

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 13220 of Gallaudet College, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for a special exception under Paragraph 3101.46 for the further processing and revision of a college master plan in an R-4 and C-M-1 District at the premises 800 Florida Avenue, N.E., 1399 5th Street, N.E. and 1200 block of 5th and 6th Streets, N.E., (Square 3591, Parcel 141/69, Parcel 129/106 and Lot 4).

HEARING DATE: May 28, 1980
DECISION DATE: July 2, 1980

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The subject application requests approval of a Campus Plan for Gallaudet College, as required by Paragraph 3101.46 of the Zoning Regulations. The Campus Plan includes all that property owned by the College roughly bounded by Florida Avenue, N.E. on the south, West Virginia Avenue, N.E. on the east, Corcoran Street, N.E. and Mount Olivet Road, N.E. on the north, and the rear boundary of Hamilton Junior High School and the privately owned property fronting on 6th Street, N.E. on the west. Also included within the campus boundaries is the property owned by the college in the northern half of Square 3591 bounded by Penn Street on the north, 6th Street on the east and 5th Street on the west.

2. The main part of the campus is zoned R-4. This will house all of the academic, administrative, residential and athletic facilities of the college. The property in Square 3591 is zoned C-M-1 and will be used as a transportation and maintenance facility, site H on the plans, and as a parking garage, site J on the plans.

3. The applicant, Gallaudet College, seeks the Board's approval of a revised campus plan encompassing the period from 1980 to 1990. Gallaudet College is a private educational institution chartered by the United States Congress in 1864 and serving the needs of deaf people.

4. The campus plan for Gallaudet College was first approved by the BZA in Case No. 11093, by Orders dated December 13, 1972, February 22, 1973 and April 5, 1973. Modifications were approved in BZA Order No. 12068, dated June 17, 1976, BZA Order No. 12757, dated November 6 1978, BZA Order No. 13088, dated February 19, 1980 and BZA Order No. 13269 dated August 20, 1980. The campus plan covers the proposed development from 1980 to 1990. The subject application is a request for a further processing of the campus plan.

5. The BZA, in Order No. 12757, dated November 6, 1978, ordered Gallaudet College to submit a revised Master Campus Plan to the BZA for its review and approval within six months of November 6, 1978. The deadline for the submission of the revised Master Plan was extended by the BZA to February 6, 1980.

6. The proposed College Master Plan consists of the following documents:

- a. College Master Plan booklet, 1980-1990, marked as Exhibit No. 5 of the record.
- b. Plan drawings at a scale of '1" = 100,' marked as Exhibit No. 8 of the record.
- c. Utility location drawings, marked as Exhibit No. 7 of the record.

7. In the first half of the twentieth century, Gallaudet provided elementary education to deaf pupils in the District of Columbia, a liberal arts education for deaf undergraduates from across the United States and around the world and graduate education for both deaf and hearing students, those wanting to go into the service of deaf people. As more deaf students completed high school and desired to go to college, Gallaudet's enrollments in academic programs expanded to meet these needs. Approximately eighteen years ago it was noticed that many young deaf children were not well prepared for continuing education. Congress, therefore, charged Gallaudet with developing and operating two national demonstration schools. One of these is the Kendall Demonstration Elementary School. The Kendall school serves young children and babies, from an onset of deafness to age fourteen to fifteen years.

Children come to it from the District of Columbia, from Northern Virginia and Maryland. The Kendall School develops materials that are used nationally to serve other children in various schools, both schools for the deaf and public school programs.

8. The second school is the Model Secondary School for the Deaf which serves students from age fourteen to seventeen years and tries to respond to a larger attendance area. The Kendall School is a day school, while the Model Secondary School for the Deaf is a partially residential school. At the Model School there are houses on the campus where students stay overnight, although many go home on weekends. The attendance area is five states plus the District of Columbia.

9. The Kendall School and the Model Secondary School for the Deaf are free schools. They charge no tuition or room and board, because elementary and secondary education in the United States is free wherever people live. The Federal government pays for the education of the children who come to these schools. The College, on the other hand, does charge tuition, which is on the basis of the average tuition of land grant institutions across the United States. Gallaudet College charges its deaf students what they would have to pay at their State universities at home, except these State universities do not have the services available at Gallaudet College. Tuition for the 1979-1980 year was approximately \$690 for two semesters. The College has scholarship programs and other financial assistance programs. The present cost at the College for tuition, room and board and books is about \$3,000 per year.

