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3817 T Street NW
Washington DC 20007

2011 APR 13 AM 10:16

11 April 2011

Mr. Anthony Hood
Chairman, DC Zoning Commission
441 Fourth St, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case No. 10-32, Georgetown University Campus Plan

Mr. Hood:

I have owned my home and lived in the Burleith neighborhood for the past 32 years. I raised my children here, sending them to DC public schools. I have treasured being in a small neighborhood in a city with walking access to schools, shopping, restaurants, and public transportation. I have remodeled my home over the years to make it environmentally friendly, and my family has two cars, one a small hybrid and the other an even smaller city car. I work with my neighbors to keep our properties clean and appealing.

In the late 1970's when I bought my house, there were only two rental properties on my street, both student rentals. For the most part these were graduate students, and we got to know them and welcomed them. They came to Burleith events, like our annual picnic, and participated in other activities, such as clean-ups, all within the character of the neighborhood.

The contrast with the Burleith neighborhood today couldn't be greater. Almost half of the houses are now rented, mostly to students, with up to six unrelated individuals living in rather modestly sized houses. The level of noise and issues of disrespect from students have gone up astoundingly. Living in a townhouse community is like living in a dorm – if everyone tries to keep his or her noise contained, all can peacefully coexist. Unfortunately, it is rare to be able to enjoy our back yard for the music blaring from neighboring houses (even on other blocks). We have neighbors who cannot take their young children into their own yards because of the marijuana smoke and the foul language they will be exposed to.

Georgetown University has given us numbers for proposed growth in their past plans that were totally spurious. A plan for an attrition of several hundred undergrads became an increase of well over a thousand new students with no plans to house them on campus. The campus housing (dormitories) has been allowed to deteriorate with no investment in providing Wi-Fi and other services the students now find essential. Mixed communities like Burleith – which include many elderly, families with young children, retirees, and young professionals – cannot absorb these students without a profound degradation of the properties. A fire across the street from me last summer in a group house left the house in ruin for months and caused the neighbors doors to be smashed open in case the fire spread rapidly. Safety is a huge issue in urban neighborhoods. This fire was caused by a student who left a candle burning unintended. We only give thanks

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO.

10 32

EXHIBIT NO.

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that no lives were lost. Overall, our quality of living has declined on so many levels since I first moved here.

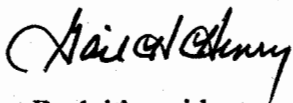
And as the quality declines, so does the value of our homes. I bought my house because it was affordable (back in 1978), close to transportation, big enough for a family, and the location allowed me to walk rather than use my car all of the time. I have poured many times the original cost back into the house to improve it, make it energy efficient, replace dead trees, etc. Further increases in the number of students in our neighborhood will only lead to more properties that are badly maintained in addition to the other stresses large groups in small houses bring.

My sister is a city planner in North Carolina, and she was shocked to find out that we do not have neighborhood overlays to control the number of unrelated people occupying houses in an area such as Burleith. These houses are not large enough for -- nor were they designed for -- large groups.

Georgetown University claims that we benefit from having them nearby. I have never found that to be true. They do not increase the quality of my life in any way. They are haughty and disdainful of the neighboring communities' needs and seem to think they can simply steamroll over us. When we ask for consideration of on-campus housing or expansion of the apartment housing they use in Arlington, they simply inform us that those discussions are not on the table. They will argue about the initiatives they have taken to place someone in the neighborhood and to stop problems before the police are involved. This has not helped in the ways they claim but rather it appears they are simply paying lip service. I've heard students laughing about how they don't have to worry about the police. If anything, the university seems to be enabling bad behavior.

Given that we pay real estate taxes and they don't, I hope that the zoning board will do what is necessary to save our neighborhood from further decline and force the university to take more responsibility for housing its students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alice Henry".

Burleith resident

Cc: Jack Evans, Ward 2 representative