The George Washington University
WASHINGTON DC

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT

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D.C. ZONING

May 23, 2000

The Honorable Carol Schwartz
Council of the District of Columbia
441 Fourth Street, NW
Suite 706
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Carol:

Thank you for your continued interest in The George Washington University Campus Plan, as shown by the questions and comments in your letter of May 5, 2000. I am disappointed, however, that you chose not to wait for the answers to the questions raised in that letter before filing your May 10, 2000 letter with the Board of Zoning Adjustment expressing your concerns. I encourage you to revise your letter to the BZA once you have had an opportunity to consider all of the facts.

Before I address your specific questions, you should know that GW has agreed to extend its BZA hearing date once again to allow for further discussions requested by the Office of Planning. The first day of our hearing was held on April 24, 2000, and the second day set for May 24th. We have now agreed to delay the second hearing day until September 12th. We believe that the University has continued to bend over backwards to be accommodating in this process, both procedurally and substantively. Procedurally, GW filed its campus plan prior to the January 4, 2000 deadline set by the BZA, one year before its expiration date (contrary to your assertion to the BZA that we had failed to file it in a timely manner). Despite this, because the Office of Planning was not prepared to proceed with our Campus Plan hearing, GW previously delayed the start of the scheduled BZA hearing, and now has delayed its conclusion. Substantively, GW has made numerous changes to its Campus Plan, as I previously outlined, and has agreed to discuss the Plan further.

With respect to the specific questions raised in your letter of May 5th, please be advised as follows.

BZA
Case No. 16553
Exhibit No. 165

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16553
EXHIBIT NO.165

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1. Are graduate students being housed on-campus now, as seems to be implied by your second bullet?

GW provides some graduate student housing, and will continue to provide a limited number of beds for such students.

2. If additional undergraduates will be housed on campus at the expense of graduate students, where will graduate students be housed?

GW, like most universities, does not provide housing for most graduate students. The concern repeatedly expressed by our neighbors has been the housing of full time undergraduate students, and thus our housing policies are targeted towards that population. This is appropriate for two reasons. First, graduate students—who are generally older and more mature—present fewer behavioral problems compared to undergraduates and do not require the additional support provided with University residential life programs. Second, approximately 70% of GW graduate students live outside of the District of Columbia and we believe the majority of graduate students who do live in the District live outside the relatively expensive Foggy Bottom neighborhood. Thus, the housing needs of these students are already being met with little impact on the Foggy Bottom neighborhood.

3. How do you define the "long-term" portion of your goal to provide University housing for 80% of undergraduate students?

This goal is in the context of the Campus Plan, which covers the time frame 2001 through 2010. It is a "goal" for two reasons. First, attaining this goal depends on various factors outside of the University's control for developing additional housing (e.g., assemblage of parcels not currently owned, securing government approvals). Second, too high of a housing percentage could have the effect of drawing undergraduates who live in Maryland and Virginia into the District, which is counterproductive to the concerns we have heard from some neighbors about lessening the impact of such students on Foggy Bottom.

4. Can you define the properties owned by the University referred to in your fourth bullet – i.e., is the Dakota an apartment building?

Most of the specific buildings referred to, including the Dakota, are "dormitories" under D.C. Zoning Regulations because 95% of the

occupants are students. Only the Aston is an "apartment building" because more than 5% of the occupants are non-students who are entitled to remain in the building as tenants under District landlord-tenant law.

5. What GWU properties are located on squares 43, 58, 81 and 122?

Square 43 was included in the Campus Plan up to 1985 and approximately 80% of it is owned by the University. The University has recently cleared the site in preparation for building additional undergraduate housing. Non-University properties include the Remington Condominiums and three townhouses. Square 58, approximately 70% of which is owned by the University, contains GW's dormitory-- Riverside Towers Hall--and several individual GW properties. Square 81 contains GW's dormitory, the Dakota, and several individual GW properties. Square 122 contains several University buildings--two dormitories, a private club and a proposed office/residential Planned Unit Development. Only one property in the square, a commercial parking garage, is not owned by the University.

6. Are these squares within the campus boundaries?

Parts of Square 122 are located within existing Campus Plan boundaries. Square 43 was formerly included in GW's boundaries, but was taken out under the 1985 Plan at the request of the community. The rest of these squares are located immediately adjacent to the University's southern campus plan border.

7. What commercial zone properties does GWU have now or contemplate building upon, or acquiring?

GW currently owns commercially zoned property in Squares 75 and 101, along Pennsylvania Avenue. While the University has no plans at this time to acquire additional properties in commercial zones, it has reserved the right to locate University uses, including residences, in such zones. Under District of Columbia Zoning Regulations, there is no requirement for BZA approval for university uses in commercial zones. By definition, university uses in a commercial zone would not have any adverse impact on residential neighborhoods.

8. Are GWU students permitted to own or possess cars in their freshman and sophomore years? If not, how does GWU oversee that policy? If yes, why does GWU permit this?

There is no University restriction on student ownership of vehicles, although many students choose not to bring cars to the campus. Our traffic experts advise us that GW's population accounts for less than 20% of area traffic. It is also interesting to note that our peak traffic hours are mid-morning and mid-afternoon - unlike more traditional office traffic. The University currently has sufficient parking spaces to meet the existing demand as determined by a daily examination of parking space availability. The Campus Plan calls for an increase in parking spaces over the life of the plan as the population increases within the BZA determined caps. GW is currently constructing a parking facility which will add 200 spaces by next September.

9. Can you tell me which squares located within the GWU boundaries are being looked at for on-campus housing development?

Yes, Squares 80 and 103.

10. What does GWU plan to do with its "old" hopsital?

GW has not yet determined what will ultimately be done with the existing hospital site. For the next two years, of course, it will continue to be used as a hospital. During that time, the University will undertake studies to determine whether it will propose to construct a new building for medical, academic/administrative, residential, or commercial purposes. GW will share its proposal with the community and submit plans to be reviewed by the appropriate zoning authority.

After you have reviewed these responses, please contact me if you wish to discuss the Campus Plan further.

Sincerely,

Bernard Demczuk

CC: Sheila Cross-Reid