

Phi Beta Cons

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The *Right* take on higher education.

By Jane S. Shaw

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Johns Hopkins University is the latest university to undermine donor intent if the facts reported in the *Washington Post* recently are correct.

The family of the former owners of the 138-acre Belward Farm in Gaithersburg, Md., have sued the university for failing to abide by its agreement. In 1989, the family sold the land to the school at a large discount (the bulk of the land was a charitable donation). The understanding at the time was that it would be used for research and development. According to a press release from the family, 30 acres would be developed commercially, and it was.

In 1997, the family agreed to let the university use some of the acreage for a satellite campus for Johns Hopkins, but the university wants much more — including a commercial office park with retail stores and residences. From the *Post* article by Jonathan O’Connell:

[Tim Newell, a family member who is among the litigants] said that in 1997, the university and the family had agreed on a plan to build a 1.4 million-square-foot satellite campus for the university on Belward Farm. Now the plan is for 4.7 million square feet, which county officials envision as the anchor to a “Science City.”

The county has already approved the expansion, according to the *Post*.

For previous outrageous violations of donor intent, see Martin Morse Wooster’s paper, “Games Universities Plan: And How donors Can Avoid Them.” One first step: Never trust a university with your land or money.

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