

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 14085, of the President and Directors of Georgetown College, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for a special exception under Paragraph 3101.46 for further processing under the Georgetown University Campus Plan to permit the construction of student housing facilities in an R-3 District at premises 3800 Reservoir Road, N.W., (Square 1321, part of Lot 1).

HEARING DATE: February 15, 1984  
DECISION DATE: February 15, 1984 (Bench Decision)

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The Board, in a preliminary matter to the hearing of the application, for good cause shown, waived Section 201.3 of its Rules to permit the applicant to file in the record at the public hearing revised plans marked as Exhibit No. 23 of the record.

2. The proposed Student Residence Village C will be located at the southern end of the Georgetown University campus where the existing O'Gara Hall is located. The New South Dormitory abuts the proposed Student Residence Village C on the south, a large parking area abuts the site on the west, Harbin Hall is about 130 feet to the north, and the Jesuit Community parking lot and Gervaise Hall are to the east. The site is known as premises 3800 Reservoir Road, N.W. It is in an R-3 District.

3. Georgetown University was established in 1789, under a charter granted to it by the Congress of the United States. It is an accredited university, is authorized to confer degrees, and qualifies as a university under the Zoning Regulations.

4. This application is submitted pursuant to the Georgetown University Campus Plan 1983-2000 A.D. and Beyond that was approved by the Board in BZA Order No. 14021.

5. The present application requests permission to construct Student Residence Village C in accordance with Alternative I of the approved Campus Plan. The project will provide students with attractive housing that will be in harmony with the surrounding architecture. The University has a pressing need to provide on-campus residence facilities for the students.

6. This project achieves one of the approved objectives of the Campus Plan to increase the number of students living on campus and thereby reduce the number of students commuting to campus.

7. The proposed Student Residence Village C will be a nine story dormitory facility containing 700 beds in two wings connected by a skylighted entrance way to the academic campus to the east. The facility will provide 184,500 square feet of gross floor area, with 29,592 square feet of lot coverage. The applicant plans to demolish the existing structure on the site, O'Gara Hall, which was originally built as a barn and is presently occupied by the Departments of Transportation and Protective Services. The existing O'Gara Hall contains 7,313 square feet of gross floor area with 3,750 square feet of lot coverage.

8. Paragraph 3101.46 of the Zoning Regulations provides that a college or university which is an academic institution of higher learning, including a college or university hospital, dormitory, fraternity or sorority house proposed to be located on the campus of a college or university, is permitted as a special exception in a residential district, provided that:

- A. Such 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;
- B. In R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5-A and R-5-B Districts the maximum bulk requirements normally applicable in such districts may be increased for specific buildings or structures provided the total bulk of all buildings and structures on the campus shall not exceed the gross floor area prescribed for the R-5-B District;
- C. The applicant shall submit to the Board 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, and a description of all activities conducted or to be conducted therein, and of the capacity of all present and proposed campus development;
- D. Within a reasonable distance of the college or university campus, the Board may also permit the interim use of land or improved property with any use which the Board may determine is a proper college or university function; and,

- E. Before taking final action on an application for such use, the Board shall have submitted the application to the District of Columbia Office of Planning and the District of Columbia Department of Transportation for review and report.

9. The Student Residence Village C will not be objectionable because of noise. The project is well within the campus boundaries and is not adjacent to any non-university owned properties or buildings. The facility will be constructed of materials that provide a maximum amount of sound insulation. The grounds around the Village will be limited to passive quiet outdoor activities. Active recreation activities are provided on campus at the Yates Center and on the recreation fields that are located on the western portion of the Campus. The University's rules and regulations also place certain restrictions on the students as to noise.

10. Construction of the project will decrease the noise generated by automobiles. The 700 residents in Village C will not be allowed to have automobiles on campus, thereby reducing noise generated by automobiles. This restriction not only reduces the noise in the immediate vicinity of the Village, but it will reduce the number of cars circulating in the campus area.

11. The proposed structure will not be objectionable to neighboring owners because of traffic. The parking demand as a whole on the campus will decrease because many students who would have to otherwise live off campus and commute will now be able to live on campus. The University does not allow these students to have automobiles on campus. Therefore, the project will have a positive impact on traffic and parking. The development of the entrance to the campus from Canal Road will not be affected.

