April 17, 2000

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Washington, DC 20037-2211

Sheila Reid Cross, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St., NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20001

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
00 APR 18 P1:13

SUBJ: The George Washington University's Campus Plan - BZA Application 16553

Dear Members of the Board:

As a concerned Historic Foggy Bottom resident-owner, I wish to make known my concerns about the George Washington University's Foggy Bottom Campus Plan which is now before the Board. There are many Foggy Bottom residents who share my views.

For clarity, and your convenience, the first part of this letter lists key areas of concern and requests for Board consideration. The second part covers broader issues about the relationship between Foggy Bottom residents and GWU which the Board might consider in its overall deliberations.

Please be aware that, like most Foggy Bottom residents, I am *not* anti-education, anti-college campus, nor anti-student. However, I am deeply concerned about GWU's increasing encroachment, in the broad sense of the word, on the Foggy Bottom residential community and public spaces.

SPECIFIC CAMPUS PLAN CONCERNS:

- Gateway Markers - Nowhere in the narrative parts of the Plan could I find mention or description of gateway markers that would be placed *on public property*. One would expect some mention of that, especially in paragraphs IVE (Open Space and Pedestrian Network), VC2b (Signs), and VC2c (Streets). On close examination of Figure L, I noticed that the four "Gateway markers" on each side of the mid-block crossing scheme are situated at curbside! I ask the Board to **prohibit placement of any kind of GWU signage and/or object on public property, especially to this extreme.** I do not object to placement of such markers on GWU-owned property.

BZA
Case No. 16553
Exhibit No. 106

Board of Zoning Adjustment
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EXHIBIT NO.106

- Pennants - In para. IVG, the Plan indicates that GWU has placed "...pennants permanently mounted on lampposts..." It does not mention that the lampposts are *not* on GWU property. In fact, the pennants are on a multitude of public lampposts throughout streets that cross much of Foggy Bottom. They are yellow cloth signs mounted on the street side of the lampposts advertising GWU. (See enclosed photo.) As if it's not enough that they have been placed along campus blocks -- they string commercial areas including a good part of Pennsylvania Avenue from Washington Circle.

  In addition to various signs and markers advertising GWU or identifying GWU property, there are large flag banners on poles extending out the front of virtually every major GWU building. There are kiosks, directional cross signs, signs mounted on buildings, implanted signs in front of buildings just off the sidewalk, etc., etc. In some areas, signage has gone amok and a circus-like effect has been created (see enclosed photo).

  Members of the Board need only tour the campus area to realize that the signs on public lampposts are overkill. They are also obnoxious to many Foggy Bottom residents who do not need such overbearing reminders that they live next to GWU. The streets and sidewalks are not owned by GWU nor are they for its exclusive use. Many residents must traverse the cross streets; e.g., I walk nine blocks to work in the IMF/World Bank area. For the most part, Foggy Bottom residents are not concerned about lawful signage on GWU property. The objection is with GWU "in your face" advertisements on public property. Pedestrians and drivers should not have to contend with the gluttony while traversing the public thoroughfares around which GWU chose to build itself.

  The Plan indicates here and there GWU's intention to "...continue its efforts aimed at creating a distinct campus identity. It is a wonder how much more campus identity the school needs. Only a comatose person would not realize that he or she is in the midst of a campus. I hope the Board realizes that much of the GWU signage in place, and that to come, is pure advertisement. Would the Board approve, if it were able, the placement of like special interest *commercial* signs on public lampposts? I request that the Board **take action to have the lamppost GWU signs removed**

- GWU Street Name Type Signs - It is strange that this issue is not addressed in the Plan's many references to signage. I point out that absence because it appears that GWU has seen fit to take signage privileges to the limit. At several intersections, street name signs declaring the school's name have been added immediately above actual street name signs (see enclosed photo). This is not only another example of the extent to which GWU will go to advertise itself, it is a

hazard to public safety as well! Drivers who look to the street signs for direction find that they can't avoid noticing the GWU advertisement. Even though that may take a second or two, the distraction is a potential danger that could cause an accident involving automobiles and pedestrians. I ask that the Board **take action to have the GWU additions to the street signs removed**. Foggy Bottom residents dread the day they notice that public sidewalks are painted in GWU colors!

