

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 15435 of the President and Directors of Georgetown College, pursuant to 11 DCMR 3108.1, for a special exception under Section 211 for further processing of an approved campus plan for construction of a perinatal building as an addition to the university hospital in an R-3 District at premises 3900 Reservoir Road, N.W., [Square 1321, Lot 1 (817)].

**HEARING DATE:** April 17, 1991  
**DECISION DATE:** May 1, 1991

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

1. The subject property is located on the Georgetown University campus which contains approximately 104 acres of land and is roughly bounded by Reservoir Road to the north, Glover-Archbold Park on the west, Canal Road on the south, and 35th and 36th Streets on the east. The campus is zoned C-1 and R-3. The site of the proposed facility is located within the medical center campus in the northwest sector of the university campus. The main academic portion of the university campus is located on the southeast portion of the campus.

2. The applicant is seeking a special exception for further processing under an approved campus plan to allow for the construction of an addition to the existing Georgetown University Hospital to house a Perinatal center. The location, size and design of the Perinatal Center corresponds to the information presented by the University in its 1989 Bicentennial Campus Plan.

3. Section 211 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 present location, height and bulk, where appropriate, of all present and proposed improvements, including, but not limited to buildings, parking 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 as 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 Department of Public Works for review and report.

4. This request for special exception is submitted pursuant to the Georgetown University Bicentennial Campus Plan reviewed and approved by the Board in BZA Application No. 15302, Order dated October 12, 1990. The instant application is the second project submitted for approval under the approved Bicentennial Campus Plan.

5. Georgetown University is located in an urban setting composed of residential, institutional and commercial uses. Georgetown University is also located within the Georgetown Historic District and the Commission of Fine Arts has architectural review authority for specific building projects. The site which is the subject of this application is located on the Medical Center campus.

6. In this case, there are two issues presented for review:

- 1. Is the Perinatal building designed to meet the University's needs and to further the academic mission of the University?
- 2. Does the project meet the requirements of the Zoning Regulations in that it is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions?

7. The proposed Perinatal Center is the result of over a decade of planning and study. The need for the proposed project has become more and more pressing over the last five years, as evidenced by the high infant mortality rate in the District and the evident shortage of neonatal capacity. The proposed facility is

the result of the University's commitment to provide state-of-the-art perinatal medicine to the community.

8. The proposed Perinatal Center will be a model center where doctors, nurses and other health care professionals will be trained in the care of mothers and infants. Georgetown remains one of the leading teaching institutions in the country. The teaching of health care professionals will have far reaching impacts well beyond the additional numbers of patients Georgetown will be able to treat in the Perinatal Center. In significant respects, the project carries out the goals and academic mission of the medical center or provide for the education of health care professionals and to provide the finest care possible in the Nation's Capitol and surrounding communities.

9. The proposed addition is the first of several projects designed to modernize the existing Georgetown University Hospital in order to continue to provide the finest in patient care in a modern physical plant. The Perinatal project was identified as one of several priority projects as part of the Campus Plan process. The other priority projects which were identified, include the Medical Research Building, the new parking garage and the Lombardi Cancer Center addition. All of these projects are included in the Campus Plan and are designed to carry out the academic mission of the University.

10. The main hospital building was constructed over forty years ago at a time when medical, technical and support needs and construction methods and codes were very different than today. The existing facility requires modernization to meet its current needs. Portions of the Main Building have already undergone various levels of renovation. The new west wing addition for the Perinatal Center will tie into refurbished and improved hospital spaces. These include improvements to the labor and delivery areas which are not physically part of the new addition, but which are an essential component of the University's efforts to improve patient care. The concept for the proposed addition was adopted by the applicant after studying several alternatives and is designed to maximize the existing facilities and to provide a modern physical plant. A completely new perinatal center, which would be the most efficient solution to the hospital's needs, is not financially or physically feasible.

11. The proposed Perinatal center is only one component of the University's efforts to address the high infant mortality rate in the District of Columbia. The national rate of neonatal deaths is 9.9 per 1,000 births. In the District of Columbia, the rate is 23.2 neonatal deaths per 1,000 births. The University is involved in a number of programs designed to help solve the infant mortality rate by addressing prenatal care, drug use and early intervention in addition to constructing the proposed facility.

12. The provision of perinatal care at the hospital plays an important role in addressing the problem of high infant mortality. Over 22 percent of the total infants born at Georgetown require admission to the intensive or intermediate care nurseries. This is more than twice the national average. Under existing conditions, occupancy in both the intermediate and intensive care nurseries has exceeded 100 percent on several occasions, requiring Georgetown to accommodate overflows in other areas of the Hospital, which results in having to turn away transports from other hospitals seeking specialized care. The need for the proposed facility is not simply a space need, but rather a need to provide a model center with the most up-to-date equipment for high-risk newborns. High technology equipment often means the difference between life and death, or between leading a normal life and one that is dependent on continuing medical treatment. In addition to the high technology equipment, the Perinatal Center will also provide separate areas for mothers and newborns. There will be no increase in the number of students at the University as a result of the proposed addition.