10. It is the policy of Gallaudet College never to turn down a qualified deaf student. The College does not maintain an open admission policy. All prospective students are required to demonstrate that they are reasonably capable of college-level work. About 1,200 students throughout the country are given the Gallaudet examination, and about 340 will qualify for admission. Students who are apt to fail within the first year or two in college are not accepted. However, the College does accept high-risk students who are admitted to a preparatory studies program, who, with an extra year of work, often can become college-level students.

11. In cooperation with the national deaf community, Gallaudet College responds to many needs. Some of these needs are specially critical, such as assistance to deaf adults to make the vocational adjustment from a goods producing to a service producing economy, and study in the area of how to teach language and communication skills to pre-lingually deaf children. The College has a large resource division, and, among other things, publishes a periodical that is circulated throughout the nation and to other countries, summarizing relevant research bearing on the education of deaf children. The College provides assistance for public school administrators and teachers of the deaf, special assistance to parents of deaf children, leadership training for deaf adults, full television programming with captioning, adult education and legal and medical services.

12. The operating and capital funds of Gallaudet College traditionally come from the Federal government. Its budget is a line item in the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Education, and the budget must have the approval of the Office of Management and Budget within the Executive branch. It is a private educational institution, but must give careful attention to the goals as they are expressed for the hearing impaired people by the Congress of the United States and the Executive branch.

13. Gallaudet College is located on a large tract of land of approximately ninety-six acres at the intersection of West Virginia Avenue and Florida Avenue, N.E. The College has made a substantial effort to work with the community surrounding it. It has a Gallaudet Community Relations Council consisting of fourteen community leaders and six Gallaudet staff personnel, so that the College can keep in touch with the citizens of the community. The Council has been in existence since 1975. Its members consist of various community leaders who represent Wards 2, 5 and 6 in the Gallaudet area. It also represents the "A" PACT organization, the Mount Olivette High civic public interest group, the Meals on Wheels program, the Corcoran Street Block Club, the Northeast Ministry Group Association and Gallaudet faculty, staff and students. The Gallaudet Community Relations Council, as well as the Holy Name Roman Catholic Church, which is across West Virginia Avenue from the College, have recommended approval of the Master Plan of the College.

14. In addition to the main campus, located at Florida and West Virginia Avenues, the College owns two parcels to the northwest and adjacent to the main campus; namely, the Penn Street Property, half of which is used by the College as a transportation vehicle maintenance storage area and half of which is occupied by a tenant who conducts an open market. The second parcel is the 5th-6th Street property, which is in use as a parking lot for the College faculty, staff and students.

15. The Master Plan presented by Gallaudet College is quite similar to the campus Master Plan previously approved by the BZA. There are a few differences between the approved campus Master Plan and the new Master Plan of Gallaudet College:

a. The approved Master Plan provided for a Field House with underground parking. The new Master Plan calls for a Field House at the same location with parking in a separate parking structure adjacent to the Field House instead of underground. The original planned single building has been divided into two adjacent buildings and the shape of the Field House is slightly different. The new Master Plan provides for an exit from the Field House parking building to West Virginia Avenue. West Virginia Avenue is a densely populated area which is heavily traveled. Vehicles existing from the Field House parking structure would do so at off-hours in the evening or on weekends following athletic events at the Field House. In the aforementioned BZA Order No. 13269 the Board ORDERED that the West Virginia exit be deleted from the plans and that the traffic be dispersed through the existing campus and then out to public streets using the existing campus access points.

b. The Continuing Education and Conference Center building is a minor change from the previously approved Master Plan. What had been previously approved was a larger building, which occupied the space of the currently planned Continuing Education Conference Center, and also extended over into the area of the Old Gym. The Old Gym is now to be renovated and will provide facilities for the Continuing Education and Conference Center.

c. The Advanced and Special Programs building is shown in the same location in the previously approved Master Plan and essentially the same size as called for under the old plan.

d. Dormitory No. 6 has been moved to a new location in the new plan, but is essentially the same building, having the same configuration and number of gross square feet.

e. Dormitory No. 7 is shown in the same location and with the same configuration and square footage as provided in the approved plan.

f. Dormitory No. 8 represented as site F on the plan, is a completely new structure, not mentioned in the approved Master Plan. The need for this dormitory is based on the projected needs of the College beyond 1980, by reason of increase in enrollment. The building will accommodate 234 students, a staff of twenty and four administrative officers. The building is to be seventy feet, seven stories and will have a gross floor area of approximately 90,400 square feet.

