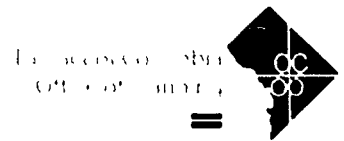


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MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Karen Thomas, Case Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: February 18, 2014

SUBJECT: BZA Case 18715 - Request for special exception at 3000 Cathedral Avenue, NW (Maret School)

I. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the Maret School's special exception request pursuant to Section 206, with the following conditions.

- An expansion of the school, including a 1-story addition to the existing 3-story Academic Building, a 2-story addition above the existing 1-story North Activities Building, and a 1-story addition at-grade at the South Activities Building.
- An increase in student enrollment from 635 students to 650 students and
- An increase in faculty/staff from 129 to 135

OP is also supportive of some of the minor adjustments to the conditions of approval as described at the end of this report

II. AREA AND SITE DESCRIPTION

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT District of Columbia	
Address	3000 Cathedral Avenue, NW
Legal Description	Square 2113, Lot 843
Ward	3
Lot Characteristics	7.9 acres, 597' wide
Existing Development	Private school, grades K-12
Zoning	R-1-B and R-3 – Single-family residential and row houses, private schools permitted by special exception
Historic Designation	The entire campus is a historic landmark with several contributing buildings including the Woodley Building, cottage, and carriage house/stable.
Adjacent Properties	North, South, and West: Single-family detached homes; East: Swiss Confederation building
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Single-family detached residential structures; institutional uses including an embassy

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 18715
EXHIBIT NO. 26

III. APPLICATION- IN-BRIEF

The Maret School has requested special exception relief to increase its student enrollment, with a related increase in its faculty and staff. The existing school is currently operating under BZA Order 17826 A, which permits the school a maximum of 635 students and 129 faculty and staff members. The applicant now proposes an increase to the student enrollment to 650 students and faculty/staff to 135 members. The proposed increase would not trigger the need for additional off-street parking as the property already contains parking spaces in excess of that required for the use. The school is also requesting a relatively small expansion of its facility, including new academic, administrative and recreation space (8,457 sf).

IV. AREA AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is located within Square 2113, which is bounded by Cathedral Avenue on the north, 32nd Street on the west, Garfield Street on the south, and 29th Street on the east. The campus is located on the South side of Cathedral Avenue, NW and extends south to Garfield Avenue, NW. The surrounding blocks contain primarily residential and institutional uses. Neighboring districts include an R-1-A district to the north of the site along Woodley Road and a TSP/R-1-A district to the south of Cleveland Avenue.

The property has no alley access. Vehicular access to the property is provided via 3 driveways from Cathedral Avenue. The faculty and staff parking lots are located at the east and west ends of the site, each served by its own curb cut. Travel through the campus is facilitated by a semi-circular, two-lane driveway entered via the East Gate. The East Gate is located immediately west of the east faculty parking lot, and allows one-way travel through the site and access to two visitors parking areas. The driveway is used for student drop-off and pick-up within a prescribed schedule that varies by grade level. Vehicles exit the driveway using the curb cut at the west end of the site, or the West Gate.

In September 2008, the Maret School implemented a new traffic circulation plan to address community concerns about congestion on Cathedral Avenue. The plan prohibits left-hand turns onto the property from Cathedral Avenue during peak morning and evening travel times (see Traffic Impact Study Tab F of Submission). Several transportation management measures were also introduced to mitigate traffic impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.



Maret School Campus (looking south)

V. BACKGROUND

The Maret School moved to their current location in 1952. Since that time, the school has requested zoning relief to accommodate the expansion and growth of the school before the Board on several occasions. The following table summarizes BZA applications for the Maret School since 1952.

YEAR	ORDER	REQUEST	BZA DECISION
1952	2960	Establish a private school for 300 students	
1968	9594	Construct new arts and science building, with main house reserved for library and administrative uses. 400 students, 35 teachers and 16 staff.	Granted w/ conditions
1979	12821	Phase H of arts and science building	Granted
1985	14300	Classroom and gym, with 500 students and faculty/staff cap at 75	Granted w/conditions
1991	15527	Special exception to construct school bus and lawn storage garage	Granted w/ conditions
1998	16313	Variation to size of parking spaces and special exception to allow alterations, repair, and additions to school buildings	Granted w/ conditions for two phases of construction
2004	17098	Special exception to allow placement of five temporary trailers and relocation of parking off-site during construction	Granted w/ conditions
2008	17826	Request to increase student enrollment (600 to 635) and faculty/staff (125 to 129)	Granted
2014	18715	Request to increase student enrollment (635 to 650); faculty and staff (129 to 135) and to expand the athletic, classroom and atrium spaces	Current review

VI. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF

The Maret School is located within two districts, the R-1-B, which accounts for the majority of the site, and the R-3, which is located at the northeast corner of the property. The purpose of the R-1-B Residence District is to protect and stabilize existing single-family detached residential areas. The R-3 Residence District is designed for row dwellings but also includes single-family detached and semi-detached dwellings. Private schools are allowed within both districts pursuant to special exception relief.

