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September 26, 2002

Ms. Carol Mitten
Chair, D.C. Zoning Commission
441 4th Street N.W., Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Proposed Rezoning, 1615 New Hampshire Avenue

Dear Ms. Mitten:

I am writing on behalf of the owners of 1744 Corcoran Street—a four-unit fully renovated townhouse about 500 feet east of the subject property.

The owners, whom I represent as property manager, are very distressed that they just spent $250,000 last year renovating an already expensive property-- only to discover that the city might take an action which could have the unintended but disastrous effect of reducing the value of their considerable investment.

Having lived before near a college dormitory, I know from first-hand experience the noise and disturbance college students can create. Students may be well-intentioned and studious, but create quite a ruckus nonetheless, especially at late evening hours when nearby residents on a different schedule are trying to sleep. The presence of students inevitably leads to party-related noise, to horn honking and other exuberances which simply don't fit in our neighborhood. It doesn't help that Notre Dame is known as a party school, notwithstanding the clean-cut students who have testified on behalf of the proposed zoning.

What the city and residents have learned from the experience of Georgetown and GW University is that the failure to separate school and housing uses can have very negative effects. The spillover of student uses into residential areas radically alters the feel and attractiveness of those areas. Even subtle changes can greatly influence whether a neighborhood improves or declines. In addition, if you approve the rezoning what will you say to another proposed college or dormitory rezoning based on what you granted Notre Dame?

Aside from noise, there are issues of increasing traffic on Corcoran Street, which is a very narrow and quiet residential street. Increasing area density to permit a different set of 50 students to move in three times per year will exacerbate the problem of traffic tie-ups, tight parking and congestion.

Last, the proposed zoning change will reduce revenue to D.C. in two ways at this critical juncture in our municipal finances: By eliminating the subject property from the property tax base, and from reduced property tax collections from neighboring properties affected by the downscaling of the area.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-25
Exhibit 40

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EXHIBIT NO.40

The owners therefore respectfully request that you deny the proposed rezoning. Colleges no doubt need dormitories but they should choose suitable locations—commercial or business areas such as the Connecticut Avenue location presently used by Notre Dame. Quite simply, our quiet residential area is not an appropriate dormitory location.

Sincerely,

Gil Blankespoor, Principal