



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: *JLS*
Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director

DATE: May 10, 2019

SUBJECT: ZC #12-01B – Catholic University – Campus Plan Amendment and Further Processing for a Dining Hall

I. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to Subtitle X § 101, the applicant requests a special exception for a campus plan amendment and further processing of the approved Catholic University 2012 Campus Master Plan. The application proposes a new dining facility in a location proximate to that shown in the campus plan, and of a scale consistent with that shown in the plan.

The Office of Planning (OP) is supportive of the addition of a dining hall, which will help to address the lack of “adequate lounge space, office areas for student organizations and clubs, and dining facilities” as noted in the approved Campus Plan (p. 76).

OP recommends approval of the campus plan amendment, as the changes proposed would have no impacts to surrounding neighborhoods, and the revised plan would still achieve most of the goals of the approved plan. The design proposed in the further processing is consistent with the campus plan, as revised, and the architecture is appropriate for the campus as a whole and for the specific site in question. OP can recommend approval of the further processing subject to the applicant minimizing the large degree of design flexibility proposed on Sheet A101C of Exhibit 12B.

II. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

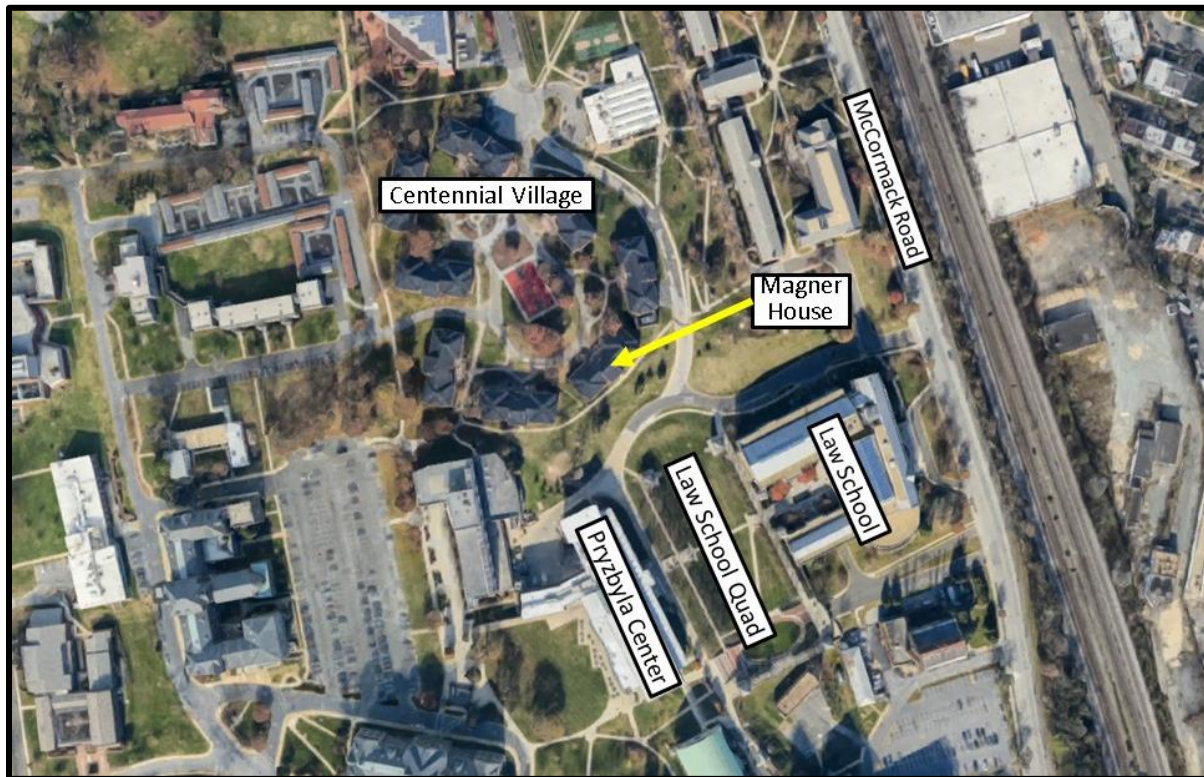
Applicant	Catholic University of America
Location	Center of the Catholic University main campus, at the north end of the law school quad Ward 5, ANC 5A Square 3821, Lot 44
Zoning	RA-1 – Low Density Apartment Zone; University uses permitted by special exception
Existing Use of Property	Dormitory (Magner House)
Comprehensive Plan Policy Map	Institutional Uses



Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use	Institutional Uses
Application and Proposed Use of Property	<p>The applicant seeks a campus plan amendment which would shift the site for the student dining and activity building south from the location for which it was approved, and which would contemplate loading in a location not previously planned for loading.</p> <p>The further processing request proposes a new dining facility with accessory office and meeting spaces on the present location of a dormitory; Total floor area of 36,500 sf; Net increase in floor area of 17,417 sf over existing; Total height to the top of the tower of 52'; Loading area at the southwest corner of the building, and revised pedestrian circulation through and around the building.</p>

III. SITE AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject site is within Catholic University’s main campus, roughly at its north-south midpoint, at the north end of the existing law school quad. The proposed dining and student activity building would sit on the current site of Magner House, one of the eight dormitories comprising Centennial Village. The topography slopes up from the law school quad to Centennial Village. That open area is bisected by a service drive that provides access to loading facilities for the Pryzbyla Center, which houses existing dining facilities that would remain. See the existing conditions vicinity map below.



Campus Plan Amendment

The applicant requests an amendment to alter one of the organizing concepts of the 2012 plan, which proposed a new, semi-formal-to-formal east-west quad with a central axis terminating on a new dining and student activity building, which would also form the visual terminus of the existing north-south law school quad. Please see the excerpt from the approved campus plan below. And for other excerpts from the plan that provide guidance for the overall form of the campus, including the east-west quad, please refer to Attachment 1.

Excerpt From Approved 2012 Campus Plan (Exhibit 17 of the Campus Plan, p. 67)



The proposed campus plan amendment would move the proposed building south, off the central east-west axis, and would not present a building face orthogonal to the future quad. The revised campus plan suggests a tower focal point for the walkway on the south side of the proposed quad.