Relief Requested

Since the property is located within two districts, special exception relief is needed from Sections 206 and 332 which address private schools in R-1-B and R-3 zones, respectively.

Item	Existing	Proposed	% increase
Faculty /Staff	129	135	4.65
Student	635	650	2.36
Building	161,964 sf.	170,421 sf	5.22

VII. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

An analysis of the project against the relevant special exception criteria is provided below

R-1-B and R-3 Special Exception Criteria

206 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND STAFF RESIDENCES (R-1)

206 1 *Use as a public school that does not meet the requirements of chapter 4 of this title or as a private school, but not including a trade school, and residences for teachers and staff of a private school, shall be permitted as a special exception in an R-1 District if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment under § 3104, subject to the provisions of this section [ORDER No 06-06, 12/01/06]*

The Maret School is an independent, coeducational institution serving grades K-12 and is classified a private school

206 2 *The private school shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions*

The applicant requests a 2 4% increase in student enrollment, a 4 7% increase in the number of faculty and staff and a 5 2% increase to the existing square footage of the school buildings. The proposed expansion would not change the function of the existing buildings on site. Currently, the school buildings are located at the center of the site, providing ample distance to buffer noise from surrounding residential and institutional uses. The traffic impact study completed for this application indicated that the proposed enrollment expansion would not affect the current level of service. The driveway used for pick-up and drop-off contains 1,250 feet for queuing on site, which accommodates existing traffic and is anticipated to handle future traffic levels. In addition, the school has an implemented TDM plan and current measures in their traffic and circulation plan to lessen its impact on adjoining and nearby property. The additional students and staff and proposed additions are not anticipated to create objectionable conditions of any type for neighboring properties.

206 3 *Ample parking space, but not less than that required in chapter 21 of this title, shall be provided to accommodate the students, teachers, and visitors likely to come to the site by automobile*

A total of 141 off-street parking spaces are currently provided on the campus. The zoning regulations require a minimum of 125 spaces for the private school use, with the proposed increase in students, faculty, and staff. The current off-street parking is divided into 4 areas, including two lots for faculty and staff and two visitor parking areas at the east and west ends of the site. Fifteen spaces are reserved for students, some of whom already carpool. The school provides ample off-street parking, to accommodate students, faculty, and visitors to the site, in excess of the zoning requirement.

322 SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS: GENERAL (R-3)

322 1 *Any use or structure permitted in R-2 Districts under §§ 302 1 and 303 through 306 shall be permitted as a special exception in an R-3 District if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment under § 3104*

Private schools are permitted as a special exception in R-2 districts and therefore also allowed by special exception in R-3 districts

Special Exception Relief - §3104

(a) Will the special exception be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps?

Private schools are permitted by special exception in both the R-1-B and R-3 districts. The Maret School has been in operation at the existing location for 62 years. The proposed use of the school is not proposed to change and the requested expansion of the school's facilities and its student and staff enrollment is relatively minor. As such, the requested special exception will remain in harmony with the purpose and intent of the zoning regulations.

(b) Will the special exception tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Maps?

The proposed expansion would not significantly increase the intensity of the use or reduce green space and yard areas. The use would remain compliant with its off-street parking requirement. Maret has ongoing efforts to help ensure that the proposed enrollment expansion would not adversely affect the use of neighboring property as identified in its existing transportation management plan. Approval of the requested special exception should not have an adverse effect on neighboring property.

VIII. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The subject property includes the former Woodley Estate and is listed as an individual landmark in the D C Inventory of Historic Sites. The Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the proposed expansion to the buildings on December 19, 2013 and concluded that the proposed additions raised "no preservation concerns" and approved the concept as compatible with the landmark and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act. *(Report attached)*

IX. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

No comments were received by OP from the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to date. DDOT's report would be issued under separate cover to the Board.

X. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

At its regularly scheduled meeting on December 16, 2013, ANC 3C issued its report of no objection to the request for special exception relief. The ANC's report will be issued to the record under separate cover.

