

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 14295 of the President and Directors of Georgetown College, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for special exceptions under Paragraph 3101.46 for further processing under a campus plan to construct an interdisciplinary center for health professionals/clinical sciences building which will be attached to the existing Gorman Building constituting a single building and under Paragraph 3308.22 to permit more than one roof structure, more than one enclosure for penthouses and mechanical equipment and a roof structure with enclosing walls of unequal height in an R-3 District at premises 3800 Reservoir Road, N.W., (Square 1321, Lot 1).

HEARING DATE: May 22, 1985  
DECISION DATE: May 22, 1985 (Bench Decision)

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The subject site is located near the intersection of Reservoir Road and 38th Street, N.W., and is known as premises 3800 Reservoir Road, N.W. It is within the boundaries of Georgetown University's main campus. It is zoned R-3.

2. The applicant requests a special exception under Paragraph 3101.46 of the Zoning Regulations for further processing and implementation of the approved Georgetown University Campus Plan 1983-2000 A.D. and Beyond (BZA Order No. 14021) to permit construction of an interdisciplinary center for health professionals/clinical sciences building in accordance with the approved Campus Plan.

3. 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 condition;

- 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 Public Works for review and report.

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

5. The interdisciplinary center will be part of the Georgetown University Medical Center.

6. The proposed project involves the construction of an eight story structure with a gross floor area of approximately 138,565 square feet. The building would cover approximately 18,435 square feet of the lot area. The structure would be connected to the existing Gorman Building. A pedestrian connection has been planned to extend from the 4th floor of the Center across the roof of the Gorman Building to the existing Bles Building. This connection will provide safe and convenient access for patients and staff of the University Medical Center. The building will be accessible to the handicapped.

7. The proposed project will be located north of the University Center and Socio-Energy Podium A, east of an

undeveloped open area, south of the Gorman Building and west of the Kober-Cogan Building.

8. The project will be designed to foster integrated and interdisciplinary programs among the academic departments in the schools of medicine, dentistry, nursing, and the graduate school. It will provide expansion space for teaching, research, and related patient care and community service functions. The clinical sciences component of the facility will enable the hospital's ancillary departments to expand and will also house the teaching, research and medical service facilities for the clinical departments of the University Medical Center.

9. Approximately 212 physicians and 228 other staff members will be housed within the building.

10. The health professionals to be housed in the Center are members of the full-time faculty and staff of the Georgetown University School of Medicine and members of the medical staff of Georgetown University Hospital. The occupants of the proposed Interdisciplinary Center are currently located in the University Hospital and other medical center buildings. It is not anticipated that there would be any increase in medical staff as a result of the construction of the Center and the concomitant reuse of space within the hospital. The space that will be vacated in the hospital after construction of the Interdisciplinary Center will be used to relieve overcrowding of existing hospital departments.

11. The existing facilities accommodate 200,000 patient visits per year. Since the proposal will provide modern facilities, an additional 30,000 patient visits are anticipated. Efficiency of the operation will improve since the physicians and staff will be located in a single location. Through a centralized registration system, patients will be able to see more than a single doctor per visit and the average length of stay per visit will be reduced.

12. The proposed facility will operate from 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. Monday through Friday and from 7:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Saturday.

13. The project is not adjacent to any nonuniversity owned properties or buildings. The facility will be constructed of materials that will limit the transmission of sound.

14. Since there will be an increase in patient visits of only approximately 115 per day, the additional traffic generated by the Center will add less than one percent to the existing traffic levels along Reservoir Road.

15. Based upon surveys of existing patients, the University estimates that the new building will generate a demand for twenty-eight additional parking spaces during the peak hour of operation. This demand will be accommodated in Socio-Energy Podium A which will provide a total of 962 parking spaces. Upon completion of Socio-Energy Podium A, 126 new parking spaces will be added to the existing parking supply on the campus. Further, upon completion of Student Residence Village C, the demand for on-campus spaces will be reduced by 266 resulting in an overall surplus of 392 parking spaces.

