Foggy Bottom Historic District Conservancy

810 New Hampshire Ave., NW
Washington, D. C. 20037
17 April 2000

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ABR 21 P 2:27

Ms. Sheila Reid-Cross, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW 2nd Floor
Washington, D. C. 20001

Re: George Washington University Campus Plan
BZA Adjustment Application No. 16553

Dear Ms. Reid-Cross:

I am writing on behalf of the Foggy Bottom Historic District Conservancy to ask that the BZA reject the above proposed land use plan submitted by George Washington University. The plan does not address how proposed growth virtually equal to what remains of the non-GWU FB Historic District will be absorbed into this area without destroying it as a citizens residential neighborhood and how years of abuse can be rectified. Many years of observation have led to the realization that the single greatest threat to this historic district is the George Washington University. The purchase of citizen's residential properties by GWU and change of use to student dormitories, offices, or outright destruction and rebuilding on previous private home sites has done more damage to the neighborhood than all neglect by absentee landlords or any other causes.

For a new plan to meet real needs, the future of the campus should be carefully designed in detail and any growth not just explained, but the deteriorations caused by the resultant or previous growth be rectified. Where will almost 3,400 students sleep and eat, park their cars, and go to classes? Where will the additional faculty teach, have their office, and park their cars? In an already crowded neighborhood who will take care of the additional trash and respond to the neglect of homes rented to students and the increased noise? Historic preservation is not just preserving facades, but the character of a neighborhood. Though, if I were to make an observation about how GWU maintains the homes it owns in the FB Historic District, it would cause one to wonder about their serious intent to even retain the structures. Destruction by neglect is not an idle threat. The citizen of FB deserve better. A guest (GWU) should not destroy the host (the city as represented by the FB residents).

Thus, I request that the present GWU campus plan be rejected and a new one developed with safeguards to the spirit and letter of any future use which would preserve the FB neighborhood. If you need any further information from the FBHD Conservancy, please let me know. I may be reached at 202-357-3293 during the day and 202-337-0810 at other times.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas W. Bower

Thomas W. Bower
President for the FBHDC

BZA
Case No. 16553
Exhibit No. 134

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16553
EXHIBIT NO.134