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Ms. Carol Mitten, Chair
Zoning Commission
Office of Zoning
441 Fourth Street NW
Suite 210 South
Washington, DC 20001

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By Fax to: 202.727-6072

Friday, February 21, 2003

Dear Ms. Mitten,

This letter addresses **Hearing 02-03** concerning **The Catholic University of America Campus Plan**. I am writing as a resident of Brookland, as an urban planner, and as a landscape architect.

I understand that CUA representatives have testified that the University has made great contributions to the community. This is simply not the case. I have lived in Brookland for twelve years and I assure you that Catholic University has no productive relationship with the Brookland community. Through the years, they have told their students and faculty that the Brookland neighborhood is a nasty and dangerous place, best avoided. They assure the students, their parents, and the faculty that the University will protect them from the community.

My major concern, however, is not this particular misrepresentation of the facts. Rather, I strongly oppose their request to close McCormack Drive. This is a city street which just happens to abut University property (just as Michigan Avenue does). Though lightly used by automobile traffic, it is a major route for trucks, especially trash trucks. If it were to be closed, all those trucks would have to use Tenth Street. Tenth Street is a narrow residential street bordering Turkey Thicket Recreation Center (which serves our neighborhood) and Brookland Elementary School. I understand that the officials of Catholic University are concerned about the safety of students crossing McCormack Drive. Catholic University students are grown men and women. I am concerned about the students of the elementary school and the young children of the neighborhood. Surely you and the Zoning Commission agree with us that young children, not the University students, should be the objects of our especial concern.

CUA's proposal would make McCormack Drive a private road (but leave it to the city to maintain).

Zoning Commission
District of Columbia
Case 02-03
Exhibit 36

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-03
EXHIBIT NO.36

CUA is a tax-exempt institution. Unlike tax-exempt universities in New Haven, Connecticut, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Ithaca, New York, CUA pays no voluntary Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). The CUA students are, in the vast majority, from out-of-state, unlike the students of UDC or Trinity. Yet CUA makes serious demands on city resources—fire protection, police protection, and all the rest.

This city cannot afford to give precedence to tax-exempt institutions. The good citizens of this community have worked hard and long to maintain and improve our neighborhood; CUA has turned its back on Brookland and Michigan Park. The CUA property south of Michigan Avenue is an insult to the neighborhood. Here, immediately adjacent to Brookland, the University has torn down historic houses, erected 8-foot chain-link fences (in violation of residential zoning regulations), parked automobiles on non-paved surfaces, and generally treated this area as abandoned property.

Catholic University has made no good-faith effort to foster a relationship with the community. When it finally wanted to present it plans to the community, it was at a loss as to how to contact the people who live here. Having failed to establish a relationship with the community, they now blame us for their failures. With that attitude, they will not do much better in the future either.

Sincerely,

Mary Pat Rowan

cc: Councilmember Vincent Orange, by fax at 202.724-8076