

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: D C Zoning Commission

FROM: *JS*
Jennifer Steingasser,
Deputy Director

DATE: January 10, 2007

SUBJECT: Z C Application No. 06-39 - Final Report on Proposed Campus Plan Amendment and Further Processing for The Catholic University of America, 2002 Campus Master Plan, 400 Michigan Avenue, N E (Square 3821 Lots 44 and 45)

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SUMMARY

Originally Catholic University of America (Catholic University), the applicant, submitted an application requesting Zoning Commission approval of

- A further amendment of the 2002 Campus Plan to authorize relocation of the ground maintenance and storage facilities erected in the northeast corner of the Main Campus to the northwest corner, and construction of 3 residence halls in the northeast corner of the Main Campus; and
- Special exception approval to
 - Proceed with further processing to allow construction of the 2 of 3 residence halls,
 - Relief under § 411.11 to permit the rooftop structures within the 11' setback required per § 400.7, and
 - Extension of special exception approval granted under Order 04-10 to allow continued use of the temporary student housing units through 2012

In a Pre-hearing Statement dated January 8, 2007, the applicant modified this application to request further processing to allow construction of the only first of the 3 residence halls, and to requests relief from § 411.5 for the penthouse and a planned architectural embellishment on the new residence hall

RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends approval as submitted

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-39

EXHIBIT NO. 18

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BACKGROUND

Lots 44 and 45 have an approximate area of 4,529,300 square feet (104 acres) and are developed with the Main Campus of the Catholic University and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. To the north across Taylor Street, N E are the Heights West Apartments and the North Campus between Hawaii Avenue and McCormack Street, N E, and to the south across Michigan Avenue, N.E. is the University South Campus. To the east across McCormack Avenue are railroad rights-of-way, and to the southwest across Harwood Road adjacent to Michigan Avenue is the 49-acre West Campus, former U.S. Government property acquired by the University previously under the control of the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home. Due west (north of West Campus) are the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center (3900 Harwood Road), Little Sisters of the Poor, et al (4200 Harwood Road), Ukrainian Catholic National Shrine (4250 Harwood Road) and Ukrainian Catholic Seminary of St Josaphat (201 Taylor Street, N E.)

The Main, North and South Campuses are in the R-5-A district within the Mixed-use Diplomatic overlay district. The West Campus and properties north of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center are in the R-5-A district, while the cultural center site is in the SP-1 district. The campus has also been subject to following pertinent zoning actions:

On May 22, 1992, the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) approved Order No. 1582 thereby approving the 1992 Catholic University Campus Plan for a period of 10 years (until 2002).

Subsequently, on May 23, 2003, the Zoning Commission adopted Order No. 02-20 and the 2002 University Campus Plan with the following conditions:

1. *The 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. *No changes were made to the enrollment maximum enrollment 7,500 graduate and undergraduate FTE's.*
4. *The number of faculty and staff shall not exceed 1,710 during the 10-year period of the Plan, however the maximum parking spaces provided on campus over the 10-year period of the Plan increased to 2,340.*
5. *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.*
6. *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.*
7. *One hundred percent of the traditional, full-time undergraduate, non-commuter freshmen and sophomores are required to live on campus.*
8. *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.*
9. *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.

- On April 6, 1994, the BZA approved Order No 15922, an amendment of the approved campus plan and further processing under the amended plan to construct the ground maintenance and storage facilities that currently exist in the northeast corner of the Main Campus
- On August 3, 1999, the BZA approved Order No 16482, authorizing 26 temporary manufactured housing units for 96 students on the Main Campus (east of Curtey Hall) for a period of 5 years (until 2004)
- On June 28, 2004, the Zoning Commission approved Order No 04-10, allowing continued use of referenced temporary student housing for an additional 5 years (until 2009)

REQUEST

The applicant proposes to further amend the 2002 Catholic University Campus Plan to

- authorize relocation of the existing ground maintenance and storage facilities from the northeast corner to the northwest corner of the Main Campus (south of Capuchin College),
- authorize construction of 3 resident halls in the northeast corner of the Main Campus forming a "U" around a terraced court, and
- further processing under this amended plan to construct first residence hall

The applicant has also requested permission to continue to use the referenced temporary student housing until the expiration of this campus plan in 2012

This course of action is being taken so that student housing would be clustered along McCormack Avenue and Taylor Road, between the academic buildings to the south and athletic facilities north of Taylor Road, N E The proposed residence hall will replace student housing on the South Campus that will be demolished over time The proposed construction is anticipated to only impact trees along the abutting edge of the wooded area south of Taylor Road, N E

Only Building 1 of the 3 residence halls would be constructed at this time. Building 1 would be 7 stories and 70 feet in height (reduced from the previous 73 feet 8 inches), have a gross floor area of approximately 123,660 square feet and include approximately 400 beds It would be of stone and masonry construction with design elements reflecting the residence halls nearby The ground floor would include a laundromat, study and community rooms for use of the students and a suite for the Resident Director According the elevations in the Pre-hearing Statement, the mechanical penthouse would rise 9 feet 8 inches above the rooftop and be surrounded (screened) by an architectural embellishment that is 10 feet taller (a total of 19 feet 8 inches above the roof, 79 feet 8 inches above grade) However, this penthouse would not have a 11 setback from all exterior walls per § 400 7 (b) Note that residence hall parking would be provided elsewhere on the Main

Campus.

There are no proposals to change maximum enrollment, personnel or faculty associated with this amendment although the amendment projects "... for the academic year 2011-12 that growth in employment ... not exceed 2,010 employees, and if (the University) reach(es) our target enrollment will be 1,812 employees ..." If these numbers were achieved, the number of employees would exceed the current maximum of 1,710.

ZONING ANALYSIS

The R-5-A district is a low and moderate density general residential zone. "Universities" are a use permitted by special exception only within the R-5-A, subject to approval of a campus plan by the Zoning Commission. The Main Campus which is the site of this application is zoned R-5-A and within a Mixed-Use Diplomatic (D) overlay district.

Standard	R-5-A Requirement	2002 Campus Plan (current)	Proposed Building	Requires Relief
Height	40 feet Unlimited stories	90 feet unlimited stories	70 feet 7 stories	None
Floor Area Ratio	0.9 FAR (max.) (1.8) ¹	0.33 FAR (max.) (735,500 s.f.) ²	0.34 FAR (859,155 s.f.)	None
Lot Occupancy	40%	Same	Same	None
Penthouse Height	18.5 ft.	N/A	9 feet 9 inches	None
Penthouse Setback	Setback from exterior walls = Height ³	N/A	< 9 feet 9 inches	Yes
Parking (on-site)	per campus plan ⁴	1,936/ 2,340 spaces ⁵	1,956/ 2,355 spaces	None

The penthouse structure and architectural embellishment (screen) would be of different heights which could violate § 411.5. Zoning Regulation § 210 Colleges and Universities also 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 application proposes to retain existing temporary student housing for the duration of the amended 2002 Campus Plan, and to construct additional permanent student housing in the northwest corner of the Main Campus.*

¹ § 210.3 of the Zoning Regulations

² reduced from 0.44 FAR as a result of the acquisition of the 49-acre West Campus

³ § 400.7 (b)

⁴ § 2106.1

⁵ Maximum number of short-term spaces / long-term spaces

- 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 proposed residence hall location is bounded by Taylor Road and the North Campus further north, other dormitory uses to the south, McCormack Street and railroad right-of-way to the east, and woodlands to the west. As a result of the separation of the site from most of the adjoining properties by roads and the buffering of adjoining properties by existing woodlands, neighboring properties will not be adversely affected by noise or other objectionable conditions.
- 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 no increase in the maximum bulk approved under the current 2002 Campus Plan.
- 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 subject application includes preliminary plans for the first residence hall. The Pre-Hearing Statement notes that the applicant is committed to incorporating "green" design elements into these new buildings. Accordingly, the applicant is seeking U S Green Building Council's Leadership in Engineering and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification for the proposed residence hall because the building designs score a "29" on the LEED-NC Project Checklist. OP supports these initiatives.

Special exception relief requested under § 411 11 for the penthouse structure and architectural embellishment from the required 11 setback (§ 400 7), and the requirement that roof structures be the same height (§ 411 5) can be granted without negatively impacting adjacent buildings and property.

- 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.* This application proposed to extend the use of the current temporary student housing units on the Main Campus until the anticipated 2012 expiration date of the 2002 Campus Plan. The applicant indicated there will continue to be a need for this temporary housing until construction of all residential halls is completed and the buildings are available for occupancy.
- 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.* This is not a proposal to move major new buildings off-campus.
- 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.* Reference the Comprehensive Plan section below.
- 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 Pre-hearing Statement indicates that construction of the one residence hall would increase the overall FAR from 0.33 to 0.34, under the maximum 0.44 permitted by the 2002 Campus Plan, the 0.9 permitted by the R-5-A district, and the 1.8 permitted by § 210.3 of the regulations.
- 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.* Consultants Wells & Associates, LLC prepared a parking and traffic assessment of the impact of the proposed amendment for the applicant dated December 4, 2006 that was forwarded to OP and the Department of Transportation (DDOT).

According to this study few, if any new vehicle trips will be generated by the new residence halls, most of the student residents would walk to classes, the new buildings will be convenient to the Brookland-CUA Metro rail station, and campus access to ZipCar and Flexcar services will eliminate the need to own and park privately-owned vehicles. Based on these findings, the study concluded that the proposed residence halls would “ have no adverse impact on the campus or adjacent residential or commercial neighborhoods ”

OP asked the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) for any comments or concerns about consultant's findings To date no comments have been received

Based on this information, the proposed amendment is in conformance with provisions of § 210

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Catholic University campus is designated an Institutional use characterized as lands and facilities occupied by colleges, universities, etc., as predominant uses Approval of this application would not be inconsistent with this designation, therefore this application is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan

AGENCY COMMENTS

OP forwarded the residence hall proposal to the Department of Transportation and Fire and Emergency Medical Emergency Medical Services for comment To date no comments have been received

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

On December 14, 2006, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC 5A) voted to support this proposal by a vote of 6 in favor with 2 abstentions ANC 5C was also recommended approval during its meeting on December 19, 2006

RECOMMENDATION

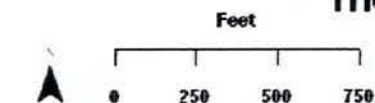
The Office of Planning recommends approval as submitted

Attachment Exhibit 1 Campus Aerial with Zoning

JS/afj



Z.C. Application No. 06-39
The Catholic University of America



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 District of Columbia
 Adrain H. Fenty, Mayor

Office of Planning ~ January 3, 2007

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.

- Street Centerlines
- Water
- Property Squares
- Owner Points (Lite)
- Property Squares
- Residential (CAMA)
- Commercial (CAMA)
- Zoning Districts