Zoning, q.a,
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Milton M. Carrow

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July 13, 2000

Honorable Anthony A. Williams
Mayor, District of Columbia
1 Judiciary Square
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 1100 South
Washington, DC 20001

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JUL 31 AM 10:45
ZONING COMMISSION
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

Dear Mayor Williams:

Right in front of your eyes an exemplary neighborhood is being decimated by a callous institution intent on expansion at all costs. Yes, Mr. Mayor, it is the Foggy Bottom Historic District and its environs. On all sides, and inside the historic district, The George Washington University is blindly pursuing its expansionist objectives. Fortunately, there is a window of opportunity, at this time, to intervene. Unfortunately, I am advised, the official body presently considering The George Washington University Foggy Bottom Campus Plan (Application No.16553), the District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA), is either powerless or disinclined to remedy the situation.

For you information, I enclose a copy of a statement regarding this matter I have submitted to the BZA as well as a letter I sent to the Editor of The Washington Post. It deserves your personal attention because an important issue of public policy is involved. On the one hand there is a powerful institution in the City, a special interest if you will, that perceives its interest as growth and expansion. On the other hand, the Foggy Bottom community represents what you yourself recognize, as well as mayors throughout the country, that the most desirable type of neighborhood for any city as well as Washington is a pedestrian scale living and working area. Because of the clash of these interests, it is the responsibility of the city's highest officials to find and enforce a proper balance. In this case, once you give the matter some thought, I am sure you will determine that the preservation of the integrity of the Foggy Bottom community is the best public policy.

Sincerely

Milton M. Carrow

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BZA
Case No. 16553
Exhibit No. 180

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16553
EXHIBIT NO.180

Milton M. Carrow

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To:District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
Re: George Washington University Foggy Bottom Campus Plan
Application No. 16553

WHY THE FOGGY BOTTOM RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT

The preservation of the integrity of Foggy Bottom residential community is important, not only because of local interests, but also in the interest of good public policy. Foggy Bottom is a prime example of a nationwide recognition that the ideal community is one of pedestrian scale. The movement is called the New Urbanism. Vincent Scully, the famed Yale architect and historian, discussed this development in the Summer, 2000 issue of the Brookings Review, a symposium on "Reinventing the City" (including an article by our own Mayor, Anthony Williams).

What are the proponents of the New Urbanism seeking to accomplish? According to Scully the New Urbanism seeks "to create, or revive, the kind of town and city environment that most Americans at all economic levels love best...". What are its elements? One is to get away from the dependence and frustrations of the automobile; thus, a community designed primarily for pedestrian access to basic needs, , including the workplace, at least by public transportation. Another is an environment suitable to its locale, such as building design and street alignment. Also, it is not necessary for the community to be a large scale development; it can be a section in a large city; thus encouraging neighborliness. Finally, Scully says, "the New Urbanism has always had its sights set on affordable houses and rental units."

One of the examples of the new urbanism is Kentlands in suburban Maryland. Its well laid out streets and facilities and "largely constructed of brick with many row houses in the Georgian vernacular of the Middle Atlantic tradition." has made it a successful project. The towns of Reston and Columbia are larger versions of the new urbanism. Others appear in Sacramento, Memphis, Portland and Charleston.

The good news is that Foggy Bottom has all of the most desirable elements of the New Urbanism and more - an integrated neighborhood where neighbors converse with each other, with everything needed within walking distance, tree-lined streets, flowered front gardens and overall charm and active community organizations. The bad news, is that, despite the expansion of the idea of the New Urbanism throughout the country, the pressures on Foggy Bottom are forcing it to contract. Instead of appreciating the importance of maintaining this exemplary community, the forces of development are encroaching on it. The new hospital (the existing one could have been upgraded), the conversion of a hotel to a dormitory, the building of the new university Wellness Center beyond the campus are examples. These things are exacerbated by the unsupervised occupation of private residences by students who have no desire or obligation to be part of the community, whose automobiles clog the streets and whose partying disturb the neighbors. The public authorities seem unable to deal with or are oblivious to these destructive incursions. The university crassly continues its own invasions.

If the New Urbanism is, in fact, a desirable movement for adaptation in Washington, then the existing space in Foggy Bottom, built or unbuilt, should be designated for the expansion of new urban objectives rather than contraction. Scully points out that mayors throughout the country, including Mayor Anthony Williams, believe this to be best for their cities. In the past, the public authorities in Washington have not thought in these terms regarding the erosion of the Foggy Bottom residential community. In considering the George Washington University Campus Plan , the Mayor, the Board of Zoning Adjustment and all other public officials as well as university officials should take these matters into account.

Milton M. Carrow, a resident of Foggy Bottom.

Milton M. Carrow

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July 13, 2000

Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Editor:

In your editorial today, "Promising News for Downtown", you wrote enthusiastically about "...a living downtown filled with thriving retail businesses and restaurants, pedestrian traffic and tax paying condo owners...", referring to the relocation of "Newseum" to downtown Washington. Good. Will you extend your enthusiasm to help stop the trashing of a gem of such a pedestrian scale community ,in the midst of Washington, namely, the Foggy Bottom Historic District and its environs? Something can actually be done now because the city, through the Board of Zoning Adjustment, is presently considering the adoption of the George Washington University Foggy Bottom Campus Plan (Application No. 16553).

In the past few years the University has converted a hotel (Howard Johnson), opposite the Watergate residences, to a dormitory (and incidentally removed it from the tax rolls), undertaken to build a new hospital on land adjoining the historic district (the existing hospital could have been renovated), the building of a new Wellness Center also on land adjoining the historic district and there are rumors of more of the same well inside the historic district. These things are exacerbated by the unsupervised occupation of private residences within the historic district by students who have no desire or obligation to be part of the community, whose automobiles clog the streets and whose partying disturbs the neighbors.

I'm glad to know that Mayor Anthony Williams has said , as you reported, that the city should "move heaven and earth to get this (relocating the Newseum) done as quickly as possible" How about a little movement to stop the destruction of the kind of community he would like the city to develop? The Mayor, incidentally, contributed an article to the Summer, 2000 issue of the Brookings Review, a symposium on "Reinventing the City", in which Vincent Scully , the famed Yale architect and historian, discussed the "New Urbanism" "...which seeks to create or revive, the kind of town and city environment that most Americans at all levels love best...", a community of pedestrian scale. Scully pointed out that mayors throughout the country, obviously including Mayor Williams, believe this to be best for their cities. Will the rhetoric be put to work?

Sincerely yours

Milton M. Carrow

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
00 JUL 31 AM 11:42

FAX COVER SHEET

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TO: Zoning Jeerilyn Keiss **DATE:** 7/31/00

PHONE NO: _____ **FAX:** _____

FROM: Lisa Kennedy

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER SHEET: 2

REMARKS: Please forward