

## Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

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**From:** heather sacks <heathersacks@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 3, 2018 3:42 PM  
**To:** DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)  
**Subject:** Comments in opposition to BZA Case 19377: The Boundary Companies and The Missionary Society

To whom it may concern:

This is a letter in opposition to Case 19377. I wanted to express my concerns around the following topics listed below:

Construction traffic and parking in and around our current neighborhood, Chancellor's Row (CR): Sixty homes and an institutional building are too much. We already struggle with parking in CR, and there is limited and restricted parking on 4th street, which would be the next closest potential for parking. This is only going to get worse when the school is fully occupied, and traffic on 4th Street is going to get worse when the city narrows the roads to add bike lanes. Adding 60 homes and a large building will result in a long construction period, a tremendous influx of people and vehicles, and will compromise my safety in walking and driving through my neighborhood. Limiting the number of homes to no more than 30 would reduce the negative impact of this new development on the use and enjoyment of our neighborhood.

Related: Future traffic and parking management for 60 homes. Although the applicant's plan does not currently provide for vehicular through traffic on private CR streets, there is pressure from DDOT to connect 4th and 7th Streets through our neighborhood and to change the easements. I strongly oppose such use of our private streets, which were not designed for heavy traffic and are 100% maintained and paid for by our HOA. I request that the BZA prevent any efforts to connect the streets or increase the easements in place.

Dust and debris from construction, construction noise, and safety risks around the construction site: Any construction site is bound to have noise and safety risks, but with the addition of a new multi-person residential living/learning facility, and 60 town houses will severely diminish the quality of life, and property values of our entire neighborhood.

The loss of open, green space and mature trees - The tree survival rate shown by the applicant is wildly overstated, given the significant amount of regrading and underground work included in the plan and practical experience with construction. The testimony given by Barbara Deutsch, an experienced landscape architect, as well as our experience in Chancellor's Row where many trees have declined or died in the last few years, directly contradicts what the developer has promised. Tree root structures extend 2-3 times the size of a tree's crown, and the plan as shown does not limit construction enough to protect the existing trees. The BZA should require that the applicant structure the project to protect the long-term survival of 100% of the heritage trees (whose trunks are more than 100" in circumference) and to protect more trees overall. The testimony of Casey Trees should also be disregarded until they include heritage tree assessments and can fully address the impact of underground work. When questioned by the BZA members, the representative from Casey Trees admitted that they are not fully aware of the underground construction planned for the site. The applicant needs to provide Casey Trees with a full explanation of the significant regrading, utility line construction, and storm water management work that they intend to perform so that Casey Trees can provide a meaningful

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analysis. In the meantime, their testimony should be viewed as pending. Casey Trees also did not account for heritage trees on the site, which is a new DC requirement.

Storm water drain off - any time it rains, there is significant flooding in a part of the land near the storm water drains. There has been no accountability or explanation for how this will be accounted for - both in the new construction, and the structural impact this is bound to have on our existing houses every time it rains.

Engagement with community - The BZA should require that the applicant cooperate with the surrounding community, and provide evidence of that cooperation. The applicant has not made sufficient effort to cooperate, as evidenced not only by the number of concerned neighbors at the hearing, but also by the lack of communication with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. USCCB submitted a letter in opposition at the last minute once they realized the use of their private drive and storm water management system are part of the applicant's plan. The developer gave the BZA a list of the meetings they supposedly held with the community. Most of those meetings were just presentations where the developer showed slides to the crowd, not discussions where they actually listened to the concerns being raised. Given the numerous issues identified during the hearing and how long this application has been pending, we suggest the BZA deny the current application and require the developers to work with the surrounding property owners to address all the relevant issues that have been identified before resubmitting their application. Evidence of meaningful engagement with the surrounding communities (the CR HOA, the specific homeowners' party, the USCCB, and Building Hope schools) in the form of signed agreements should be provided in the developer's amended submission. During one of these meetings, with respect to the proposed new Paulist facility, I had inquired why they didn't just renovate a portion of their existing structure? The comments provided were that "it was going to be too expensive". No proof was offered. In addition, they kept on stating that they needed to sell the land at a premium price to "take care of the aging Paulist population in their later years". So, constructing a brand new, state of the art building is supposed to help support their aging Paulists? That makes no sense. What makes sense would be to utilize their current existing structure, which has already been deemed a historical site.

Safety and quality of life - the quickest route to the new, proposed development from the Brookland metro is through the CR neighborhood. In addition to significantly increasing the amount of pedestrian traffic that uses our private (and privately maintained streets and sidewalks), this also poses a risk to our safety. Increase in population that uses our streets will impact the trash in our neighborhood, normal wear and tear of sidewalks and streets, and puts CR residents at additional risk for auto and home break-ins.

Finally, as noted above, the Paulists intend to occupy the large building with the few seminary students they have for the short term, but have refused any sort of restrictions on that building, meaning they want to be able to sell it for any purpose in the future. Not only does this pose a significant risk to the current community, with no restrictions on what the building can be used for, there is also an elementary and high school that are next to the proposed site. This too could pose a huge risk to the students who attend these classes. It's not an unreasonable request to object to the construction of a new dormitory 50 feet from a current house.

I recognize that DC development is evolving at a brisk pace. Heck, our neighborhood was constructed because of this growth. But at a certain point, this can take a huge toll on not only the resources that currently exist - both from a community standpoint (parking, traffic, safety, etc.), and from an environmental standpoint - loss of green space for the surrounding neighborhoods and the schools.

Thank you,

Heather Sacks  
602 Regent Place NE  
202-841-0533  
heathersacks@hotmail.com