GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

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DATE: June 8, 2004

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

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

FROM: David J. McGettigan, AICP

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 04-10
Catholic University of America
Temporary Housing
620 Michigan Avenue, N.E.

Summary

The Catholic University of America (CUA) seeks renewal of a special exception to maintain 26 existing temporary housing units in the R-5-A zone. The use requires special exception approval by the Zoning Commission as further processing under the current campus plan under §210 of the Zoning Regulations. The use was previously approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment in Order No. 16482 on July 21, 1999 for a period of five years. The applicant requests approval of the special exception for a period of five years.

Recommended Action:
The Office of Planning recommends approval of the application as the units are located so that they are not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions. Additionally, the FAR is within the limits of the R-5-A zone and the campus plan. The maintenance of 96 beds on campus will reduce the impacts of the increase in number of students from previous years (the student population remains substantially below the enrollment cap). The five year period requested for this approval will allow the University sufficient time to build the additional housing proposed in the campus plan.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-10
EXHIBIT NO. 17

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.04-10
EXHIBIT NO.17

Background

The Catholic University of America is located in Northeast in ANC 5C. The campus is in the Neighborhood Cluster 20 Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan. The campus is surrounded by a variety of uses including institutional uses like the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center and the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home, commercial uses on the south side of Michigan Avenue (the remainder of Square 3657) and on the northwest corner of Taylor and Harewood, industrial uses to the north and across the tracks to the east, park/open space uses on the north (Fort Totten Park) and residential uses on the northwest and south (see Attachment 1). Most of the campus is substantially buffered from residential uses by roads, tracks and compatible uses. The existing temporary housing units are located on the main campus in the center of the square.

The main campus is generally bounded by Taylor Street NE on the north, John McCormack Road NE to the east, Michigan Avenue to the south and Harewood Road to the west covering the majority of Square 3821. Within this area are three sites that are not part of CUA (Lot 44), they are the Marian Scholasticate (Lot 817), the Capuchin College (Lot 45) and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (Lot 40). The main campus is in the R-5-A zone.

Zoning Commission Order No. 02-20 approved the current Catholic University campus plan on May 23, 2003 with the following conditions:

1. *Approval of the Campus Plan shall be until May 22, 2012*
2. *The approved Campus Plan boundaries shall be as set forth in the 2002 Plan. There shall be no change to the Campus Plan boundaries approved in connection with the 1992 Plan.*
3. *The maximum enrollment shall be 7,500 full-time equivalent (FTE) students based on the fall enrollment numbers. The full-time equivalent student enrollment shall be calculated as follows:*
    - *(a) Undergraduate student FTE the total number of semester credit hours awarded to undergraduate students divided by 15 semester hours.*
    - *(b) Graduate student FTE· the total number of semester credit hours awarded to graduate students divided by 9 semester hours*
    - *(c) Total FTE: the sum of the undergraduate and graduate student FTEs.*
4. *The number of faculty and staff shall not exceed 1,710 during the 10-year period of the Plan.*
5. *A maximum of 2,340 parking spaces shall be provided on campus over the 10-year period of the Plan.*
6. *A maximum density of 0 44 FAR or a gross floor area of 2,729,175 square feet shall be permitted by the year 2012.*
7. *The areas of the South Campus where buildings may be demolished shall be graded and landscaped in a professional manner in a park-like setting (e g., seeded) within six months of demolition of any or all buildings*

8. *One hundred percent of the traditional, full-time undergraduate, non-commuter freshmen and sophomores are required to live on campus.*
9. *CUA shall provide a yearly report to the Zoning Commission documenting enrollment numbers, the number of beds available, and the numbers of beds utilized by undergraduates and graduates.*
10. *CUA must submit to the HPO and the Zoning Commission a historic preservation element to the Campus Plan within one year of the effective date of this Order. Until the element is submitted to the Commission, CUA will not demolish any structures other than Salve Regina and St. Bonaventure Halls.*

This is the first further processing application since approval of the campus plan.

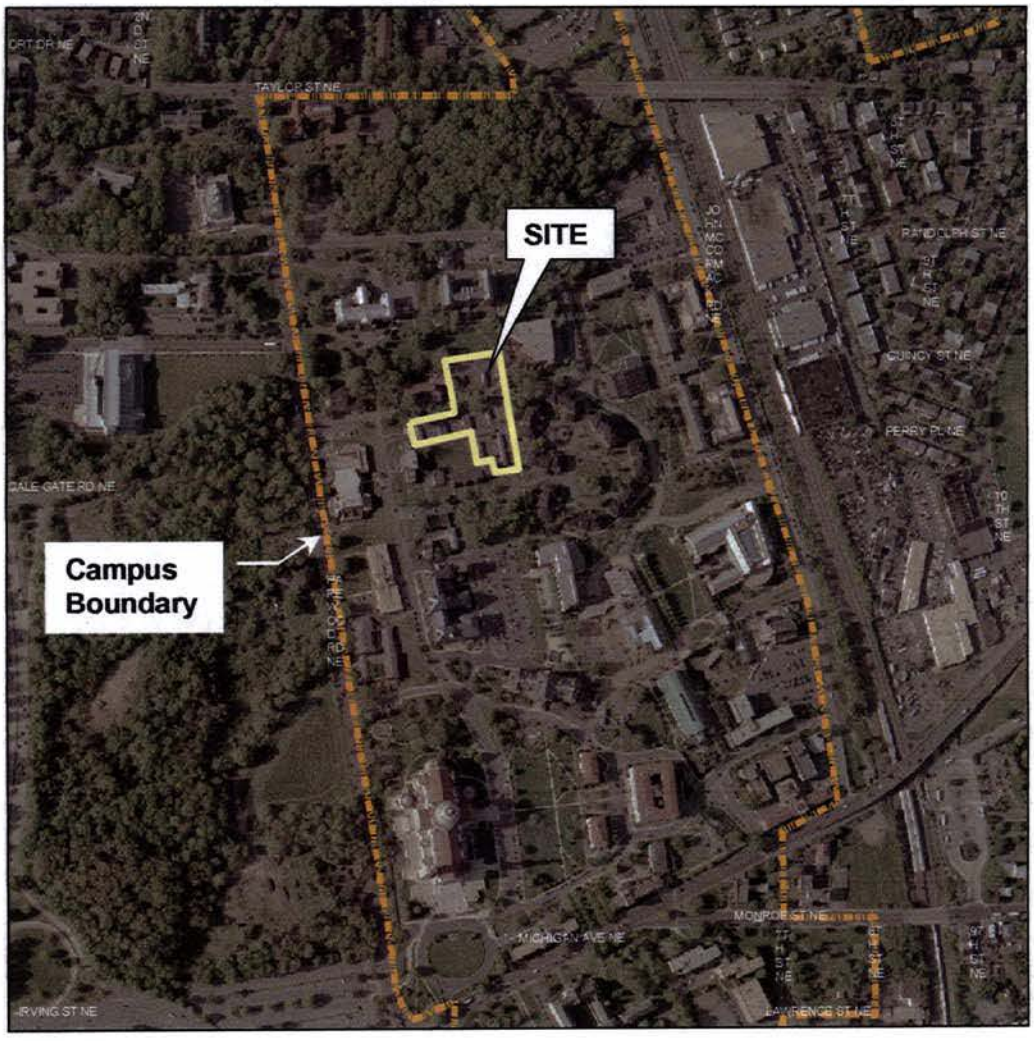


Figure 1 - Main Campus

Project Description

The project consists of 26, one-story, manufactured housing units providing 96 beds. Sidewalks provide pedestrian access to the units. The units are oriented to face on landscaped squares that are equipped with picnic tables and benches. The project is sufficiently screened from adjoining public streets by the existing topography and buildings.



Analysis

Campus Plan

The campus plan does not address the temporary housing units, but the area currently occupied by the units is planned to be a surface parking lot providing 90 short-term and 90 long-term parking spaces. The campus plan indicated that according to a field survey, parking demand in September 2001 was 1,558 of the existing 1,942 parking spaces on campus.

Comprehensive Plan

The Catholic University main campus lies in the Institutional category of the Generalized Land Use Map. An excerpt from the Generalized Land Use Map is provided as Attachment 2. The institutional land use category of the Comprehensive Plan is designated for college and university master plan areas. The provision of on-campus housing is consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning

By reference in §352.2 college and university uses are permitted in the R-5-A zone in accordance with the standards of §210 with the approval of the Zoning Commission as provided under §3104. Section 210 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.

