

GOVERNMENT
OF
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

+ + + + +

ZONING COMMISSION

+ + + + +

PUBLIC HEARING

+ + + + +

----- :
IN THE MATTER OF: :
: :
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY - PARTIAL :
RENOVATION AND RECONSTRUCTION : Case No.
OF THE MCKINLEY BUILDING AS : 06-43
THE NEW HOME FOR AMERICAN :
UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF :
COMMUNICATION :

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Hearing Room 220 South
441 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

The Public Hearing of Case No.
06-43 by the District of Columbia Zoning
Commission convened at 6:30 p.m. in the
Office of Zoning Hearing Room at 441 4th
Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20001, Carol
J. Mitten, Chairperson, presiding.

ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

CAROL J. MITTEN	Chairperson
ANTHONY J. HOOD	Vice-Chairperson
GREGORY JEFFRIES	Commissioner
JOHN PARSONS	Commissioner (NPS)

NEAL R. GROSS
COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

OFFICE OF ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

SHARON S. SCHELLIN Secretary
DONNA HANOUSEK Zoning Specialist

OFFICE OF PLANNING STAFF PRESENT:

STEPHEN MORDFIN
JOEL LAWSON

The transcript constitutes the
minutes from the Public Hearing held on
March 15, 2007.

A G E N D A

Opening - Chairperson Mitten	4
Preliminary Matters	7
Applicant's Case	
Mr. Tummonds	8
Mr. Abud	9
Mr. Lund	13
Questions	17
Office of Planning Report	19
Closing Statement	
Mr. Tummonds	21
Vote	22

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(6:40 P.M.)

CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. This is a public hearing of the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia for Thursday, March 15th, 2007. My name is Carol Mitten, and joining me this evening are Vice Chairman Anthony Hood and Commissioners John Parsons and Greg Jeffries. The subject of this evening's hearing is Zoning Commission case number 06-43, and this a request by the American University for special exception relief pursuant to sections 210 and 3104.1 of the zoning regulations for approval of further processing of an approved campus plan for the partial renovation and reconstruction of the McKinley Building as the new home for the American University School of Communication.

The subject property is located at 4400 Massachusetts Avenue, Northwest and is known as lot one and square 1600. Notice of

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 today's hearing was published in the D.C.
2 Register on November 18th, 2006, and copies of
3 the hearing announcement are available to you,
4 and they're in the wall bin by the door. This
5 hearing will be conducted in accordance with
6 the provisions of 11 DCMR section 3117 and the
7 order of procedure will be as follows: We'll
8 take up any preliminary matters, then we'll
9 have the presentation of the applicant's case,
10 report by the Office of Planning, the report
11 of any other government agencies, report by
12 the affected advisory neighborhood commission,
13 in this case it's 3D, organizations and
14 persons in support, and organizations and
15 persons in opposition.

16 The following time constraints
17 will be maintained in the hearing: The
18 applicant will have fifteen minutes,
19 organizations will have five minutes, and
20 individuals will have three minutes, and the
21 Commission intends to adhere to these time
22 limits as strictly as possible in order to

1 hear the case in a reasonable period of time.
2 The Commission reserves the right to change
3 the time limits for presentations if
4 necessary, and notes that no set time shall be
5 ceded.

6 All persons appearing before the
7 Commission are to fill out two witness cards,
8 and those cards are on the table by the door.
9 Upon coming forward to speak to the
10 Commission, please give both cards to the
11 reporter, who is sitting to our right. Please
12 be advised that this proceeding is being
13 recorded by the court reporter, and is also
14 being webcast live, accordingly, we ask you to
15 refrain from making any disruptive noises in
16 the hearing room. When presenting information
17 to the Commission, please turn on and speak
18 into the microphone, first stating your name
19 and address, and when you're finished
20 speaking, please turn your microphone off,
21 because they tend to pick up background noise.

22 The decision of the Commission in

1 this case must be based exclusively on the
2 public record, and to avoid any appearance to
3 the contrary, the Commission requests that
4 persons present not engage the members of the
5 Commission in conversation during a recess or
6 at any other time. And Ms. Schellin and Ms.
7 Hanousek will be available throughout the
8 hearing to answer any procedural questions
9 that you might have.

