

Before the Board of Zoning Adjustment, D. C.

Application No. 12002 of the Catholic University of America, pursuant to Section 3101.46 of the Zoning Regulations for review and approval of its Campus Plan and the Boys Town Center in and near Squares 3821, 3810, 3894, 3655, 3645, 3648, 3663, and 3671, 620 Michigan Avenue, N. E.

HEARING DATE: August 20, 1975

EXECUTIVE SESSION: August 23, 1975

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. In this application, the Catholic University of America requests (1) approval of its Campus Plan and boundaries pursuant to Section 3101.46 and (2) approval of the Boys Town Center building, the first building under Phase I of new construction for the University. The Campus Plan is shown and described in the booklet submitted to the Board entitled "The Catholic University of America--The Master Plan 1970-2000" published in June 1975. The proposed boundaries of the Campus are shown in the map designated "Proposed Campus Boundaries" and attached to the Statement of Applicant and designated Exhibit A. Plans for the Boys town Center are those contained in the file submitted by the applicant.

2. The Catholic University Campus for reference purposes may be described in three parts: The Main Campus, the North Campus and the Varnum Campus. As shown in Exhibit A, the Main Campus is bounded on the north by Taylor Street, on the west by Harewood Road and Fourth Street, on the south by a diagonal line commencing between Fourth and Fifth Streets and between Franklin and Gerard Streets running in a northeasterly direction to Seventh Street (the same line being the southern property line of St. Paul's College), and on the east generally by Seventh Street and Brookland Avenue. The North Campus is bounded on the north by Fort Totten Park, on the west by Hawaii Avenue, on the south by Taylor Street and on the west by Brookland Avenue. The Varnum Campus, located east of Puerto Rico Avenue, lies generally between Taylor Street and Buchanan Street and is bisected by Varnum Street, as more particularly shown on the Proposed Campus Boundaries plat designated Exhibit A.

3. The proposed Campus Boundaries include for the most part land of Catholic University owned by the University and actively devoted for many years to university use. This Board has approved numerous buildings and uses within the proposed boundaries on each of the identified campuses. The boundaries also include land not owned by the university but which, for the most part, is presently utilized by institutional and educational organizations such as the area south of Michigan Avenue owned and used by St. Paul's College. In Square 3654, bounded by Seventh and Eighth Streets and Monroe and Lawrence Streets, also included are approximately five lots in private, nonuniversity ownership. The uses within the Campus boundaries are generally described at pages 15, 39 and 41.

4. The Board of Zoning Adjustment has not previously adopted a Master Plan or Campus boundaries for the university, although the NCPC had reviewed and approved Campus boundaries. The proposed boundaries respect previously approved uses and are proposed by the University in order to meet University needs consistent with the low-density character and profile of the University.

5. The land within the Campus boundaries is zoned in its entirety R-5-A except for Square 3654, which is zoned R-4. Surrounding zoning includes R-5-A, R-4, C-M-1 east of the B&O Railroad tracks and C-1 zoning near the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Brookland Avenue.

6. The Catholic University of America was established in 1889 and has been a continuous educational institution in the District of Columbia since that date. The history, objectives and goals of the university are set forth at pages 6-11 of the Master Plan Booklet. These goals and objectives include the enrichment of its academic programs and the desire to serve the community and strengthen its role in a contemporary society. The university has a number of schools and academic divisions (see pages 11, Master Plan) with an existing full-time equivalent enrollment of 5,214 students and a full-time equivalent faculty of 523. The 25-year proposed Master Plan projects that by the year 2000 there will be 6,117 students (fte) and 655 (fte) faculty. This represents approximately 17% increase in student body and faculty.

7. The Planning, Architectural and Engineering firm of Leo A. Daly has been chiefly responsible for the preparation of the Master Plan. Its purpose in preparing the Plan has been to redesign where appropriate elements of the University's activities to maximize the usable open space within the Campus and to centralize the various academic and recreational uses and, at the same time, blend in with the neighborhood.

8. The present Campus location and description of surrounding uses are shown on pages 14 and 15 of the Master Plan. The vast majority of the surrounding use are institutional, vacant properties or properties forming a natural barrier between the next adjoining uses. In this latter category are the properties owned by the B&O Railroad to be devoted to Metro and Fort Totten Park. Only at the southeastern end of the Main Campus and the southeastern edge of the Varnum Campus are there other residential uses. In these areas, the university proposed residential uses which have already existed in a compatible fashion. In preparing the Plan, the University and its consultants have identified the existing land uses and those qualities that should be preserved and enhanced (pages 16 and 17 of Master Plan). Additionally, the university has identified those areas, including potential pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, which can be improved within the Campus and at the periphery of the Campus. The University has dealt with these factors and, in addition to creating as its major theme open green space focal points, the plans for development are aimed at resolving those few areas where improvement is necessary. See pages 36-41 of the Master Plan.