16. 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, dated December 30, 1983. Proposals currently under consideration include:

- A. Escalate parking charges as new structural facilities come on line;
- B. As public transportation services improve to serve nonuniversity areas, reduce zip code areas that are eligible for parking permits;
- C. Research to produce more efficient types of buses;
- D. Reduce staff and faculty parking by encouraging alternative forms of transportation; and
- E. Construct additional on-campus student housing.

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

18. According to the Zoning Regulations, the total bulk of all buildings and structures on a campus in an R-3 District shall not exceed a floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.8. The proposed structure indicates a maximum ultimate development of 0.981 FAR, well below the maximum allowed.

19. 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, 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.

20. This application achieves one of the approved objectives that the Campus Plan was designed to accomplish, namely the provision of adequate and integrated medical

facilities to serve the needs of the University and the community.

21. The construction of the proposed interdisciplinary center follows the generalized location set forth in the Campus Plan.

22. The University is not requesting any interim use of land in this application.

23. Paragraph 3308.12 requires that all penthouses and mechanical equipment shall be placed in one enclosure. The structure shall harmonize with the main structure in architectural character, material and color. Enclosing walls from roof level shall be of equal height and shall rise vertically to a roof. The Board is authorized by Sub-section 3308.2 to grant exceptions to the setback and enclosure requirements. The applicant seeks this relief.

24. The existing Gorman Building and the proposed Interdisciplinary Center will be interconnected above grade and will form a single building. The roof line of the Center will be approximately forty-five feet above the roof line of the Gorman Building, making it impossible to place two roof structures in one enclosure.

25. The relief the applicant seeks is for the erection of a roof structure which does not place all penthouses and mechanical equipment in one enclosure and which does not have all enclosing walls of equal height. This relief is necessitated by reason of the size and shape of the new structure versus the size and shape of the existing Gorman Building and its roof structure.

26. Operational factors justify the location of a separate roof structure for the Interdisciplinary Center. The Center will have separate elevator service from that of the Gorman Building and requires separate mechanical equipment. The existing equipment for the Gorman Building is not designed to service an additional structure. Construction of a single roof enclosure would be structurally infeasible because of the forty-five foot height difference between the Gorman Building and the proposed Interdisciplinary Center. The alternative of raising the enclosing walls of the Gorman Building roof structure to the same height as the Center's roof structure would be costly and unattractive, and would adversely impact the light and ventilation of adjacent buildings. Further, it would require additional zoning relief from the height limitation for roof structures.

27. The proposed penthouse is in compliance with all other provisions of the Zoning Regulations applicable to roof structures. The new roof structure for the

Interdisciplinary Center will consist of one structure housing essential mechanical and elevator equipment serving the Center. This structure will have walls of equal height, will be 18.5 feet in height from roof level and will be built of identical materials to those of the main facade. Further, it will exceed the setback requirements so that there will be no adverse impact on the light and ventilation of adjacent properties.

28. The project is subject to design review by the Commission of Fine Arts. The Commission has given the project conceptual approval. The final exterior facade may be adjusted to respond to the Commission's recommendations.

29. The Office of Planning (OP), by report dated May 15, 1985, and through testimony of a representative at the public hearing, recommended that this application be approved. The OP reported that the proposed Interdisciplinary Center conforms to the Campus Plan. The facility is to be located away from any nonuniversity residential buildings. It will not cause any increase in the number of students, faculty or staff, and the fifteen percent increase in patients will not materially affect existing traffic levels along Reservoir Road. Finally, because the Center will be connected to a much lower building, it will be necessary to construct a separate penthouse for the "addition," necessitating relief from the requirement that all mechanical equipment be placed in one penthouse enclosure. The Board concurs with the reasoning and the recommendation of the Office of Planning.

