

Testimony in Opposition to GWU Campus Plan – PUD Application
Case Number 06-11 & 06-12

My name is Douglas Hansen and I have been a resident of Foggy Bottom for 19 of the last 23 years and currently reside at 2415 I Street. I began as a student at GWU and following a couple of years in Maryland and Virginia was ultimately drawn back to Foggy Bottom by the charm of the historic district and it's proximity to central Washington and even by its proximity to GWU.

The Foggy Bottom of my university days and first 10 years as a non-student resident differs a great deal from the Foggy Bottom of today. While I was a student at GWU, Foggy Bottom was 'that group of row houses on the other side of the hospital'. Campus activity centered on G and H Streets and most students had little reason to venture into the Foggy Bottom residential neighborhood. Certainly there have always been students renting row houses and apartments in the historic district, but not in the numbers seen today. These changes have been brought about in large measure by the huge expansion of the student body population and GWU's, until recent, failure to expand on-campus housing options.

Am I anti-student? No. I am anti-GWU's expanding beyond its ability to provide adequate on-campus housing for an undergraduate student population that has grown by upwards of 40% since 1999. This growth spurt has left students little choice but to cram into row houses, apartments, and condos throughout the historic district turning it into a defacto west campus. For confirmation, one need only visit any weekend night. Raucous parties with the accompanying noise, trash, and on occasion public urination have unfortunately become fixtures of the historic district. GWU's acquisition and conversion of the Premier Hotel (former Howard Johnson's) and the St. James into dormitories at has significantly exacerbated the situation.

What is next? It is well known that the University has attempted to purchase the apartment building at 925 25th Street and the River Inn. Future acquisition and conversion (officially or unofficially) of either would sound the death knell of the historic district as a residential neighborhood. The sheer number of students that could be housed in either would overwhelm what is left of the community.

In the event that the Zoning Commission allows GWU to move ahead on a campus plan revision, I ask it to include strict provisions linking any development to an expansion of on-campus housing within the current student body population numbers.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-11

EXHIBIT NO. 217

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