- Hospital Signs - This also was not addressed in the Plan. It seems that GWU's need to advertise itself knows no bounds. Recently, huge plastic banners were mounted to the side of the existing hospital on 23rd Street (see enclosed photo). They are near or over other GWU Hospital signs already mounted on the building or adjacent structure. The signs serve no purpose but to advertise the GWU Hospital and, therefore, GWU. One of the signs indicates "entrance" as if to meet a need; however, it is clear that the signs serve an advertising objective. Enough is enough! I request that the Board **take action to have the hospital banners removed**.

- Existing GWU Hospital - Like many Foggy Bottom residents, I object to the idea of converting the existing GWU Hospital (Square 54) to commercial use. The combination of existing commercial enterprises, the GWU Hospital and campus have fully maximized density in the area. Automobile and Metro traffic congestion there is already an unsolvable problem significantly caused by GWU expansion, and to be aggravated further with the building of the new hospital. Use of the existing hospital square should be limited to academic and/or medical purposes. Let us not make Foggy Bottom any more of nightmare than has already been caused by poor planning and execution. I ask that the Board **take action to limit the use of Square 54 to GWU related academic/medical purposes**.

OTHER CONCERNS:

- One-Sided View. The content of the Campus Plan is truly a one-sided view, repetitious in content. It is a self-glorifying description of GWU that would surely please a GWU proponent. However, it does not discuss any actual or potential negative on the Foggy Bottom community, not to mention the greater community. Perhaps Mr. Trachtenberg feels that there is not the remotest possibility that GWU could have a negative impact on the community.

- Economic Impact. The Plan mentions GWU's important role in Washington's economy; i.e., tax revenues created by GWU, taxes to be paid by the new GWU hospital, employment opportunities, dollars paid in good and services, etc. It does *not* mention any GWU generated *costs* to the community and the District. Whereas dollar figures are given to

emphasize GWU's contribution to the local economy, no figures are given regarding costs to the community.

- Sense of Community. Comments in the Plan that GWU will "...continue to develop a sense of 'community' among GWU students, faculty, staff, Foggy Bottom residents..." can be misleading. That may be what GWU desires, but should not be interpreted to be the desire of many Foggy Bottom residents like me. I do not feel the same need. I belong to the Foggy Bottom *residential* community. GWU is a *campus* community, and it is not likely that the twain will meet... It is ludicrous to expect residents in a community such as this to want or need to communitize (is that a word?) with the campus. They don't mix well in that context. If only GWU would truly respect the Foggy Bottom community, and "walk the talk," GWU would not need to rely on glorified verbiage to put forth its Plan.

- Security Patrol. The Plan mentions campus security patrols in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood. I believe I speak for most Foggy Bottom residents on this issue. Residents don't want campus security officers patrolling the neighborhood. That further identifies the residential community with that of the campus. By all means, the campus patrol is welcome when called or on otherwise emergent situations. Campus patrol service on the GWU campus is sufficient.

- Excesses. How can Foggy Bottom residents be expected to trust a neighbor who supposedly operates under a campus plan such as that before the Board, only to be occasionally insulted by that neighbor's "matter-of-right" excesses? We have a "George Washington University Inn" in the midst of Historic Foggy Bottom. Great advertising for GWU! The former Howard Johnson Hotel is now a dorm with glaring GWU advertisements emblazoned on it. Another example is GWU's recent investment in "don't-call-it-a-dorm" Columbia Plaza, perhaps soon to be named "The George Washington University Plaza." We are to believe that since the dorm and not-a-dorm-yet sites are outside the campus zone, that should be okay -- you know..."just pretend they're not there and GWU's campus will not seem to be expanding." Sure! Where GWU and BZA are concerned, the GWU campus lies within the artificial boundaries on the Campus Plan. The reality is quite different to Foggy Bottom residents. There is much, much more to the GWU "campus." The encroachment is stifling!

  What's next? What's being discussed, planned, negotiated behind closed doors? What surprises are in store for Foggy Bottom residents? Will the River Inn be the next victim? Perhaps the St. James Hotel? Perhaps GWU's attempts "to develop a sense of community" really means surrounding, infiltrating, stifling, and displacing existing Foggy Bottom residents so that what is now the Foggy Bottom residential and GWU

campus will become, very simply, the GWU campus. Don't be duped by the protected "Historic Foggy Bottom" veil that GWU is quick to use -- remember what *matters-of-right* can do. While the Board concerns itself with campus zoning issues within the paper boundaries, GWU may already be at work in further expanding "the campus" outside those boundaries.