30. The D.C. Department of Public Works (DPW), by memorandum dated May 15, 1985, reported that the main campus of Georgetown University is bounded on the north by Reservoir Road, on the south by Canal Road, on the east by Prospect, P, O, 36th, 37th and N Streets, and on the west by Glover Archbold Park. Reservoir Road is a two-way, four lane minor arterial with a thirty-six foot wide pavement. The average daily traffic volume is 17,600 vehicles. Parking is prohibited on the north side from 4:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. and on the south side from 7:00 A.M. to 9:30 A.M. Canal Road is a two-way, four lane principal arterial with a fifty foot wide pavement. The average daily traffic volume is 48,700 vehicles in the vicinity of the southern entrance to the main campus. Parking is prohibited on Canal Road. MacArthur Boulevard is a two-way, four lane minor arterial with a fifty foot wide pavement. The average daily traffic volume is 16,600 vehicles near the campus. Parking is limited to two hours on the north side of the street between 7:00 A.M. and 9:30 A.M. Unrestricted parking is allowed at all other times. Foxhall Road is a four lane minor arterial with a forty foot wide pavement. The average daily traffic volume is 19,500 vehicles near the campus. 35th Street is a collector street with an average daily traffic volume of 19,900 vehicles. Parking is controlled by the Residential

Parking Permit Program. Prospect Street, 36th, 37th, O and P Street are local streets with an average daily traffic volume of approximately 2,000 vehicle on each street. Parking is controlled by the Residential Parking Permit Program.

31. There are fifteen Metrobus routes that stop within walking distance of the campus. The University operates its own eleven vehicle minibus system, which is available to faculty, staff and students.

32. The DPW further reported that the proposed facility will not generate new faculty or staff trips to the campus but will generate 130 new patient trips daily. The DPW did not anticipate any adverse traffic impacts to result from the increase in traffic volume. Parking spaces will be housed within Socio-Energy Podium A. The DPW estimate that between forty and fifty parking spaces will be needed to accommodated the new patients. DPW made the following recommendations:

- A. A minimum of forty parking spaces should be set aside which are designated for the exclusive use of patients at the Center between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M.
- B. A system should be established which allows the outpatients at the Center to utilize the Georgetown University Transit System (GUTS) between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. This would reduce the increase in parking demand on the campus, and would help in curtailing future increases in patient parking demand above that initially estimated.

33. With respect to DPW's recommendations, the Board finds that there is no need to designate spaces since it would create an inefficient parking operation that may result in additional parking on neighborhood streets. The OP representative testified on DPW's behalf that DPW had reconsidered this recommendation since there is a surplus of spaces available to meet the expected demand. The University's bus system is licensed by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and is designed to serve only University students, faculty and staff who have proper identification.

34. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E filed its recommendation untimely. The Board did not waive its Rules to receive the report into the record. A representative of the ANC testified at the Public Hearing that the ANC voted not to oppose the application since the proposal was in conformance with the approved campus plan. Since there was no recommendation of record, the Board is not required to

give the ANC the "great weight" accorded to a written recommendation that is timely filed.

35. There was no opposition to the subject application at the public hearing or of record.

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 that the proposal meet 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 the relief will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property.

The Board concludes that the applicant has met its burden of proof. The proposed use is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions. The use will not have an adverse affect on the use of neighboring property since the project is not adjacent to any nonuniversity properties and will have adequate parking facilities. Also, additional traffic generated by the project will not significantly affect existing traffic levels on nearby streets. The center is consistent with the approved Campus Plan.

The Board further concludes that the applicant is also seeking a special exception from the roof structure requirements to allow a single building to have more than one roof structure, more than one enclosure for penthouses and mechanical equipment and a roof structure with enclosing walls of unequal height. The Board concludes that because of operating difficulties, difference in height of the Gorman Building and the proposed building and other conditions relating to the building and surrounding area, full compliance with the Zoning Regulations would be unduly restrictive, prohibitively expensive and unreasonable.

The Board further concludes that the granting of the two special exceptions as conditioned below will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and maps and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with said Zoning Regulations and maps. Accordingly, it is hereby ORDERED that the application is GRANTED SUBJECT to the following CONDITIONS:

1. No mechanical equipment shall project above the level of the top of the penthouse structure.
2. Any projection above the level of the roof other than the penthouse structure, shall be set back

from the edge of the building at a ratio of two to one.

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

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: 16 AUG 1985

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 CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS.

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