GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Andrew Altman
Director

DATE: March 5, 2001

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2001 MAR 12 PM 1:32

SUBJECT: BZA Application 16683: Saint John's College High School

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APPLICATION
Application of Saint John's College High School (the "Applicant"), pursuant to 11 DCMR 3104.1, for a special exception from the provisions of Section 210 for the construction of a new science and technology center on the existing school campus at 2607 Military Road, N.W., (Square 2308, Lots 804 through 807) in the R-1-A District.

The project proposes the construction of a new science and technology center and a new exterior canopy that will cover the walkway between the school entrance and the addition. The center will include remodeling and expansion of the existing east wing and will result in new laboratories and classrooms. The addition is proposed to be one story and the exterior façade will be finished with coordinating details and masonry materials. There is no change in enrollment, hours, parking or traffic circulation included in this application.

BZA
Case No. 16683
Exhibit No. 27

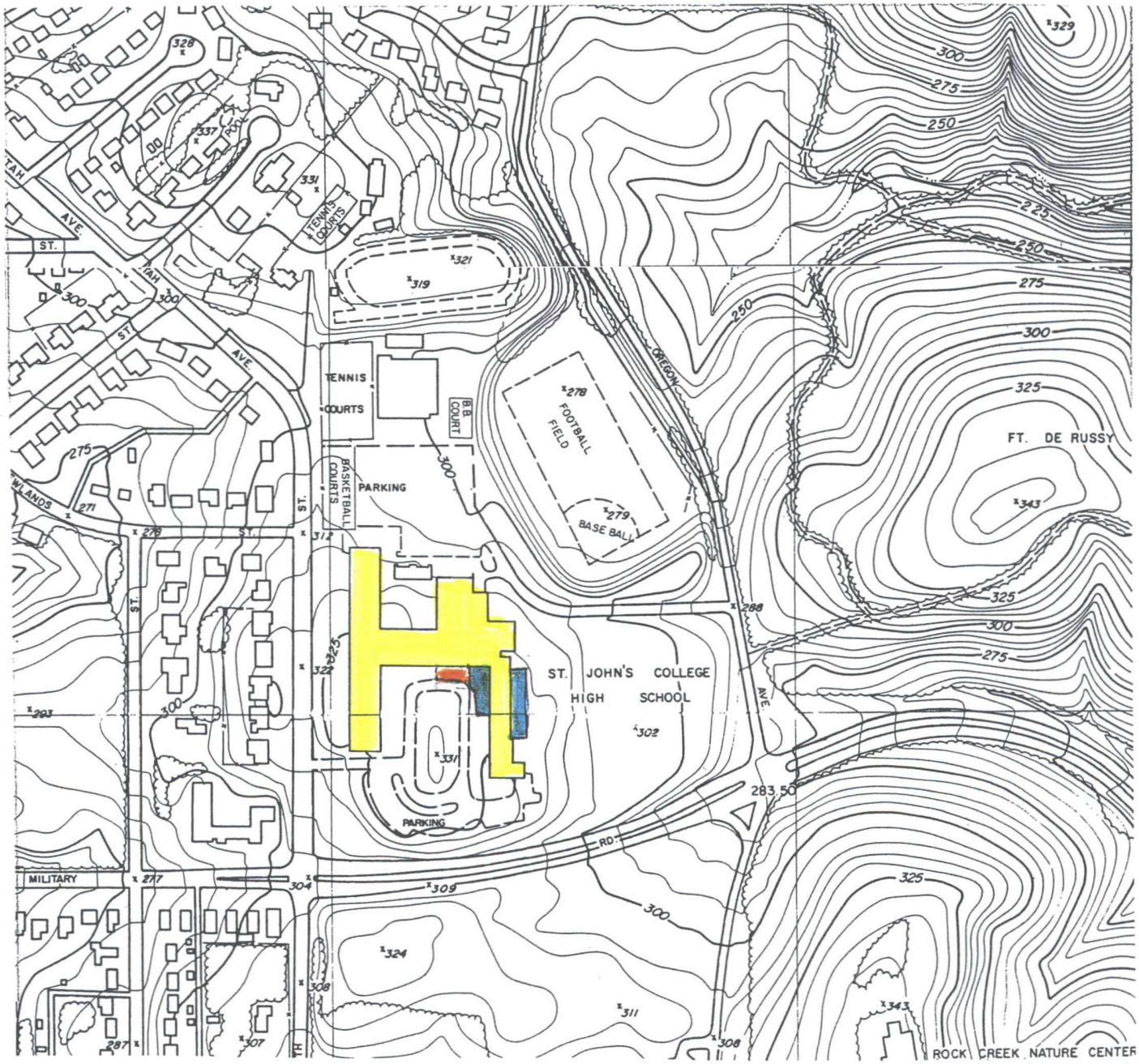
SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION
The Office of Planning recommends approval of the application.