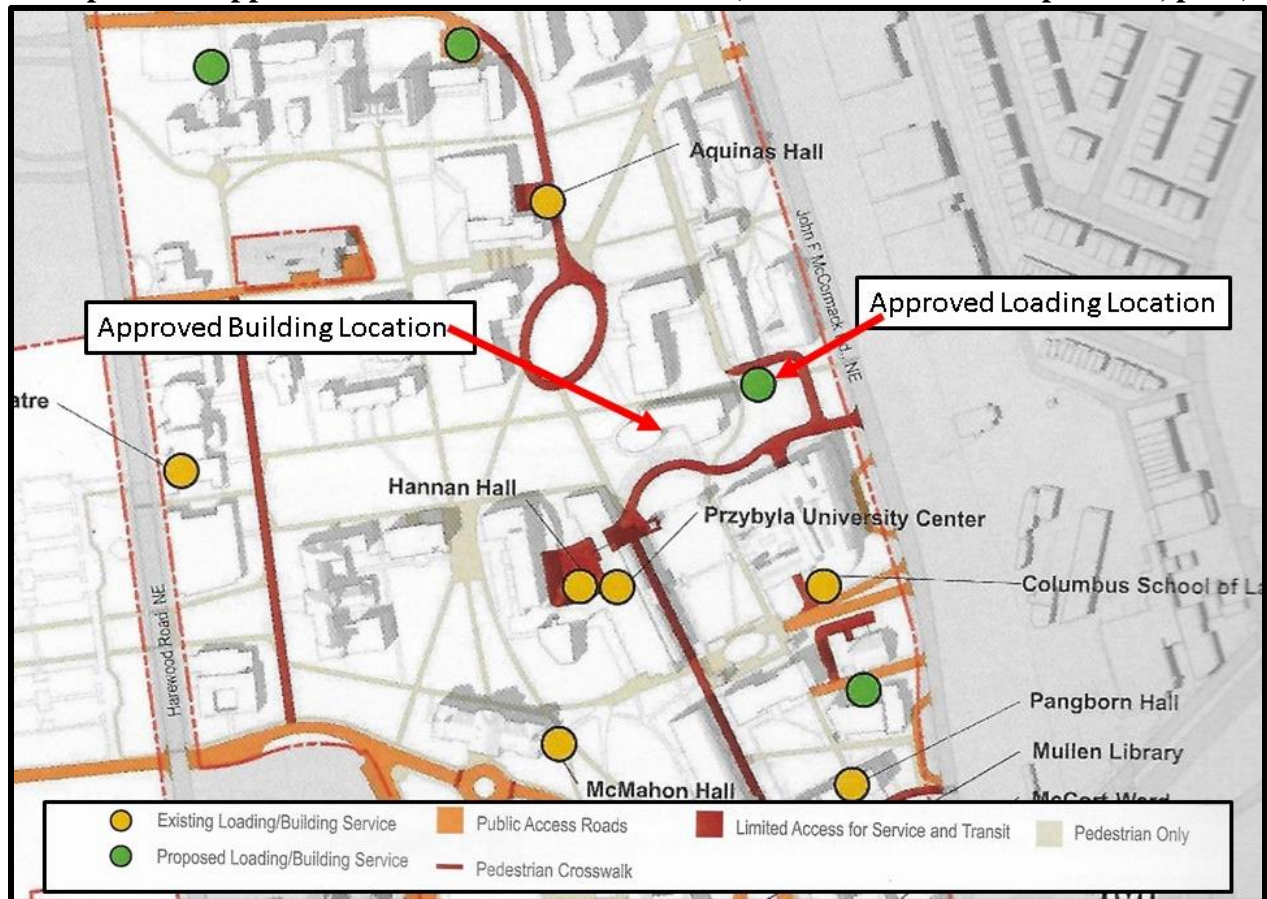
The proposed building in the campus plan amendment would appear to be approximately the same size as the formerly proposed building, just altered in shape and location. The amendment would also appear to remove a formerly proposed building shown as “C1” on the approved plan, which would have been located north of the Pryzbyla Center. The overall result in the ultimate condition would be a less formal arrangement of buildings around the east-west quad, and no central visual terminus. Pedestrian circulation in the proposed campus plan would be enhanced by allowing pedestrian movement through the center of the building, providing a direct connection from the law school quad to uphill uses. Please refer to the excerpt from Exhibit 16A below, the applicant’s proposed campus plan.

Excerpt From Applicant’s Proposed Campus Plan (Exhibit 16A)

