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ROBERT E. STIPE
100 Pine Lane
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514-4331

Telephone (919) 967-2448
e-mail: bobstipe@mindspring.com

May 3, 2003

Mayor and Members of the City Council
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I submit this letter to express for the record my strong opposition to the portion of the University's application to amend the campus development plan to construct a 16,000 square foot "chiller plant" and a four level 600 car parking garage behind Cobb Dormitory as described in your notice of April 25th.

My wife and I own several graves not far from the northern boundary in the Old Chapel Hill cemetery. It is absolutely incredible to me that the University would propose to construct and operate such intensive and incompatible structures and uses so close to one of the most hallowed historic sites in all of Chapel Hill.

No doubt the University will argue that the occupants of the cemetery are dead and won't know the difference. However, the living descendents of those whose remains are interred there who use the cemetery as a place of quiet rest, repose, and remembrance, as my wife and I sometimes do, will feel very differently about this proposal. The proposal is nothing less than an act of sheer, wanton vandalism to a sacred place. I assume that the African-American community in Chapel Hill will view this proposal as I do, as will the Chapel Hill Historical Society and the Chapel Hill Preservation Society if they are true to their corporate purposes.

It is no secret that parking decks are among the worst of all polluters, and that the proposed "chiller plant" is essentially an industrial use not in any way comparable with the cemetery, open space and recreation facilities presently in and near the area of proposed construction. All of them will be effectively destroyed. The heavy construction vehicles and machinery that will be needed to implement this aspect of the plan modification will doubtless have additional harmful impacts if construction is approved. How this plan amendment can be rationalized with the Town of Chapel Hill and the University's long-standing policy of removing campus parking to remote suburban, park-and-ride locations is a mystery to me.

I note also for the record that the Cemetery was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on June 16, 1994 as a place of statewide significance, and that in addition to review and approval by the Town of Chapel Hill, the modification proposal will be

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Chapel Hill Mayor and Council

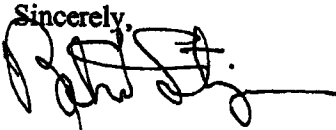
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subject to the environmental review processes mandated by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended if federal funds or permits are required; and that if any state funds are used for the project, it will be subject to the environmental review processes required under North Carolina General Statute Chapter 121 Section 12.

For the reasons cited, I request that you not approve the above modifications to the UNC Development Plan.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Stipe

cc: Dr. Jeffrey Crow, State Historic Preservation Officer
Division of Archives & History, Raleigh NC
Ms. Rebecca Clark
The Chapel Hill Preservation Society
The Chapel Hill Historical Society
Chapel Hill Planning Board
UNC Chancellor James Moeser