

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia **ZONING COMMISSION**
District of Columbia

FROM:  Ellen M. McCarthy
Director

CASE NO. 06-16

EXHIBIT NO. 24

DATE: May 12, 2006

SUBJECT: Z.C. CASE NO. 06-16 – Request filed by Holland & Knight LLP for a special exception for further processing for Gallaudet University at 800 Florida Avenue, N.E.

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APPLICATION

This applicant proposes to construct a building consisting of approximately 85,400 square feet of gross floor area to house the Sorenson Language and Communication Center

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends **APPROVAL** of the application.

BACKGROUND

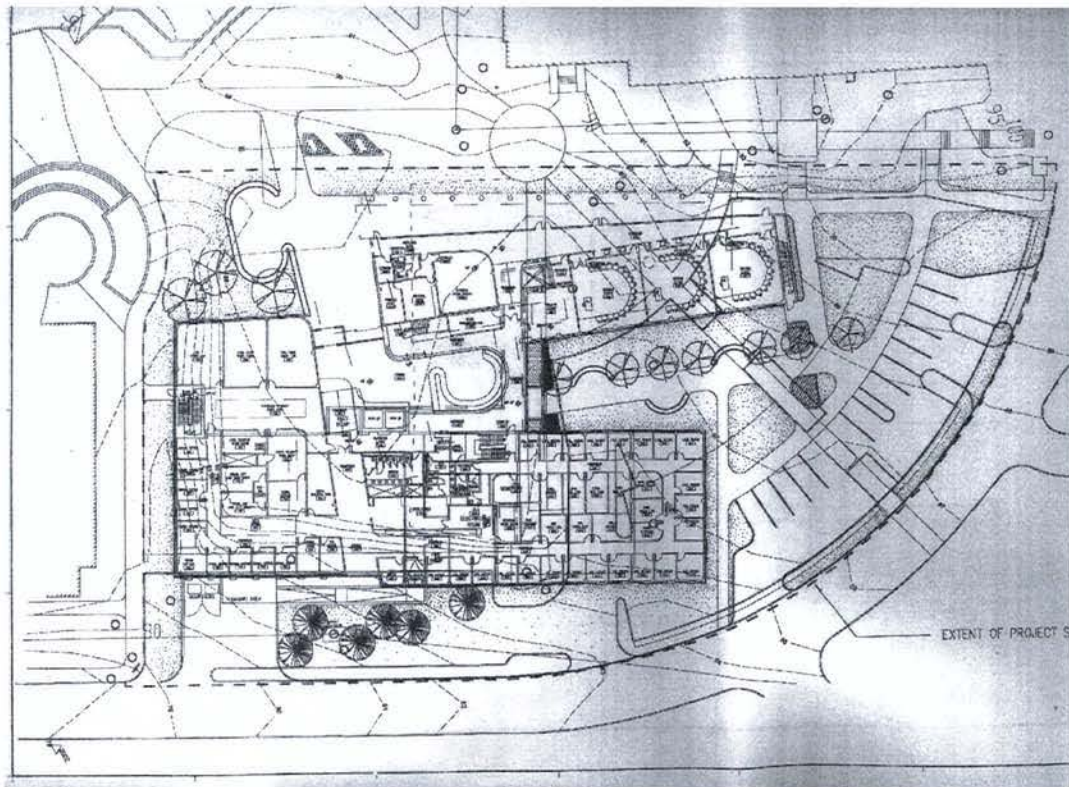
Zoning Commission Order No. 03-02 approved the Gallaudet University Facilities Master Plan, 2002-2012 on August 26, 2003

The subject application is the first further processing application to that plan

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant requests special exception approval for further processing under the approved campus plan to construct a new Sorenson Language and Communication Center. The proposed building consists of 84,500 square feet of gross floor area, 59 feet in height and will serve as an academic teaching and research facility

Construction of the building will result in the reduction of an existing 109-space surface parking lot to 14 spaces, for a net loss of 95 parking spaces. No garage parking will be provided within the building



PROPOSED SORENSON LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION CENTER

ZONING REGULATIONS

Section 210 of the Zoning Regulations, Colleges and Universities, sets forth the criteria required for approval of university uses within residential zone districts.

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 subject application requests special exception approval by the Zoning Commission to permit the construction of a university building on the campus of Gallaudet University within the R-4 Zone District.

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.*

The subject application does not propose an increase in the number of students, faculty or staff, and therefore will not result in an increase in traffic. The proposal will result in a net

loss of 95 parking spaces, reducing parking for the university from 1,424 to 1,329 spaces. However, only 748 parking spaces are required based on a projected 2012 student enrollment of 2,020 and 819 staff and faculty members. Therefore, the remaining parking is considered sufficient and the proposed Sorenson Language and Communication Center will not become objectionable to neighboring property.