10 I ask you to turn off all beepers
11 and cell phones at this time so as not to
12 disrupt the hearing, and I'd ask that anyone
13 who's planning on testifying this evening, if
14 you would stand up, raise your right hand, and
15 direct your attention to Ms. Schellin, and she
16 will swear you in.

17 (Whereupon, the witnesses were
18 sworn).

19 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you.
20 Did you have any preliminary matters, Ms.
21 Schellin?

22 MS. SCHELLIN: Just to advise that

1 we have received the affidavit of maintenance
2 and it's in order.

3 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you.
4 Mr. Tummonds, any preliminary matters?

5 MR. TUMMONDS: No.

6 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: All right,
7 then we're ready to go.

8 MR. TUMMONDS: Great. Good
9 evening. We have a very simple and
10 straightforward case for you this evening. As
11 mentioned, American University is proposing a
12 minor addition of 3152 square feet to the
13 existing McKinley Building. We believe our
14 pre-hearing statement details how this project
15 satisfies the standards of section 210 of the
16 zoning regulations, this application received
17 the support of the Office of Planning, the
18 conditioned support of ANC 3D, and late this
19 evening, there was a report from DDOT
20 addressing the traffic issues.

21 We will truly follow your lead if
22 you think there are things that we'd like to

1 address in detail, but as noted, we are
2 planning on doing this in fifteen minutes.
3 We've also submitted for the record this
4 evening the two page HNTB analysis that was
5 the basis for DDOT's report. It notes that
6 there was no perceptible traffic impact as a
7 result of this proposal.

8 With that, I will have Jorge Abud
9 from American University give his brief
10 testimony.

11 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Great, thanks.

12 MR. ABUD: Good evening, I'm Jorge
13 Abud, Assistant Vice President of Facilities
14 and Administrative Services. I have overall
15 responsibility for the university's
16 facilities, including planning for new
17 facilities and improvements. The renovation
18 of the McKinley Building, which is the second
19 oldest building on our campus, is part of a
20 continuing program to improve the university's
21 facilities in support of our academic
22 programs. As we worked on the design of the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 building in its renovation, we determined that
2 a modest expansion of the building was
3 necessary in order to meet the school of
4 communication's needs.

5 SOC, as we call it, the school of
6 communication, is one of AU's six schools and
7 colleges. Its 1200 students are enrolled in
8 three academic programs of study: Journalism,
9 public communication, and visual media. Our
10 journalism program is one of only a few across
11 the nation that is accredited, and in the
12 city, AU and Howard share that distinction.
13 SOC is currently squeezed into about 25,000
14 square feet in three buildings, primarily the
15 Mary Graydon Center, which is slated to be our
16 student center.

17 Its new McKinley location will
18 about double that space and provide facilities
19 appropriate for teaching communication for
20 21st century audiences. The building will
21 include classrooms, offices, and the
22 specialized spaces needed in what's become a

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 very technology-depended discipline. Finally,
2 it'll allow our students, faculty and staff to
3 have what they can really call a home.

4 As part of our planning for this
5 project, we reviewed it with our neighborhood
6 liaison committee, and received all positive
7 comments on it. And we presented it to the
8 ANC 3D at two different meetings, January 10th
9 and February 7th, and the ANC had questions in
10 primarily three areas. First one being that
11 we clarify how we meet our undergraduate
12 student housing requirement, especially in
13 light of the university phasing out its use of
14 an apartment building in Bethesda, Maryland,
15 called Park Bethesda.

16 We prepared a table that's part of
17 our submission, which demonstrates that
18 clearly and that we do meet the requirement.
19 Traffic and its impact, in particular as it
20 relates to the potential for non-university
21 people attending events at the theater
22 included in this building was the second

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 question. And as part of our response, we
2 shared a list of events that we hold now in an
3 existing theater that's a little bit smaller.
4 And we shared our experience that virtually
5 all the participants in these events are AU
6 students, faculty, or staff, and that we have
7 very few outside attendees.

8 And lastly, we asked HNTB to
9 prepare an analysis that addressed the issue,
10 and they concluded that there would be no
11 perceptible impact on surrounding traffic.
12 Lastly, the ANC asked us about our off-campus
13 student behavior program and how it was being
14 communicated, and so we have reviewed our
15 procedures internally and agreed to meet with
16 a group of surrounding ANC representatives to
17 talk about how we can better communicate the
18 program to surrounding neighbors, and if there
19 are any improvements that we would like to
20 make to the program.

