GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
00 JUN 30 P3:47

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Andrew Altman

DATE: June 28, 2000

16582 EB

SUBJECT: BZA Case ~~16565~~—Gallaudet University new construction and additions

---

APPLICATION

This application by Gallaudet University, pursuant to 11 DCMR 3108, for a special exception under Section 210 for an amendment to and further processing under the amended plan to permit construction of a new Student Academic Center (with related additions to the Ely Center), an addition to the existing Washburn Arts Center, and a new grandstand and pressbox/concession stand for the athletic field in an R-4 Zone District at premises 800 Florida Avenue, NE (Square 3591, Parcel 141/69).

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved.

APPLICATION

The proposed improvements include:

1. A 53,138 square foot Student Academic Center on the site of the demolished Hughes Gym. (This site had been approved for a new School of Management building of approximately 50,000 square feet in the currently approved Campus Plan.)
2. The addition of 740 square feet of gross floor area, minor fenestration work and entrance enhancements to the Ely Center Student Union building.
3. An 11,500 square foot addition to the Washburn Arts Center for a remodeled entrance, additional classrooms, studio space and office space.
4. Replacement of the existing bleachers on the athletic field with a 725 square foot brick grandstand that includes a pressbox and concession stand.

BZA
Case No. 16582
Exhibit No. 25

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16582
EXHIBIT NO.25

The University no longer feels the need for an entire building to be devoted to its business education programs. Other academic concentrations are more in demand, hence, the need for a more general academic building. The approved Campus Plan envisioned the construction of a disabled accessibility ramp to the Washburn Arts Center, but it did not address the addition proposed in this application. This addition will satisfy the increased demand on the University's fine arts program, especially the graphic design program. The current Campus Plan did not include modifications to the bleachers on the west side of the athletic field. These bleachers are inadequate to meet the needs of the current University population.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

Gallaudet University occupies 99 acres of land totaling 4, 312,440 square feet. Most of the campus is zoned R-4 with a portion of the west side of the campus zoned C-M-1. It is located in the Trinidad neighborhood of Ward 5. The street boundaries of the campus are Mount Olivet Road to the north, Florida Avenue to the south, West Virginia Avenue to the east and 6th Street/Brentwood Parkway to the west. Additionally, the University owns several parcels of land (129/103, 129/106 and 129/112) that are located between 5th and 6th Streets, NE. The campus is bordered by a mixture of residential neighborhoods with largely R-4 zoning and commercial/industrial areas with C-M-1 and M zoning. (Please see Exhibit A—zoning map.) Both Metrorail and commercial rail lines pass close to the western edge of the campus. The recently approved New York Avenue Metro Station will be within easy walking distance to the campus, regardless of which site option is chosen.

The Gallaudet College Historic District is located within the boundaries of the campus. The portion of the campus that has historic status was laid out in 1866 fronting along Florida Avenue, NE. Notable buildings that are located in the Gallaudet College Historic District include Chapel Hall, College Hall and the President's House.

ANALYSIS

Special Exceptions. Subsection 3108.1 of the Zoning Regulations regulating Special Exceptions requires applicants to be in harmony with the Zoning Regulations and Maps and not adversely affect the use of neighboring property as defined in the conditions specified in Section 210. OP believes the applicant meets these general conditions. We will further analyze how the applicant meets the more specific conditions of Section 210 below.

Zoning Issues. The subject site is in an R-4 District. The Zoning Regulations, in section 200.1, describe such districts as follows:

> The R-4 district is designed to include those areas now developed primarily with row dwellings, but within which there have been a substantial number of conversions of the dwellings into dwellings for two or more families. . . its primary purpose shall be the stabilization of remaining one-family dwellings.

Section 210--Colleges and Universities

Subsection 210.1 of the Zoning Regulations permits college or university use within R-1 (and all R) districts by special exception, under certain conditions. Subsection 210.1 states:

> Use as a college or university that is an academic institution of higher learning, including college or university hospital, dormitory, fraternity, or sorority house proposed to be located on the campus of a college or university, shall be permitted in an R-1 district if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment in accordance with the conditions specified in Section 3108 of chapter 31 of this title, subject to the provisions of this section.

Subsection 210.2 of the Zoning Regulations states:

> Use as a college or university shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.

Below we analyze the above potentials for creating objectionable conditions:

Noise: Proposed plans call for one academic building to be substituted for another in the central part of the campus, a small addition to an existing building in the northwest part of the campus adjacent to the former Hamilton Junior High School property and replacement of existing bleachers with a grandstand adjacent to the athletic field. The proposed grandstand is highly unlikely to cause any objectionable conditions to the neighboring properties that line West Virginia Avenue, NE because of its distance from those residences, approximately 500 feet. The athletic field will not be lighted at night.

Since the proposed additions are to be used by existing students and faculty and the uses are not substantially changed from the approved Campus Plan, upon completion of construction, there will be no increase in the amount of noise that will come from the campus.

Traffic and Parking: Since the proposed additions are to be used by existing students and faculty and the uses are not substantially changed from the approved Campus Plan, upon completion of construction, there is not likely to be an increase in the amount of traffic to the campus as a result of these additions. OP notes the omission of any bicycle parking on the site plans for the Student Academic Center and the addition to Washburn Arts Center. We hope that this is an oversight and that the University will voluntarily add bicycle parking in order to encourage alternative modes of transportation and for the convenience of those who already bicycle. We applaud the University's use of a shuttle bus from Union Station Metro and its efforts to get the new red line Metro station to locate close to the University.

Number of students: The projects in this application will not result in any increase in students.

Other objectionable conditions: OP knows of no other objectionable conditions likely to be caused by the proposed application.

Section 210.3 requires that the cumulative FAR remain below that permitted by the Zoning

Regulations.
The proposed construction will generate only a minimal increase in the total FAR of the campus and will remain below the 1.8 FAR permitted by the Zoning Regulations, increasing form 0.564 to 0.579.

Section 210.4 requires the applicant to submit a plan for developing the campus as a whole, showing the location, height, and bulk of all improvements.
Gallaudet University has filed with this Board its long range plans for developing the campus as a whole. In Order No.15671, this Board approved that plan, effective until July 10, 2002. This application seeks slight modifications to that plan.

Section 210.5 dealing with interim use of land and Section 210.6 dealing with off-campus development are not applicable to this application.

Section 210.7 requires compliance with the policies of the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
The proposed additions included in this application further the goals of the institutional land use designation of the campus. One of those goals is to promote the economic and cultural vitality of the District. Community groups in Ward 5 and adjacent Ward 6 believe that the University is important in furthering their goals of protecting and enhancing the stability of residential neighborhoods and promoting employment opportunities for ward residents.

Section 210.8 requires certification re: FAR.
The certification in the application is acceptable to the Office of Planning.

Section 210.9 requires submission for review by the Office of Planning and the Department of Public Works.
OP certifies that the applicant has complied with this requirement.

ANC AND COMMUNITY GROUPS
ANC 5B voted 5 – 0 to support the application. Gallaudet Community Relations Council has also endorsed the plan.

OTHER AGENCY COMMENTS

The Metropolitan Police Department—we hope to attach this report by the hearing date.

The Office of the Fire Marshall—has no objection— see attached Exhibit B.

The Department of Public Works— we hope to attach this report by the hearing date.

RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved. OP believes that the proposed projects are not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.

We believe that this application meets the criteria for approval under the Zoning Regulations and the Comprehensive Plan of the District of Columbia.

Attachments

AA/mv

Exhibit A
Zoning Map

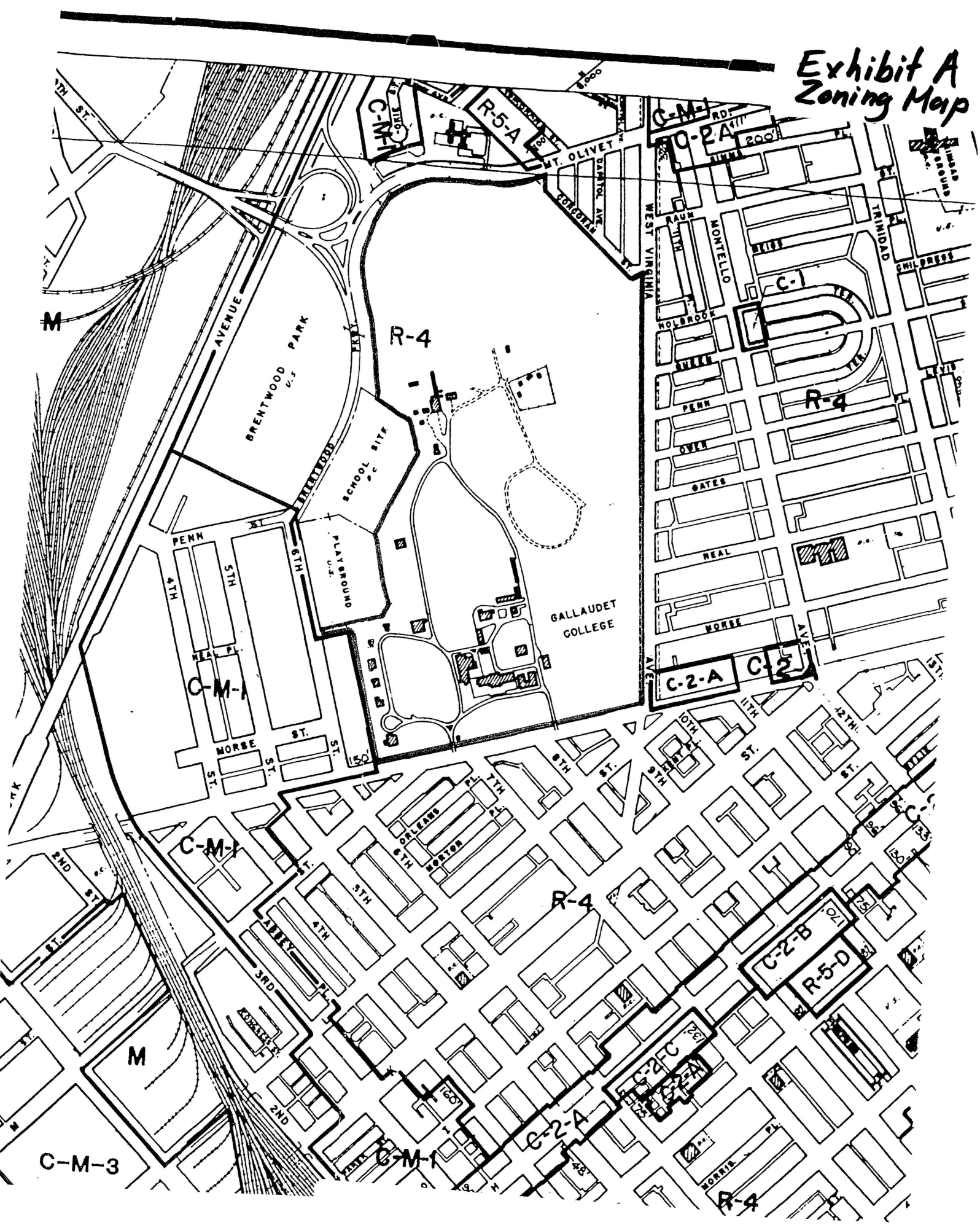


Exhibit B
Fire Dept.

F.D. Form 19.1

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
FIRE DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20001

MEMORANDUM

TO: Andrew Altman
Director
Office of Planning

FROM: James N. Short, Jr. JNS.
Battalion Fire Chief

DATE: June 21, 2000

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 16582 - The Gallaudet University Application for an Amendment to and Further Processing of the Approved Campus Plan on Premises Located at 800 Florida Avenue, N.E., Lot 141/60, Square 3591

The D.C. Fire and EMS Department has no objection to BZA Application No. 16582.

If you have any questions regarding this review, I may be reached at 727-3659.