9. The plans for new development on the Campus call for relatively minor number of new structures to be located on the interior of the Main Campus in a manner that will enhance the open space and yet not increase the peripheral image as to density and height.

10. The illustrative concept, as shown at page 36, together with the design analysis, shown on page 33, provides for the establishment of several clusters and yards, each of them to be a central enclave housing support services required by the University. The consultants have given particular attention to security and landscape elements. See pages 52-53 of Master Plan.

11. The Master Plan brings about the creation of pedestrian streets not presently existing on the Campus to allow for the emphasis on the pedestrian. A number of vehicular streets have been closed and either removed or converted to pedestrian streets. See pages 46-47 and 51 of Master Plan.

12. The three-Campus portions are connected in a manner to insure ease of access. This is done principally through pedestrian walkways but also includes a proposed overpass over Michigan Avenue connection the Main Campus north of Michigan Avenue with the portion of the campus south of Michigan Avenue.

13. Special attention has been given by the university to the Brookland Metro stop, enabling a direct pedestrian flow from the Metro access to the campus by way of pedestrian easements and a pedestrian bridge over the southeastern entrance to the university thoroughfare. The campus plan calls for the reorientation of traffic generated by the University so as to permit greater spread of points of egress and ingress, thereby reducing the effect on the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Harewood Road. The curb cuts on Harewood Road have also been reduced as have the curb cuts on Brookland Avenue.

14. The traffic circulation plan, both externally and internally, has been improved. To provide good service with standard two-phase signal at Michigan Avenue and to the Maloney Building entrance and to eliminate any delay of through traffic on Michigan Avenue by left-turn vehicles, provisions for left-turns from Michigan Avenue to the Main Campus will be made by aligning Seventh Street with the university entrance. This involves using a portion of the university's property south of Michigan Avenue for street use. The only significant distance between existing and future traffic conditions will be at Taylor Street and Brookland Avenue. Increases in volume capacity ratios are indicated at both these locations because of the planned functions of these two intersections as primary university entrance points. However, the slightly increased usage will present to problems to the neighborhood traffic in view of the fact that these intersections are operating and will continue to operate in an uncongested range.

15. The traffic circulation plan is based upon detailed studies and comparisons of traffic counts of 1967, 1973 and 1975 traffic. The university has worked closely with the Department of Highways and Traffic.

16. The parking plan for the university calls essentially for a consolidation of parking within the Main Campus to alleviate the parking area that is used west of Harewood Road on Shrine property with no increase in the provision of parking. Presently, the university has approximately 1,732 parking spaces on campus with an additional 200 or more spaces available on the Shrine parking lot west of Harewood Road. Under the proposed plan, even with an increase in student body of 17%, the total proposed parking spaces provided will be approximately 1,940. The major centralizing factor for the parking will be the construction of a parking structure at the eastern center of the Main Campus under the proposed stadium. Access to that parking structure will be from four different points to provide a spread of access. Additionally, service to the university is being consolidated in that major service points will be off Brookland Avenue so that the larger trucks servicing the university will not use the other surrounding streets, such as Harewood Road, Taylor Street, Michigan Avenue, for direct access to the campus.

17. The phasing for new construction for the university is shown at pages 57-58. The Boys town center building is the first building to be constructed in Phase I.

18. The university's existing density consists of an F.A.R. of approximately 0.23. Under the proposed campus plan, the F.A.R. for all projected new facilities on the land area allocable to such known facilities will be 0.38. Thus, the applicant come well within the permitted bulk in an R-5-A District of 0.9 and even further below the 1.8 F.A.R. permissible with Board approval in the applicable zoning classifications.

19. The applicant has complied with Section 3101.46(c) in that all information specified therein is provided through the Master Plan booklet and exhibits submitted to the Board. See page 7 of Statement of Applicant. No interim use off-campus is specified or requested in this application.

20. The Boys Town Center building proposed as the first building under Phase I of construction and designated building A on page 41 of the Master Plan booklet is located substantially removed from all boundaries. This use in the building will serve as a center for the study of youth development with its central purpose the study of sociological, psychological and spiritual problems of youth. The Center will be established as an integral part of the curriculum of the Catholic University of America and is primarily concerned with the academic study of youth. The building and its use are sponsored by the Boys Town of Omaha, Nebraska, and the building will cost approximately \$2,700,000.