13. The existing perinatal facilities at the hospital are out of date. They are too small by the standards of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. These are the standards used by the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) in licensing, and the University has been cited numerous times for space deficiencies. The Hospital has also received complaints from patients because the present facilities are overcrowded and lack patient privacy. The existing facilities, for example, do not have consultation rooms for physicians and parents, private areas for grieving parents, or space for sibling visitation. In addition, some offices for nurses and physicians who staff these areas are in distant areas of the Hospital.

14. The proposed addition will provide an increase of twelve special care bassinets. During the past three years, the special care nurseries have averaged in excess of 90 percent occupancy and the occupancy rate has exceeded 100 percent over 20 percent of the days in each of these years. The additional 12 beds will help alleviate the existing occupancy problems. The new special care nurseries will provide 22 intensive care beds for infants, 12 intermediate care beds and 10 convalescent beds. The special care nurseries will be immediately adjacent to the delivery suite, neonatal labs, satellite pharmacy, satellite blood bank, respiratory therapy, consultation and waiting areas and staff lounge space.

15. The proposed addition will consist of a 7-story building, approximately 51,869 square feet in size, filling in the space between the northwest wing and the southwest wing of a Main Building of the Hospital. The addition consists of 4 full floors

above ground, and on floors 5 through 7, a smaller addition to provide elevator access to all floors of the existing Hospital. Included in this space will be areas for materials, management, staff and support space, a new patient drop-off/pick-up covered driveway, additional lobby and waiting areas, and modern facilities to house the Perinatal Center. The Perinatal Center will be located on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors of the new addition, plus renovated space on the 2nd and 3rd floors of existing units.

16. The existing perinatal facilities currently occupy space on the third floor of the existing Hospital Building. Within the confines of the existing building, it is physically impossible to increase the square footage enough to provide the additional space needed in the nurseries and the labor and delivery suites. Currently, there is only 70 and 35 square feet per bed in the intensive and intermediate nurseries, respectively, and there is a severe shortage of support space and equipment storage.

17. The proposed addition also includes improvements to the main entrance of the Hospital. At present, the main entrance is difficult for patients and visitors to find, and has long been a complaint by those coming to the Hospital. The new addition will add a covered circular drive where cars can drop-off and pick-up patients, and an additional lobby and seating area adjacent to the new main entrance.

18. The proposed addition will match the existing hospital building with respect to architectural design, building materials and color. In addition, the planned reconfiguration of the access drive from Reservoir Road to the hospital would greatly enhance the building's appearance and provide an opportunity for landscaping improvements.

19. The proposed facility has been designed to provide the standard insulation materials found in all new construction, and there will be no increase in noise or vibrations as a result of the project. Further, with the improvements to the circulation system accessing the hospital, any noise associated with the dropping-off or picking-up of patients should be reduced.

20. The proposed Perinatal Center will add approximately 36,750 square feet to the campus. Including the proposed congeneration facility, this will bring the University's new total FAR to 4,351,688 square feet, or 1.0 FAR. Thus, the Perinatal Center, when added to all existing buildings and structures on campus, is well below the gross floor area prescribed for the R-5-B District. In the Campus Plan, the Perinatal Center was projected at 68,000 square feet.

21. The proposed facility will fully comply with all licensing requirements and will result in no other objectionable

conditions.

22. The Perinatal project would result in no objectionable impact due to increased traffic. The access to the Hospital will be enhanced with the improvements proposed for the entrance and lobby areas, including the new circular drive. The area in front of the existing entrance is presently used for short-term parking by persons arriving to admit or take home patients, and by delivery vehicles. All deliveries will be rerouted to the new delivery space area. All persons bringing or picking up patients will be allowed to use the circular drive and then will be directed to use the parking garage.

23. The proposed facility is expected to increase the number of employees at the University by approximately eighty. Due to the shift in conditions and the phasing of programs, the increased number of employees will not result in any objectionable traffic impacts. Adequate parking is provided on campus to accommodate those employees expected to drive to the site. In addition, the University has a transportation management program to encourage carpooling and ride sharing. The amount of traffic generated by the proposed facility will be small and is not expected to produce any measurable impact on the traffic on Reservoir Road. The loading area for the Hospital will remain unchanged as a result of the addition and the relocation of service delivery vehicles will improve existing conditions.

24. The Office of Planning (OP), by memorandum dated April 19, 1991, recommended that the application be approved. The OP was of the opinion that the proposed addition would not create any objectionable conditions to neighboring property because of its location relative to the confines of the existing hospital compound, its unobstrusive scale, and the fact that the University owns all the property and buildings that surround or are directly adjacent to the the subject site. The proposed addition would not generate additional noise or a substantial increase in vehicular traffic. The proposal would not increase the number of students on the campus as a whole, although an additional 80 employees would be added to the hospital staff over a period of time. Parking for both visitors and employees of the proposed Perinatal Center would be adequately accommodated in existing campus parking facilities when required. The Office of Planning found that the proposed addition, when added to all other buildings on campus, would result in a total campus FAR well within the 1.8 FAR permitted under the Zoning Regulations. The Office of Planning was further of the opinion that the subject proposal is compatible with the approved Campus Plan and that it would be in harmony with the existing Hospital relative to architectural character, material and color.

