GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 22, 2003

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

THROUGH: Andrew Altman, Director OP
Ellen McCarthy, Deputy Director OP

FROM: David J. McGettigan, AICP

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 03-07
Trustees for Harvard University/Dumbarton Oaks
Robert and Anne Bass
3232-3240 R Street, N.W. (Square 1280, Lots 96, 97, 98, 99)

Summary

The applicant, Trustees for Harvard University, on behalf of the property owners, Robert and Anne Bass, request a special exception to permit the interim use of 3232-3240 R Street, N.W. for a university use in the R-1-A zone. Such use is permitted in the R-1-A zone by grant of a special exception under §210.5 in accordance with §3035.1. Dumbarton Oaks recently approved campus plan and further processing (BZA Application No.16555) is temporarily displacing some university activities during construction. The applicant requests temporary (five years) use of the subject properties for administrative offices and staff residence.

Recommended Action:
The Office of Planning recommends the special exception for interim use of the subject properties be approved for a period of five years and the condition that visitors and students be directed not to park on the subject property, but are directed to park on the main campus.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 03-07
Exhibit 29

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.03-07
EXHIBIT NO.29

Background

Dumbarton Oaks was established as part of Harvard University in 1941 and is used for the collection and study of pre-Columbian and Byzantine artifacts as well as the history of landscape architecture. The landscaped grounds and buildings are designated as a historic landmark and are open to the public for tours. In addition, the pre-Columbian and Byzantine collections are on display in the campus' museum. The remaining facilities on the campus support these functions. Board of Zoning Adjustment Appeal No. 568 approved the facility for the "use and study of the Works of Art and the Library" as an educational institution.

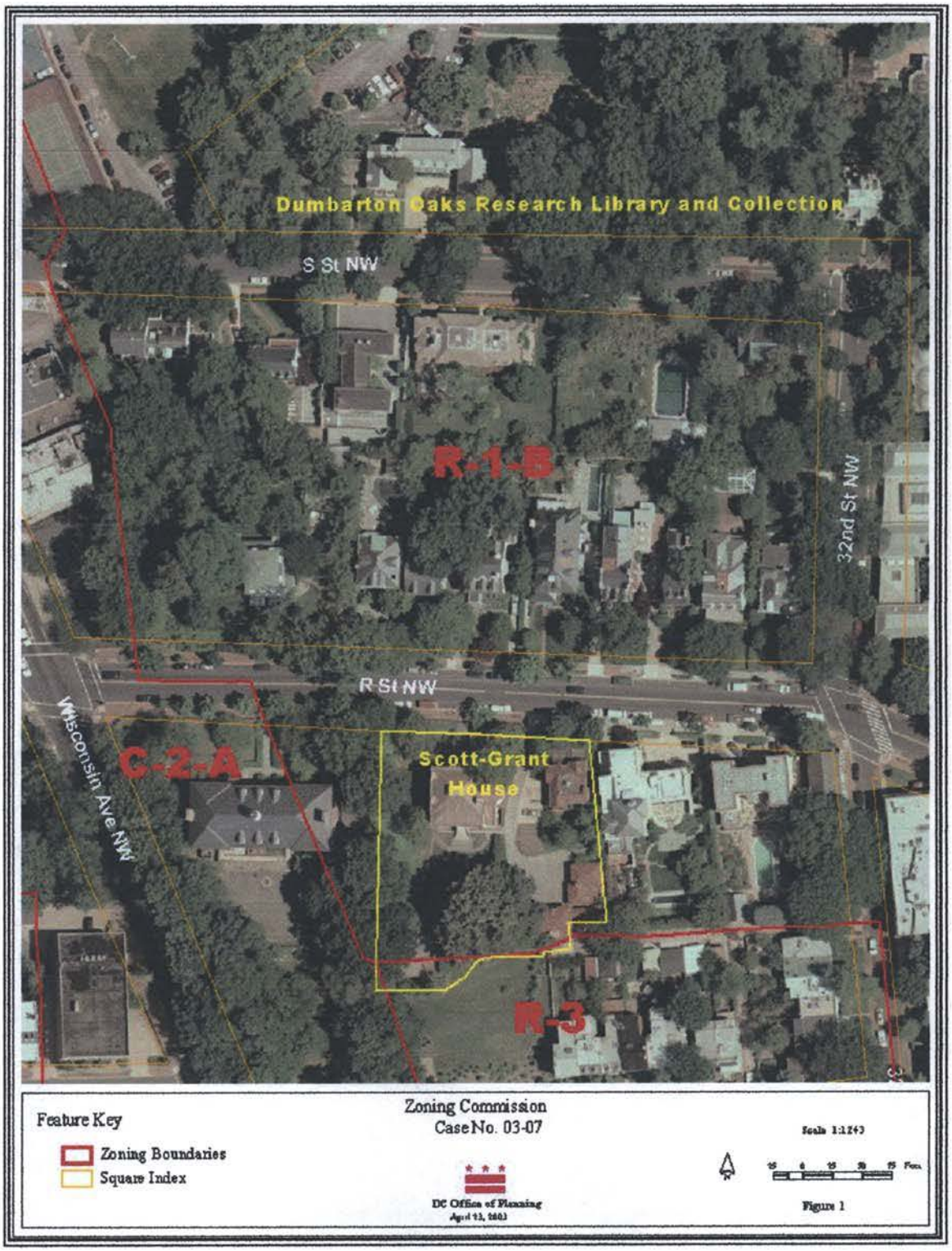
Records indicate that the campus has been modified three times since its establishment:

- BZA Order No. 4456 in 1956 to add a new second floor addition to the existing building on R Street to be used as a library.
- BZA Order No. 6232 in 1961 to add a new one-story museum wing and basement library wing.
- BZA Order No. 14584 in 1987 to establish a campus plan and to allow the construction of an addition to the existing museum.
- BZA Order No. 16555 in 2000 to add a new library and gardner's building and renew the campus plan.

The campus plan, as approved for Dumbarton Oaks in BZA Order No. 16555 in 2000, had the following conditions:

1) The Campus Plan shall be valid for a period of 10 (ten) years, until December 31, 2010.
2) The total number of fellows shall not exceed 25.
3) The total number of parking spaces shall not exceed 60.
4) The applicant shall establish a method of communicating the construction schedule to the community and shall establish a point of contact for construction related concerns.
5) The applicant shall hold community meetings every 2 (two) months starting 4 (four) months prior to the start of construction.
6) The applicant shall work with the National Park Service to coordinate a storm water management plan.
7) The applicant shall submit to the ANC an off-site staging plan.
8) The applicant shall adopt the Cooper Rules—Safety Standards for Construction Vehicles.
9) Any further design refinement shall be reviewed through the Commission of Fine Arts, or the Old Georgetown Board.

During construction under the recently approved further processing and campus plan, the applicant requests interim use of the historic Scott-Grant House.


Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection
S St NW
R-1-B
32nd St NW
R St NW
Wisconsin Ave NW
C-2-A
Scott-Grant House
R-3
Feature Key
Zoning Boundaries
Square Index
Zoning Commission
Case No. 03-07
DC Office of Planning
Figure 1

The Scott-Grant House owned by Robert and Anne Bass is located mid-block on R Street, N.W. between Wisconsin Avenue and 32nd Street, N.W. (See Figure 1). The properties contain a number of structures in addition to the Scott-Grant House (approximately 7,700 square feet in floor area), including a guardhouse, a gardener's cottage, a carriage house and sheds. Directly to the west is the Georgetown Library, north across the street and east are single-family detached dwellings, and row houses abut the property to the south. The main campus is one block north on S Street, N.W.

The campus is located at 1703 32nd Street, NW (Square 2155, Lot 812) and is bounded by S Street, 32nd Street and R Street on the South, Boys Club of Washington to the West, and Dumbarton Oaks Park and Montrose Park to the North. The site consists of approximately 16.25 acres, the majority of which is occupied by historic landscaped gardens.

