

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 14387, of National Forest Products Assn., pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for a special exception under Paragraph 4101.43 to use the subject site as a university facility by Johns Hopkins University and approval of a campus plan in an SP-2 District at premises 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., (Square 181, Lot 850).

HEARING DATES: February 19, 1986 and April 16, 1986
DECISION DATE: May 7, 1986

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. A preliminary matter was raised at the public hearing of February 19, 1986. The proposed campus plan includes two buildings, 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., where the Johns Hopkins University is currently located, and 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., where the University's proposed expansion will be housed. The property at 1740 Massachusetts Avenue was not posted with notice of the BZA hearing until February 13, 1986, six days before the public hearing. Sub-section 302.3 of the BZA's Supplemental Rules of Practice and Procedure requires that the property be posted at least fifteen days in advance of the hearing. Further, property owners within 200 feet of the site were not notified of the application as required by Sub-section 302.2(b). The Board decided that it would limit the hearing to the special exception application, subject to the approval of the campus plan application, which was scheduled for hearing on April 16, 1986.

2. The premises known as 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., are located on the north side of Massachusetts Avenue between 16th and 17th Streets, in an SP-2 District.

3. The subject site is rectangular and has a frontage of 82 feet along Massachusetts Avenue and a depth of 134.69 feet. A sixteen foot wide public alley borders the rear of the site.

4. Adjacent to the west of premises 1619 Massachusetts Avenue is the Airline Pilots Association Building (office/-highrise). Adjacent to the east is the Embassy of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, (a townhouse converted to office use). Next to it is the Embassy of the Commonwealth of Australia (highrise/office complex), and to the north

there is the First Baptist Church complex at 1328 16th Street, N.W. The SP-2 District extends to the east and west of the subject site. An SP-1 District is located to the north, south, and one lot east of the site.

5. The premises known as 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. are located on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue one block west of the subject site in the SP-1 District.

6. The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies ("SAIS") is an institution of higher learning engaged exclusively in graduate educational programs in the field of international studies. SAIS was established in 1943.

7. The SAIS campus in Washington, D.C. presently consists of a single building located at 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. which was constructed for SAIS in 1962.

8. SAIS' full-time equivalent student enrollment has grown from approximately 100 in the early 1960s to a recent peak of approximately 360. Current enrollment is approximately 330 full-time equivalent students, and enrollment will not increase substantially as a result of the acquisition of the building at 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

9. The current facility at 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. is overcrowded, providing inadequate space for the library, classrooms and offices for faculty and staff.

10. Pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, the applicant is seeking a special exception under Paragraph 4101.43 to use the subject site at 1619 Massachusetts Avenue as a university facility and for approval of a campus plan.

11. Sub-section 8207.2 states in pertinent part that the Board is authorized to grant special exceptions as provided in the proceeding articles of these regulations where in the judgement of the Board such special exceptions will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and maps and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with said Zoning Regulations and maps.

12. Paragraph 4101.43 states that the Board has the authority to approve a college or university which is an academic institution of higher learning, including college or university hospital, dormitory, fraternity or sorority house proposed to be located on the campus of a college or university, provided that:

A. The applicant has submitted and the Board has approved 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 buildings, parking and loading facilities, screening, signs, streets, and public utility facilities, athletic and other recreational facilities, and a description of all activities conducted or to be conducted therein, and of the capacity of all present and proposed campus development. The plan may provide for the interim use, for a limited period of time, of land or improved property with any use which is a proper college or university function. The Board may approve such a plan, or any amendment thereto, concurrent with an application for approval of a specific college or university building or use.

- B. In approving such a plan, the Board shall determine that the use is so located that it is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.
- C. In approving any application for a specific college or university building or use, the Board shall determine that the proposed building or use is consistent with the approved campus plan, and further is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions.

13. SAIS has a contract to purchase the building at 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. which was built in 1961 and has been occupied since that time by the National Forest Products Association and various trade and professional organizations. National Forest Products Association has authorized SAIS to act as its agent in submitting the subject application.

14. The building located at the subject site consists of eight stories plus basement with parking garage and a penthouse; contains approximately 57,000 square feet of space (excluding basement and penthouse), and has 32 spaces for automobile parking.

15. The Campus Master Plan submitted by SAIS indicates that the building at 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. will be used predominantly for classrooms and offices for faculty and staff. SAIS plans to expand its library in the building at 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. and that expansion will displace some existing classrooms and offices. There will be no enlargement of the facility at 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

16. The number of full time SAIS professors is approximately 20 and of part-time professors is 80. The number of administrative personnel is approximately 45. There are currently 10-12 full time faculty members and 45 administrators present at any given time. These numbers could increase to 20-22 and 50-55 respectively, if the university were to experience an expansion.

17. The subject building is presently occupied by approximately 200 office workers between 8:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. The university proposes to have a smaller average population on the premises. Because of the reduction in the number of individuals using the site at a given time, plus the educational character of this facility, the noise generated by the users of the facility should be even less than that of the present office occupants.

