

October 27, 2006
Carol Mitten, Chairman
Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200 South
Washington DC 20001

Re: *GWU/School Without Walls* Case # 06-17

Dear Ms. Mitten,

As a former School Without Walls and George Washington University student, I could not be in greater support of the proposed renovations of School Without Walls and improved residence hall facilities at George Washington University. The four years which I experienced as a School Without Walls student provided an environment which encouraged academic and personal development far beyond the average DC public school system experience. As a result of the academic nurturing I received through small class sizes, discourse with academically advanced peers, and an atmosphere promoting an overall standard of excellence, I was awarded a Stephen Joel Trachtenburg scholarship my senior year of high school. Upon entering GWU in 2001, I continued to receive support and encouragement from SWW faculty and peers to perform at a level of excellence. Due to the foundation I received at School Without Walls, I had the mental and emotional resources to be an active member of the GWU community. The successful completion of my Bachelor's of Arts while being a collegiate basketball player, president of my fraternity and one of the vice-presidents of the Student Association and my current status as a second year doctoral student at Fordham University can each be significantly attributed to the solid foundation I developed as a result of being a School Without Walls student.

I graduated from School Without Walls five years ago and the interactions and experiences I had during high school are fond memories I hold with me today. However, I hold these memories with a slight feeling of disappointment because these experiences had to occur despite the physical condition of the school building. I was able to play on the SWW basketball team despite not having a recreational facility. I was able to enjoy lunch despite not having an auditorium or cafeteria. I was able to have a quality academic experience despite having an undersized library. The accomplishments which I have had during the past five years will be replicated many times by SWW students if we are able to renovate one of the most academically rigorous high schools in the District of Columbia. Further, the academic experience of college students is greatly enhanced by having living conditions which are conducive to studying and relaxing after a long day of classes. The benefits School Without Walls, George Washington University and the greater DC community will receive as a result of providing adequate facilities to our youth and young adults far outweigh the potential risks of the proposed renovations and land improvements. Therefore, I fully support the proposal for the improvement of School Without Walls, George Washington University, and the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,

Isaiah B. Pickens

Isaiah B. Pickens
Doctoral Student

Fordham University

ZONING COMMISSION

District of Columbia

District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-17

EXHIBIT NO. 35

EXHIBIT NO.