GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

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Application No. 14831, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, pursuant to 11 DCMR 3108.1, for a special exception under Section 210 for further processing under an existing campus plan for the proposed new construction of a research building and main building addition in an R-1-A District at premises 5241 Broad Branch Road, N.W., (Square 2288, Lot 813).

HEARING DATE: July 21, 1988
DECISION DATE: July 21, 1988 (Bench Decision)

FINDINGS OF FACTS:

1. The subject site is known as 5241 Broad Branch Road, N.W. and is located at the intersection of Broad Branch Road, 32nd Street, and Jocelyn Street, N.W. The site is zoned R-1-A.

2. The site, lot 813, Square 2288 is irregular in shape and contains approximately 8.8 acres of land area. It contains the campus of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

3. Lot 813 is improved with several structures, including the Main Building, the Experiment Building, the Cyclotron Building, and the Accelerator Building as well as several smaller incidental structures. The site can geographically be divided into two areas. The first area contains the Main Building and is dominated by a knoll which crests at 275 feet above sea level. This knoll slopes downward with gradients of three to seventeen percent towards the southwest corner of the site, which has an elevation of 203 feet above sea level. The second area of the site is to the north of the Main Building and contains the Experiment Building, the Cyclotron Building, the Accelerator Building and a variety of incidental buildings, as well as the parking lot. The highest elevation of this second area is 270 feet with lower elevations of 250 feet sloping westward with average gradients of between three and nine percent.

4. The main entrance to the campus is from 32nd Street, N.W. This drive serves as an entrance for the Main Building and continues on to serve as a site exit via Broad Branch Road, N.W. There are two secondary entrances from Jocelyn Street, N.W. Pedestrian circulation is between the Main, Experiment and Cyclotron Buildings via the serv

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drives or across the knoll. The vehicular circulation extends from Jocelyn Street, N.W. servicing the Cyclotron, Accelerator and Experiment Buildings. There are approximately thirty on-site parking spaces located along the main and secondary entrance drives and in a small area north of the Main Building.

5. The campus is characterized by a low building density and well maintained landscaped open space. The existing buildings are well-buffered from surrounding streets by their set back from the streets and carefully maintained lawns, specimen trees and ornamental plantings that create a visual impression of an institution sited within a park. This impression is reinforced by the grouping of the buildings around the knoll of the hill higher and well back from Broad Branch Road, and 32nd Street, N.W. The grouping is also well set back from Jocelyn Street, N.W.

6. The area surrounding the subject site is characterized by a residential neighborhood with a mix of institutional uses in the R-1-A, R-1-B and R-2 Districts. Three institutional neighbors surround the immediate borders of the Carnegie Institution in the R-1-A District. These include the residence of the Tunisian Ambassador, the Presbyterian Home of the District of Columbia and Temple Sinai. The residential neighborhood is predominantly single family detached dwellings.

7. The purpose of this application is to further enhance the physical plant of the campus in order to provide research and educational facilities of the highest caliber, and to permit increased interaction among scientists in different disciplines. In order to pursue these developments, the Carnegie Institution seeks special exception approval pursuant to 11 DCMR Section 3108.1 and 210 for further processing under an existing campus plan.

8. The Carnegie Institution of Washington is a non-profit research and educational institution which conducts basic research and training in the natural sciences, such as earth and planetary sciences, astronomy, developmental biology and plant biology. The current campus is the site of the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, which engages in a wide variety of studies in astrophysics, geophysics, geochemistry and planetary physics. The Geophysical Laboratory, located at 2801 Upton Street, N.W., is another branch of the Carnegie Institution. This branch conducts physical chemical studies of geological problems, with particular emphasis on the processes involved in formation and evolution of the earth's mantle and core. The Carnegie Institution's purpose is to promote the development of interdisciplinary science, with the collection of scientists at the same campus designed to encourage

interaction across several disciplines of the earth and planetary sciences. Therefore this site is used primarily as a research facility and for post-doctoral education.

