Burleith CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

1807 37th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007

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~~18~~ May 16 April 2000

Rec'd.
MAY 16 2000

DC Office of Zoning
441 4th Street N.W., Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20001

RE: Application of Georgetown University No. 16565 – pursuant to 3104.1 for a special exception under Section 210 for further processing of an approved Campus Plan to permit a minor addition in the existing St. Mary's Hall Building, renovate entrances to

Madam Chairman and Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to present our comments. My name is Patricia Scolaro, President of the Burleith Citizens Association and I am here today representing the Board of Directors on behalf of the Burleith Community. We are asking the BZA not to grant a special exception to redesignate the use category of St. Mary's from residential to mixed-use.

Why do we ask for Party Status? Why does Burleith want to participate in this hearing? Because our community is in jeopardy and we are working hard to preserve this unique part of the city.

Burleith was developed in the late 1920s as a residential community of small single -family row houses and it is zoned R-3. This small community of approximately 550 houses is across Reservoir Road from Georgetown University and directly opposite St. Mary's.

Because of the proximity of the University, this community is severely impacted by every action or lack of action taken by the University.

The Burleith community has many concerns – foremost among them is student housing. Today, according to the most recent University count 1,041 undergraduate students live in zip code 20007; and, of this number 538 live in Burleith. These numbers and these group houses have a serious impact on our community. (Note that the enrollment figures have been updated)

BZA
Case No. 16565
Exhibit No. 58

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16565
EXHIBIT NO.58

The 1990 Campus Plan called for adding 200 beds to St. Mary's and when last in use there were 217 beds in St. Mary's. However, in August of 1996, Georgetown University announced that St. Mary's had been closed as a dormitory and the future use was unknown but that most likely it would be used by the Nursing School. To my knowledge the upper floors of St. Mary's have been unoccupied since that date – almost four years.

Now the University is asking for a special exception - to change the use category of the building from residential to mixed-use – opening it up for administrative purposes.

These proposed changes have a potential negative impact on the community; and they are inconsistent with the goals and remedies set forth and agreed to in the current campus plan (1990-1999).

Please note that the current campus plan, and the BZA Findings of Fact acknowledge that there are community "issues" resulting from the large number of students who are forced to live off campus because the University has not provided adequate housing.

In fact, the University has a legal obligation – based on the campus plan – to conduct its operations so that it (the University) is not objectionable to the neighboring communities.

In the current plan, the University committed to "providing the ability to house 100% of its undergraduate students on campus as a long-term goal" (by 1997). (Appendix H)

As of this date 1,041 undergraduate students live off campus in zip code 20007 with 538 living in Burleith.

There is serious community impact from excessive numbers of off-campus students with most living in group houses. Every block in our neighborhood is impacted by student group house rentals – unkempt yards, trash in the alleys, loud raucous parties....and most recently serious vandalism.

By not meeting its housing commitment, the University has not implemented all of the mitigation measures agreed to in the current plan.

In addition, this proposal will, at great expense, remove on-campus housing from existing inventories and make it more difficult to achieve the mitigation measures agreed to in the current campus plan.

Changes in use such as those proposed in this plan should not be considered in isolation.

The proposed project should be considered as part of the 2000-2010 Campus Plan:

A new Campus Plan approval process is underway, with hearings scheduled in May and June.

That process will include an assessment of student impact on the community and consideration of potential tradeoffs – for example, other conversions, new residential construction or a modification of the enrollment cap.

Note, however, that the proposed new Campus Plan as received by the community contains no increase in residential capacity and actually requests an increase in undergraduate student enrollment.

This Community requests of the BZA:

Reject the current proposal
Consider any such project only as part of the 2000-2010 Campus Plan

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Scolaro
President

Georgetown University Students - Zip Code 20007

Spring 1996

Community	Undergraduate	Graduates	Medical
Georgetown Waterfront & Park	41	15	5
East Georgetown	29	50	17
West Georgetown	622	81	27
Burleith	536	99	76
Foxhall	35[1]	98	135
Cloisters	51	1	7
Hillandale	8	2	0
Georgetown Reservoir	13	23	11
Glover Park	88	305	196
Palisades	4	5	64
Total	1427[2]	679	538

[1] Includes Foxhall Village & Foxhall Crescent

[2]This figure includes all undergraduates living in zip code 20007; the number released in April 1996 -- 1220 -- included "traditional" undergraduate students, as defined by the BZA.