

SELF-CERTIFICATION MEMORANDUM
Special Exception Application

To: District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Lloyd Jordan, Chairperson
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200 S
Washington, DC 20001

From: Sean O'Donnell, AIA LEED AP
Agent / Architect
Perkins Eastman DC

Date: 10 August 2015

Subject: **Roosevelt High School, 4301 13th Street NW, Square 2915, Lot 802
ANC 4C**

I. NATURE OF RELIEF SOUGHT

This statement is submitted on behalf of the District of Columbia Department of General Services (the "Applicant"), the owner of Roosevelt High School located at 4301 13th Street NW, Lot 802 in Square 2915 (the "Property") in support of its application for special exception from:

- A. the rooftop mechanical screening set back requirement (§400.7) to allow the Applicant to modernize the existing school building's heating, air conditioning, and ventilation equipment, and
- B. the parking location requirement (§2116.4) to provide parking accessible to the front entrance of the school.

II. JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD

The Board of Zoning Adjustment (the "Board" or "BZA") has jurisdiction to grant the special exception relief requested here pursuant to §3104.1 of the Zoning Regulations

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Description of the Surrounding Area

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Lot 802 in Square 2915, is bounded by Allison Street NW on the north, Iowa Avenue NW on the east, Kansas Avenue NW at the southeast corner, Upshur Street NW on the south, and 13th Street NW on the west. The area is 722,848 square feet, or 16.59 acres. See DC Office of Zoning Map provided with this application. The Lot is located approximately five blocks north (.5 miles) of the Georgia Avenue / Petworth Metrorail Station. The Lot is not located within any historic District.

Roosevelt High School, MacFarland Middle School, and Petworth Library are all located on the Lot, along with the Roosevelt track and football stadium, recreational basketball and tennis courts, and a middle school sized softball field. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 1, provided with this application. The stadium, recreational courts, and softball field are used by both the District of Columbia Public Schools and the Department of Recreation. Roosevelt High School is used by the District of Columbia Public Schools. MacFarland Middle School is currently being used as temporary classroom space (“swing space”) for the Roosevelt High School program, but was empty before, and will be empty again after, the high school modernization project. Petworth Library is operated by the District of Columbia Public Libraries.

The elevation of the northwest corner, at the intersection of Allison Avenue NW and 13th Street NW, is on grade with the surrounding streets. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 2, provided with this application. The land rises to a sharp crest at the southwestern corner, where 13th Street NW intersects with Upshur Street NW. A manmade terrace that is level along the entire west edge of the Lot was created when Roosevelt was constructed. The multi-story grade difference between the entrance level of Roosevelt and the adjacent 13th Street NW is handled with a double set of stepped slopes. See Photographs of the Property, Figures 3, 7 and 8, provided with this application.

None of the existing buildings are currently listed on the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites.

Parking is provided on surface lots between the existing fields and buildings. There are currently 167 parking spaces serving both Roosevelt High School and MacFarland Middle school.

B. Background Information Regarding the Property

Roosevelt High School was constructed in 1932 with an addition added in 1978-1980. The High School has a current student population of 500 daytime students, 300 night school students, and 107 full-time employees.

The Applicant is currently undertaking a modernization project of the Property to bring the building up to current educational, energy code, life safety, and accessibility standards. After renovation, Roosevelt will be capable of accommodating approximately 120 full-time and contracted employees and up to 1,030 students.

There is an existing BZA Order attached to the Property. BZA Order No. 18420 allows for special exception to allow the installation of a 128-foot-tall (lightpole) monopole, antennas, and related equipment shelter and cabinets under §2713, and a variance from the minimum setback from the lot line requirements under §2713.9. See BZA Order No. 18420 provided with this application.

IV. NATURE OF RELIEF SOUGHT - SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUEST #1:

Special exception relief is required for the rooftop mechanical screening requirements under 11 DCMR Section §400.7.

A. SUMMARY:

This special exception qualifies under 11 DCMR Section §3104.1 “Roof Structures - location, design, number, and all other regulated aspects” and §411.11 because the existing building conditions of the Property make compliance with the one-to-one setback requirements under §400.7.b impracticable.

B. BASIS FOR GRANT OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION:

Under 11 DCMR §3104.1, the Board is authorized to grant a special exception where in the judgement of the Board, the special exceptions will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps and will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property.

Under 11 DCMR §411.11, the Board is authorized to provide relief from specific criteria, including §400.7. Applicants for the special exception need to demonstrate that operating difficulties, size of building lot, or other conditions relating to the building, would make compliance with the requirement unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly, or unreasonable, and that approval of construction not in accordance with §400.7 will not adversely affect the structure, or the light and air of adjacent buildings.