21 Additionally, as part of that
22 discussion, it became clear that it probably

1 made sense to add a couple of ANCs where we
2 don't have property but that are close to our
3 campuses, to our neighborhood liaison
4 committee, so that we have a regular dialogue.
5 Paul Lund, our architect, will review the
6 building.

7 MR. LUND: Good evening, I'm Paul
8 Lund, principal at Bowie Gridley Architects.
9 I have brief PowerPoint to take you through
10 the design of the building. This is the
11 current master plan drawing for the campus,
12 the building in question, the McKinley
13 Building, is located here, the Friedheim Quad
14 is here, Nebraska Avenue and Massachusetts
15 here. When we initially looked at the
16 project, it became apparent that there were a
17 number of things that the client would like to
18 do, the university would like to do with the
19 building in addition to house classrooms and
20 so forth.

21 The building is located on the
22 Friedheim Quad, although it doesn't have a

1 door. When the building was originally
2 constructed - it's at this end. The building
3 also has a connection - a useful connection -
4 to the media production center, which is a
5 media production center serving the school of
6 communications. This is the building on the
7 right, the McKinley Building, and you can see
8 that it doesn't really have a presence on the
9 main quad of the campus. Our goal was to try
10 to improve that.

11 In looking at the existing
12 building, again, here, with Mary Graydon and
13 the Bender Library here, it became apparent
14 that this was a beautiful building that we
15 needed to preserve the facades and the
16 integrity of. So the orange area that you see
17 is the historic piece. There are two quads
18 being - there's a new quad being proposed,
19 which is in this area. And in this location -
20 again, the Friedheim - instead of trying to
21 create an addition to the building where the
22 circle is here, we tried to look at an idea of

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 moving the emphasis of the entrance more to a
2 space, a courtyard that could become an
3 entrance plaza, and really not only create a
4 seat at the table for the school of
5 communication, but also a wonderful connection
6 for the campus between the new quad and the
7 existing Friedheim.

8 The design of the building - again
9 - this is the site plan, again, orientation,
10 Mary Graydon center, Bender Library, McKinley
11 Building, the future quad will be here, so you
12 can see that the building, in its landscape,
13 is trying to link the two together. In terms
14 of entrances, the main entrance is off the
15 courtyard. It currently looks something like
16 this. It's proposed to look like this.
17 Again, the existing building and the proposed
18 addition plaza with steps down to the future
19 quad.

20 The remaining spaces on the second
21 floor really include offices and academic
22 classrooms, as well as a converged newsroom in

1 the center, which is a teaching space.
2 There's a secondary entrance to the building,
3 which is off the future quad on the lower
4 level, which we refer to as the first floor.
5 Currently looks like this. Future something
6 like this. You can see to the left the stairs
7 leading up to the plaza and an entrance to the
8 200 seat theater that is in the lower level.
9 Rounding out the first floor, primarily, are
10 labs and studio spaces, as well as a few
11 academic offices and then the main 200 seat
12 theater.

13 On the third floor of the
14 building, primarily we have academic offices
15 with a few classroom and lab spaces. Fourth
16 floor, primarily all academic offices with a
17 rooftop terrace. This is the existing
18 building viewed from the parking garage
19 behind. This is the proposal. That completes
20 my presentation.

21 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you.

22 MR. TUMMONDS: And that completes

1 the applicant's presentation. We're able to
2 answer any questions that you may have.

3 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Okay. Can we
4 have the lights back up? Even though it is so
5 nice to have the mellow darkness. Any
6 questions from the Commission for the
7 applicant? Okay, I just had two questions.
8 Where will the uses that are in the building
9 now be relocated to?

10 MR. ABUD: We're currently in the
11 process of phasing out the current uses. Half
12 of the building is actually empty. They were
13 arts uses that moved to the Katzen Arts Center
14 two years ago. The others will move to former
15 art buildings. One is now in use, one is
16 empty. And we're phasing those this year.

17 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Okay. And then
18 in your chart in exhibit B that shows where
19 the housing is being accommodated - this may
20 be something that we dealt with in the campus
21 plan and I just - my memory's not good enough.
22 In fall of '07, you will have 115 beds at

1 Nebraska that you haven't had in the past.
2 What is that?

3 MR. ABUD: Nebraska Hall is an
4 existing building that has been used as
5 housing in the past, was converted to
6 temporary uses for arts when the art building
7 was under construction, and other renovation
8 projects. It's being converted back to
9 housing. So it's been out of a housing use
10 for about seven or eight years.

11 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Is that the
12 one building that was over by the Katzen Arts
13 Center on that side?

14 MR. ABUD: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Okay.

16 MR. TUMMONDS: The first page of
17 exhibit A has the campus plan map, which shows
18 Nebraska Hall.

19 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Oh, okay.
20 Thanks. No one else? Okay, thank you very
21 much.

22 MR. TUMMONDS: Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: I think we're
2 ready for the Office of Planning report,
3 because we don't have a representative here
4 from the ANC, I just want to make sure. Go
5 ahead.

6 MR. MORDFIN: Good evening members
7 of the Commission, I'm Stephen Mordfin with
8 the Office of Planning. And the Office of
9 Planning stands on the record.

10 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you, Mr.
11 Mordfin. Does anyone have any questions for
12 Mr. Mordfin? Thank you.

13 MR. HOOD: Mr. Mordfin, I'll just
14 ask anyway, I think I know the answer. The
15 ANC submitted their report, and they approved
16 this particular process, but it seems like
17 they're reiterating some conditions that are
18 in the existing campus plan, I believe. Am I
19 correct in assessing that?

20 MR. MORDFIN: They put five
21 conditions in there that they attached to
22 their recommendation of approval that come out

1 of the previous approvals. So you are correct
2 in assuming that.

3 MR. HOOD: Because it's like
4 they're saying their approval again is
5 contingent on these conditions, which are
6 already in the campus plan.

7 MR. MORDFIN: Yes.

8 MR. HOOD: All right, thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Just to
10 clarify, I think they were trying to fine tune
11 a couple of issues. For instance, like the
12 liaison committee, that's a condition of the
13 campus plan, they're asking for that to be
14 expanded. So in each case it has a point of
15 origin in the existing conditions, but they're
16 asking for some accommodation and each of
17 those have been addressed by the applicant in
18 their submission of the 1st of March.
19 Anything else? Okay. Then I would note that
20 we have now in the record - we received today
21 the report from DDOT, and they have had an
22 opportunity to review the findings of the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 applicant's traffic expert, and they are -
2 they have no objection to the project.

3 And we were told that we should
4 not expect a representative from ANC 3D, but
5 we do have a resolution from them in support,
6 exhibit 12 in the record, subject to five
7 conditions, which the applicant has responded
8 to. And now I'd ask are there any individuals
9 who'd like to testify in support? Anyone
10 who'd like to testify in support? Anyone
11 who'd like to testify in opposition? Any
12 opposition? Okay, Mr. Tummonds.

13 MR. TUMMONDS: As I mentioned, I
14 think that we have satisfied these special
15 exception standards, and we think that it'd be
16 appropriate. We'd ask for your approval this
17 evening. Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you. I
19 think that request can be accommodated. As
20 you said, I think the record is complete, and
21 I think you have addressed the special
22 exception standards, and given that you have

1 addressed the concerns raised by the ANC, I
2 think that their concerns have been addressed
3 and their report is being given great weight.
4 As I move approval of Zoning Commission case
5 number 06-43.

6 COMMISSIONER JEFFRIES: Second.

7 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you Mr.
8 Jeffries. Is there any discussion? Then all
9 those in favor, please say aye.

10 (Chorus of ayes).

11 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Those opposed,
12 please say no. Ms. Hanousek, would you record
13 the vote, please?

14 MS. HANOUSEK: Yes, the vote is
15 four to approve, four, zero, one, with
16 Chairman Mitten making the motion, and Greg
17 Jeffries making the second, and Commissioner
18 Hood and Parson in support. And Commissioner
19 Turnbull not here.

20 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Right, okay.
21 Thank you very much, thank you for your time.

22 MR. TUMMONDS: Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Go forth and
2 build a school of communication. We're
3 adjourned.

4 (Whereupon, the above-entitled
5 matter was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.)

6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22