The continued use of the property is as a university.

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.

Noise. The low scale of the development and its central location on the campus minimizes the impact on neighboring property. The applicant indicates that, in the five years that the units have been in place, they have created no objectionable noise. The trailers are 1500 feet from the nearest residential neighborhood with intervening streets, buildings and topography.

Traffic. The continuation of the existing housing units will not impact existing traffic on campus. Continued use is consistent with DDOT recommendations during the campus plan review that use of on-campus housing be increased to reduce traffic congestion and parking demand. Parking demand should not be increased by the continuation of the temporary use and the campus plan indicated that the campus had approximately 450 underutilized parking spaces.

Number of Students. Currently, the total student enrollment at CUA is currently 5740, which is below the cap of 7500. Including the temporary housing units 2,079 beds are provided on campus.

Other Objectionable Conditions. OP is not aware of any other objectionable conditions associated with the project.

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.

The campus as a whole meets the bulk requirements of the R-5-B district, which is 1.8 FAR. The current campus FAR is 0.37, which is below the proposed campus plan FAR of 0.44.

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.

CUA has a current campus plan that was approved by Zoning Commission Order No. 02-20. The temporary trailers are consistent with the campus plan and provide temporary housing while permanent housing is constructed. OP does not expect these trailers to be a permanent solution however. OP notes that the temporary use of trailers is to accommodate the construction of new dormitories. OP has concerns about the continued renewal of a temporary building to the degree it becomes de facto permanent. The University should proceed with further processing and development of new dormitories in accordance with the campus plan as soon as possible. As the University predicts that the temporary use will not be required in five years, then there must be a point before then when a further processing application is filed and construction plans developed. In anticipation of a further processing application, the Office of Planning believes that

approving the trailers for three more years is adequate with another extension of two years at the time that the further processing for new dormitories is reviewed.

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.

No off-campus interim use of land is proposed with this application.

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.

CUA has certified that the FAR for the campus as whole does not exceed the FAR permitted in the approved campus plan. The current campus plan authorizes an FAR of 0.44. With the 19,890 square feet in the trailers the current FAR comes to 0.37.

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 provides this report in accordance with this regulation.

