

June 1, 2005

Ms. Fran Mainella
Director, National Park Service
Washington, DC

Dear Ms. Mainella:

The balloons in the attached photographs indicate the actual height of the proposed private Georgetown University boathouse, currently planned to be built within the C&O Canal National Historical Park. The balloons provide an effective way to comprehend the serious impacts on the Park and its surrounding from the construction of the boathouse.

Picture 1 was taken from the Towpath. It demonstrates that the roofs of the boathouse would rise well above the Canal, thereby blocking the view of the Potomac River from the Towpath, and modifying the view of the Park from the River, the Potomac Gorge, the Key Bridge and the Virginia shoreline. (The two red balloons on the left are located at the ends of the higher roofline peaks; the orange balloon on the right is located at a point on the lower roofline.)

Picture 2 was taken from the Capital Crescent Trail. It illustrates how high the boathouse would appear to people on the Trail. More important, it also shows that the enormous boathouse would replace undeveloped parkland along a busy, narrow, popular recreational corridor. (As you know, the planned boathouse is to be built on what is a designated floodplain, and would extend the length of a football field at the Gateway to the Park.)

The National Park Service should support the development of a better alternative boathouse plan, i.e., one that will preserve and protect the Park for future generations, while providing boating facilities for both university and public needs. An Environmental Impact Statement of the entire non-motorized boathouse zone in Georgetown would help to develop such an alternative plan.

As a long-time resident of the District of Columbia, and frequent visitor to the Park -- a national, regional and local treasure -- I would be pleased to meet with you to discuss the many environmental, technical and practical advantages of an alternative plan.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Sally C. Strain
Resident of DC-Palisades neighborhood and
Member, Defenders of Potomac River Parkland www.savethecanal.org

cc.

NPS - Lawler, Parsons, Brandt
CFA - Childs
C&O Canal Commission - Weidenfeld
DC Council - Schwartz
US Congress - Norton
ANC3D - Gates, Haas, Thompson
Palisades Citizens Association – Ross



Picture 1



Picture 2