COMME[redacted]S BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZON[redacted]G ADJUSTMENT
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

Goodafternoon. I am Karen Cruse and I live on 35th Street directly across from a University dorm. I am here today because I am concerned about Georgetown University's plans to greatly increase its student enrollment over the next ten years.

In this regard, I would like to make a few brief comments.

Several assertions were made by Mr. Bolan, Georgetown's real estate witness, that require examination. Mr. Bolan stated that with the opening of the SouthWestQuad, student demand for housing in zip code 20007, particularly in Burleith and West Georgetown, would dry up. This assumed weakened demand would in turn lead to the sale of rental properties to resident-owners. However, Mr. Bolan offers no logical rationale for this position. His assumption that the students who remain in the community would shun those neighborhoods closest tothe University, preferring instead to live outside 20007, goes against common sense. It is obviously to a student's advantage to live as near as possible to campus. By doing so he avoids dependency on the use of Metro and University busses and schedules. Even a student owning a car would find it more convenient to live in close-in housing with garage or alley parking, thereby avoiding the problem of residential parking restrictions faced by the commuter. Moving ones car every two hours is certainly not conducive to class, study and extra curricular activities. A student's social life also benefits from living near school - visiting with friends is more convenient and a party a few blocks from campus would obviously be more easily and better attended than one across Key Bridge. Finally, many parents would feel more confident knowing that their children live in the relative safety of the University's environs rather than in more distant parts of the City - particularly when late-night travel becomes an issue.

With such reasoning, it makes sense that those students who will live off-campus after SouthWestQuad will continue to seek housing in those neighborhoods closest to the University.

Mr. Bolan further asserts that a strong housing market in three or four years will induce owners of rental properties to sell their units. However, there is no way for him to predict what the market at that time will actually be.* Furthermore, his contention that there are numerous property owners who are waiting for just such an opportunity to divest themselves of their property does not mesh with fact. While a few owners were caught in a down-market and turned to renting their homes until they could be sold, the vast majority of houses were purchased as investment properties. In fact, several landlords in the Georgetown/Burleith area own multiple dwellings. These properties are not assets waiting to be liquified; they are income-generating businesses. The house next to mine has been sold three times over the past twenty years, each time as a rental property. There is no reason to expect this situation to change.

BZA
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Exhibit No. 141

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
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EXHIBIT NO.141

I believe that the opening of the SouthWestQuad will greatly improve the student-housing situation in the community. However, any benefits so derived would be undermined by the influx of students generated by increased enrollments. When, and if, our neighborhoods stabilize is the time to revisit this issue.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns.

* Even accepting his premise of a strong market, results could be far different than what he assumes. It was during the boom market of the 1980's that a phenomenon ~~in~~ occurred in our neighborhood. Precisely because housing values were rising, a number of homes were purchased by parents for their children. They did so with the full knowledge that the rents paid by their children's friends would help pay the mortgage. When they later sold the house, they could easily recover their expenditure. Two houses on my block alone were dealt with in this way and I know of others.