g. The new plan provides for visitors housing to be constructed in the same location as previously planned. The new plan shows a slight change in the configuration from the originally approved plan but is essentially the same amount of gross square feet, size and shape. It will have the same capacity for approximately sixty visitor apartments. Visitors throughout the country and around the world continue to come to Gallaudet in increasing numbers because of their interest in deaf persons and the Visitors Center will provide a better inter-relationship between the visitors and the College community.

h. A new building, represented as site H on the plans, is shown to be located at the Penn Street property. This building was not denoted in the previously approved Master Plan. It will be a facility for a garage and vehicle maintenance area for vehicles which are used on the College campus. The building will have a gross square footage of approximately 25,000 with four work bays, administrative offices and a warehouse.

i. A new, but very small building, represented as site I is planned to be located at the east entrance to the campus, off Florida Avenue. This tiny house will house Gallaudet's security officers. It appears to be necessary for security and informational purposes.

j. Off-campus, at the 5th-6th Street parking area, represented as site J on the plans, the College plans a building thirty feet in height, consisting of two floors, plus roof parking, which building would accommodate 539 automobiles and would have a gross square footage of 287,440. Parking would be provided for students, staff, faculty and visitors. The College believes this structure is necessary to provide parking spaces needed between 1980 and 1990 for the growth in student enrollment staff, and more importantly, for the increasing number of visitors that come to the campus. This lot is located in a C-M-1 district, where parking is permitted as a matter of right. Gallaudet College provides for all vehicular parking within its campus for its students, staff, faculty and visitors. No one coming to the College is required to find parking spaces off-campus

k. The enrollment projections of Gallaudet College, made in the approved Master Plan, as compared to those objections in the new Master Plan are very similar. The previous plan projected undergraduate and graduate students at the College by mid-1980's to be 1,800, whereas the College is now projecting that by 1990, undergraduate and graduate students will be approximately 2,200. Projections for the Model Secondary School for the Deaf for mid-1980 was 600, while the projection at 1990 is 500. Projection for Kendall Demonstration Elementary School for mid-1980's was 300, which is the same projection for the period 1990. A dramatic increase in public service on the campus is now projected, in the magnitude of 10,500 through the period, while no such projections were made in the approved Master Plan. An analysis of faculty and staff levels through the period 1974 through 1990 shows a seventy-four percent growth, or a growth of 12.3 percent each year in faculty and staff for the period 1974 to 1980. This growth in real numbers was from 731 in 1974 to 1,269 in 1980. Projections for the future show a considerable reduction in growth from 1,269 at present to 1,946 in 1990 for an increase during the period of fifty-three percent or 5.3 percent per year.

16. The College's Master Plan has an extensive landscaping and lighting plan which seeks to make the campus a pleasant and attractive place for students, staff and faculty, which will be an assist to the community in which it is located. It is the plan of the College to create a large, beautiful green campus, which is surrounded by industrial, commercial and residential uses.

17. In the BZA decision of March 22, 1978, with respect to the Learning Center at Gallaudet College, the BZA found as follows with respect to the density of other college and university campuses in the District of Columbia: at George Washington University 405 students per acre; Federal City College 797; Washington Technical Institute 390; Georgetown University 150; American University 216; Catholic University 32 and Gallaudet College 29 students per acre.

18. The College is in the process of acquiring the Plaza Chevrolet tract of land of approximately two and one half acres and a building of about 33,000 square feet on 6th Street, N.E., just north of Florida Avenue and adjacent to the College campus. It is the expectation of the College that this property will be used by the College for vehicular repair and storage. At an appropriate time, the College intends to amend its Master Plan to incorporate this property in it and present the matter to the BZA for its approval. Plaza Chevrolet property is located in a C-M-1 zone where such a use is permitted as a matter of right.

19. The District of Columbia Hamilton Junior High School is immediately adjacent to the Gallaudet College campus to the northwest. Should the District of Columbia close this school it would be appropriate and of great benefit if Gallaudet College could acquire it. Should this event occur the College might be able to move its division of research and division of public service into the building and eliminate the need to build two major facilities on its campus. In addition, services to the community might be provided from the building as there is no such place to do that within the College campus. Approximately a year ago a committee recommended to the Board of Education that the school be closed but the Board of Education rejected this recommendation.

20. Pursuant to Sub-Paragraph 3101.465 the application was referred to the Office of Planning and Development and the Department of Transportation for their review and report.

