June 13, 2019

Ms. Marnique Heath  
Chair, Historic Preservation Review Board  
1100 4th Street, SW, Suite E650  
Washington, DC 20024

Re: 201 E. Capitol St. SE/Folger Shakespeare Library (HPA 19-332)

Dear Ms. Heath:

On June 12, 2019, at a duly noticed and regularly scheduled monthly meeting, with a quorum of six out of six commissioners and the public present, this case came before ANC 6C. The commissioners voted 6-0 to support the application overall, but to oppose two specific aspects. ANC 6C authorized Commissioner Christine Healey (6C01) to present testimony, with Commissioner Mark Eckenwiler (6C04) as a backup witness if needed.

The applicant seeks concept approval to construct new visitor entrances via grade-lowered plazas to the northeast and northwest of the building. The proposal would bring much-needed improvement to the quality of accessible access, channeling all visitors to the new lower-level entrances. In our view, the proposed arrangement respects the overall integrity of the building while using landscaping to limit the visual impact of the changes in grade in the adjacent public space.

We object, however, to two alterations on or near the north terrace (or “plinth”). First, the proposed east-west extensions to the benches in front of the historic entrances from the terrace detract from their prominence and thus sends a confusing signal. In addition, although we support the idea of ensuring that the terrace is accessible to all visitors, the proposed double-sloped ramp materially alters the appearance of the plinth base and thus the overall composition. We urge the applicant to consider less visually intrusive alternatives for terrace access.

Thank you for giving great weight to the views of ANC 6C.

Sincerely,

Karen Wirt  
Chair, ANC 6C