

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Elisa Vitale, Case Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: January 26, 2016
SUBJECT: BZA Case 19166, 4601 Texas Avenue, SE

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following:

- § 411.6 Rooftop Enclosure (one rooftop enclosure required; multiple rooftop enclosures provided); and
- § 411.18 Roof Mounted Equipment (16 foot setback required; 5.3 foot setback provided).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	4601 Texas Avenue, SE
Legal Description	Square 5351, Lot 878
Ward/ANC	7, 7F
Lot Characteristics	The irregularly shaped lot is bounded to the north by B Street, SE; to the west by Reservation 612 and Texas Avenue, SE; to the south by C Street, SE; and to the east are residential buildings in the R-2 zone district. The lot is 106,549 square feet (2.45 acres) in area.
Zoning	R-2 – one family, semi-detached dwellings.
Existing Development	The lot is currently developed with the Plummer Elementary School.
Adjacent Properties	One family detached dwellings are located to the north, south, and east of the campus, and multifamily buildings, in the R-5-A Zone District are located to the north and northwest of the school property.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding neighborhood character is predominantly low and moderate density residential, consisting of one family detached dwellings and apartment buildings. To the south is Woodlawn Cemetery and the the west is Fort Chaplin Park. The nearest commercial corridor is along East Capitol Street, located approximately two blocks north of the subject site.

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The Department of General Services (DGS), the Applicant, proposes to modernize the educational spaces and existing building systems. Plummer Elementary School was constructed in 1959 and no additions, alterations, or other changes have been made since construction. The system upgrades would require new mechanical roof equipment. The Applicant has requested relief from the maximum number of rooftop enclosures permitted (§ 411.6) and from the one-to-one setback requirement for rooftop mechanical equipment (§ 411.18).

IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant special exceptions under § 3104 from §§ 411.6 through 411.10 and § 411.18, upon a showing that:

- (a) *Operating difficulties such as meeting Building Code requirements for roof access and stairwell separation or elevator stack location to achieve reasonable efficiencies in lower floors; size of building lot; or other conditions relating to the building or surrounding area make full compliance unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly or unreasonable;*

The Applicant proposes to modernize an existing elementary school, which would require the provision of new mechanical roof equipment. The mechanical equipment would be located in multiple enclosures. The use of multiple enclosures, in lieu of the required single enclosure, would provide additional rooftop area on which to site solar panels.

The screen wall for the new equipment would be 16 feet in height, providing a five foot and three inch setback from the southern edge of the building, where a 16 foot setback would be required. The vision-proof louvered metal screening would ensure that the rooftop equipment would not be visible from the street, or along the sides of the structure.

- (b) *The intent and purpose of this chapter and this title will not be materially impaired by the structure; and*

The proposal would enable the Applicant to upgrade an existing school and provide modern mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems thereby improving the campus for students. The use is permitted by right within the R-2 Zone District, and with the exception of the roof structure setback and number of enclosures, complies with all development regulations. The proposal meets the intent of the Zoning Regulations, as it will be adequately screened from view, and separated from adjacent properties by a minimum of approximately 60 feet.

- (c) *The light and air of adjacent buildings will not be affected adversely.*

The proposal does not appear to adversely affect the use of neighboring property. The existing school building is located at the northwest corner of the property, which would provide separation between the school and the existing dwellings that are adjacent to the east of the school. The mechanical equipment would be screened from view by a louvered metal screen. B and C Streets SE provide additional separation between the subject property and adjoining residential dwellings.

V. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

As of the date of this writing, comments from other District Agencies had not been received.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 7F had not filed an ANC report in this case as of the date of this report. OP has not received comments from the community, and letters, either in support or opposition, have not been submitted to the file.

Location Map