12. This project achieves the approved planning objectives that the Campus Plan was designed to accomplish including discouraging vehicular traffic and constructing residential facilities prior to or concurrent with other proposed developments. The University is continuing to develop and implement remedial traffic and parking proposals to limit the effect of the University on traffic and parking in compliance with Conditions "d" and "e" of BZA Order No. 14021.

13. There will be no increase in student enrollment as a result of this application.

14. Sub-paragraph 3101.462 of the Zoning Regulations limits the total campus bulk to the gross floor area prescribed for the R-5-B District. Taking into account the decrease in bulk due to the demolition of the existing

O'Gara Hall, the net increase in bulk as measured by floor area ratio (FAR) is only .041. The new campus FAR, including the Animal Resource Facility, would total 0.793, far less than the 1.8 permitted.

15. The applicant has previously filed with the Board in Application No. 14021 the University's long range plans for developing the campus as a whole, showing the location, height and bulk where appropriate, parking and loading facilities, athletic and other recreational facilities, and a description of all activities to be conducted therein, and the capacity of all present and proposed campus development.

16. The University is not requesting any interim use of land.

17. The Office of Planning, by memorandum dated January 11, 1984, recommended approval of the subject application. The Office of Planning reported that the proposed Student Residence Village C conforms to the recently approved Campus Plan. The facility is to be located near the center of the campus, away from any non-university residential buildings. It will reduce commuting by students who currently live off campus, eliminating some of the existing traffic on neighboring streets. Not only will the facility not bring about any increase in student population, it will continue the trend toward the creation of a self-contained campus, decreasing the potential adverse impact of students on the neighboring residential area. The Board concurs with the reasoning and recommendation of the Office of Planning.

18. The Department of Transportation, by memorandum dated January 10, 1984, recommended approval of the application. The DOT reported that the development of the dormitory will further the stated objectives of the campus plan of reducing vehicular traffic on surrounding local and arterial streets during peak periods by providing new residential units so that more students can reside on campus. The DOT supported this objective. One aspect of the proposed dormitory development which should be enhanced, however, is the placement of bicycle parking spaces. As indicated in the Campus Plan, the closest bicycle parking station is to be located near Maguire Hall. Adequate bicycle parking facilities should be located within the dormitory building to encourage and facilitate bicycle use by the student population. The Board concurs with the DOT recommendation.

19. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E, by report dated January 11, 1984, reported that a resolution in support of the application was unanimously passed by the ANC at its January 4, 1984, monthly meeting. The ANC advised that:

- A. The project involves the construction of student housing facilities which follow the approved

Campus Plan that has been discussed at several meetings of ANC 2E;

- B. Georgetown University intends to develop a University Center on top of Socio-Energy Podium A in the near future, and this was a strong factor in the community's acceptance of the Campus Plan; and,
- C. Georgetown University continues to work with the community on problems of mutual concern, and insofar as this project represents development in accordance with the Campus Plan, the ANC 2E urged the Board to approve the application.

The Board concurs with the ANC recommendation.

20. There was no opposition to the application at the public hearing.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND OPINION:

Based on the record, the Board concludes that the applicant is seeking a special exception, the granting of which requires compliance with the requirements of Paragraph 3101.46 and that the relief requested can be granted as in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and that it will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property. The Board concludes that the applicant has met its burden of proof. The applicant has addressed the issues of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions. The Board concludes that the use is so located so as not to become objectionable to neighboring property. The total bulk of all buildings and structures on the campus does not exceed the gross floor area prescribed for the R-5-B District. The applicant has submitted a plan for developing the campus as a whole. The Office of Planning and the Department of Transportation have reported favorably on the application. 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. The Board concludes that it has accorded to Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E the "great weight" to which it is entitled. Accordingly, it is ORDERED that the application is hereby GRANTED SUBJECT to the CONDITION that construction be in accordance with the revised plans marked as Exhibit No. 23 of the record.

VOTE: 3-0 (Walter B. Lewis, William F. McIntosh and Douglas J. Patton to grant, Charles R. Norris and Carrie L. Thornhill not present, not voting).

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