411.11 Where impracticable because of operating difficulties, size of building lot, or other conditions relating to the building or surrounding area that would tend to make full compliance unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly, or unreasonable, the Board of Zoning Adjustment shall be empowered to approve,

as a special exception under §3104, the location, design, number, and all other aspects of such structure regulated under §§ 411.3 through 411.6, even if such structures do not meet the normal setback requirements of §§ 400.7, 530.4, 630.4, 770.6, 840.3, or 930.3, when applicable, and to approve the material of enclosing construction used if not in accordance with §§ 411.3 and 411.5; provided, that the intent and purpose of this chapter and this title shall not be materially impaired by the structure, and the light and air of adjacent buildings shall not be affected adversely.

C. APPLICANT MEETS THE BURDEN OF PROOF FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION

Compliance with the requirement would be unduly restrictive and prohibitively costly.

The majority of the 1932 era roofs on the Property are sloped and covered with original slate tiles, which is not conducive to mounting large pieces of rooftop equipment.

There are three areas of flat roof on the Property, located at the north, middle, and the south areas of the building. The overall length of the Property is 750 feet long, requiring that the rooftop equipment be dispersed for full coverage. Whereas the existing flat roofs to the north and middle of the building are large enough to meet the setback requirement of §400.7, the existing flat roof at the south end of the Property was not.

The south end of the Property houses the existing gymnasium and pool, as well as locker rooms and other athletic support spaces. Due to the ventilation requirements of these types of spaces, the required rooftop equipment is quite large.

There are two areas of flat roof in immediate proximity of the gymnasium. The first area of roof is directly east of the gymnasium, located directly over the pool, and was constructed as part of the addition in the late 1970's. The gym and pool mechanical units were originally designed to be located on this roof, but structural analysis of the existing concrete deck indicated that it would not be able to support the weight of the units without significant structural intervention.

The second area of roof is directly south of the gymnasium and is part of the original 1932 building. This roof is relatively small in area, at just 25 ft. deep and 110 ft. wide. Unlike the 1970s era roof to the east of the gym, the structure of the 1932 roof is capable of supporting two large mechanical units, the associated dunnage, and the required screen walls. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 1, provided with this application, for location of this area of roof.

Due to the equipment's maintenance clearance requirements, a minimum of 3 ft. clear is provided between the back of the screen enclosure and the adjacent wall of the gymnasium to the north. The enclosure then extends 13.5 ft. to the south, to hide the unit from view along the east and west elevations. This leaves approximately 8 ft. clear between the existing exterior wall at the south edge of the Property and the mechanical screen wall. The top of the screen wall is located at a height of 10 feet above the finished roof surface in order to cover the entire height of the mechanical unit.

In conclusion, whereas the roof south of the gym is too shallow to allow the appropriate setback for the mechanical screen wall, the roof to the east of the gym is not capable of supporting the equipment loads. The level of structural intervention required to support the mechanical units on the east section of roof would have been cost prohibitive to the Applicant.

The proposed non-compliant condition will not affect the light and air of adjacent buildings.

There are no buildings immediately adjacent to the Property along the south side of the site. The Property sits 85 ft. back from the face of the curb along Upshur Street NW, and is located at an elevation of 20 ft. to 25 ft. above the sidewalk level. The school is only one story high at this location. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 9 and 10, provided with this application. The mechanical screen wall will have no adverse effect on the availability of light and air to the closest buildings on the opposite side of Upshur Street NW.

V. NATURE OF RELIEF SOUGHT - SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUEST #2:

Special exception relief is required for automobile parking spaces that do not meet the restrictions on location in relation to a building façade per 11 DCMR §2116.4, which states that parking spaces shall not be located in the following areas:

- (a) Between a building restriction line and a lot line abutting a street; or
- (b) Except in an Industrial District or a building used solely as a parking attendant shelter, between a lot line abutting a street and the more restrictive of either a building façade or a line extending from and parallel to a building façade.

A. SUMMARY:

This special exception qualifies under 11 DCMR §2116.5 because the accessory parking is not for single-family use. If the parking spaces that the Applicant is requesting a special exception for are not installed, the building will not maintain its current parking quantities. There were 167 existing parking spaces on site. The new construction would provide for 169 total spaces. If the parking spaces covered by this application are not installed, the count will drop to 159 spaces.

