

July 2, 2007

Carol Mitten, Chair, Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200 South
Washington, DC 20001

Re: The George Washington University Mount Vernon Campus – Pelham Replacement Project (Case 07-12)

Dear Chairperson Mitten,

When I first heard about the Pelham renovations, I will admit that I was pleasantly surprised. With Campaign GW (the student group created to work with the administration on planning the University's development) a great deal of focus over the past year has been on three projects – the 20-year Campus Plan, Square 54 and School Without Walls, all of which exclusively deal with the Foggy Bottom Campus. However, I feel this project puts a much-needed emphasis on "the Vern" and its potential to develop into the perfect compliment to Foggy Bottom.

During the year I have been here, I've visited the Vern a great deal and have had a number of friends who did live there, and the biggest problem universally encountered while there was dining. Having only a single dining facility on campus is woefully inadequate and needs to be rectified. Furthermore, this project would also increase the student population on the Vern, and a second dining facility would be more feasible in part because of the increased demand.

After dining facilities, I feel that there are also serious inadequacies in both the volume and types of other non-academic student use space. By allowing for the extra square footage in Pelham not designated for residence, the University is able to deliberately create this type of space from the ground up so it can be as versatile and useful for students as possible. Furthermore, there is still a bit of flexibility in what that space might be used for (providing the use is student-focused), based upon students' needs and requests.

Finally, I feel this project shows that the University is serious about its commitment to the promises it has made in the Foggy Bottom Campus Plan regarding caps for students and faculty by enhancing its second campus and allowing the volume to be spread out among the two campuses. With more students living on the Vern, it would be more opportune for the University to increase and diversify course offerings there, lessening the strain on Foggy Bottom. However, I do understand that there are enrollment caps in place enumerated in the Mount Vernon Campus Plan, and the increased number of students due to this project still stays under those set numbers.

In summation, I thank the Commission for the opportunity to share my opinions on this fantastic opportunity for the Mount Vernon Campus and offer my support for this wonderful project.

Sincerely,
William Rone
GW Class of 2010

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

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