9. The total existing campus population is ninety persons and consists of thirty faculty, twenty-five students, fifteen technical support staff, fourteen administrative staff, and six building and grounds personnel. It is projected that by 1990 the only increase in the campus population will be the number of students. The number of students is expected to increase by nine resulting in a total student population of thirty-four by 1990. There is no significant anticipated growth beyond 1990.

10. The total floor area ratio (FAR) of the existing buildings is 0.62. The proposed construction would add 0.26 FAR to make a total of 0.88 FAR. The maximum FAR permitted for all buildings on a campus in an R-1-A District is 1.8. Thirty off-street parking spaces exist on the campus. The proposed construction will increase the number of off-street spaces to sixty-seven.

11. The Carnegie Institution proposes to construct a new research building as well as renovate the Cyclotron and Main Buildings on its campus. The proposal seeks to maintain the current landscaping of the campus and builds in their existing composition by locating the new Research Building at the rear of the campus as viewed from the corner of Broad Branch Road, and 32nd Street, N.W. This new construction will be set back from the Main Building, which will thus retain its visual prominence. The new Research Building will consist of approximately 63,000 square feet of gross floor area, and will house twenty-five faculty members, approximately twenty-seven students and fifteen support staff. The environmental impact of the new Research Building will be minimized by locating vehicular access, parking and services in the rear of the building, with the truck loading dock visually screened by its placement at the ground floor or lowest elevation of the building.

12. The Carnegie Institution also proposes to renovate the existing Cyclotron Building to serve as a center for Isotope Geochmistry and Cosmochemistry, and to provide laboratory, office and support areas for five faculty members and approximately seven students. This facility requires ultra-clean laboratories and will be located separately from the other research areas. In addition, the Carnegie Institution proposes to renovate the Main Building to serve as the administrative, library and social center for the campus. An existing shop area immediately adjacent to this building will be renovated to provide a small auditorium seating approximately ninety people. In addition it will house approximately fourteen administrative staff and provide office space for visiting scientists.

13. The proposed new construction and renovation activity will take between two and three years to complete. The initial phase of construction will include the new Research Building and Cyclotron Building. It is anticipated that this phase will take up to eighteen months with a reserve of three months. Most of the heavy dirt hauling activity will occur during this period. Once the new research building is completed work will proceed on the Main Building and the remaining construction activity is estimated to take twelve months.

14. The Office of Planning (OP) by report dated July 13, 1988 recommended that the application be approved. The OP believes that the proposed new development and renovation of existing buildings are designed to maintain compatability with the character of the area, and would be so located that it is not likely to create objectionable conditions in the area. The Board concurs with recommendation of the OP.

15. Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 3G by report dated July 5, 1988 recommended approval of the application. ANC-3G was satisfied with the long range plans for the site and believes that the new facility would fit well on the site and in the neighborhood. The ANC is of the opinion that the only major problem that it forsees lies in the fact that there will be some disruption to the surrounding neighborhood during the construction period when heavy trucks will be hauling dirt from the excavation of the site and propose the following conditions.

a. Construction traffic should leave the site by way of Jocelyn Street, 32nd Street and Nevada Avenue Avenue out to Nebraska Avenue rather than by way of Jocelyn to Broad Branch and Nevada and then to Nebraska.

b. Construction vehicles should not approach the site down either 32nd Street or Broad Branch, but instead, return to the site the way they left it. (Please note that for may years, it has not been possible to get onto Military from either Broad Branch or 32nd Street south of Military as 32nd and Broad Branch are one-way streets south (down) from Military Road.)

c. No itinerant deliveries be made before 9:00 A.M., in the morning, but this particular mitigation shall not apply to dirt-haul and concrete trucks.

d. Wherever possible, the Carnegie Institution should provide space for construction workers to park on campus, provided environmental damage is not done.

e. In accordance with the recent enactment of the District of Columbia Vehicle Cover Act of 1988, now D.C. Law 7-108, all dirt-haul trucks, regardless of where they are licensed, shall be covered.

f. For dirt-haul trucks leaving the site and the immediate neighborhood, only various road arterials should be utilized; Military Road to the west, Military Road to the east, and Nebraska Avenue to the southwest.

