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MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen Cochran, Case Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: September 3, 2013
SUBJECT: BZA Case 18602: 1600 Morris Road, S.E. (private school)

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING (OP) RECOMMENDATION

OP recommends the Board **approve** the application by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington for a special exception under 11DCMR § 206, to establish a private school in the R-5-A zone, at 1400 Morris Road, S.E., subject to the following conditions:

- A copy of the portions of the lease between the Washington Middle School for Girls and the applicant that are relevant to parking for the school shall be provided to the Board before its decision;
- There shall be no more than 150 students enrolled in the school at any time;
- There shall be no more than 20 faculty or staff employed by the school at any time;
- Outdoor play areas or athletic fields shall not be equipped with bleachers or lights;
- An adult hired by the school shall be designated to monitor student drop-off in the morning and pick up in the evening, and assist with traffic management during that time, at a location to be chosen in coordination with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT);
- The vehicular circulation system shall be one-way, entered from the existing curb cut off of Morris Avenue between 16th and 17th Streets, S.E. and exited onto Morris Road from the existing curb cut opposite Erie Street, S.E.;
- The school shall coordinate with Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church on the timing of special events anticipated to attract more than 100 people.

II. BACKGROUND AND PROPOSED PROJECT

The Archdiocese has leased a portion of the 590,825 square feet of land occupied by the Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish to the Washington Middle School for Girls, for use as a private school. The proposed school would occupy a building that had previously been used for parochial school classrooms. Operations would begin with 40 students in grades 4 and 5, with two grades added every other year until a total of 150 students in grades 4 – 9 are being served by 20 faculty and staff. The school would be open from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. on weekdays. There would be no more than 12 evening events per year, plus occasional open houses on weekends for student recruitment.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 18602

EXHIBIT NO. 25

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III. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address: 1600 Morris Rd. SE	Legal Description: Sq. 5817, Lot 803	Ward: 8	ANC: 8A
Historic District: none	Zoning: R-5-A, low density apartment houses		
Lot Characteristics: 590,825 square feet of sloping, substantially wooded land in Randle Highlands, with church and related buildings, circulation road and parking. Morris Road, SE, serves the property.			
Existing Development: 350 seat church, parish hall, former school building with attached rectory, two parking lots, play area, softball diamond, and unspecified out-building.			
Adjacent Properties: low rise apartments and single family houses, 200 to 800 feet distant; Fort Stanton Park	Neighborhood Character: Moderate-density residential with substantial open space.		



Figure 1. Site

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS

	Criteria and Information Provided	OP Analysis
§ 206.1	<i>[Private schools] shall be permitted as a special exception in an R-5 District</i>	Meets criterion.
§ 206.2	<i>Not...objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of:</i>	

	Noise: <i>Nearest residence is 200 feet, across Morris Road to south and 800 feet to north and west. Areas to east buffered by Ft. Stanton Park. Athletics, recess and outdoor activities will be buffered by other buildings or forest, and age-range won't draw spectator crowd.</i>	Meets criterion.
	Traffic: Applicant estimates 50% of students (75) will arrive by automobile; the rest would walk or take public busses. 2/3 of faculty would drive. Remaining third would take one of two Metrobus routes from the Anacostia Metro station, less than one mile away. The school would have a crossing-guard and drop-off monitor near 16 th Street and Morris Road, S.E. Circulation would be westbound from Morris Road, to Morris Road as it angles around the southern border of the site.	Meets criterion.
	Number of Students 40 students in grades 4 and 5 the first year. Two grades added every other year. 150 students total, grades 4 – 9.	Meets criterion.
§ 206.3	Ample Parking for students, teachers, visitors by automobile: • § 2101.1 requirement: <u>School</u>: 2 spaces for 3 teachers required [14 spaces]; 15 spaces provided by lease. • Church: 1 space per 10 seats required = 35 • Total Provided: 150 parking spaces on property; plus overflow area.	Meets criteria.
§ 3104	Harmony with Purpose and Intent of Zoning Regulations: A school compliant with § 206 criteria is compatible with the residential zone.	Meets criterion.
	No Likely Adverse Effect on Neighboring Properties. Given size of school and faculty, lack of evening and weekend activities, substantial open space buffer, and proposed traffic management agent, it is unlikely the school will have an adverse impact, as long as it coordinates its activities with the uses of the church and other buildings on the property.	Meets criterion.

V. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and OP have discussed the application. DDOT will be sending its comments under separate cover. Its concerns are reflected in the conditions of approval recommended by OP.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 8A voted on August 15, 2013 to recommend approval of the special exception request.