21. The Office of Planning and Development by report dated May 23, 1980, stated that OPD was in favor of the approval of the concept of the proposed physical facilities. The OPD found that the proposed revisions in the previously approved 1976 Gallaudet College campus plan reflect moderate adjustments in terms

of enrollment, dormitory space and other services. The OPD noted however, that the proposed garage and the overhead bridge on 6th Street combined with the removal of curb and other parking spaces inside the campus is a major element in the revision of the proposed campus plan and requires further study. The application has been referred to the Department of Transportation and it is expected that the DOT will submit its report to the Board as soon as possible. The Board so finds.

22. The DOT, by memorandum dated June 16, 1980, reported that the major transportation element revisions in the campus plan are the proposed increase in the number of parking spaces from 1473 as approved in 1976 to 2025, and the proposed construction of a parking garage outside the campus boundaries. The DOT reported that the current proposal for 2025 parking spaces in the Gallaudet College 1980-1990 Master Plan appears reasonable. The DOT appreciated the fact that because of the specialized nature of the institution, people need to rely on automobile usage more than their counterparts in other universities. Even so, the ratio of parking spaces to the proposed number of students, faculty and staff is in line with several other educational institutions in the District. Furthermore in applying DOT's normal parking rationale, and assuming a transit usage of forty percent and automobile occupancy of two persons per automobile, DOT determined that a demand/supply balance will be achieved. Not all of the 2,025 parking spaces will generate peak period traffic. Approximately thirty-five percent of the spaces will accommodate official campus automobiles, visitors' automobiles, and resident students' automobiles that are permanently stored on campus.

23. The DOT was pleased that Gallaudet officials have initiated and are continuing to seek measures to reduce automobile commuting by students, faculty and staff. One example is a shuttle bus service that was initiated in March of 1979. It consists of two routes between the college and the Union Station and Eastern Market Metrorail Stations, respectively. The DOT understood that steps have been taken to encourage carpooling, and that the advisability to charge for parking as a measure to control the use of the parking spaces is being studied. The DOT again recommended that the parking needs be monitored throughout

the phasing of the implementation of the Master Plan, as improved transit service becomes available, and as measures by Gallaudet College to curb automobile use are implemented.

24. The Department of Transportation reported that, at the early stage of plan development for the parking structure proposed on the north side of 6th Street, N.E. and indicated as facility J on the Facilities Master Plan, coordination with the Department will be essential. Areas of concern include the availability of providing access to the garage from 6th Street, N.W., the practicability of a pedestrian structure spanning 6th Street, and the adequacy of sidewalks adjacent to the garage to serve pedestrian flow generated by that facility. The Board agrees that such early coordination is desirable.

25. There was no opposition to the application at the Public Hearing nor on file. As previously noted in Finding No. 13 the Gallaudet Community Relations Council and the Holy Name Church were on record as in favor of the revised campus plan.

26. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5B made no recommendation of the application.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

Based on the record the Board concludes that the applicant has complied with the requirements of Paragraph 3101.46 of the Zoning Regulations. It is an academic institution of higher learning and as such it is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions.

On the matter of the campus boundaries the record clearly reflects that the property which the University is requesting to be included in its boundary has been owned by the University and used for University purposes for many years. In addition, the proposed boundary has been used by the University for planning purposes for many years, and the proposed boundary was recommended for approval by the Office of Planning and Development. The Board therefore concludes that the continuation of the University's use of the boundary does not represent an unreasonable expansion into a residential neighborhood.

On the matter of traffic the Board notes Findings No. 22, 23, and 24 in which the DOT recommends that the application be granted with the provision that parking needs be monitored throughout the phasing of the implementation of the Master Plan and the early stage of plan development for site J, the new proposed parking structure be coordinated with the DOT.

The Board further concludes that the application can be GRANTED as in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property. Accordingly, it is ORDERED that the application is GRANTED SUBJECT to the following CONDITIONS:

1. The plan shall be as shown in the Campus Development Plan, marked as Exhibits 5, 7 and 8 in the record.
2. The boundaries of the University shall be those proposed in the plan, as specifically shown on drawings 1 through 9 of the Plan.
3. Approval of this plan shall include only those items as shown in the Phase up to 1990. The University shall reapply to the Board, or whatever body has jurisdiction at that time, for approval of a campus plan for the period beyond 1990.
4. The University shall submit to the Board as a special exception each individual request to construct a building. Along with each request the University shall submit information as to how the particular request complies with the plan. Such information shall also include a detailed statement as to the effect of the proposed building on traffic and parking.

VOTE: 5-0 (William F. McIntosh, John G. Parsons, Connie Fortune Charles R. Norris and Leonard L. McCants to grant).

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

ATTESTED BY: Steven E. Sher
STEVEN E. SHER
Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: 10 NOV 1980

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."