- Contributions to Community. The Plan mentions several times the many contributions GWU makes to the Foggy Bottom community. If GWU's claimed contributions to the community are of any consideration to the Board, I ask that the Board evaluate the extent of their existence, and their value of and usage by Foggy Bottom residents. I firmly believe you will find this is something of which GWU should not be boasting.

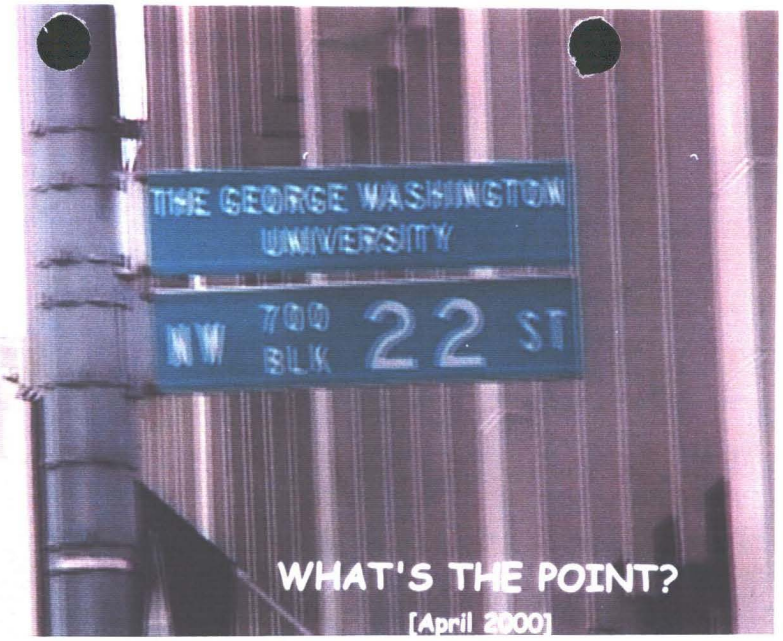
It is truly a disappointment to see a campus plan that lacks so much and skirts so many issues when put forth by an institution like GWU that holds itself so high in esteem.

Thank you for your consideration of my requests and comments. I trust you will consider GWU's application in the spirit of the intent of zoning. My understanding is that zoning was originally created to protect citizens from inappropriate, unorganized, and unsafe growth. For that reason, shouldn't citizens' views weigh heavily on the ultimate decisions? Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

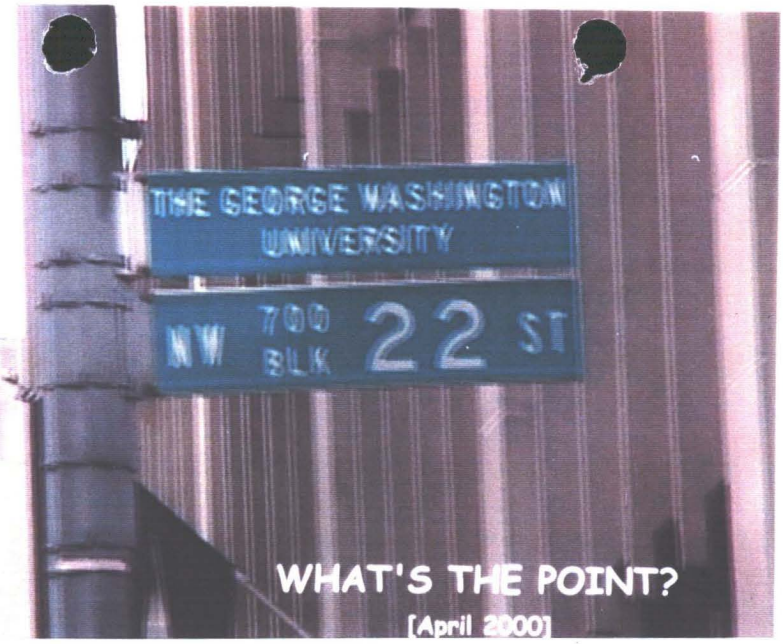
Enclosures (4 photos)




THE GEORGE WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
NW 700 BLK 22 ST
WHAT'S THE POINT?
[April 2000]


Alumni House
Mideampus Gateway 2
Lisner Auditorium
Corcoran Hall
Strong Hall
Lenthall Houses
Dakota
WOODHULL
HOUSE
NEED MORE SIGNS?
[April 2000]


Washington
Hospital
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
[April 2000]


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