XI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

OP recommends **approval** of the requested special exception to allow an expansion in enrollment and faculty at the Maret School and its proposed additions with the following conditions:

1. The maximum number of students shall not exceed 650 and the number of faculty and staff shall not exceed 135 employed for any one period of the day.

- 2 The applicant shall submit a report every other year to ANC 3C and the District Department of Transportation. The report shall provide enrollment and staffing figures and a description of the school's performance related to the transportation management plan from the preceding year.
- 3 The applicant shall provide a total of 141 parking spaces onsite, of which a minimum of 10 shall be dedicated to visitor parking.
4. The applicant will prohibit vehicles from making a left-hand turn onto the campus from Cathedral Avenue during school drop-off and pick-up times,
- 5 The applicant will instruct parents not to park on or queue on Cathedral Avenue to wait for their children at school drop-off and pick-up times;
- 6 The applicant will continue to provide traffic control personnel at both ends of its driveway during school drop-off and pick-up times to facilitate on-campus traffic flow and enforce drop-off and pick-up procedures,
- 7 The applicant will distribute a policy manual to all families prior to the start of the academic year that explains all relevant policies and procedures regarding its transportation management measures including, but not limited to, carpooling, parking, pick-up, drop-off, and penalties for noncompliance. This information shall be posted on the school's website,

Attachments Historic Preservation Review Board Staff Report –December 19, 2013

JL/kt
Karen Thomas, Case Manager

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address	3000 Cathedral Avenue NW	Agenda
Landmark/District	Woodley	X Consent Calendar
Meeting Date	December 19, 2013	X Concept Review
H P.A. Number	14-088	X New Construction
Staff Reviewer	Anne Brockett	Alteration

Tom Wheeler of Cox Graae + Spack Architects seeks the Board's review of a conceptual design for additions to buildings at the Maret School. The school's campus includes the landmarked "Woodley," a brick home constructed c. 1801 by Philip Barton Key that later served as summer home to two Presidents and is now used the school's offices and library. Woodley has been added on to a number of times over the centuries, although it retains its integrity as a residential building type and its prominence within the campus.

The school is proposing three additions – at the north end of the Activities Building, which is attached to the east end of Woodley; at the south end of the Activities Building; and on top of the Sturtevant Building, immediately west of Woodley. Neither the Activities nor the Sturtevant Buildings contributes to the historic character of the landmark.

Activities Building North

The work here would demolish and rebuild a non-contributing connector that joins the easternmost addition to Woodley (added c. 1900 by then-owner Francis Newlands) to the Activities Building. The existing building is two stories above grade with a covered walkway projecting on its west side. The new construction would fill in the footprint of this covered area with a two-story storefront system. There are no alterations planned for Woodley and there is no structural attachment to the historic building. The connector is set back from the exterior corner of Woodley and will be attached very lightly with only a sealant joint and will improve the current connector's less sympathetic attachment to the historic mansion.

Activities Building South

A one-story weight room is proposed at the south end of the Activities Building, which is at the southern edge of the property. The addition is attached to the non-contributing gym building and follows the geometry, architectural vocabulary, and materials of the existing structure.

Sturtevant Building

The non-contributing Sturtevant Building is located to the west of Woodley. The building is three stories tall except at its east end, where it is set back considerably and is only two stories in height. The proposal would add a third story here, following all the architectural details of the building below, including the split face block walls and bands of windows. A new rooftop mechanical penthouse is pushed as far away from Woodley as possible.

Evaluation

The addition at the south end of the Activities Building has no potential to affect the architectural character of Woodley and would be entirely blocked from view by the existing Activities Building. However, the HPO notes that there are known archaeological resources on the property and the school is strongly encouraged to continue working with the City Archaeologist to determine best practices before ground disturbance for the new construction destroys any resources within this area.

The addition that connects Woodley to the Activities Building similarly raises no preservation concerns. It is designed with a light touch both in terms of its largely glass construction and its method of attachment to

the historic building. It improves the existing building by connecting more sensitively and by setting back to fully expose Woodley's corner.

The Sturtevant Building is the closest new construction to the Woodley mansion. However, even with an additional floor, Sturtevant will be considerably shorter than Woodley. The portion of Sturtevant where the addition is proposed is pushed back from the rest of the façade, deferring to Woodley to the east. Sufficient space would remain between Sturtevant and Woodley, allowing construction of the additional story without overwhelming the landmark building. The design follows the existing architecture, which was reviewed years ago by the HPRB and is compatible in all aspects.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept as compatible with the landmark and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff.