

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF PLANNING



Office of the Director

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
**FROM:** *JSB*  
Harriet Tregoning  
Director  
**DATE:** January 26, 2007  
**SUBJECT:** Trinity University Campus Master Plan 2006-2016  
125 Michigan Avenue, N.E.  
**CASE:** Z.C. Case No. 06-42

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**APPLICATION**

Trinity University has filed for special exception relief pursuant §§ 210 and 3104 of 11 DCMR for approval of its master campus plan, Trinity University Campus Master Plan 2006-2016, by the Zoning Commission for Square 3548, Lot 2, and Parcels 120/33 and 120/34.

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

The Office of Planning recommends approval of the campus plan for a period of ten years subject to further definition of proposed investment projects on campus.

**CAMPUS HISTORY**

Trinity was established on October 20, 1897 by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur on land purchased from Glenwood Cemetery and began holding classes in November 1900. Its first campus plan was approved in 1965. The last campus master plan, 1996-2006, was approved in 1996. That plan permitted an increase of 94,200 gross square feet, and resulted in the addition of the 58,164 square foot Trinity Center for Women and Girls in Sports, which was constructed in 2003. No other buildings were constructed.

The 1996 plan anticipated a doubling of the student enrollment from around 1,050 students up to 2,100 by 2006. It showed a parking inventory of 306 spaces.

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-42  
EXHIBIT NO. 12

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
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EXHIBIT NO.12



**Figure 1: Aerial View of Campus**

## **CAMPUS MASTER PLAN PROPOSAL**

### ***Enrollment***

The submitted master plan proposes several changes to the previous plan. The university proposes to increase enrollment over the next ten years to sustain a baseline financial capacity to remain economically healthy. Currently, Trinity has around 1,600 students split between three bodies: The College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Education, and the School of Professional Studies. Over the next ten years, Trinity intends to develop new academic programs and delivery systems including online and off-site programs. These are intended to help the university achieve its enrollment goals. By 2010, the university intends to enroll a total of 3,000 students in degree programs including 600 undergrad students in the College of Arts and Sciences, 750 graduate students in the School of Education, and 1,650 students in the School of Professional Studies.

Trinity assumes that 10% -15% of the total number of students will take all of their classes online. Also, with a wide range of scheduling options, including many weekend and evening classes, the 600 full-time undergraduate and 2400 professional students would never all be on campus at the same time.

### ***Facilities***

The plan lays out a wide range of facilities goals for the university over the next ten years. Planned or potential projects include:

- Demolition of the existing library and construction of 180,000 square foot University Academic Center
- Complete renovation and modernization of the existing Science Center building
- Renovation of Alumnae Hall to expansion of recreation space and incorporation of the Campus Center concept throughout
- Potential demolition of Cuvilly Hall and construction of new residential facilities with possible commercial or market rate residential components

The following tables lay out the proposed campus development plan:

### **New Construction**

| Project                           | Function                        | Approximate Building Height | Gross Square Footage |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| New Residential Development       | Student/Campus Life/Residential | 5-stories                   | 200,000              |
| University Academic Center        | Administrative/Academic         | feet                        | 180,000              |
| <b>TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE ADDED</b> |                                 |                             | <b>380,000</b>       |

### **Demolitions**

| Project                             | Function                | Approximate Building Height | Gross Square Footage |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Culvilly Hall                       |                         | feet                        | 71,168               |
| Library                             | Administrative/Academic | 3-stories                   | 39,000               |
| <b>TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE REMOVED</b> |                         |                             | <b>110,168</b>       |

### **Renovations**

| Project | Function                | Approximate Building Height | Gross Square Footage |
|---------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Science | Administrative/Academic | 4-stories                   | 42,060               |

|                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>NET CHANGE</b> | <b>+269,832 SQUARE FEET</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|

### ***Historic Preservation***

The Trinity University campus has significant historic resources on its grounds. Four of its main buildings were constructed prior to 1930 and many campus structures are potential historic landmarks. The applicant has agreed to work with the Historic Preservation Office to do a full review of campus buildings and work with HP staff on any construction, renovation, or exterior alteration of historic campus buildings.

### **EXISTING ZONING**

The subject property is located within the R-5-A (low density general residence) Zone District and the Mixed Use Diplomatic Overlay District. The Zoning Commission is empowered to approve the use of colleges and universities within the R-5-A District. All uses, buildings and structures permitted within the R-5-A District are also permitted within the Mixed Use Diplomatic Overlay District.

### **R- 5-A District**

*"The R-5 Districts are General Residence Districts designed to permit flexibility of design by permitting in a single district, except as provided in §§ 350 through 361, all types of urban residential development if they conform to the height, density, and area requirements established for these districts under chapter 4 of this title. The R-5 Districts shall also permit the construction of those institutional and semi-public buildings that would be compatible with adjoining residential uses and that are excluded from the more restrictive Residence Districts."* (§ 350.1)

### **Mixed Use Diplomatic Overlay District**

*"The Mixed Use Diplomatic (D) Overlay District is established to implement the Foreign Missions Act, approved August 24, 1982..."* (§ 1000.1)

### **RELIEF REQUESTED**

The application is in conformance with the criteria contained within § 210, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, as described below.

*"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."*

This application is for the use of the subject property as an academic institution of higher learning, including dormitories.

*"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 campus does not directly abut any residential properties. The only property that it does directly abut is Oblate College to the north, a similar type institution. To the east, across 4<sup>th</sup> Street, is Saint Paul's College, another similar type institution. To the west, across Michigan Avenue and to the south, across Franklin Street, are residential developments that face into their properties, and not the abutting street.

In addition to the large campus and limited residential neighbors, the noise is further limited by the layout of campus. The sports facilities are centrally located on campus and the campus contains large tracts of open space that surround most of the buildings and on-campus uses.

### Traffic

The applicant has presented a traffic study with the plan and has met with DDOT representatives to review the plan. In its report dated January 24, 2007, DDOT states that they have no objection to approval of the campus plan subject to the following measures proposed in the traffic study:

- Trinity should work with DDOT to provide for an entrance warning sign, east of the proposed entrance off Franklin Street, to provide notice to west bound traffic at such time as the Franklin Street gates are opened.
- Trinity shall continue to publicize to likely attendees the availability of its shuttle service between the campus and the Brookland/Catholic University Metrorail Station prior to major events.
- Trinity should continue its use of traffic control support by the MPD during major events that would utilize most of the capacity of the proposed campus.
- Trinity shall provide parking spaces for at least 20 bicycles located near building entrances for use by students and staff.
- Trinity should continue its contingency plans for the use of off-site parking, such as the Washington Hospital Center, and identify other potential sites, for unusual situations where modal choices of event attendees result in excessive parking demand.

### Number of Students

The proposed campus plan proposes an increase in enrollment from 1,650 to 3,000, including 600 full time students. Forty percent are graduate students. The majority of the students are expected to be evening and weekend students, and not all 3,000 are expected to be there at the same time. In addition, approximately 100 students are expected to be enrolled in courses in Anacostia and it is anticipated that 300 to 500 will be enrolled on-line. This reduces the

number of students on campus to between 2,400 and 2600. As the campus is approximately 27 acres in size, the increase is minimal.

### Housing

While the amount of student housing on campus is adequate to meet the needs of the university, the existing residential buildings are becoming outdated. The university intends over the course of this plan to seek partnership ventures with for-profit entities to develop new student housing on campus with a potential mix of market rate units and/or retail uses. OP does not consider this aspect of the plan to be appropriately well-defined at this stage and recommends that the plan either clarify the use, bulk, and exact location of each proposed building, or that no investment be shown and the university return to the Commission for modifications of the plan in the future.

*"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 gross floor area permitted within the R-5-A District is permitted up to a maximum ratio of 1.8. The subject application proposes a floor area ratio of 0.72, less than the maximum permitted. This FAR includes only the existing and proposed buildings that are a part of Trinity University, and may not include any floor area that may be a part of the possible joint venture with a private developer in the southeastern corner of the campus.

*"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 proposed master plan does not contain a description of all proposed buildings. It does describe all existing buildings, and those that are proposed as a part of the campus. However, there is no description of the future residential buildings that would be a part of joint venture with a private developer. Therefore, the application is in conformance with this provision only for the campus related buildings.

*"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 any off-campus interim use of land or improved property.

*"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 subject application does not propose to move off-campus any major new building that had been proposed in a campus plan.

*"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 Comprehensive Plan recommends the following objective:

- 1629.1 "The objectives for land use/zoning are as follows:  
(e) Meet various citizens' needs with educational, recreational and cultural facilities;"

OP believes that the proposed campus plan furthers the educational goals of the District and thus of the 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."*

This application is not for the approval of a new building, but rather for the approval of a new campus plan. As such, this criterion is not applicable at this time.

#### **COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

The plan was presented by the applicant to ANC 5C. At its meeting on January 16, 2007, the ANC voted unanimously to support the plan. OP is aware of no other neighborhood concerns or comments on the plan.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Office of Planning has reviewed the proposed campus master plan for Trinity University and finds that it is generally in conformance with Section 210 of the Zoning Regulations. OP recommends against striping of a large area of the campus for potential investment, and instead OP recommends further clarification of the location, bulk, and use of any future buildings, especially those containing non-university investment uses. Subject to this condition, the Office of Planning recommends approval of the proposed campus plan.

HT/tp