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Outline of Testimony before the Zoning Commission

Application No. 04-32
Center for Hellenic Studies
3100 Whitehaven Street, N.W.

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Director of Zoning and Land Use Services
Holland & Knight LLP

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I. Site location and description

A. Location

1. South side of Whitehaven Street between Dumbarton Oaks Park and Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

2. Project site consists of Lot 802 in Square 2155

B. Size

1. Total site area is approximately 283,750 square feet

2. Site has frontage of approximately 616 feet on Whitehaven Street

C Existing site condition:

1. Campus for Harvard University's Center for Hellenic Studies

2. Administration Building

3. Residential buildings

a. 6 detached dwellings

b. Director's residence

c. Fellows' apartments

4. Vehicular access from the west end of the site

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.04-32
EXHIBIT NO.16D

5. Secondary pedestrian access from the east end of the site

6. 38 existing parking spaces

II. Description of surrounding area

A. Massachusetts Avenue Heights/Embassy Row area

B. To the north:

1. Whitehaven Street

2. Single family detached dwellings

3. Chanceries of Brazil and New Zealand

4. Chanceries of Bolivia and Great Britain

C. To the west:

1. Chancery of Denmark

2. Dumbarton Oaks Park

3. Commercial uses fronting on Wisconsin Avenue

D. To the south:

1. Dumbarton Oaks Park

2. Dumbarton Oaks property

E. To the east:

1. Chancery of Italy

2. Massachusetts Avenue

3. Rock Creek Park

III. Existing zoning: D/R-1-A

A. R-1-A

1. Uses (§§201 – 221)

a) Single family detached dwellings permitted as a matter-of-right

b) College or university use permitted with Zoning Commission approval as a special exception

2. Height - maximum of 3 stories, 40 feet (§400.1)

3. Lot size (§401.3):

a) Minimum area – 7,500 square feet

b) Minimum width – 75 feet

4. Lot occupancy – maximum of 40% percent §403.2)

5. Rear yard – minimum of 25 feet (§404.1)

6. Side yards – minimum of 8 feet (§405.9)

7. Parking (§2101.1):

a) Single family dwelling: 1 space

b) College or university: 2 for each 3 teachers, plus either 1 for each 10 classroom seats or 1 for each 12 stadium seats or 1 for each 10 auditorium seats, whichever is greater

B. Diplomatic overlay – chancery use permitted subject to disapproval by the Foreign Missions Board of Zoning Adjustment

IV. Zoning history

A. Approval to use property as part of Harvard University on a temporary basis (BZA Order No. 6343, June 21, 1961)

B. Permanent approval for Center for Hellenic Studies (BZA Order No. 6430, August 23, 1961)

C. Approval of modification of the campus plan and further processing to construct a shed and porch (BZA Order No. 14659, October 16, 1987)

D. Approval of further processing for renovation and addition to an existing dormitory (BZA Order No. 15780, February 17, 1993)

E. Approval of further processing for alterations and additions to the Director's Residence, the Administration Building and two of the fellow's houses (BZA Order No. 16213, March 28, 1997), with condition requiring submission of new campus plan

V. Proposed use

A. Continued use as a college or university

B. Minor additional construction to enhance existing facilities:

1. Library addition to administration building

2. Courtyard enclosure for administration building

3. Addition to one of the single family dwellings for restrooms in connection with its conversion to a meeting room and video conferencing facility

4. Relocation of tool shed

5. Relocation of one parking space

C. No further processing; additional construction will require further review by the Commission

D. No change in access

E. No change in number of parking spaces

VI. Relief required: special exception for approval of a college or university campus plan

VII. Standards for the special exception (§210)

A. Use as a college or university shall not likely become objectionable because of noise traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions

B. Bulk allowed to be maximum of 1.8 FAR

C. Submission of a campus plan showing location, height and bulk of all present and proposed improvements and description of activities

D. Interim use allowed within reasonable distance

E. Relocation of proposed major new building off-campus requires Commission approval for any different building

F. Commission shall consider policies of District Elements of Comprehensive Plan

G. Certification of FAR

H. Referral to Office of Planning and Department of Transportation

VIII. Compliance with the special exception standards

A. No objectionable impact

1. Total amount of new construction proposed is 10,495 square feet of gross floor area (0.04 FAR)

2. No change in access or number of parking spaces

3. All additional construction is substantially removed from public frontages

4. Whitehaven Street has substantial institutional character already and proposed changes to campus would not disturb the existing quiet conditions

B. Total proposed FAR will be 0.20 (from existing 0.16)

C. Campus plan contains all required information

D. No interim use proposed

E. No relocation of major existing building

F. Comprehensive Plan

1. Major policy to stabilize and improve the District's neighborhoods (§102)

2. Objectives for residential neighborhoods include protecting neighborhoods from disruptive uses (§1102.1(e))

3. Policy to protect neighborhoods from incompatible uses by buffering and appropriate separation of uses (§1104.1(i))

4. Generalize Land Use Map designates for low density residential

G. Certification of FAR set forth in Appendix A-1 of the Campus Plan

H. Referrals were made to OP and DDOT

IX. Conclusions

A. Application meets requirements for the special exception

B. Campus plan modifications are minimal increases to existing facilities

C. Comprehensive Plan contains limited guidance but proposal is generally consistent with goal of protecting residential neighborhoods

D. The application should be granted