GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



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Office of the Director

Memorandum

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: JLS for Andrew Altman, Director
Office of Planning

DATE: February 5, 2002

SUBJECT: BZA Application #16826 (City Gate)
5917 16th Street, N.W. (Square 2724, Lot 9)

BZA
Case No. 16826
Exhibit No. 21

APPLICATION

The application by City Gate requests, pursuant to 11 DCMR 3104.1, a special exception to permit church programs under Section 216, in the SSH/R-1-B District.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Due to insufficient information, the Office of Planning is unable to make a recommendation on the requested special exception. We will continue to work with the applicant and with input from ANC-4A and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) we will provide a supplemental report to the BZA prior to the public hearing.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject property is located at 5917 16th Street, N.W (Square 2724, Lot 9) at the intersection of 16th Street and Oglethorpe Street (See Attachment 1). The site is developed with a two-story plus basement house and a 2-car garage to the rear of the property. To the rear of the property is a 20-foot wide alley.

The church is located in the Brightwood Park neighborhood. The site is generally bounded by 16th Street to the west, Oglethorpe Street to the north, residences to the east, and Manchester Lane to the south. The surrounding community is developed with predominantly single-family, detached residences. Along 16th Street there are a number of non-residential uses such as churches, some of which are located in former single-family residences. Other uses include embassies such as the Ugandan Embassy located at 5905 and 5911 16th Street, two houses south of the subject property.

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PROPOSAL

City Gate currently operates a number of community outreach programs within the city. The subject site will be the central location and coordination point for a number of their off-site programs as well as providing a number of programs on the site. The proposed activities on the property will include:

- Worship, instructional services, and educational programs for up to 75 persons;
- Homework assistance and mentoring for groups of 8-15 persons;
- ESL programs;
- A small office;
- Housing for up to 8 long-term volunteers e.g. House manager and long term college/seminary student ministry interns; and
- Overnight hospitality for short time mission volunteers for up to 1 week. Number of persons based on space availability.

ZONING REQUIREMENT

The subject site is zoned SSH/R-I-B. Church programs are permitted with the approval of a special exception.

ANALYSIS

1. City Gate is a non-profit organization sponsored by the Calvary Baptist Church (8th and H Streets, N.W.) and has a contract with the DC Baptist Convention to train and deploy ministry volunteers in ministries related to churches in the Convention. The applicant has provided a list of activities and programs that they will operate on the site, but has not provided an outline or explanation as to how the programs will be coordinated, the hours of operation for each of the activities, and the number of persons for each program. The applicant has stipulated that the staff will be all volunteers but has not provided information as to the complement of staff for the proposed programs.

2. The applicant proposes to provide homework assistance and mentoring programs for neighborhood children. The applicant has provided no evidence to demonstrate the need for such a program in this neighborhood, the radius from the site from which the children would come, and how many children they could accommodate.

3. The application proposes to provide hospitality for short-term volunteers and therefore there will be a constant turnover of residents at the house. OP is concerned that the provision of this type of transient accommodations causes some concerns, as it could be disruptive to the community.

4. The applicant has not provided any plans to demonstrate the layout of the building in order for an assessment to be made of how well the programs and sleeping accommodations fit in the building.

5. The Office of Planning questions the appropriateness of this application to qualify as a church program as Section 216.3 states "The part of the church program conducted on the property shall be carried on within the existing church building(s) or structure(s)". The building is not a church building or structure and the building is owned by City Gate. Therefore, the application does not meet this requirement.

6. The ANC–4A review of the proposal is scheduled for February 5, 2002. The application will also be reviewed by the 16th Street Heights Citizens Association.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning is unable to make a recommendation on the request to grant a special exception due to insufficient information. If the information is provided before the public hearing we will provide a supplemental report with our recommendation.

ATT: Attachment 1 – Site Location

AA/mbr/



Feature Key

- Zoning Boundaries
- Square Index
- Ortho Index 1999

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Application No. #16826

DC Office of Planning
January 23, 2002

Scale 1:1347

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25 0 25 50 75 Feet

Attachment #1