BACKGROUND
St. John's College High School (St. John's) is an independent co-educational school for students in grades 9 through 12. St. John's has operated a school in the city since 1851 and was authorized to operate as a private school at the current location in 1946. Since the initial approval, the Board has approved three special exception applications for additions to the campus.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16683
EXHIBIT NO.27

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The site is on the north side of Military Road and sits fully between Oregon Avenue on the east and Utah Avenue/27th Street on the west. Single-family detached residential dwelling adjoin the school on the north. Rock Creek Park is located directly across Military Road to the south and Oregon Avenue to the east.



Existing School building Proposed Addition Proposed Canopy

North
n.t.s.

EXISTING ZONING AND RELIEF REQUESTED

The site is located in the R-1-A zone district. The R-1-A zone district permits matter-of-right single-family detached dwellings with maximum lot occupancy of 40 percent and a maximum height of 3 stories/40 feet. The district permits, with the approval of the BZA, private schools so long as their location does not result in objectionable impacts on the neighborhood.

The applicant seeks approval from the Board for a special exception from the provisions of Section 210 to construct a one-story science and technology addition to the school along the eastern wing of the existing building. As part of the project, an exterior canopy is also proposed that will provide a covered walkway to the main school entrance.

ANALYSIS

Section 210 permits a private school use in an R-1-A zone district if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as a special exception in accordance with the provisions of Subsection 3104.1. It must also be so located that it is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, parking, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions.

Hours of Operation, Student Enrollment

There is no change in enrollment or hours of operation included in this application. The core school hours will continue to be 8:05 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. with after school activities operating until early evening.

Noise Levels (Inside and Outside)

The addition is for interior classrooms and laboratories. The new science and technology center will be constructed along either side of the eastern wing of the school. The addition will be setback approximately 350 feet from Oregon Avenue, NW. Rock Creek Park is immediately across Oregon Avenue, NW. After construction is complete, there should be no increase in the level of noise from the addition.

Building Renovations

The architect, Richard Mullineaux, has stated that there will also be interior modifications to improve student circulation between the existing facilities and the new addition. The applicant has stated that the exterior materials will be coordinated to blend with the existing masonry materials. A canopy will be added to cover the main entrance walkway and connect the entrance to the new addition to the main entrance. Mr. Mullineaux has stated that the canopy will not interfere with the existing stain glass window.

Traffic

The intersections either side of the school, 27th Street, NW, at Military Road at, and Oregon Avenue, NW, at Military Road, operate at acceptable levels of service during the morning peak hours (Level B and C, respectively) and the afternoon peak hours (both at Level B). According to the traffic impact assessment (TIA) provided by the applicant, there will no permanent impact on the existing levels of service from the addition. The applicant has stated that there will be no change to the circulation patterns, access points or parking as part of this application. The Department of Public Works has reviewed the TIA and will issue a separate memorandum.

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Parking
The traffic assessment also includes a study of the existing parking for students, staff and visitors. The assessment concludes that there is ample parking with the existing 305 parking spaces currently available. OP staff visited the site on two separate occasions and noted that on each visit, there were at least 40 open and available parking spaces during school hours. In addition to the available parking, the school has a bus system that utilizes three buses, each seating 42 passengers, and has plans to add one more bus to the system. The application does not include any deviation to the existing parking and OP believes none is need.

Construction Management Plan
The applicant has also provided a Construction Management Plan (CMP) for the project. The CMP provides contacts with telephone and pager numbers to the ANC and neighborhood, addresses hours of construction, on-site material storage, and construction traffic routes. The CMP is very similar to the plan approved for the Episcopal School. It is identified in Attachment H of the application.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
The Comprehensive Plan Generalized Land Use Map designates the general area surrounding the school for low-density residential uses. Schools and churches are considered to be part of the fabric of a residential community. As the Comprehensive Plan notes in Subsection 102.3, "Many city neighborhoods also include integral commercial and institutional uses that contribute to their character. Neighborhood businesses, schools, park and recreational facilities, churches and other public facilities all add to the livability of our communities. These uses must be protected, stabilized and improved."

COMMUNITY COMMENTS
Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 3G voted on February 19, 2001 to unanimously support the requested special exception.

AGENCY COMMENTS
The Department of Public Works has been provided with a copy of the applicant's proposal and traffic impact assessment. They will be providing a separate memorandum.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATION
Compliance with Section 3104.1
The BZA must find that approval of the special exception will not cause a "substantial detriment to the public good" and that it will not impair the intent, purpose and integrity of the Zoning Regulations and Map.

The proposed addition to Saint John's College High School is located on a portion of the building that provides the greatest setback from the exiting residential neighborhood and Rock

Creek Park. The zoning district allows buildings up to 3 stories and this application is proposed for only one. The proposed lot coverage appears to be less then ten percent, which is well below the maximum allowable 40%.

The Office of Planning believes that the proposed addition would be in compliance with §3104.1, would not impair the intent, purpose or integrity of the Zoning Regulations and Map and recommends approval of the application.

AA/jls$_{AICP}$