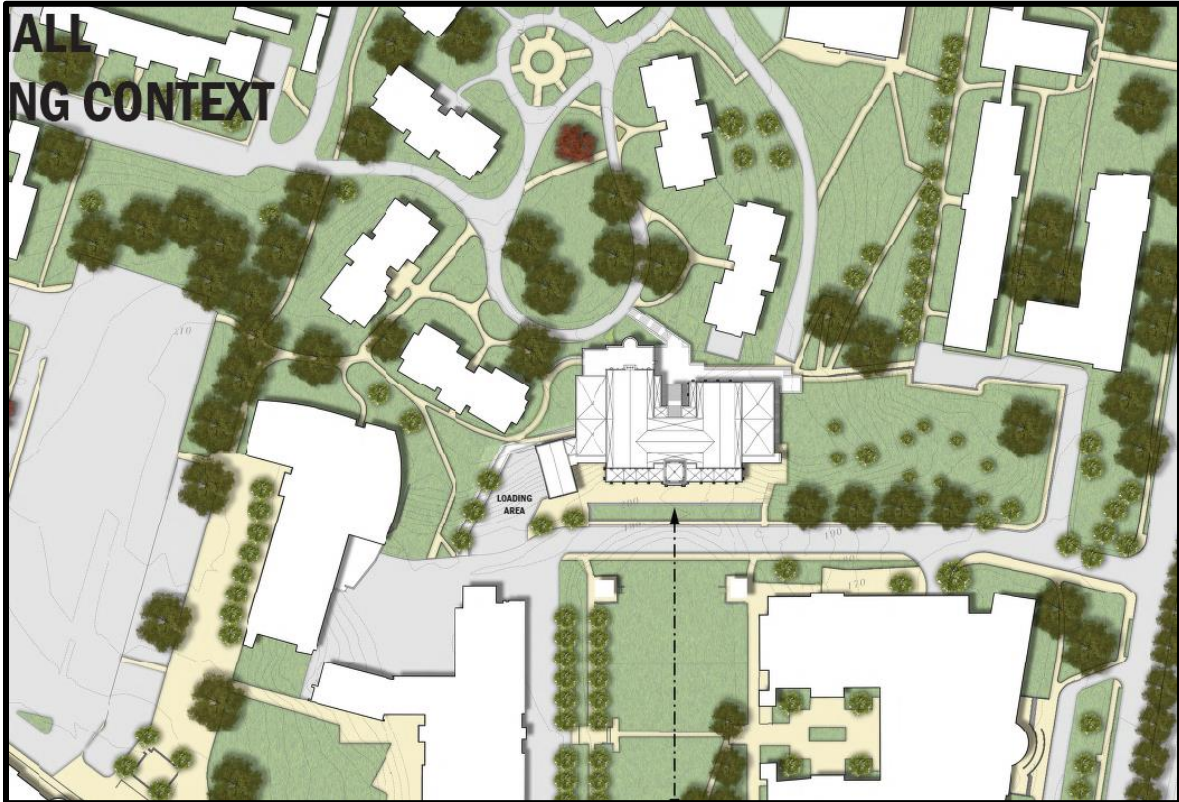


The approved campus plan provided for continuation of the loading area at the Przybyla Center, but contemplated that future loading would occur at the periphery of the campus. Specifically in this case the building in question would have had loading on its eastern end. The campus plan amendment proposes to allow an expansion of the existing loading facility to serve the new dining facility, and, with a reduced east-west footprint for the proposed building, eliminate the loading area on the east side of the building. Please refer to the approved circulation plan below, as well as the proposed site plan.

Excerpt From Approved Vehicular Circulation Plan (Exhibit 26 of the Campus Plan, p. 93)



Excerpt From Proposed Site Plan (Exhibit 16A)



As seen on the site plan above, the interim condition would retain the other dorms of Centennial Village. The campus plan amendment does not propose any changes to enrollment or staffing numbers, or any of the conditions approved with the 2012 campus plan. According to the applicant's statements in Exhibit 12, the University currently complies with all applicable conditions.

Further Processing

The further processing application would provide a dining hall building, which, in addition to the actual dining facility, would also provide space for student activities. The total size of the building would be 36,500 square feet, with a height to the top of the main tower of 52 feet. The building would be gothic in appearance, a character appropriate to the Catholic University campus. As viewed from the south, the main portion of the building would be symmetrical, with a central tower and two flanking front gables. Attached to the main portion of the building would be a loading wing on the west side. One prominent feature of the building is an open-air central passageway and stair through the building providing a direct link from the law school quad to uses further up the hill. Please refer to Exhibit 12B for floor plans and elevations. Note that the key plans in Exhibit 12B refer to an earlier version of the design and do not reflect the currently proposed footprint.

IV. CAMPUS PLAN AMENDMENT AND FURTHER PROCESSING REVIEW

University or college use in a low or moderate density residential zone is permitted as a special exception as part of a campus plan. In addition to the campus plan application itself, reviews are required for individual buildings in “further processing” applications, which may be evaluated concurrently with campus plan amendments, if necessary. Subtitle X Section 101 of the Zoning Regulations provides standards for reviewing campus plan and further processing applications. OP’s analysis of the application against those criteria is below.

101.1 Education use by a college or university shall be permitted as a special exception subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission after its determination that the use meets the applicable standards and condition of this chapter.

Catholic University is an educational use with concomitant dining facilities. The proposed dining hall would fulfill a need for additional dining options on campus, and could serve as a functional nexus for the campus, linking the predominantly residential northern part of the main campus and the primarily academic southern part of the main campus.

101.2 The uses shall be located so that they are not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, parking, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.