16. The Board agrees with the recommendation of the ANC, except that with respect to the proposed conditions for construction traffic, the Board notes that the Department of Public Works will determine the final truck routing and applicable code requirements for construction activity. However, the Board will note that the applicant has agreed to the recommendations and guidelines of the ANC.

17. Neighbors of the site including the representative of the Embassy of Tunicia appeared at the public hearing in opposition to the application. The opposition raised issues regarding the impact of traffic and parking during the period of construction and the visual impact of the proposed research building.

18. The Board's response to the opposition concern related to construction traffic and parking is the same as stated in Finding of Fact No. 16. The Board finds that the research building is proposed to be located in such a manner that will minimize any impact to adjoining and nearby property. The research building will be set back the maximum possible distance from any property line. Stands of existing trees provide a visual screen for the research building and additional trees will be planted to maintain this visual screen.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND OPINION:

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and the evidence of record, the Board concludes that the applicant is seeking a special exception, the granting of which requires substantial evidence that the applicant has complied with the requirements of Section 3108.1 and Section 508.1 of the Zoning Regulations. The Board concludes that the applicant has met its burden of proof.

The Board concludes that the proposed increase in development the of the campus is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring properties because of noise,

traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions. The site is a self-contained campus, separated from its abutting neighbors by public streets and wide expanses of open space. The campus is primarily used as a research facility with a modest population which is not likely to generate any activity that will adversely affect the residential neighborhood. The proposed new construction is planned to be located on the least visible areas of the campus and will include provisions for off-street parking for staff and visitors. The total bulk of all buildings and structures on the campus does not exceed the floor area ratio prescribed for a campus plan in the R-1-A District.

The Board further concludes that approval of the application will be in harmony with the intent and general purpose of the zoning regulations and map and will not tend to impact adversely the use of neighboring property. The Board concludes that it has accorded to the ANC the "great weight" to which it is entitled. Accordingly, it is ORDERED that this application is APPROVED SUBJECT to the following CONDITIONS.

1. The campus shall be developed in accordance with the plans marked as Exhibit No. 8 amended by Exhibit No. 21A of the record.

2. The campus shall be used primarily as a research facility and for post-doctorial education. The revised campus plan shall include: a new research building; a renovated Cyclotron Building to serve as a center for Isotope Geochemistry and Cosmochemistry; a renovated Main Building to serve as the administrative library and social center, and; a renovated shop area to provide an auditorium seating approximately ninety persons and to house administrative staff and visiting scientist.

3. The campus population shall not exceed ninety-nine persons.

    a. There shall be no more than thirty-four students or fellows.

    b. There shall be no more than thirty faculty, fifteen technical support staff and twenty administrative staff and other personnel.

4. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for the campus shall not exceed 0.88.

5. There shall be a minimum of sixty-seven

off-street parking spaces provided.

6. Existing landscaping shall be maintained in a healthy state. New landscaping shall be provided in accordance with Exhibit No. 21A (Street No. L-1) of the record.

7. The applicant shall make every effort to facilitate an orderly phasing of construction to minimize any impacts on the neighborhood.

VOTE: 3-0 (Paula L. Jewell, William F. McIntosh and Carrie L. Thornhill to approve; Charles R. Norris not present, not noting).

BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED BY: _____
EDWARD L. CURRY
Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: OCT 28 1999

UNDER 11 DCMR 3103.1, "NO DECISION OR ORDER OF THE BOARD SHALL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL TEN DAYS AFTER HAVING BECOME FINAL PURSUANT TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT."

THIS ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER, UNLESS WITHIN SUCH PERIOD AN APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING PERMIT OR CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS.

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