The Boys Town Center will have dimensions of approximately 130 x 125 feet and will be two stories high with a height of approximately 28 feet. Because of the topography, the architects have been able to locate the building in an extremely low profile rising into the increasing topography. The building itself will not be visible from any off-campus residential use.

The proposed Boys Town Center will have three classrooms with 150 seats and an auditorium accommodating 200 persons. The expected maximum occupancy of the building will be 280. Parking for the building will be located on a long-term interim basis across a relocated Campus road entering from Harewood Road, which is also part of the approval in this application.

The Boys Town Center will have a gross floor area of approximately 42,000 square feet with a new usable area of approximately 0.1% F.A.R. addition to the existing campus density.

21. This application, in accordance with Section 3101.46(e), was referred to the National Capital Planning Commission, the Department of Transportation (formerly Department of Highways & Traffic) and was also referred to the Municipal Planning Office. The reports of these agencies are all favorable to the grant of this application.

22. The National Capital Planning Commission recommended approval of the Campus Plan and Boys Town Center and indicated that the Campus Plan was a District of Columbia element under the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act. NCPC also indicated that the Boys Town Center building was so located that "it will not become objectionable to the neighborhood because of noise, traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions."

23. The Municipal Planning Office furnished a detailed statement and a representative appeared at Public Hearing to present the report and to answer questions. The Municipal Planning Office recommended approval for both the Boys Town Center and the Campus Plan. The recommendation was conditioned upon (1) that the University maintain natural landscaping on the North Campus, especially as it exists along Hawaii Avenue and (2) the Institute of Social Behavior Research and Electronics Music Lab be relocated from its location in square 3654. The University representative at Public Hearing indicated that it met both of these conditions since the natural landscaping referenced would be retained and that the use referenced in Square 3654 had been removed to the Main Campus approximately six weeks ago.

24. The Department of Transportation also recommended favorably on the application but noted the need for continuous review with regard to parking space provisions as the Brookland Metro station becomes a reality. The University complies with this suggestion in that, as it indicated at Public Hearing, as the Brookland Metro station impact is experienced, flexibility has been built into the parking plan so that, in the event not all proposed parking spaces are needed, they may be eliminated over the phasing of construction.

25. The University indicated that it has coordinated this plan with the Upper Northeast Coordinating Council. There was no opposition at Public Hearing.

OPINION AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Board is of the opinion that the university has met the requirements of Section 3101.46 and Section 8207.2 with regard to both its Campus Plan and boundary approval and the Boys Town Center building. The detailed planning effort and

and careful attention to areas in need of improvement are evident from an examination of the Master Plan and the presentation at Public Hearing. Essentially, the University's plan calls for a carefully designed plan of concentration of uses on the Main Campus so as not to emphasize or increase the low-profile appearance and use of the university. Careful attention has been given to traffic circulation both on and off the campus as it relates to the neighborhood. The uses proposed are in keeping with normal university uses. Thus, we conclude that the university has met the requirements of showing that the uses will not become objectionable to neighborhood property because of noise, traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions.

The university, being located in an R-5-A Zone which provides for other institutional and semi-public buildings, is in accordance with the purposes of that zone. The university's proposed plan and the Boys Town Center also will blend compatibly with the adjoining uses under the existing Zoning classifications. Thus, we conclude that the Campus Plan and Boys Town Center will be in harmony with the purposes and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps.

ORDERED:

It is hereby ordered that the above application be GRANTED as requested subject to the following conditions:

1. The University boundaries are approved as set forth in Exhibit A to the Statement of Applicant.
2. The Master Plan is approved as generally set forth in the booklet entitled "The Catholic University of America--The Master Plan 1975-2000" published in June 1975.
3. The Boys Town Center is approved as requested.

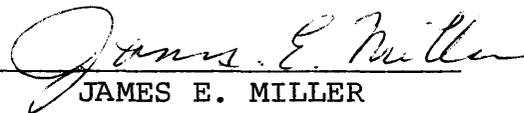
4. Catholic University will maintain the natural landscaping as shown in the illustrative plan that exists on the North Campus, especially as it relates to Hawaii Avenue.
5. That the Institute of Social Behavioral Research and the Electronic Music Laboratory be relocated from its location on the southeast corner of Seventh and Monroe Street to the main campus and that the Seventh and Eighth Street block be used exclusively for residential uses.

VOTE:

3-0 (Mr. Scrivener and Lilla Burt Cummings, Esq., not voting after not hearing the case)

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

ATTESTED By:



JAMES E. MILLER
Secretary to the Board

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: 10/6/75

THAT THE ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS ONLY UNLESS APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING AND/OR OCCUPANCY PERMIT IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER.