FOGGY BOTTOM
ASSOCIATION

c/o West End Library
24th and L Streets, NW
Washington, DC 20037



MS. CAROL MITTEN
Chairperson
D.C. Zoning Commission
401 F Street NW
Suite 312
Washington, DC 20001

November 11, 2003

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D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
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Re: Set Down of Zoning Commission Case No. 03-29/George Washington University(GWU)/ Proposed New Dormitory at 2025 F Street, NW

Dear Chairperson Mitten and Commissioners:

On October 14, 2003, at our regular monthly meeting, the Board of Directors of the Foggy Bottom Association—which represents nearly 500 residents throughout the Foggy Bottom/West End neighborhoods—voted unanimously to oppose the above-titled project in its current form. We conveyed our objections to the project under the scope of the Shipstead-Luce Act to the Commission on Fine Arts.

We strongly disagree with, and are disappointed with, the Office of Planning's conclusion that this project should be set down as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) project with one of two alternative changes in zoning. The site for this project is within GWU's Campus Boundary and the application should be heard as a Special Exception case for further processing of the Campus Plan, if it is heard at all. Any rezoning of this site under a PUD would continue to demonstrate that the Campus Plan is basically meaningless and that the City has no intention of protecting our residential neighborhood from further damage from GWU's unfettered expansion.

Once again, GWU is choosing to locate a project in an area where it will have maximum negative impact and, as OP noted, position GW to begin the overbuilding and density increases in the heart of the R-5-D portion of the "campus." It also seems clear to us that GWU is deliberately setting the community up to being considered obstructionist if it doesn't embrace yet another of the university's inappropriate, ad hoc "planning" choices. Clearly, another huge concentration (400+) of students in this very small area where there are already too many students—3,000+ including dorms and off-campus housing, which happens to be directly across F Street to the South—to solve GWU's self-created over-enrollment problem will result in incalculable damage to this last enclave of our residential community East of 23rd Street. The Commission should also be aware that the Corcoran School, which is in the Eastern part of Foggy Bottom, has no dormitories and is also displacing long-term residents with transient students. This concentration of transient students in an area that has lost 85-95% of its tax-paying, non-student population is a violation of our Comprehensive Plan.

Right around the corner from this proposed dormitory is the 1957 E Street AGC/GWU PUD modification—a GWU application that the ZC approved in June 2002 that has been appealed by an adversely affected neighborhood group

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Exhibit 18

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and argued before the D.C. Court of Appeals on November 4, 2003. This project has already created objectionable effects and further eroded the residential nature and quality of life in this section of Foggy Bottom. Not only did the Commission grant GW excess development rights for that project, but also the PUD has three to four times the intensity of use than the originally-approved project, which was to be a high-end residential condominium and office building with an association headquarters located there. There are now thousands of students, faculty, staff and visitors traveling through the neighborhood and converging on this building, on and off, all day long and into the evening, seven days a week creating problems that we predict will also occur with this proposed project. In addition, with the conversion of the condominium portion of the GWU's 1957 E Street structure into a dormitory for undergraduate GWU students, late-night noise and a frequent campus party atmosphere have now been extended even further South to E Street, further eroding the residential quality of life in the small enclave of adjacent non-University properties. Further, Attachment 4 in OP's report—an Aerial Oblique Photo looking South toward the proposed project—is visual confirmation of the inappropriateness of the scale of this project.

In closing, we would like to reiterate that our entire residential community has been gravely affected by GWU's over-expansion, and we believe that the form and scope of this request is inappropriate. Once again, a project of this size will result in predictable economic losses and health, environmental and public safety problems that will be glossed over by GWU and then inappropriately brushed off onto the non-university community. At the least, the Commission should not set this application down as a PUD. While we agree that the University should be responsible for complying with the most recent approved Board of Zoning Adjustment Campus Plan Order to house its 8,000+ undergraduate students within its campus boundaries, the form and approach of this overdeveloped project is clearly not the way to accomplish this.

Sincerely,

Ron Cocome
President