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Anthony Hood, Chairperson
DC Zoning Commission
Office of Zoning
441 4th ST NW STE 200-S
Washington, DC 20001
zcsubmissions@dc.gov

**RE: Z.C. Case No. 06-11L; Hillel at The George Washington University
Letter of Opposition**

Dear Chairperson Hood and Members of the Commission

My Letter of Opposition is regarding issues I see with the Application by the Applicant Hillel at The George Washington University ("Hillel" or "Applicant") regarding their co-application with The George Washington University ("University") for variance relief of construction ("Project") of a new facility at 2300 H ST NW ("Property").

The following section is regarding Exhibit 5D

- In Section IV Page 3 Hillel states the Project will be 17,155 square feet of gross floor area and that the majority of the Project will be used by Hillel as a place of worship and related accessory uses The University's application to ANC2A for Minor Modification of Campus Plan and here as Exhibit 1, Application for Campus Plan Amendment, Further Processing states on Page 2 – Paragraph 1 that the University will be leasing 9,150 square feet of gross floor area from the Hillel This amounts to 53.33% usage of the new building, which is a majority usage of the Project. Hillel's usage will be 46 67% for religious purposes and related accessory uses
 - Hillel's application for variance relief on many pages states that usage of the building will be 100%, and therefore, they require relief due to being a religious building If Hillel's Project was completely for Religious use the actual Project would not need to use 100% of the lot space and could provide the regulation required 15 foot rear yard space
 - In Section V Page 6 Hillel lists local Synagogues in the area, including Keshet Israel at 2801 N ST NW with a square foot size of 2400 s.f which is 52% of the size of Hillel's current square footage. Keshet Israel is also a corner lot, at the corner of N ST NW and 28th ST NW, and they are able to provide a 15 foot rear yard space (see photographs Keshet Israel on Page 5)
- In Section IV Page 2 that the facility serves more than 3,000 undergrad and 1,500 grad students This is actually an estimate of all Jewish students on campus, practicing and non-practicing Jewish students. In fact on a weekly basis Hillel serve no more than 50-100 "unique" students; if Hillel were to produce its past Shabbat dinner sign up count on a weekly basis

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you would see the typical Shabbat service averaged 30-40 students Hillel serves most people during the High Holidays where they typically rent Auditorium space from the University and could build for their actual usage.

- Keshet Israel has over 200 active members and is able to operate in a building 52% of the size of Hillel

- In Section IV Page 4 as well, Hillel states they are not required to have loading/unloading facilities for a House of Worship under 30,000 square feet.

Absent this loading/unloading zone and limited parking during daytime hours, including "Rush Hour No Parking" from 4pm – 6 30pm on 23rd ST NW and a "No Standing, No Stopping – Bus Stop" in front of the building, where will the Hillel park their food trucks? These trucks/vans normally deliver food for Shabbat services or for the Kitchen, which must provide food for up to 140 students, it seems unlikely that absent a loading/unloading area that they will be able to legally park the delivery vans in the area. Currently food is delivered by white vans that can be seen in the driveway once a week for 30 minutes to an hour Further Hillel has hosted events where the white vans have been parked in the driveway for several hours (See Notes Exhibit 12B)

- In Section V page 13 Hillel states they do not require parking, however, on a typical day during the week Hillel has 3-6 unique vehicles in its driveway that change throughout the day Currently the University has construction projects that have removed parking for residents and visitors at the following
 - 24th St NW Between H and I St – Both sides of the street
 - 24th St NW Between New Hampshire and K St – East Side
 - H St NW Between 23rd and 22nd St – Both sides of the street
 - 22nd St NW Between H and I St – Both sides of the Street
 - H St NW Middle Block Between 22nd and 21st St – North side of the street
 - 21st St NW Between H and G St – East side of the street

With continued University construction Hillel is now asking for additional cars to be parked on the street and for delivery trucks to take up space on the street.

The following section is regarding Exhibit 7

- The Hillel's application states that over time Hillel will seek to use the third and fourth floor, and according to Exhibit 7, the University plans to lease and use 53.33% of the building for a period of 20 years The current building has been occupied since 1989 and lasted for 25 years while Hillel has not been able to make full use of the entire building They are now proposing a partnership with the University for 20 years of lease (see Exhibit 7 Paragraph 1), however stating in their application (Exhibit 5D

Section IV Page 3 Paragraph 2) that they intend to lease the space for the near term, in contrast with the University's campus plan amendment.

