

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 13269, of Gallaudet College, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for a special exception under Paragraph 3101.46 for further processing under a campus plan to construct a field house and parking structure in an R-4 District at the premises 800 Florida Avenue, N.E., (Parcel 141/69).

HEARING DATE: May 28, 1980  
DECISION DATE: June 4, 1980

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The main campus of Gallaudet College is bounded generally by Florida Avenue, West Virginia Avenue, Mount Olivet Road and Brentwood Parkway, N.E. The mailing address of the campus is 800 Florida Avenue, N.E.

2. The building proposed to be erected in this application is to be located in the southeastern portion of the campus, near West Virginia Avenue. That portion of the campus is zoned R-4.

3. Gallaudet College is a private educational institution of higher learning, chartered by the United States Congress 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 and BZA Order No. 12757, dated November 6, 1978, and BZA Order No. 13088, dated February 19, 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. Gallaudet College has submitted a revised Campus Plan for consideration by the Board in Application No. 13220. That case was heard concurrently by the Board on the same date as the subject case. The record and exhibits introduced in that case were incorporated into the Board's consideration and decision of this case.

7. In the subject application, the applicant requests approval to construct a field house and parking structure. The only existing facility on campus for indoor physical educational activities is the Hughes Gymnasium which is now obsolete. It has a seating capacity of 725 which is completely inadequate. There is a clear need for a new field house and the existing gymnasium can be used as an adjunct facility in support of the academic and intramural activities at the College.

8. The new field house has been planned for many years and was described in the approved Master Plan as far back as 1972. The location of the proposed field house is identical to that indicated in the 1972 plan. The only difference is that the underground parking is now to be located in a separate parking structure, whereas previously it had been proposed to be located underneath the field house. The shape of the building has also been altered slightly.

9. The new field house will provide for a full range of academic and athletic programs not presently possible. Included in the new building will be facilities for basketball, volleyball, wrestling, squash, handball, and other indoor athletics; ballet studios for the dance and drama department; classrooms; locker-rooms; offices; and support services. Permanent seating will be provided for 1768 people with provisions for an additional 500 people using moveable seating. The seating arrangements are planned to allow flexible use of the main assembly area, not only for athletic events, but for academic, public and deaf community facilities as well. Graduations, convocations, meetings of deaf related professional organizations will be served by the building. There is no facility on campus able to meet these needs. The new field house is not intended to increase the number of students on campus, but to better accommodate existing activities.

10. In order to replace the parking area which the field house will occupy, which now contains space for 250 cars and to satisfy major parking requirements, parking for 236 cars will be provided in a separate building adjacent to the field house. The 236 spaces will provide one of the major parking nodes on the campus, serve for auditorium gatherings, as well as for the field house, and meet the parking needs for the southeastern segment of the campus.

11. The concept designed for the field house is pre-cast concrete Tee-roof structure to span the main activity floor and spectator area of the building. The building elevations express the flat roof structure, enclosed with permanent panels. The site plan has been developed to directly relate the field house and parking building to the adjacent auditorium. The field house will have a total square footage of approximately 64,736 square feet.

12. Adjacent to the field house is the planned field house parking structure. The parking structure will be partially hidden from West Virginia Avenue by an earth berm, which will be in front of the two story building, leaving approximately five feet above the level of the berm. The building will have a gross square footage of approximately 80,590 feet.

13. The design of the proposed parking structure provides for an exit directly to West Virginia Avenue. West Virginia Avenue is a heavily traveled street at all hours of the day. The alternative egress pattern is to have all the vehicles exit through the campus and use the existing access point to public streets.

14. The decision to remove the underground parking from the field house and to provide for it in a separate parking structure was principally based upon the fact that underground parking was extremely expensive and the parking could be provided at far less expense in a separate structure. The cost of the parking structure is approximately \$1,800,000, while the cost of parking underneath the field house would be \$2,900,000. Congress has appropriated the necessary funds to permit the College to construct the field house and the parking structure. Congress has not appropriated sufficient funds to provide for an additional million dollars for underground parking.

15. The old Master Plan called for parking 224 cars underground and 140 on the surface in an adjacent area to the building for a total of 364 spaces. The present plan calls for 280 spaces in a separate building. Its use will require an additional seven staff personnel and the parking structure will require an additional three staff persons. The use of the new field house and parking structure will have no adverse impact on the student population of Gallaudet College or on surrounding properties.

16. The proposed field house and parking structure are a part of and completely consistent with the revised Campus Plan before the Board in Case No. 13220.

17. The Office of Planning and Development, by report dated May 23, 1980, and by testimony at the hearing, reminded that the application be approved subject to a finding from the Department of Transportation that the additional access to the parking structure as proposed from West Virginia Avenue would not have an adverse impact on traffic flow in the area.

18. The Department of Transportation, by memorandum dated June 16, 1980, reported that it had "no objection to this proposal. The egress from the structure will occur mainly during periods other than the peak traffic periods on West Virginia Avenue. The egress must, however, be located opposite the existing Morse Street intersection to avoid an off-set intersection." The Board notes that West Virginia Avenue experiences high traffic volumes at all hours.

19. There was no report from Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5B in the record of this case.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND OPINION:

Based on the above Findings of Fact are the evidence of record, the Board concludes that the applicant has complied with the requirements of Paragraph 3101.46. The proposed building will not increase the number of students at the College, but will serve to better accommodate activities which already occur on the campus. The Board concludes that there will be no adverse effect or objectionable condition because of noise, traffic or number of students. The Board notes that the field house and parking structure are part of a well thought out Campus Plan, which the Board will approve in Case No. 13220.

As to the egress for the parking garage to West Virginia Avenue, the Board concludes that such egress should not be approved. Even though the Department of Transportation reported that traffic exiting from the parking garage will occur mainly during other than peak periods, the Board has determined that West Virginia Avenue is a heavily traveled street at all hours. The area surrounding the campus at this location is heavily developed with row houses and small apartments, and the Board concludes that no additional traffic should be directed immediately at that area.

The Board concludes that the University Campus can adequately disperse existing traffic from the proposed parking garage through the existing campus and then out to public street using the existing campus access points.

It is therefore ORDERED that the application is GRANTED subject to the CONDITION that the exit proposed by the applicant directly to West Virginia Avenue be DELETED from the plans.

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

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

ATTESTED BY:

  
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STEVEN E. SHER  
Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: 20 AUG 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."

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 LICENSES, INVESTIGATIONS, AND INSPECTIONS.