Community Outreach and Involvement

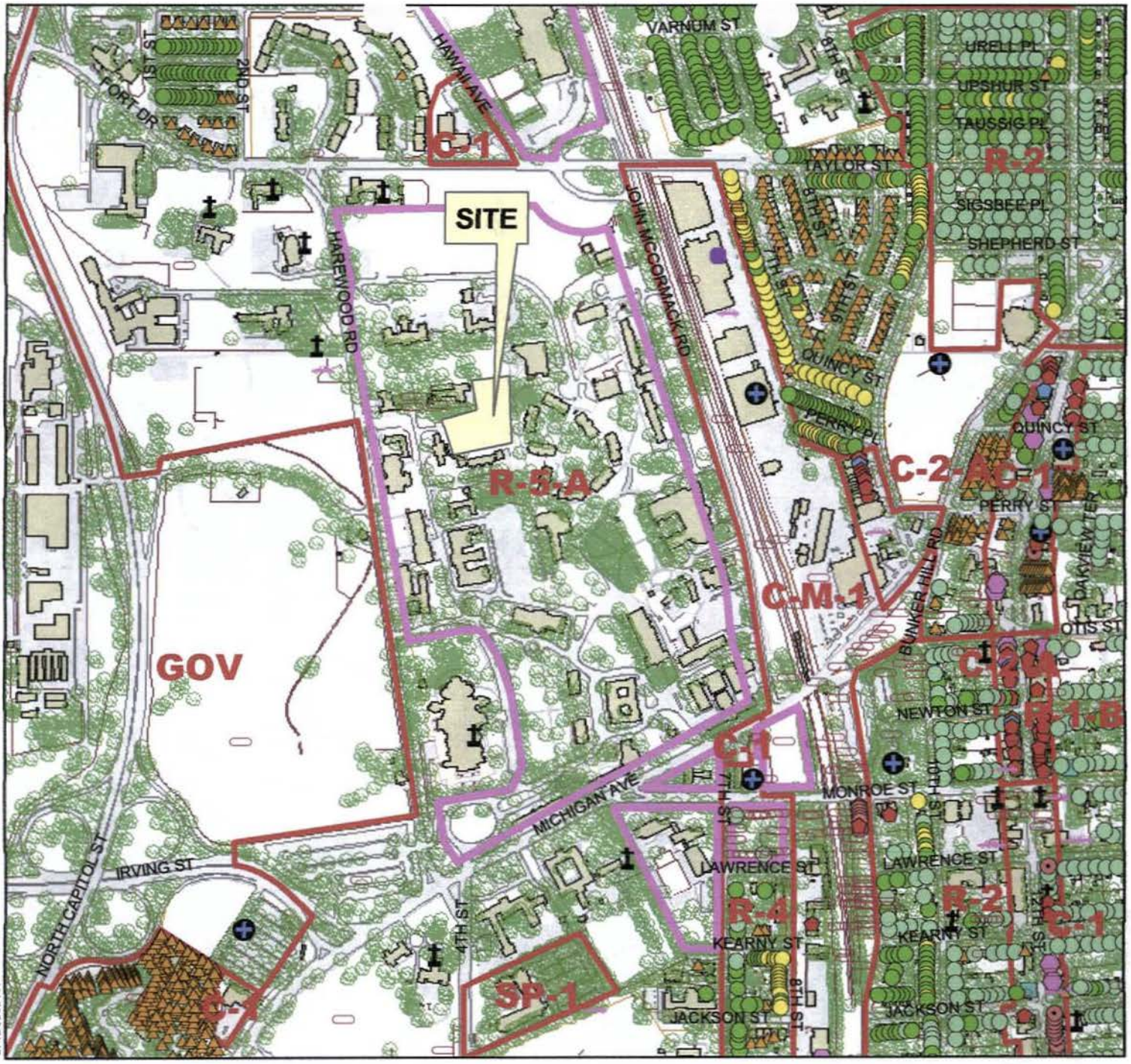
The applicant has met with ANC5C which has voted unanimously to support the application. The applicant has not been able to meet with ANC5A.

Recommendation

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends approval of the special exception application for a period of three (3) years.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Zoning and Land Use
2. Comprehensive Plan
3. Aerial Photo



Zoning and Land Use
ZC Case No. 04-10

Feet

N

0 500 1,000

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Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

Office of Planning ~ May 10, 2004

This map was created for planning purposes from a variety of sources. It is neither a survey nor a legal document. Information provided by other agencies should be verified with them where appropriate.

Land Use Legend

- Non-conforming SF Use
- Rowhouse
- Single-Family Detached
- Single-Family Semi-Detached
- Resid. Garage
- Resid. - Mixed Use
- Multi-family
- Fraternity/Sorority House
- Resid. Transient
- Store
- Barber/Beauty Shop
- Office
- Parking - Special Purpose
- Theaters, Entertainment
- Warehouse
- Religious
- Special Purpose
- Vacant
- Vehicle Service Station
- cuaboundary

Note: Land Use Info based on OTR records.

Attachment 1



Comprehensive Plan Map
ZC Case No. 04-10.

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Miles

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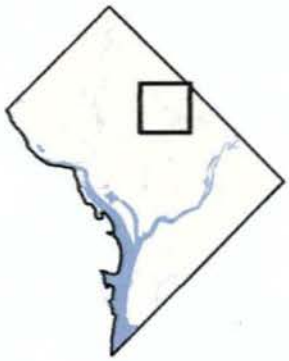
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Office of Planning ~ June 18, 2004

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Generalized Land Use Key

- Residential Low Density
- Residential Moderate Density
- Residential Medium Density
- Residential High Density
- Water
- Commercial Low Density
- Commercial Moderate Density
- Commercial Medium Density
- Commercial Med.-high Density
- Commercial High Density
- Federal
- Institutional
- Local Public
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Production and Technical Employment



Attachment 2



Aerial Oblique Photos
ZC Case No. 04-10

☆ Subject Site - CUA Trailers



Attachment 3

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Office of Planning ~ June 4, 2004

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