The following section is regarding Exhibit 12B

- Hillel states that they plan on having delivery trucks deliver at the Bus Stop location on H ST NW in a marked "No Standing or Parking Metro Bus Stop" spot (see Photographs Bus Stop Page 5)
 - Hillel states they will ask for deliveries to be during off-peak hours of 9 30 AM – 3 00 PM, however on Page 3 they state at least 2 of the deliveries will be during Rush Hour periods of 7 00 AM to 10:00 AM. They further state during Rush Hour Periods the buses come every 15 minutes yet they plan on taking deliveries of 20 minutes and 25 minutes daily during Rush Hour peak periods, either by blocking the bus stop or by double parking the truck and inhibiting the flow of Southbound traffic from 2 lanes to 1 lane for 20 and again for 25 minutes daily
 - Further twice per week there will be a milk delivery blocking one of those 2 locations for 15 minutes
 - They will also take a 45 minute proprietary delivery once every 2 weeks for 45 minutes double parked or blocking the bus lane
- It should be noted that parking in the Foggy Bottom area is VERY limited and 23rd St NW on the West Side (Southbound lanes) contain parked vehicles all day long until 4:00 PM Rush Hour The same can be said for H ST NW which has vehicles parked 24 hours a day throughout the day, the absence of a loading zone for the amount of time Hillel plans on having vehicles illegally parked creates a safety issue for drivers and pedestrians

Regarding the construction and the potential closure of the sidewalks on 23rd ST NW and H ST NW along with the Bus Stop immediately in front of Hillel, I see no documentation in the Hillel's exhibits as to how the flow of foot traffic will be affected and safely mitigated

- 23rd St NW is a very heavily foot trafficked as it is a direct path to the Foggy Bottom Metro.
 - Current construction projects on GW's campus have had covered walkways, but these walkways take several months into construction before they are actually raised, hence the sidewalk between the Church and Foggy Bottom metro will be closed
 - This causes concerns on several levels
 1. Many elderly parishioners will be forced to cross 23rd St at H St NW to walk all the way down to G St NW to then walk back up 23rd St NW to the church
 2. GW students routinely refuse to cross the street and therefore attempt to walk in the street itself, while during most of the days cars will be parked in the right lane, during Rush Hour students will cause a safety issue for themselves and drivers while all 3 lanes are in use
 - Will the construction block H ST NW, causing students from Amsterdam Hall to have to walk into H St or Jaywalk across H ST

NW to get around the construction, if the sidewalk on H ST is to be closed, then Hillel should be working with the DDOT to create Zebra stripes in the middle of H ST NW for students to safely cross

- Further if this effects the bus stop, will the bus stop be removed, will it be moved further back on H ST removing additional parking?

Lastly, during the summer months the sun rises to the North of due East, a taller Hillel will block early morning sun from the Church and St Mary's Court

While we can appreciate the loss of floor space depriving Hillel of "near-term" revenue to fund construction of this new facility, the continued growth of the University and this project will ultimately continue as what appears by Hillel's proposed numbers as "majority" University operated space versus a religious operated space

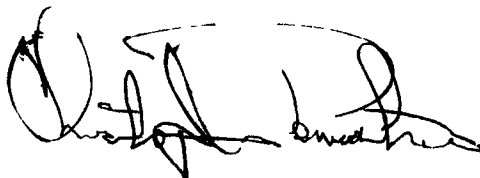
This Project appears to be misrepresented to the Zoning Office as a necessary case to request a variance for Religious needs. However, upon closer analysis the need for this variance is solely based on the Hillel's inability to provide adequate funds to construct a new building. If Hillel were able to provide the funds on its own to enter into construction, Hillel's space needs are only 47% of the proposed Project and they could therefore stay within current DC Zoning Regulations.

This request for Variance lays solely on the fact that the Hillel has partnered with the University to fund this Project and must provide the University adequate space in repayment for construction funds. Hillel should consider using the funds it has to renovate the current building and seek variances for extending the rooftop to cover the driveway area.

Please deny this request for Variance or send it back for additional changes to be made to bring it more in line with DC code as it is based not on actual needs of a Religious institution, but due to being a mixed-use facility.

Note: Photograph Exhibits on Page 5

Sincerely,



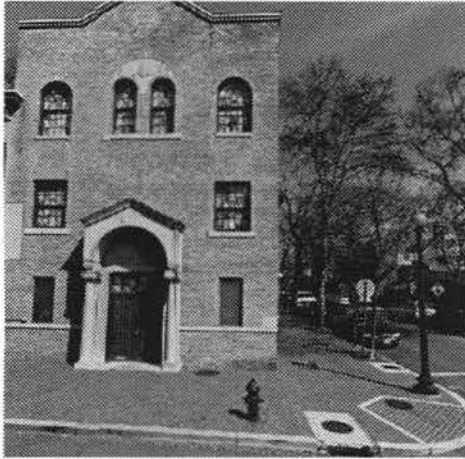
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PHOTOGRAPHS

Kesher Israel

View from N ST NW:



View from 28th ST NW including Rear Yard:



Bus Stop (H ST NW)

