

## **Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)**

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**From:** Kirsten Olean <kirsten.olean@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 9, 2018 10:12 AM  
**To:** DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)  
**Subject:** Comments in opposition to BZA Case 19377: The Boundary Companies and The Missionary Society  
**Attachments:** IMG\_7610.jpg; IMG\_7611.jpg; IMG\_7612.jpg

Comments submitted by:

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Dear Board of Zoning Adjustment Members:

I had the opportunity to testify regarding the above referenced case at the recent hearing on April 25, but I wanted to follow up with written testimony, as well.

As I stated during the hearing, the reason I chose my particular home when I purchased in Chancellors Row was because of its location on the green space of the Paulist property. While I was led to believe at the time that that land would not be developed, I recognize now the naivety of expecting that an open piece of land wouldn't be considered for development. However, I do believe that development should be considered thoughtfully, so that the impact on the community is positive and not negative. I am very concerned that the new development, as proposed, would have an adverse effect on the surrounding community due to its impact on parking, traffic, stormwater management, existing trees and available green space.

As the Paulists have stated, they have generously made this land available to the surrounding community - long before Chancellors Row was built, and since then. While certainly Chancellors Row residents enjoy this space for community gathering, dog walking and as a play area for kids, the space is also enjoyed by the surrounding community, and in particular, the elementary school children at Lee Montessori. There is very limited green space in the surrounding area, and so it makes sense that residents of Edgewood/Brookland would take advantage of this wonderful space. If you drop by the Paulists' land on any good snow day, you'll find a mix of residents - kids and adults alike - sharing in the fun of an excellent sledding hill. My seven-year-old son has grown up with this green space as his front yard, and he is incredibly sad at the prospect that it might disappear. As you've seen from the photos submitted with testimony by many neighbors, it is a truly beautiful space, and no development will make it more beautiful.

In addition to eliminating some of the only green space in the community, I am concerned that the density of the proposed development will adversely affect parking and traffic, which is already strained with normal rush hour traffic on 4th Street, and the drop off/pick up patterns of the schools now occupying the Paulist building. These schools are not even at capacity yet, with over 700 students eventually expected, and the DDOT assessment looks only at the impact of the new homes, and does not take into account the significant traffic generated by the schools. By narrowing 4th Street and encouraging parking on 4th Street, traffic can only get more congested.

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EXHIBIT NO.167

While the developer's plan does maintain some of the established and heritage trees, the survival rate of the trees is greatly overstated. Significant underground work will need to take place during construction, and the spread of the roots of these very large trees will inevitably be impacted. I would point you to the testimony of Barbara Deutsch, a professional landscape architect, for more details on the negative impact the development and construction will have on the trees both short and long term. As Casey Trees admitted in their testimony, they did not take underground work into account when making their assessment of tree survival, so their assessment cannot be considered accurate. At a minimum, I would ask that all heritage trees be preserved (taking into account impact of underground work and the extensive spread of their roots), and as many existing trees as possible be preserved.

As you can see in the attached pictures (also submitted during my in-person testimony), the Chancellors Row property ends just a few feet out my front door (at the light pole). The new townhouses are currently slated to be built just 50 feet from my front door, with no road or other natural boundary between us. Typically in-fill development is separated from existing homes by distinct intervening spaces such as roads, or is located to the side or behind existing dwellings, not immediately outside their front doors with no clear separation. What the developer proposes is highly unusual, and will have a great impact in particular on our row of homes.

While development of facing rows not unusual, the fact that the Chancellor's Row homes are already occupied makes construction of a new row of units at this proximity problematic. This is particularly true when you consider that five of the eight homes on our row have school-aged children living in them, with two of them relying on home daycare, who will be subjected to the noise, dust, and other construction impacts each and every day throughout the construction period. Usually when facing rows are built in a development, no units are occupied until both facing rows are complete (such was the case when Chancellors Row was built).

It seems that in order to achieve the flat, level grades between our homes and the proposed homes, significant grading and earth work is going to be necessary. We estimate that this grading and earth work would have to begin at the community property line and likely extend over it onto the property of the Chancellor's Row HOA and as a result would take place as close as eight to ten feet to the front doors of our homes. This would lead to serious adverse effects on our row of homes – including noise, construction dust, visual impacts, and quite possibly the normal use of our front doors and outdoor living spaces (e.g. front porches and stoops) during construction.

I request that the BZA require the Applicant to shift the northeastern-most row of the proposed townhomes further west to create a minimum 40-foot construction buffer zone between existing Chancellor's Row property line and the use of heavy construction equipment, with the proposed unit outside wall being no closer than 75' to the outside wall of mine and my neighbors' homes. This could be accomplished by shifting the homes westward and relocating some of the proposed open space along 4th Street NE to this buffer location, to benefit the residents who will be closest to and most heavily affected by the new townhomes. Given the size of the open space shown at the entrance on the developer's plan, shifting a portion of it to benefit Chancellor's Row would still preserve ample open space for passerby on 4th Street NE and the general neighborhood.

Alternately, given the repeated public statements by the Paulists that the construction of their proposed building is on a separate development pathway from the residential development and that it is contingent upon them raising the capital to be able to construct the building, and that they are having challenges in their fundraising campaign, we question how or when they might actually build this building and as a result ask the BZA to consider eliminating that building from the plan and relocating some of the residential development to that area in order to achieve the requested minimum 75' setback and give me and my neighbors the additional relief we would need to be less impacted by the requested variances.

Here I raise just a few of the issues that are still outstanding related to this development, and I am uncomfortable with the idea of this development moving forward without these issues and others raised by my

neighbors in Chancellors Row, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, and parents of the students at the schools being addressed and resolved. The proposed development is just too much - it is focused on getting as much development as possible in this space - and the density of 60 townhomes and the Paulist building can only have an adverse effect on the surrounding community for all the reasons previously stated. My preference would be for the developer's proposal to be denied, and they be asked to truly engage with the community to draw up a new plan that addresses all the outstanding issues. However, if the development is to be approved, I would ask the BZA to approve a development with no more than 30-35 homes, and no Paulist building. A development of that scope would preserve adequate green space for the community, preserve most of the existing and heritage trees, would lessen the impact on traffic and parking.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kirsten Olean













A large, multi-story building with a prominent green metal roof. The facade is a mix of light-colored panels and large glass windows. A central section features a large arched glass entrance. The building is partially obscured by several tall, dark green pine trees in the middle ground.

A row of multi-story residential townhouses or row houses. The buildings are painted in various colors, including white, light green, and dark red. They have multiple windows and small porches with black railings. A sidewalk runs along the front of the row.

A grey metal utility box, likely an electrical or telecommunications cabinet, sitting on a concrete pad. It has a label on the front with some illegible text and the number "100" printed below it.

A circular, patterned manhole cover set into the grass in the lower-left foreground.