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 subject application proposes to increase the FAR for the university as a whole from 0.42 to 0.44, which is less than the maximum FAR permitted of 1.80

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,

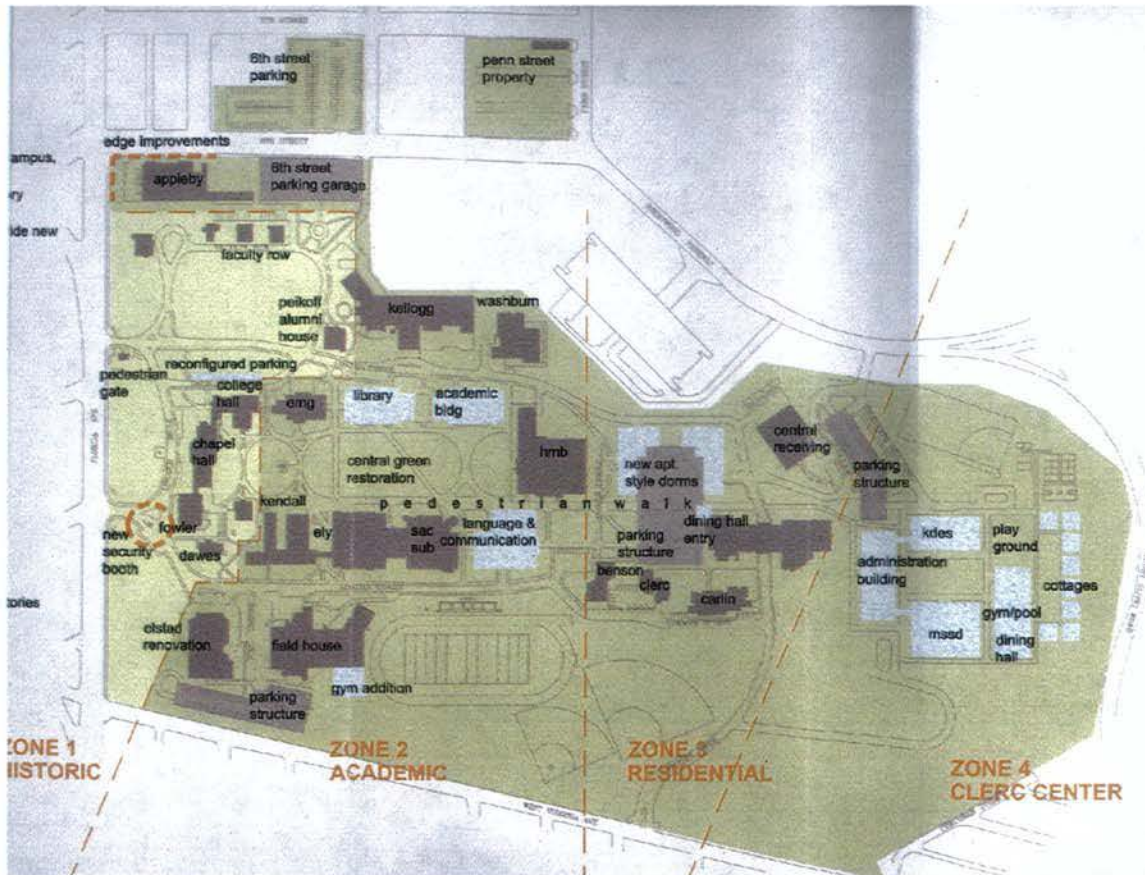
(c) Athletic and other recreational facilities, and

(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 2002-2012 Facilities Master Plan includes a plan for all present and proposed improvements. The Sorenson Language and Communications Center site is located within the Academic Zone, consistent with the application. The FAR for the campus will increase to 0.44, less than the maximum 1.8 permitted.

The 2002-2012 Facilities Master Plan proposes a FAR of 0.42, or a reduction of 180,000 square feet of gross floor area by the year 2012. While the subject application proposes the addition of 84,500 square feet, increasing the FAR to 0.46, the applicant informed the Office of Planning that it must construct this building prior to the demolition of any existing buildings so as to have space in which to relocate existing university operations. Therefore, the construction of this building will allow the University to move forward on

its plan to reduce the FAR, and the subject application is in conformance with the plan for the campus as a whole.



CAMPUS PLAN

- 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 subject application does not propose interim use of land located off-campus.

- 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.*

No major new buildings are proposed to be moved off-campus as a result of this application

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*

The subject application is for the construction of an academic building, pursuant to the approved Campus Plan. The request is consistent with the policies of the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan, including the following objective:

“Meet various citizens’ needs with educational, recreational and cultural facilities,” (§ 1629 1(e))

The proposed academic building is a reasonable addition to a university campus

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*

The subject application contains documentation of the existing and proposed FARs for the campus as a whole. The proposed FAR is 0.44, less than the maximum 1.80 permitted.

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 Transportation for review and written reports*

The subject application was referred to the Office of Planning and the Department of Transportation for review and written reports. The District Department of Transportation prepared a written report indicating that it has no objection to the proposal.

Based on the analysis above, the Office of Planning concludes that the subject application is in conformance with the provisions of the § 210

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 5B, at its regularly scheduled meeting of May 4, 2006, voted to support the application

AGENCY COMMENTS

The District Department of Transportation, in a memorandum dated May 9, 2006, concluded that the proposed improvements will have no measurable adverse traffic impact on the

surrounding streets and adjacent residential neighborhood and therefore has no objection to the proposal

RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends **APPROVAL** of the application as submitted by the applicant.

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