The proposed dining facility would be located in the center of the main campus, approximately 800 feet and across the metro and railroad tracks from the nearest off-campus residence. Although the building would have some outdoor seating, OP does not anticipate that the noise potentially generated by that outdoor seating would be significant. The use would likely generate additional deliveries and trash truck trips, but those vehicles would access the facility from John McCormack Road, and then from either Michigan Avenue or Taylor Street, and should not pass directly through neighborhood streets. No parking is proposed with the building, and because the cafeteria is intended to serve existing students, no additional automobile traffic should be generated.

101.3 Any commercial use customarily incidental to a university use in an R, RF, or RA zone, or as an adjunct use to a university building, shall be subject to the following conditions:

- a) There shall be a demonstrated and necessary relationship between the use and the university functions;*
- b) The total floor area of all commercial uses, including basement or cellar space, shall occupy no more than ten percent (10%) of the gross floor area of the total campus plan floor area; and*
- c) The commercial use shall be located so that it will not become objectionable to non-university residential neighbors due to hours of operation, noise, parking, loading, lighting, trash, or other operational characteristics that are not customarily associated with a residential use.*

The application materials do not specify whether any floor area would be dedicated to commercial uses such as for-sale restaurant-type food options. But if provided, those uses would be typical for a university use and similar to existing uses in the adjacent Pryzbyla Center. They could require some delivery and trash truck trips, but those vehicles would access the facility from John McCormack Road, and then from either Michigan Avenue or Taylor Street, and should not pass directly through neighborhood streets. OP does not anticipate any negative impacts from hours of operation, noise, lighting or other operational characteristics.

101.4 The campus plan process shall not serve as a process to create general commercial activities or developments unrelated to the educational mission of the applicant or that would be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The proposal would not create general commercial activities on the campus unrelated to the mission of the university.

101.5 The following development standards shall apply to the maximum total density of all buildings and structures on the campus in an R, RF, RA, or RC-1 zone:

TABLE X § 101.5: MAXIMUM TOTAL DENSITY OF ALL BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Zone	Maximum Height (Feet)	Maximum Floor Area Ratio
All R and RF zones	50	1.8
RA-1, RA-2, RA-6, RA-7, RA-8, RC-1	50	1.8
RA-3, RA-4, RA-5, RA-9, RA-10	90	3.5

According to page 3 of Exhibit 12, the FAR for the entire campus would be approximately 0.3, which would be below the maximum of 0.39 permitted in the campus plan, and well below the 1.8 FAR permitted by the Regulations.

According to page 2 of Exhibit 12, the height of the building to the top of the tower would be 52'. The main roof would be lower and should comply with the 50' maximum height in the zone.

101.6 Because of permissive increases as applicable to normal bulk requirements in the low-density zones regulated by this title, it is the intent of this subsection to prevent unreasonable campus expansion into improved low-density zones.

The proposed dining facility would not result in an expansion into low-density zones. The use would be within the existing boundaries of the campus, at the center of the campus, and the

proposal should not result in impacts to nearby residential areas.

101.7 In calculating floor area ratio (FAR), the land area shall not include public streets and alleys, but may include interior private streets and alleys within the campus boundaries.

The FAR calculation included in the campus plan did not include public streets but did include interior streets and driveways within the campus boundaries.

101.8 As a prerequisite to requesting a further processing for each college or university use, the applicant shall have submitted to the Zoning 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.*

Campus Plan Amendment

With application #12-01, the Commission approved the Catholic University campus plan, which illustrated, among other items, the locations of buildings, open spaces, parking facilities, loading facilities, pedestrian ways, streets, and athletic and recreation facilities, and also described the capacity of the campus in terms of students, faculty and staff.

The campus plan amendment seeks a modification of one of the organizing concepts of the 2012 plan. The plan proposed a new, semi-formal-to-formal east-west quad with a central axis terminating on a new dining and student activity building, which would also form the visual terminus of the existing north-south law school quad. Complementing its role as a visual focal point and terminus from multiple vantage points, the building would also have been a functional hub on the campus.

OP fully supports the existing plan, which sought to regularize the sometimes haphazard existing arrangement of buildings on the campus. One way of formalizing the arrangement of buildings was to introduce a new east-west quadrangle – through the demolition of select buildings and the construction of new structures – with a very strong visual focal point on the eastern end. However, the applicant now chooses to amend the plan to provide a less formal arrangement of buildings around the future quad and eliminate the central focal point. OP does not object to the proposed amendment to the building's location, as it would have no impact on surrounding neighborhoods, would provide a grand northern boundary to the law school quad, and would further other campus plan goals such as pedestrian connectivity and providing much-needed dining and student activity

space. OP encourages the applicant, in future campus plan amendments, to consider reintroducing a building, west of the new dining hall, that would form a visual terminus to the east-west quad.