25. The Department of Public Works (DPW), by report dated March 29, 1991, stated that it has no objection to the proposal.

The report concluded that the proposed project will have no measurable adverse impact on the surrounding streets and adjacent residential neighborhood.

26. The Fire Department, by report dated November 19, 1990, indicated that it had no objection to the Perinatal Building.

27. The Metropolitan Police Department, by report dated November 26, 1990, indicated that it was not opposed to the application, and that the application would not affect the public safety in the immediate area or generate an increase in the level of police services now being provided.

28. Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 2E, the ANC within which the University is located, by report dated April 9, 1991, and by testimony presented at the public hearing, supported the Perinatal Center conditioned on the granting of a certificate of need by the D.C. State Health Planning and Development Agency and a finding by DCRA that this project will not have a negative environmental impact on the community.

29. Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 3B, by testimony presented at the public hearing and by a letter filed at the hearing, requested that the Board refrain from hearing the proposal until the applicant has explained its proposal to the affected neighborhoods and residents and the Environmental Impact Statement has been published, reviewed and commented on by the ANC's. Further, the representative of ANC 3B requested that conceptual review by the Commission of Fine Arts follow zoning review. The Board finds that appropriate notice was given to all affected ANC's and that there is no evidence that the applicant has avoided citizen input. Further, the Board finds that the project is currently in the process of environmental impact review. Finally, the Board finds that in special exception cases, the Board finds helpful the recommendations of the Commission of Fine Arts, and that, therefore, the Board encourages applicants in special exception cases to have conceptual review completed prior to coming before the Board.

30. The record contains several letters of support of the granting of the application, citing the significant benefits to the community and the District of Columbia that the project will provide. There were no letters of opposition filed by neighborhood residents.

**CONCLUSION OF LAW AND OPINION:**

Based on the foregoing findings of fact and the evidence of record, the Board concludes that the applicant is seeking special exception relief, the granting of which requires compliance with

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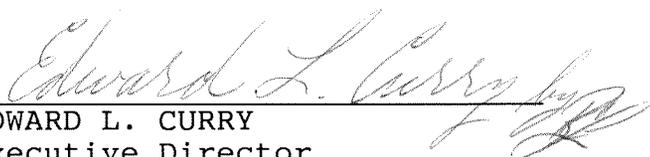
the requirements of Sections 211 and 3108.1 of the Zoning Regulations and that the requested relief can be granted as in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and that it will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property. The Board concludes that the University has met its burden of proof and that the use is so located as to not likely become objectionable because of noise, traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions.

The Board further concludes that, as hereinafter conditioned, the project is not likely to adversely impact adjacent or nearby properties. Accordingly, it is hereby **ORDERED** that the application is **GRANTED, SUBJECT** to the **CONDITION** that the applicant may modify the exterior design details, including materials, in accordance with the recommendation of the Old Georgetown Board and D.C. Commission of Fine Arts.

VOTE: 4-0 (Paula L. Jewell, Sheri M. Pruitt, Charles R. Norris and Carrie L. Thornhill to grant).

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

ATTESTED BY:

  
EDWARD L. CURRY  
Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: \_\_\_\_\_

AUG 23 1991

PURSUANT TO D.C. CODE SEC. 1-2531 (1987), SECTION 267 OF D.C. LAW 2-38, THE HUMAN RIGHT ACT OF 1977, THE APPLICANT IS REQUIRED TO COMPLY FULLY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF D.C. LAW 2-38, AS AMENDED, CODIFIED AS D.C. CODE, TITLE 1, CHAPTER 25 (1987), AND THIS ORDER IS CONDITIONED UPON FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THOSE PROVISIONS. THE FAILURE OR REFUSAL OF APPLICANT TO COMPLY WITH ANY PROVISIONS OF D.C. LAW 2-38, AS AMENDED, SHALL BE A PROPER BASIS FOR THE REVOCATION OF THIS ORDER.

UNDER 11 DCMR 3103.1, "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."

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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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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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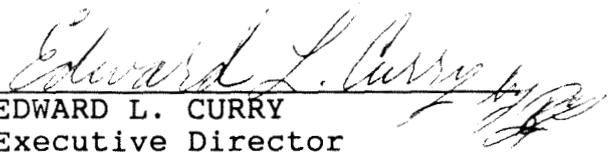
As Executive Director of the Board of Zoning Adjustment, I hereby certify and attest to the fact that a copy of the Order in this application/appeal dated AUG 23 1991 has been mailed postage prepaid to each party who appeared and participated in the public hearing concerning this matter, and who is listed below:

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EDWARD L. CURRY  
Executive Director

DATE: AUG 23 1991