Washington, DC Zoning Commission
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Reference: # 02-30, Georgetown University Boathouse

May 14, 2003

To Whom it May Concern,

As a recent graduate of Georgetown University (1999), and former rower on the Georgetown Varsity women's crew team, I can understand why it might seem that my opinion—strongly in favor of the new Georgetown boathouse—would be biased.

However, I am also a current resident of Washington, D.C., residing in Burleith and using the tow path, crescent trail, and waterfront areas quite frequently when running, bicycling, or guiding friends and family who visit the city. I consider these trails, and the waterfront in general, to be among the most beautiful places in Washington.

That said, there are many reasons why this boathouse should be built, and the only one against (the aesthetics of the canal and river along this stretch) just doesn't hold water.

1. Georgetown University, and specifically its rowing shells on the Potomac, have long been considered a dramatically beautiful part of the Washington, D.C. landscape. The university's hilltop stance, its towers visible from the river, is the most striking and beautiful thing about entering the area from the Northwest. The proposed boathouse—which has received favorable comment from the Old Georgetown Board and the Fine Arts Commission—will simply provide another landmark, a memorable, enticing invitation to the city.

2. Thompson's Boathouse, where Georgetown's team currently keeps its boats, is considerably too small, crowded and inadequate for a world-class university and crew team.

3. There are so many miles of trail along the river that have no buildings around—and yes, uninterrupted views of the trees and water are very nice. But as someone who uses these trails almost daily, I can say very strongly that the new boathouse just won't diminish the rest of the natural beauty of this area. It is in an area that seems very reasonable for development, directly upriver from current boathouses and immediately below the Georgetown campus. To suggest that a building—desparately needed, beautifully designed—in this area would somehow mar the tow path, Crescent trail or waterfront for the bikers, joggers, rollerbladers or strollers who use the area is unreasonable. If what they're looking for is a pristine and untouched wilderness, they simply need to travel another quarter mile. What

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will be gained (much as the Philadelphia and Boston boathouses add to the colorful personae of those cities) is definitely worth it.

Meanwhile, the benefits to the Georgetown crew team, the University, and the city, will be much appreciated by tourists (watching the rowers), high school rowers (they'll have more room at Thompsons), elite rowers in D.C. (the area will gain more prominence in the rowing community with a facility such as this), and the community in general, which will gain a distinct and useful waterfront landmark.

I hope that you will take my plea, and the best interest of Washington residents, into consideration, and allow the construction of the Georgetown boathouse to begin.

Thank you for your consideration,

Melissa Conradi

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