The approved campus plan also sought to locate new loading facilities only at the periphery of the campus, in order to minimize the visual impact to the existing and new open spaces, and to minimize the impacts to pedestrians and bicycles. In the case of the approved dining hall location, loading would have been provided via a loading drive from John McCormack Road. In the amended campus plan, loading for the dining hall would be located adjacent to the existing loading for the Pryzbyla Center. This consolidation has some logic, but would risk impacting the goals of the plan noted above – to minimize the visual and circulation impacts in the heart of campus. The visual impacts should be somewhat mitigated by the topography; The loading would be tucked into the hillside, which should reduce its visibility from the north and west, and also from the south, as a berm should provide some buffering. Overall OP does not object to the revision to the loading in the campus plan, but encourages the applicant to maximize landscaping around the loading facility, and plan for most loading trips to occur late in the evening or early in the morning, to minimize impacts on pedestrians.

Further Processing

Given the changes to the campus plan, OP generally supports the further processing application. The appearance of the building is appropriate for the university, and the building fulfills a key objective of the campus plan to provide additional dining and student activity space. The scale of the building and its location match the amended campus plan. Also, its construction would fulfill other goals of the campus plan, including improved pedestrian circulation, and elimination of an existing north-south road, thereby reducing vehicular movements in that part of campus. As noted above, the applicant should maximize landscaping near the loading docks, and should schedule loading and trash trips for times of minimum pedestrian activity.

While further processing is not a design review, OP's support for the further processing is subject to the applicant constructing the project as shown in Exhibit 12B and minimizing the requests for design flexibility as the flexibility could result in changes to how the building functions on the site. Sheet A101C of Exhibit 12B lists a number of very significant areas of flexibility that could dramatically alter the appearance and impact of the building. For example, a note on the page states that the loggia could grow, or shrink, or be eliminated altogether; the northern porch may grow or be removed altogether; the loading wing may shift orientation and the location and size may shift. These requests for flexibility mean that staff and the Commission do not have adequate certainty about what the building would actually look like and how it would function.

101.9 The further processing of specific buildings, structures, and uses within an approved campus plan shall be processed as a special exception unless the campus plan approval was included in an order granting a first-stage planned unit development (PUD) for the campus, in which case the further processing shall be in the form of second-stage planned unit development applications filed consistent with the conditions of the approved campus plan/PUD.

The present application is appropriately filed as a special exception for a further processing to the original campus plan, as well as an amendment to the campus plan.

101.10 Within a reasonable distance of the college or university campus, and subject to compliance with Subtitle X § 101.2, the Zoning Commission may also permit the interim use of land or improved property with any use that the Zoning Commission may determine is a proper college or university function. The land need not be included in the campus plan. 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 Zoning 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 Applicant is not proposing an interim use of property.

101.11 In reviewing and deciding a campus plan application or new building construction pursuant to a campus plan, the Zoning Commission shall consider, to the extent they are relevant, the policies of the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

As part of Zoning Commission case #12-01, the Commission found that the overall campus plan was not inconsistent with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including the Upper Northeast Area Element and the Brookland Small Area Plan. Please refer to ZC #12-01, Exhibit 30, page 5, paragraph 31. The present application should not change the relationship of the campus or campus plan to the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan's Generalized Policy Map and Future Land Use Map both describe the site as appropriate for institutional uses, and the provision of a dining hall on a university campus would be consistent with those designations.

101.12 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 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.

According to page 3 of Exhibit 12, the FAR for the entire campus would be approximately 0.3, which would be below the maximum of 0.39 permitted in the campus plan.

101.13 Pursuant to Subtitle Z § 405.1, as soon as the application is accepted, the Office of Zoning shall refer the application to the Office of Planning, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Energy and Environment for review and written reports.

As of this writing the record contains no reports from other District agencies.

