Testimony

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Re: Case No. 02-30

This proposed boathouse is the wrong structure in the wrong place. Although the W-O zone may be appropriate for parkland, a special exception for construction of a boathouse at this site is not in the public interest. It will ruin habitat for wildlife; remove wetlands; alter the floodplain; and impair natural park views from the river, Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) and C&O Canal National Historic Park. It will pose a safety hazard for other boaters and affect their boating lanes. It will threaten the structural integrity and historical setting of Washington Canoe Club (WCC), a historic landmark listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Federal Elements of the National Capital Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan for the Nation's Capital states the "**preservation of the park's historic resources should take precedence over the provision of recreational activities.**"

Parking
To allow a special exception request for a boathouse without on-site parking facilities is a recipe for disaster, especially when it is located along a heavily used trail. To my knowledge the applicant has not submitted or made available to the public the required detailed plans for the site referenced in the Special Exception Review Criteria and the Special Exception Requirements which include a survey plan and site plan with elements such as:

- traffic plan showing the number of vehicle trips per day including bus trips for special events, summer camps, regattas, and daily activities.

- parking management plan which will accommodate bus and auto use by the Potomac Boat Club, the new facility, recreational trail users, and the WCC which will lose parking under a new NPS plan.

- site plan showing the proposed turn around at Key Bridge and the new facility

Other criteria are missing relating to the site development:

- calculation of the amount of cutting from or filling to natural grade for the site and the Capital Crescent Trail including plans for storage of the 25,000 sq. ft. of fill.

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- map delineating "normally submerged areas" to determine adherence to provision 2 of boathouse regulations.

- description of the activities to be carried out at the site

- description of riverbank treatment- natural vegetation or rip-rap

- construction plan for moving CCT and **plans to reduce impacts to Washington Canoe Club during construction**

Any approval of this project should require a use permit excluding special events as Georgetown claims these will not take place.

I am particularly disappointed to learn the NPS promotes a project which is more massive than that stated in their contractual agreements with Georgetown University (Preliminary Agreement to Exchange Real Property, 1998) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Memorandum of Agreement, 1998).

There are no "exceptional circumstances" to warrant a variance for this project and to grant a reduced setback. The size of the project should be reduced to retain the 20-foot setback, to conform with the historical setting, and to protect views from nearby parkland. The rowing tank and space for events can be located on campus. The height limit should not grant additional footage for design features. The proposed building is the length of a football field and 68 per cent taller than the adjacent WCC. The dock size should conform in scale to nearby structures and should not impact these structures or the use of the river by other groups. The project is too large!

Use By Public of Proposed Site

The Park Service and Georgetown University have made several negative remarks about the fence at WCC. As a woman I felt safe for several years going to the boathouse by myself to paddle at any time because the fence limited access by intruders. However, in recent years after several incidences of break-ins and theft at the boathouse, and because I was almost accosted by an intruder there, safety is an important consideration in my use of the club. I question the University's promise to provide continued public access to their proposed site. Their promise is likely to compromise personal safety.

Because of the unique and special features of this parkland, the area should be zoned W-O with no special exceptions or variances allowed. The project should be moved downstream to protect parkland and to improve an undeveloped asphalt area of the waterfront.