18. Due to class schedules and outside time commitments, no more than 50 percent of the school's students are likely to be present in campus buildings at any given time. As a graduate school, SAIS has a mature study body, with an average age of 25 years; most of the students have worked a few years before entering this graduate program. Students are usually at the school only for classes and for research work that must be conducted in the library.

19. The new building would provide SAIS with an additional auditorium of 99 fixed seats, 20 new classrooms, and additional office space of which the 7th and 8th floor would be occupied by the Foreign Policy Institute Division of SAIS. The 4th, 5th and 6th floors would provide office space to the existing faculty to alleviate existing overcrowded conditions and some room for expansion.

20. No exterior changes to the building are proposed. The proposed improvements are to take place inside of the subject structure. No changes or improvements are envisioned for the exterior of the subject building. All parking and loading activities will take place inside the building and access to those facilities are from the existing alley to the north (rear) of the property. No athletic or recreation facilities are proposed by the applicant.

21. The building at 1619 Massachusetts Avenue will provide an additional 32 parking spaces for faculty and staff. These spaces, when added to the existing 48 spaces available at 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, will provide adequate parking for the campus as a whole. Students are not and will not be permitted to park on campus, as access by Metro is readily available (the Dupont Circle Metro Station is within 1,000 feet of the original site and 1,800 feet of the proposed site).

22. The applicant's traffic consultant has conducted a traffic study of the University and the area and has concluded that if the University were to maintain existing parking policies for students and faculty and the number of students, faculty and administrators were to remain constant or with a slight increase, the proposed number of parking spaces would be adequate to handle the demand. Also, the consultant stated in his report that the street capacity of the area could assimilate the traffic generated by the proposal. The Board concurs.

23. The use of 1619 Massachusetts Avenue by SAIS would result in a net reduction in the number of vehicles brought into the area compared to the more intensive existing office use.

24. By memorandum dated February 12, 1986, the Office of Planning (OP) recommended conditional approval of the subject application. The OP reported that the applicant has submitted to the Board a plan for developing the campus as a whole and has shown the location, height and bulk of all present and proposed improvements. The proposed use of the building will have less impact on neighboring properties than the current use of the building. This section of Massachusetts Avenue is considered a major arterial street which carries heavy commuter traffic. The proposed use will not have an objectionable impact on the neighboring uses -- offices, chanceries, and a church. No negative impact is foreseen to the neighbors because of noise, traffic and number of students and faculty. The OP reported that the applicant has generally complied with Paragraph 4101.43 and Sub-section 8207.2. The OP recommended approval of this application provided that the University maintains existing parking policies for students and staff. The Board concurs with the reasoning and recommendation of the OP.

25. By letter dated February 11, 1986, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 2B reported its support for the subject application. The ANC reported that in 1985 when it opposed SAIS's application for a PUD which was denied by the Zoning Commission, the Commission and the ANC recommended that SAIS search for property on which to expand. The acquisition would fulfill the university's need for expansion. The ANC further reported that a university is one of the uses desirable in an SP zone. The Board concurs.

26. By letter dated February 18, 1986, the Residential Action Coalition (RAC) reported that it voted to support the subject application provided that no antennas or satellite dishes shall be placed on the roof of the buildings without a further hearing before the Board. The Board finds that the grant of this application is so conditioned. RAC further testified that the proposed number of parking spaces to be provided is not sufficient to comply with the Zoning

Regulations requirements. The Board finds that the University will comply with all parking requirements.

27. The First Baptist Church and the Embassy of Australia wrote letters of support for SAIS' application. A neighbor of the subject site testified in support of the application.

28. There was no opposition to the subject application at the public hearing or of record.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND OPINION:

Based on the record, the Board concludes that the applicant is seeking a special exception to use the subject site as a University and for approval of a campus plan, the granting of which requires that the proposal meet the requirements of Paragraph 4101.43 and that the relief requested can be granted as in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and the relief will not tend to affect adversely the neighboring property.

The Board concludes that the applicant has met its burden of proof. The applicant has submitted a plan for developing the campus as a whole. The proposed use, as conditioned below in this grant of the application, is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions. The use will not have an adverse affect on the use of neighboring property.


The applicant has shown that on-site parking provided at 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. and 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. satisfies the parking requirements of the Zoning Regulations. The Board further concludes that the application for special exception can be granted as in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations, as consistent with the Campus Plan being approved concurrently.

The Board further concludes that it has given to Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B the "great weight" to which it is entitled. Accordingly, it is ORDERED that the application for a special exception and approval of a campus plan is hereby GRANTED, SUBJECT to the CONDITION that no antennas or satellite dishes shall be placed on the roof of the building without BZA approval.

VOTE: 5-0 (Maybelle T. Bennett, Charles R. Norris, Paula L. Jewell, William F. McIntosh and Carrie L. Thornhill to grant).

BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED BY:


EDWARD L. CURRY
Acting Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: 11 JUN 1986

UNDER SUB-SECTION 8204.3 OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS, "NO DECISION OR ORDER OF THE BOARD SHALL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL TEN DAYS AFTER HAVING BECOME FINAL PURSUANT TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT."

THIS ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER, UNLESS WITHIN SUCH PERIOD AN APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING PERMIT OR CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS.

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