B. BASIS FOR GRANT OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION:

Under 11 DCMR §2116.5, the Board is authorized to grant a special exception relief based on specific criteria under which the location of all open parking spaces, accessory to any building or structure, are allowed to be sited anywhere on the lot except in the case of single-family homes.

2116.5 Except as provided in § 2117.9 {Driveways and parking for row dwellings}, if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment pursuant to § 3104 for special exceptions, open parking spaces accessory to any building or structure may be located anywhere on the lot upon which the building or structure is located, or elsewhere, except in the case of a one-family dwelling, in accordance with §§ 2116.6 through 2116.9.

C. APPLICANT MEETS THE BURDEN OF PROOF FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION

In accordance with §§ 2116.6 through 2116.9, the proposed parking meets the following criteria for special exception:

2116.6 The Board shall determine that it is not practical to locate the spaces in accordance with § 2116.2 for the following reasons:

(a) Unusual topography, grades, shape, size, or dimensions of the lot;

The main entrance of the Property is located on the west side of the building, facing 13th Street NW. The topography varies greatly from street level up to the entrance level at the 1st Floor, and the grading is extremely steep. See Photographs of the Property, Figures 4 and 5, provided with this application. Furthermore, for security reasons, all students, parents, and visitors arriving during daytime hours must go through screening at the main entrance. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 6, provided with this application. In order to

accommodate the security protocol, an accessible path has been designed to connect the main entrance to the public sidewalk, and the parking spaces in question. These parking spaces are being proposed at the only undeveloped, level area of site closest to the main entrance, and adjacent to the parent and bus drop off zone.

(b) *The lack of an alley or the lack of appropriate ingress or egress through existing or proposed alleys or streets;*

The above section is not applicable to the Applicant's application

(c) *Traffic hazards caused by unusual street grades; or*

The above section is not applicable to the Applicant's application

(d) *The location of required parking spaces elsewhere on the same lot or on another lot would result in more efficient use of land, better design or landscaping, safer ingress or egress, and less adverse impact on neighboring properties.*

The majority of level areas of the site that are accessible from existing curb cuts and drive aisles are already designated for parking. The other level areas contain existing tennis and basketball courts, and a softball field that serve both the school and the surrounding community. The courts and fields are being rebuilt as part of the Applicant's modernization effort. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 1, provided with this application.

2116.7 *When the accessory parking spaces are to be located elsewhere than on the lot upon which the building or structure they are intended to serve is located, the parking on adjacent lots or lots separated only by an alley from the lot upon which the building or structure is located, shall be preferred.*

The above section is not applicable to the Applicant's application

2116.8 *The accessory parking spaces shall be located so as to furnish reasonable and convenient parking facilities for the occupants or guests of the building or structures that they are designed to serve.*

The main entrance of the Property is located on the west side of the building, facing 13th Street NW. The topography varies greatly from street level up to the entrance level at the 1st Floor, and the grading is extremely steep. See Photographs of the Property, Figures 4 and 5, provided with this application. Furthermore, for security reasons, all students, parents, and visitors arriving during daytime hours must go through screening at the main entrance. See Photographs of the Property, Figure 6, provided with this application. To accommodate the security protocol, an accessible path has been designed to connect the main entrance to the public sidewalk, and the parking spaces in question. These parking spaces are being proposed at the only undeveloped, level graded area of site closest to the main entrance, and adjacent to the parent and bus drop off zone.

2116.9 The Board may impose conditions on any accessory or non-accessory parking spaces as to screening, coping, setbacks, fences, the location of entrances and exits, or any other requirement it deems necessary to protect adjacent or nearby property. It may also impose other conditions it deems necessary to assure the continued provision and maintenance of the spaces.

The Applicant acknowledges that if the proposed parking is allowed by the BZA, that additional screening or other conditions may be requested by the Board.

Along with this application, we have included the following items:

- a) Agent Authorization Letter;
- b) BZA Form 120, Application;
- c) BZA Form 126, Fee Calculator;
- d) BAZ Form 135, Self-Certification;
- e) Statement of the Applicant;
- f) List of names and mailing addresses of owners of all property located within 200 feet of the boundaries of the Property;
- g) Existing BZA Order #18420;
- h) Zoning Map;
- i) Official Building Plat from the DC Office of the Surveyor; and
- j) Architectural plans, elevations, site plans, and photographs of the Property.

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If you require any further clarification or have any questions regarding the application, we are available at any time to discuss them with you.

Regards,



Sean O'Donnell, AIA LEED AP
Agent / Architect