Plan Description

The applicant plans to use the subject property as "swing space" during the renovation of the main campus. This will mainly involve use as administrative offices relocated from the campus and residential space for one staff member. Total staff on-site will number no more than 18. The guardhouse will continue to be used as a guardhouse and residence for the guard and the gardener's cottage will be used as a weekday residence for the Director of Facilities and Services. No exterior alterations or improvements will be undertaken to change the outward appearance of the property. No parking will be permitted on the subject property; staff, visitors and students using the facility will be directed to use parking on the main campus.

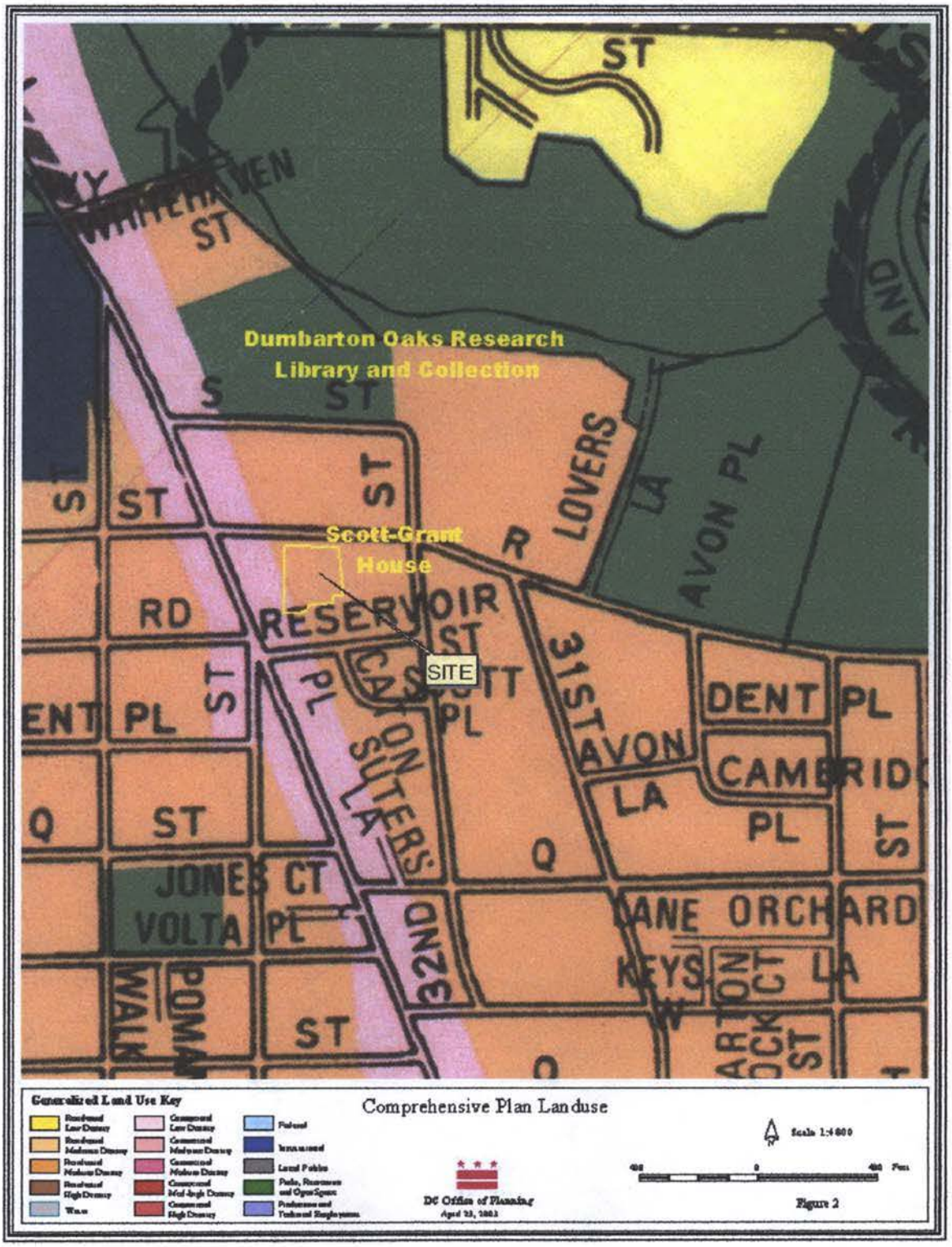
Analysis

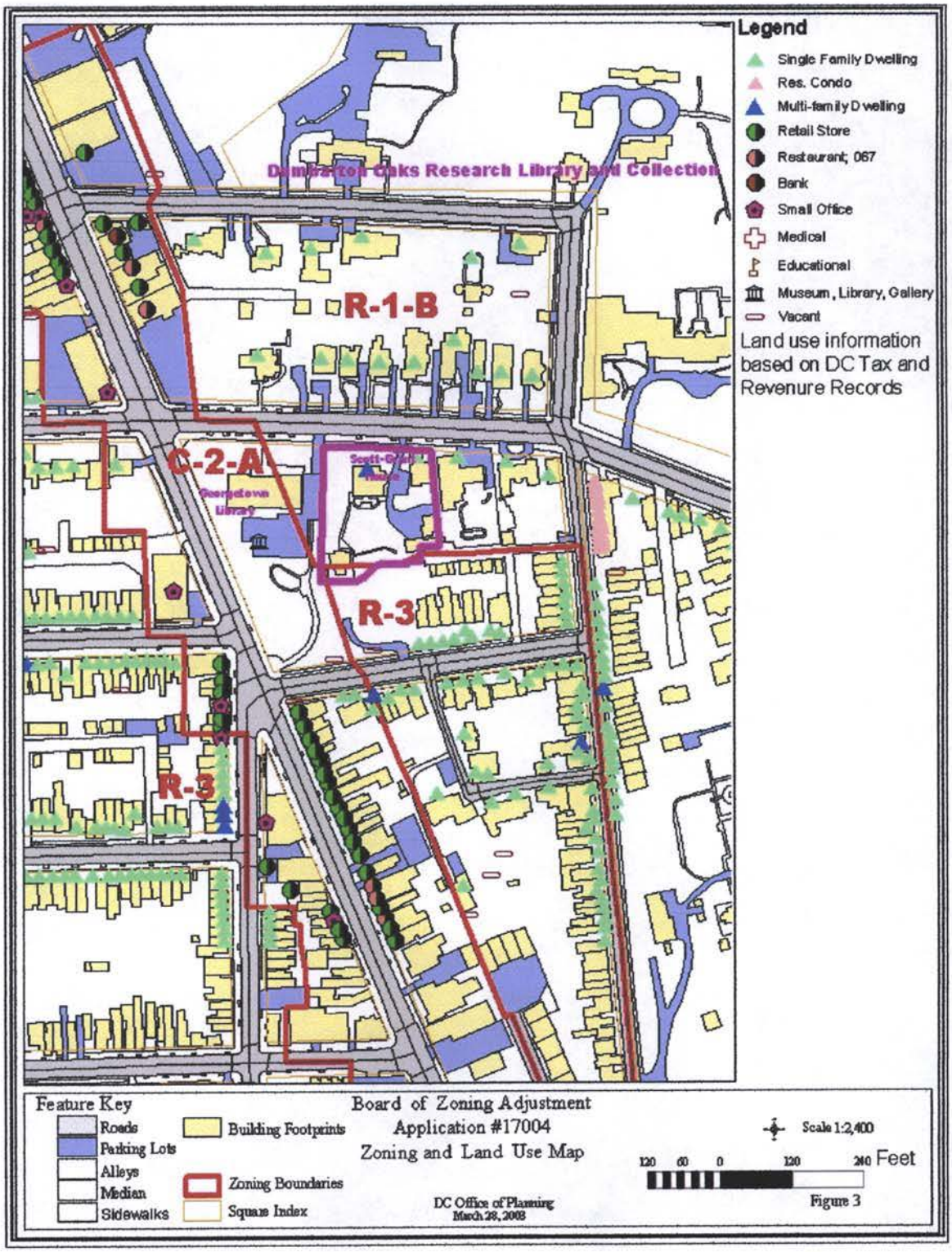
Comprehensive Plan

Since this is an interim use of the subject properties, no long-range impacts are anticipated that would trigger Comprehensive Plan issues. The subject property is designated moderate density residential which includes row houses and garden apartments as the predominant uses and may also include, as appropriate uses, low density housing. Surrounding residential neighborhoods to the north and south are designated as moderate density residential on the General Land Use Map with low density commercial to the west along Wisconsin Avenue. (see Figure 2)

Zoning

The subject properties lie in the R-1-B zone district (see Figure 3). The R-1 zone is is designed to protect quiet residential areas now developed with one-family detached dwellings and adjoining vacant areas likely to be developed for those purposes. The regulations in this zone are intended to stabilize the residential areas and to promote a suitable environment for family life, which may include colleges and universities subject to Zoning Commission approval. The R-1-B zone is generally mapped in low-density residential areas as identified in the Comprehensive Plan General Land Use Map. No exterior improvements are proposed that would require evaluation of the area requirements of the zone district.


Dumbarton Oaks Research
Library and Collection
Scott-Grant
House
SITE
RESERVOIR RD
31ST ST
AVON PL
LOVERS LA
CANAL
JONES CT
VOLTA PL
CANE ORCHARD
KEYS PL
Generalized Land Use Key
Comprehensive Plan Landuse
DC Office of Planning
Figure 2


Legend
Single Family Dwelling
Res. Condo
Multi-family Dwelling
Retail Store
Restaurant; 067
Bank
Small Office
Medical
Educational
Museum, Library, Gallery
Vacant
Land use information based on DC Tax and Revenure Records
Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection
R-1-B
C-2-A
Georgetown Library
R-3
R-3
Feature Key
Roads
Parking Lots
Alleys
Median
Sidewalks
Building Footprints
Zoning Boundaries
Square Index
Board of Zoning Adjustment
Application #17004
Zoning and Land Use Map
DC Office of Planning
March 28, 2003
Scale 1:2,400
120 60 0 120 240 Feet
Figure 3

Development Standards

College and university uses are permitted in the R-1-B zone in accordance with the standards of §210 with the approval of the Zoning Commission as provided under §3035.1. Section 210 requires a campus plan and outlines the following evaluation criteria:

210.1 Use as a college or university that is an academic institution of higher learning, including a college or university hospital, dormitory, fraternity, or sorority house proposed to be located on the campus of a college or university, shall be permitted as a special exception in an R-1 District if approved by the Zoning Commission under § 3104, subject to the provisions of this section.

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection is an academic institution of higher learning subject to a campus plan approved by BZA Order 16555.

210.2 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.

Currently, the main house is vacant and has been vacant for several years.

Noise. The activities proposed are consistent with the existing campus plan. The Scott-Grant House is situated centrally on a large lot, which provides some natural buffer from adjoining residential uses. There will be no parties, public events, fund-raising events, or large-scale receptions held at the subject property.

Traffic. The applicant proposes to direct all visitors and students to park on the main campus and walk to the subject properties. Additionally, the uses on the property replace existing uses removed from the main campus, so no increase in traffic is anticipated. No receptions and seminars will be held on the property. A few vehicular traffic trips are anticipated for the residents (facilities director and guard), maintenance vehicles, mail delivery and trash removal.

Number of Students. The number of students will not change as a result of the proposed interim use of the subject properties, which is currently fewer than 25. No more than 18 Dumbarton Oaks staff would use the office space.

Other Objectionable Conditions. There are no other objectionable condtions. The existing security and caretaking of the property will continue, no alterations will be undertaken and the subject property will be maintained at a level consistent with the main campus. The Historic Preservation Office has no objection to the proposed use.

210.3 In R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5-A, and R-5-B Districts, the maximum bulk requirements normally applicable in the Districts may be increased for specific buildings or structures;

provided, that the total bulk of all buildings and structures on the campus shall not exceed the gross floor area prescribed for the R-5-B District. In all other Residence Districts, similar bulk increases may also be permitted; provided, that the total bulk of all buildings and structures on the campus shall not exceed the gross floor area prescribed for the R-5-D District. Because of permissive increases as applicable to normal bulk requirements in the low-density districts regulated by this title, it is the intent of this subsection to prevent unreasonable campus expansion into improved low-density districts.

No additional construction of floor area is proposed with the application. The use of the nearby residential property is to be limited to period of 5 years and is intended to only accommodate uses displaced from the main campus during construction.

210.4 As a prerequisite to requesting a special exception for each college or university use, the applicant shall have submitted to the Commission for its approval a plan for developing the campus as a whole, showing the location, height, and bulk, where appropriate, of all present and proposed improvements, including but not limited to the following:

(a) Buildings and parking and loading facilities;
(b) Screening, signs, streets, and public utility facilities;
(c) Athletic and other recreational facilities; and
(d) A description of all activities conducted or to be conducted on the campus, and of the capacity of all present and proposed campus development.

The intent of the application is to permit interim use of uses displaced from the campus during construction. Therefore, uses displaces must comply with the currently approved campus plan, which controls number of students, parking and uses and their locations on campus.

210.5 Within a reasonable distance of the college or university campus, and subject to compliance with § 210.2, the Commission may also permit the interim use of land or improved property with any use that the Commission may determine is a proper college or university function.

The proposed interim use is within a reasonable distance (300 feet) of the main campus and will be in compliance with §210.2 as discussed above. The proposed uses (administrative offices, residences) of the subject properties are proper university functions.

210.6 When a major new building that has been proposed in a campus plan is instead moved off campus, the previously designated site shall not be designated for, or devoted to, a different major new building unless the Commission has approved an amendment to the campus plan applicable to the site; provided, that for this purpose a major new building is defined as one specifically identified in the campus plan.

The applicant indicates that this situation does not apply.

210.7 In reviewing and deciding a campus plan application or new building construction pursuant to a campus plan, the Commission shall consider, to the extent they are relevant, the policies of the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

This is addressed above under Comprehensive Plan.

210.8 As an integral part of the application requesting approval of new building construction pursuant to a campus plan, the college or university shall certify and document that the proposed building or amendment is within the floor area ratio (FAR) limit for the campus as a whole, based upon the computation included in the most recently approved campus plan and the FARs of any other buildings constructed or demolished since the campus plan was approved.

No new building construction is proposed with this application.

210.9 Before taking final action on an application for use as a college or university, the Commission shall submit the application to the D.C. Office of Planning and the D.C. Department of Public Works for review and written reports.

The Office of Planning has reviewed the application and referred it to other agencies for review and comment.

Agency Reports

Comments have been requested from the following agencies:

- Department of Housing and Community Development (Attachment 1)
- DC Fire Marshal (Attachment 2)
- DC Water and Sewer Authority
- DDOT
- DCRA
- MPD

At the time of this report comments have been received from DHCD and DEMS (attached). DDOT is working on a report that will be forwarded under separate cover.

Community Outreach and Involvement

The applicant has met with the Advisory Neighborhood Commission, which indicated unanimous support for the project for the 5-year term.

Recommendation

The Office of Planning recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. No exterior modifications to the existing historic property.
2. The interim use will be discontinued after five years.

3. Parking will not be permitted on-site and visitors and students will be directed to park on the main campus.

Attachment
1. DHCD Comments
2. Fire Marshal Comments