101.14 Approval of a campus plan shall be based on the determination by the Zoning Commission that the application will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps, and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property, in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps, subject to the special conditions specified in this section.

It is the intent of the Regulations that university uses should be compatible with their surroundings, especially in lower density residential zones. OP concludes that the proposed dining facility would be consistent with the existing scale of buildings on the campus, and, given its location at the center of the campus, should have no detrimental impacts on nearby properties.

101.15 Small deviations from plans approved under further processing that are determined necessary by the Zoning Administrator for compliance with life, safety, or building codes, may be permitted without an amendment to a further processing provided the deviation does not result in an increase in gross floor area of more than four-hundred and fifty square feet (450 sq. ft.) and the addition shall only be used for purposes of ingress, egress, or handicap access.

OP does not anticipate that deviations from the plans for the building would be required, should the application be approved by the Commission.

101.16 A further processing of a campus building shall not be filed simultaneously with a full campus plan application. However, an amendment to an approved campus plan may be considered simultaneously with the further processing if determined necessary by the Zoning Commission.

Pursuant to this section, the applicant requests a campus plan amendment as well as a further processing.

V. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

As of this writing the record contains no reports from District agencies.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The applicant states at page 2 of Exhibit 12 that ANC 5A voted to support the application. As of this writing, the record contains no comments from the ANC or the community.

VII. ATTACHMENT

1. Excerpts From the Approved 2012 Campus Plan

Attachment 1

Excerpts From the Approved 2012 Campus Plan

The following excerpts from the approved 2012 campus plan are policies and exhibits that guide the physical form of the campus, as well as the location of loading facilities. These concepts assisted OP's review of the present application, and some of the policies would, in effect, be modified by the proposed campus plan amendment. References can be found in the record of case #12-01, Exhibit 25B1, unless otherwise noted.

- Improving the physical organization of the campus will connect academic buildings and sacred spaces to residential halls as well as to social and recreational facilities... (p. 60)
- Each distinctive area of campus will enjoy a renewed sense of vibrancy and synergy through improvements to the delineation of quadrangles, sacred spaces, new and renovated buildings, and landscaping. (p. 61)
- Creating additional pedestrian pathways will result in a more cohesive, walkable setting, while connecting buildings on campus... View corridors will be preserved to frame vistas of campus and city landmarks, and serve as organizing devices within the Master Plan. (p. 61)
- The following steps represent key plan attributes that contribute to the cohesiveness of the Master Plan...
 - Improve open spaces and the pedestrian environment on campus
 - Build upon the picturesque, pastoral, and formal landscape qualities of the campus
 - Strengthen axes and focal points to serve as organizing devices on campus
 - Separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic...
 - Improve connections, safety, lighting, signage, and landscape edges...
 - Enhance student housing and on-campus amenities... (p. 62)
- Student center space is in deficit by almost 27,400 usable square feet. Although the Pryzbyla Center is a newer building, it lacks adequate lounge space, office areas for student organizations and clubs, and dining facilities. (p. 75)
- Future landscape designs should augment meandering pastoral qualities, extend them to campus edges, and intensify the formal character of quadrangles in the campus core. (p. 76)
- The campus rises from low-lying streets to a high, north-south ridgeline at the central core. Future buildings and outdoor spaces should be integrated with this terrain and celebrate the changes in topography. (p. 76)
- Loading is currently scattered across the entirety of the Main Campus and heavily concentrated in the center of the campus. This is not only inefficient, it is also not consistent with the University's desire to improve pedestrian conditions on campus and to create a peaceful and calm campus experience. The proposed Master Plan moves all loading activity to the east and north of the campus. There will be four main locations for

loading and all are on the periphery of the Main Campus. Three of the four loading areas can only be accessed by service drives that will not be open to vehicular traffic. The fourth will be accessed from John McCormack Road and will have a minimal presence on the campus. Consolidating the loading and shifting it to the campus periphery will enhance the campus experience while preserving green spaces and pedestrian walks. (ZC #12-01, Exhibit 25C, p. 116)

- Excerpt from Exhibit 23: Proposed Focal Points and Views (p. 81), with position of proposed building indicated by OP.

