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1925 - 38th St. NW

STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO THE GU PLAN

Before I closed on my house on 38th Street in 1984, I would drive by at random hours on random days to see and hear whether the dead-end street was quiet. It was. That was 27 years ago. At the time, there were families with children, couples and even one of the original owners living on the block of 22 houses.

Today, it is no longer a quiet, peaceful street and the disturbances seem to get worse each year. Approximately half the houses on my block are rental properties. There are usually 6 students living in a house, sometimes more. They have no interest in maintaining the properties in which they live; they have no loyalty to the neighborhood; they lack respect for their neighbors. The students change each year, sometimes each semester, and behavior changes with each new group. In addition, the students have several cars and SUVs per house, making parking a problem.

On one occasion, when I complained about the noise, a student had the audacity to tell me that the houses in Burleith were built for the students, and that we, the property owners, were the guests in the neighborhood.

Aside from the neglected front yards and ill-kempt porches with their broken-down couches, loose handrails up the steps, and discarded beer bottles and paper cups on weekend mornings, it is the noise which constitutes the main problem. And not only the raucous parties which necessitate calls to SNAP and the police.

My house is in the middle of the block on the east side of 38th Street. Facing me is a row of six student-occupied houses. When the students congregate on their front porches drinking beer, laughing and talking in raised voices late at night - sometimes as late as three, four and even five o'clock in the morning - their voices carry directly into my bedroom. I am awakened, get dressed, and go over to ask them to please go inside. My night has been broken and it's

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not easy to get back to sleep. I am a senior citizen, a retired lawyer, but I still work as a journalist from home, and I do not relish these middle-of-the-night forays.

Typical behavior is for students to come home between 2 and 3 in the morning after the bars close. They slam car doors, shout to one another in the street, often using obscenities. While this behavior lasts only a short time, it is enough to rouse the neighborhood, yet not enough to call the police. Case in point: last week was student turnover on the block. On Saturday night at 2:30 a.m., a group of boys came home talking to one another in voices loud enough for me to hear that one of them "had sex with lots of women and been drunk lots of times." An hour later, at 3:30, a group of girls arrived by taxi, laughing and shouting to one another in shrill voices.

There have been incidents of urinating on the front yards, and parties with 60 or 70 students crowded into a row house. Outdoor parties still go on after midnight. While there are blocks with fewer or no student houses, the problem for the community as a whole can only be solved by having ALL undergraduate students live in university housing. It's done at other universities and Georgetown could do it too. The GU Plan would only increase the problem.

At issue here is not only the quality of life for the permanent residents of Burleith, but the survival of one of Washington's most charming residential neighborhoods, which the BCA is valiantly trying to maintain. Please do not permit the university to destroy our neighborhood.