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Oral Statement in Opposition to PUD Modification – Watergate Hotel (Case No. 03-16)

My wife (who is submitting a separate statement) and I have been residents at Watergate East since 1994. I am strongly opposed to the proposed replacement of the Watergate Hotel with an apartment house. The Watergate complex must be protected as an integrated environment, in which living (the apartments), working (the offices), visiting (the hotel), and shopping (the mall) are all essential components of a way of living which, over the last forty years, has proved beneficial to the Watergate residents, their neighbors in Foggy Bottom, and the city as a whole, by virtue of the worldwide reputation of the Watergate complex as a recognizable landmark of the District of Columbia.

In addition, to this general concern, others of a more specific nature are equally compelling: (a) congestion at the shopping mall within the Watergate complex (which would be further aggravated and become intolerable, to the detriment of the whole Watergate complex and its neighborhood); (b) traffic (the addition of many more cars being parked in the Watergate complex and its vicinity would be incompatible with the preservation of manageable traffic conditions in the whole Foggy Bottom area); and (c) historic preservation (the Watergate complex, in its entirety, is the fruit of the expressive maturity of Luigi Moretti, a twentieth century architect of worldwide repute known to the American public by means also of a recent monograph published by Princeton Architectural Press on his life and work; as a work of art contributing to the beauty of the District of Columbia, the Watergate complex must be preserved against any proposed changes to its exterior or the use of its essential components).

In conclusion, the conversion of the Watergate Hotel to an apartment house would prejudice the Watergate complex as an integrated environment, which is of benefit to the city as a whole.

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