The Proposed Georgetown University Boathouse

I have traveled the towpath over many years enjoying the scenic beauty of the canal and river. I have walked all the way down from Cumberland to Georgetown three times. A culminating moment comes when you leave the canal's natural surroundings and round the last big curve on the towpath and see the first traffic light on your long 185 mile walk across the canal at the intersection of Canal Road with MacArthur Boulevard and Foxhall Road. As you proceed further a splendid view of the river and the arches of Key Bridge emerge on your right heralding the approach to the nation's capital. The Key Bridge is the worthy replacement of the Alexandria Aqueduct that once came into view at the same location as canal boatmen finished their 185 mile journey from Cumberland.

This classic view of the river and the Key Bridge which all the many walkers, joggers and bikers now enjoy is to be obstructed by a Behemoth of a Boathouse whose peaked roofs rise above the towpath and block the view. The result will be nothing less than a scenic larceny stolen from our C & O Canal National Historical Park and the many citizens who travel the towpath. The University's write up on the boathouse boasts of the view of the river and Key Bridge that students, parents and alumni of Georgetown will enjoy through the boathouse's picture windows. Yes, BUT at our park's and the public's expense!

Our C & O Canal National Historical Park was designed to protect all the scenic treasures long the whole length of the canal and river. The Park Service fails in its manifest duty when it is ready to yield up such treasures for the private enjoyment of the few and at the public's cost. This is the core issue before us.

The boathouse project, if realized, invades our vulnerable public park land. How can an NPS representative dare say this is but a "tiny" piece our 185 mile park of no consequence! Not only does it set a bad precedent allowing the taking of park land for private use. It also runs counter to the long term NPS policy of land acquisition along the narrow ribbon of canal right of way to provide protection against the very kind of encroachment the Boathouse plan exemplifies.

What was the University thinking when this behemoth boathouse project was drawn and to be plumped into park land not only at a point of constricted land access but a point of access from the river close by the rocky shallows of the Three Sisters outcroppings. The real solution is clear. Prevent the loss of park land and the obstruction of the grand view from the C & O Canal National Historical Park by locating the boathouse site in the section reserved for water activities between Key Bridge and 34th Street. Here both access to the river is far better and the view, incidentally, very fine.

Carl A. Linden
6406 Ridge Drive
Bethesda, MD 20816
(ph. 301 229 2398)

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-30
Exhibit 271

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-30
EXHIBIT NO.271