Ms. Shelia Cross-Reid
Director, Board of Zoning Adjustment
Suite 210
441 Fourth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

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July 10, 2000

Dear Ms. Cross-Reid:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Burleith Citizens Association of which I am a member. My name is Marguerite Cunningham. I have resided in Burleith for over forty-four years, having been raised in the neighborhood since starting grade school. My family has been fortunate to live next to homeowners who occupy their residences. We have not experienced problems with major vandalism or unpleasant interactions. Once a large potted plant was removed from my balcony. While walking my dog, I spotted it in the home of students living at the end of the block The plant was distinctive as was the container. I knocked on the door and described the plant and container to the letter. A male student in the house offered to carry it to my porch and apologized for the action, although he claimed not to be the person who removed the plant from my house.

How have I been affected by increased numbers of students in Burleith homes? I walk my Labrador retriever on a daily basis. I can always tell when a student house has had a party the day before. My observations are especially true during the months of September, October, November, and April, May, and June. I encounter many jumbo plastic cups strewn about on lawns, sidewalks, and curbsides. Sometimes open cups filled with brew are left standing on walls and steps of the entrances. Beer cans and bottles can also be found wedged in shrubs, planting beds, and in crotches of trees. It looks pretty bad on the "Mornings After." Some bottles are found broken, trailing shards of glass across the sidewalk. I observed this scenario routinely along the 3600 block of S Street, the 1800 block of 37th Street, and the 3600 block of T Street in the last decade.

Several years ago I delivered the Burleith Citizens Newsletter. My route took me to the 3700 block of Reservoir Road and the 3700 block of R Street. I was appalled at the refuse that was left on the stoops and against window wells of these small houses. Again beer containers were a problem. Ashtrays heaping with ashes and cigarettes were dumped onto lawns. Leftover newspapers and fliers were matted with leaves on the stairs of the houses where I needed to walk. This was more the rule than the exception. During that period I heard a Burleith neighbor call that pocket the 'Ghetto of Burleith'. I could not honestly believe that I was hearing that expression being referred to streets in my neighborhood. It really was an eye-opener for me because I did not realize the problem was that bad in my own community. In reading articles in the very newsletters that I delivered, I learned about incidents involving urinating in public, the smashing of a window with a bottle of apple cider, and unpleasant verbal exchanges amongst renting students and homeowners.

BZA
Case No. 16566
Exhibit No. 77

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16566
EXHIBIT NO.77

Things have started to turn around in Burleith in the past two years. Homeowners who intend to live in the community have bought many houses. Renting students are seemingly more caring, responsible, and informed. When I walk my dog I do not encounter the trashy aftereffects of student parties, at least not to the extent that I once did. Every now and then you still do.

I am opposed to the Georgetown University Ten Year Plan because of its serious impact on Burleith: I am opposed to any increase in student enrollment; the alignment of 38th Street with the Entrance No. 1 to the University; and the use of only four categories to identify the uses of the buildings on campus.

I hope this letter helps you to understand the importance of limiting the number of students in a townhouse community such as Burleith and the numbers of said townhouses occupied by students. Georgetown University has impacted our community enough. Any increase in enrollment at the university would create more problems for us because of our proximity. The character of our neighborhood needs to be preserved to nurture a healthy quality of life for all, homeowners, renters, and visitors alike.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Cunningham

Marguerite Cunningham
3528 T Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

Cc: Councilmember Jack Evans
Pat Scolaro, Pres., BCA