

Lauren J. Empson
950 24th Street, NW
City Hall #213
Washington, DC 20052

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

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

To Whom It May Concern:

Good Evening. My name is Lauren Empson and I am going to be a senior this coming semester at The George Washington University. I am a Political Science major with a double minor in Spanish Language and Literature and Sociology. Aside from my studies, I am involved in the GW Pitches female A cappella group, Colonial Brass (the GW pep band), and the University Symphonic Band; a music enthusiast to say the least. I have been working at Mount Vernon Campus Life throughout my college career as an Office Assistant, and was promoted to being the Undergraduate Programming Assistant for my sophomore and junior year, when I returned from studying abroad in Barcelona.

While this may appear to be a long list of activities, I began my college career at the Mount Vernon Campus. I lived in Somers Hall my freshman year, and I couldn't even begin to express how pleased I was with being a part of the Mount Vernon community. The design of the Pelham Project has proposed the construction of a residence hall that not only resembles the style of the Mount Vernon Campus, but also a residence hall that will maintain the atmosphere of this campus. From my experiences, Mount Vernon is seen as a freshman campus, and rightly so, since over half of its residents are freshmen. I believe this is a wonderful quality of the campus. Coming from a small town, and an even smaller high school, I was a bit overwhelmed by the size of my freshman class, of nearly 1,500 students. Having previously been in an environment where I knew everyone and everyone knew me, I was looking for a sort of transition that could lead me from my small town experiences to those of big city living. I found this type of environment at the Mount Vernon Campus. While it offered me the tranquil, smaller setting that I desired, I was also able to utilize all that the city had to offer. I now live on the Foggy Bottom campus, but I fondly look back and remember the wonderful times I had at Mount Vernon, which isn't very hard to do on any given day. By walking down the street, on the street of a school of over 10,000 students, it is easy to stop someone who lived on 'The Vern' with you, and a friendly smile and conversation is always sure to follow. Personally, I never have to look very far for my fellow 'Vernies,' for my best friends of today are those who lived in Somers with me during my freshman year. Not only did living on Mount Vernon offer me the transition I needed in order to become a college student, it brought me together with students who shared similar expectations from

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EXHIBIT NO. 32

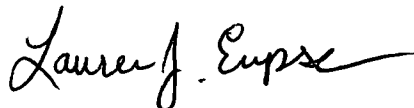
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college and life. With its smaller, community based atmosphere, Mount Vernon is able to reach out to its residents and surrounding community on a more personal basis than one might find at Foggy Bottom.

While I could continue to talk about the benefits of living on Mount Vernon, as we all know, nothing is perfect, and there were some drawbacks of living on Mount Vernon as well. In addition to a residence hall, Pelham Hall is projected to offer student support spaces. Not only are these additions essential to accommodate the additional students that the new Pelham residence Hall would bring, but several of these amenities are already lacking on Mount Vernon, or are in drastic need of renovations. For example, the Ames Dining Hall offers wonderful service to MVC and Foggy Bottom residents, but, having lived on the Vern, I can attest that the choices are limited and one can only have chicken fingers so many times. It would be wonderful to extend the dining options for students, and a new dining facility is the perfect solution. While I know that final decisions have not been made as to how the new student support space will be used, on a personal note, I would love to see an extension of the music and arts department reach Mount Vernon in the form of practice rooms and a theater. On Foggy Bottom, there are currently sixteen practice rooms and only a handful of additional spaces that serve individual students, performing groups, and music classes. Students are constantly racing and fighting in order to obtain space for their group to practice and several groups are left without space or having to practice at unimaginable hours into the evening. This is very discouraging, since the George Washington University has prided itself on being a liberal arts school, but it struggles to provide adequate space for students to practice 'the arts'. Not only would the addition of practice rooms and a theater allow Mount Vernon residents a place to oversee their passion for music and the arts, which this campus currently has no space for, it would draw students from Foggy Bottom to Mount Vernon, not only for practicing but for performances.

These past 3 years, I have seen and been fortunate enough to participate in the growing population and interest of Mount Vernon. More GW departments and student organizations have come to see Mount Vernon as a wonderful opportunity to extend their programs and reach out to students through various events and courses. By physically adding to the already growing interest of this campus, all within the established limits the University has previously agreed to, there would be a greater accommodation for students, faculty, GW departments, and the surrounding Foxhall community. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lauren J. Empson". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline.

Lauren J. Empson

Class of 2008