



Washington Canoe Club

3700 WATER STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20007

6/30/2004

Ms. Sally Blumenthal
Deputy Associate Regional Director
Land, Resources and Planning

Subj: Elevation Data for the Capital Crescent Trail, Canal Road, WCC, and proposed GU Boathouse
Attachment: GU Site Plan provided by Muse Architects

Dear Sally;

As you know the height of the proposed GU Boathouse as it compares to the Washington Canoe Club and the C&O Canal Towpath is of interest to the community because the potential impact on Scenic Views. At the June 24th Historic Review meeting in response to questions by the audience you informed us that no part of the roofline was above Canal Road. Moreover, the Muse Architects informed us that the low roofline (38 feet) was 2 1/2 feet above the towpath, while the high roofline (51 feet) was 15 1/2 feet above the towpath.

The answers provided at the meeting were inconsistent with the answers provided at the DC Zoning Hearings, even accounting for the slight reduction in height that the new roofline represents. Rather than question the answers during the meeting, I decided to determine the answers. Based on the data below, I believe that it would be appropriate for NPS to update the GU Boathouse Project Summary (in particular points 8 and 12 as they relate to the height of the Towpath and the relative height of the GU Boathouse) to reflect this current and accurate information. Additionally, I'm attaching the original GU Boathouse site plan with elevation data. I believe that elevation data shown on the original site plan is also incorrect, but it does essentially corroborate our accurate on-site measurements. Most certainly the original site plan is inconsistent with the information that was provided at the meeting.

What is currently unknown is the exact elevation of the base of the GU Boathouse relative to the CCT. As you know I've asked for that information by previous email. In fact I tried to determine that information from the sectional drawing at the 6/24/04 meeting but was informed by Alan Brangman (GU Architect) that the sectional was illustrative. However, the GU drawings do show the base of the building above the CCT, which would make sense given the need to provide drainage away from the building. This is also consistent with Mr. Brangman's statement at the meeting that GU was no longer considering the removal of 25,000 cubic feet of soil. He stated that the building would be built above ground and that there was no need to remove soil prior to construction. A feature of WCC which is often overlooked (including by the Muse Architects at the meeting on the 24th) is that WCC is below the CCT. By being well below the CCT, the relative height of the WCC structure compared to the CCT and the Towpath is reduced.

Along with a number of additional datums the following important elevations were measured:

- 1) Height of Towpath relative to CCT @ the GU Boathouse site: **28 feet**
- 2) Height of Canal Road relative to the CCT @ the GU Boathouse site: **36 feet 11 inches**
- 3) Height of main roofline of WCC above the CCT: **24 feet 6 inches**
- 4) Height of the point of the Center Cupola of WCC above the CCT: **34 feet 6 inches**
- 5) Height of the front concrete apron of WCC relative to the CCT: **- 3 feet 4 inches**

From these figures we can compute the following:

- 6) Relative height of the main roofline of WCC to the Towpath: **-3 feet 6 inches**
- 7) Relative height of the Peak of the Cupola of the WCC to the Towpath: **+6 feet 6 inches**
(The Center Cupola is 7 feet across at it's base and 14 feet tall – a narrow spire)

Again, note that the "illustrative drawings" show the GU Boathouse ABOVE the CCT. Thus we can compute the height of the GU Boathouse relative to the CCT (and thus the Towpath) and WCC.

- 8) Height of 38' roofline of GU Boathouse to CCT: **38 feet**
(This number will likely go up, not down. They show a positive elevation for the building relative to the CCT).
- 9) Height of the 38' roofline relative to the C&O Canal Towpath **10 feet**
- 10) Height of the 38' roofline relative to Canal Road **1 foot, 1 inch above Canal Road**
- 11) Height of the 51 foot roofline relative to the C&O Canal Towpath **23 feet**
- 12) Height of the 51 foot roofline relative to Canal Road **13 feet 9 inches**

In summary the relative heights of the WCC roofline and the GU Rooflines from the C&O Canal Towpath:

GU Boathouse 10 feet and 23 feet ABOVE the Towpath
WCC Boathouse 3 1/2 feet BELOW the Towpath, with a narrow spire 6 feet 6 inches above the Towpath.

Additionally, the photo we showed at the DC Zoning Hearing with the rooflines is actually right. The GU low roofline blocks the entire river view, the high roofline blocks all of the VA shore and all of Key Bridge.

Clearly an independent analysis of the elevations and the impact on the Scenic Views is absolutely essential so that the public can understand what is proposed and what the impact is. According to the Cultural Resource Specialist I spoke with a scenic view analysis is part of both an EIS and a Section 106 Process. I really believe that a crane with a flag needs to be raised on the site so folks can appreciate how high this really is, and what the ultimate impact will be. As you know I asked for this as part of the DC Zoning Commission hearings, and I still believe it's required.

VR & thank you very much,

/s/

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