ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 1B
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS / LEDROIT PARK / SHAW / UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

1B01 Lawrence T. Guyot, Jr.
1B02 Philip C. Spalding
1B03 Catherine Hammonds
1B04 Deborah R. Thomas
1B05 Jarvis Houston
1B06 Theodore "Ted" Butler
1B07 Sertira "Cookie" A. Wilson
1B08 Charles E. Glover
1B09 Sinclair "Nupe" Skinner
1B10 Kelvin P. Esters
1B11 Raymond Wright

9 August 2003

Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
Suite 210
441 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

RECEIVED
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2003 AUG 11 AM 9:17

Case No. 03-17
Howard University

Dear Chairman Mitten:

At its regularly scheduled meeting on August 7, 2003 (notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of eight of eleven members was present) ANC1B voted unanimous (8-0-0) support for the application of Howard University for a special exception under Section 210 to replace the building known as Bethune Hall and located at premises 2255 4th Street, NW (Square 3068, Part of Lot 30). There were no objections to the siting, massing, use or design of the proposed replacement building. ANC1B also noted the support of the LeDroit Park Civic Association for this application. There were no objections to the intention to turn a portion of College Street at the northern edge of the site to predominately pedestrian use. Commissioners did, however, find the applicant's overview of traffic and parking suspect. Within the strict definitions of this application Howard University will be required to identify and add two parking spaces, while the current Master Plan shows a surplus of 865 spaces. Commissioners bordering the Howard University campus stated that there is no community recognition of a surplus in parking, and that Howard University should be exploring increased parking in any amendment to the existing campus master plan. Section 210.2 requires that "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." Commissioners did indicate that traffic and parking concerns are rising to the level of objectionable conditions, and that the University should be addressing these community concerns.

ANC1B request that the Zoning Commission give great weight to our endorsement of this application.

Sincerely,

Deborah R. Thomas, Chairperson

Philip C. Spalding, Secretary
Box 73710, Washington, DC 20056

CC: Howard University

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 03-17
Exhibit 10

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.03-17
EXHIBIT NO.10

ANALYSIS

The proposed dormitory at this location was not planned or envisioned in the adopted Campus Plan and the applicant has not addressed why the change from the faculty center use to a dormitory is necessary. On page 7 of the Plan, it states:

> *"The occupancy rate for all residents halls is 85%. The Office of Residence Life has indicated that there is no immediate need for additional student housing unless enrollment increases significantly."*

Although the University has a policy to house it students on campus, at the time of the campus plan, the subject building was closed in 1997 and therefore not included in the student-housing inventory, as it was not intended to house students according to the 1988 approved Campus Plan.

In addition to the change in use, the applicant is also proposing to demolish the existing building and replace it with a new and larger building. The Campus Plan recommends that the building be reconfigured and renovated to house a Faculty Center. The applicant has not provided any information as to why the existing building could not be renovated and restored to accommodate the students. OP envisions that the reason may be that the building is old and it would not cost effective to install many of the technological improvements necessary to address the needs of today's students. The change in use and the demolition of Bethune Hall is clearly inconsistent with the approved Campus Plan. It is therefore OP's opinion that prior to the approval of the special exception to allow the dormitory the Campus Plan should be amended.

BUILDING DESIGN

The architecture of the new building will be compatible with the surrounding buildings. A policy outlined in the Campus Plan is to "respect the existing scale and massing of adjacent buildings to ensure visual and spatial continuity of the physical environment." The proposed building will be consistent with this policy as the front of the new building will complement Frazier Hall, as it will be predominantly brick and concrete. Although it is two floors taller than Frazier Hall, the two top floors will be setback and be in the roof portion of the building. Frazier Hall is at a slightly higher elevation than the new Bethune Hall so the difference in height will not be very pronounced. The rear of the building that fronts on the quadrangle is glass clad to take advantage of the light provided in that area and will provide views into the central quad area and to downtown Washington DC. It will also be complementary to the Bethune Annex with two of its "wings" also at 7-stories high.

ACCESS

The main entrance into the building will be from College Street. The applicant is proposing to close the portion of College Street on which Bethune Hall fronts and transform it into a pedestrian oriented space. Parking will be prohibited along this street and minimal traffic will be permitted in this area. Vehicular access will be limited to emergency vehicles, drop-off and pick up purposes only when the dorm opens for a new school year in August and closes in May each year, and service vehicles for Frazier Hall. Closing this portion of College Street will not affect access to other building as the street ends at the end of the block and does not serve the buildings to the east of the subject property. The improvement to this area will further enhance the entrance to Frazier Hall. Service to the proposed building will from Bryant Street, south of the Bethune Hall Annex.

The quadrangle between the buildings will be improved with additional landscaped areas consisting of grass, trees and shrubs, and walkways. The open space pattern, landscape elements and pedestrian circulation are consistent with the strategies outlined in the campus plan to unify and enhance buildings and to accommodate pathways that cross each other and intersect adjacent streets.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

According to the Campus Plan, in 1998 there were approximately 4,220 parking spaces on campus. It was proposed that approximately 500 would be lost with the construction of the new Health Science Library, and the University would maintain its parking at 3,727. A condition of the special exception request which approved the library (BZA 16382) stated that "Howard University shall implement the parking relocation plan set forth in the applicant's transportation report . . . which provides for the relocation of the 470 parking spaces provided on the library site to assigned existing parking facilities identified as having excess capacity." An inventory of parking spaces shows that there are 4,592 spaces on the campus today and indicates that more spaces have been created since the adopted Campus Plan. This increase has been to the benefit of the university since the Office of Parking and Shuttle Operations has indicated that "parking remains critical on the campus especially during work hours and the demand remains high." To help alleviate this situation, the University actively discourages freshmen from having vehicles on campus and provides shuttle services within the campus and to off-site locations such as the Shaw/Howard University Metro Station. However, with the closing of College Street, at least 16-metered parking spaces will be lost. The University has not provided any information as to how they will address this loss and its impact on an already critical parking situation.

Regarding parking to serve the new Bethune Hall, the University will not be providing parking for these students. As stated above, the University has a policy of not providing parking to freshmen students. This policy is clearly outlined in the Department of Residence Life, Division of Student Affairs Information Booklet that is sent to all freshmen and new students, the Office of Student Activities' Student H-Book and Planner, 2002-2003, the Office of the Dean of Special Student Services website, and the Office of Parking and Shuttle Operations website. These students are also highly unlikely to get a parking space because spaces are by a lottery system that begins in April prior to the enrollment of the new students. The development of this site will therefore have no impact on the availability of parking on the campus. To serve these students, a shuttle bus will make stops at the dormitory and other on- and off-campus facilities. As described in the Traffic Analysis, the proposed building will not cause any negative changes in the operations of nearby streets and intersections.

SUMMARY

The project is completely within the current campus plan boundary and the impact on student enrollment, faculty and staff requirements, parking and vehicular circulation will be minimal or not at all. The proposed FAR is within the conditions of the Campus Plan approval as described in the applicant' submission.

The proposed development will positively impact the quality of life on campus as it will provide needed housing for female underclassmen on the main campus. Providing housing on the main campus is consistent with the University's aim to house as many of its students on campus as is possible. The building, as presented, is in conformance with the bulk, height, and yard requirements of the SP-2

District. Therefore, the granting of this special exception will be in harmony with the general purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map. The location of the dormitory and the proposed use of the building will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Metropolitan Police Department, and the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department, and the Water and Sewer Authority state that the proposed development will not negatively impact their services or capacity. The Department of Transportation's (DDOT) report will be submitted under separate cover.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Condition #10 of the BZA Order requires that a Howard University Advisory Council (also known as the Community Advisory Committee) be established. The Committee consists of a number of civic associations and ANC's, and Howard University representatives. The Committee has been meeting on a quarterly basis. The subject site is within the jurisdiction of ANC-1B who voted to recommend approval of the special exception but highlighted that they had some concerns regarding parking on the campus.

RECOMMENDATION

Generally, OP supports the special exception for the proposed dormitory use. However, the applicant's submission lacks information explaining why the proposed change from a faculty center to a dormitory is necessary and the need to demolish the building. OP recommends that prior to the approval of the special exception, an amendment to the Campus Plan be submitted for review by the Zoning Commission.

If the Zoning Commission sees fit to approve the special exception for further processing of the *UniverCity 20/20 Howard University 1998 Campus Plan*, for the construction of a new Bethune Hall, OP recommends the following conditions:

1. The new Bethune Hall will be used to house female underclassmen.
2. The new Bethune Hall will be developed in substantial conformance with the revised plans dated August 19, 2003.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Aerial Photograph with Zoning

AA/mbr



Feature Key

Zoning Boundaries

Square Index

Ortho-Photography was taken in 1999.

Zoning Commission 03-17

Howard University - Bethune Hall

DC Office of Planning

September 10, 2003

Scale 1:4453

N

250 0 250 500 Feet

Attachment 1