1990

BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Application of St. Patrick's Church

BZA Application No. 15374
Public Hearing:
ANC 3B, 3D

STATEMENT OF THE APPLICANT

I.
Nature of Relief Sought

This is an application pursuant to Subsection 3108.1 of the Zoning Regulations for a special exception under Paragraph 207.1 to permit the renovation of a private school located in the R-1-B zoning district at 4700 Whitehaven Parkway, N.W. (Square 1372, Lot 817). In connection with the renovation, the school is seeking a modest increase in the enrollment and the total number of faculty and staff.

ZONING SECRETARIAT
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
'90 OCT -3 P3:08

II.
Background Of The Case

St. Patrick's Church is the owner of the site at 4700 Whitehaven Parkway, N.W., where it operates a church and a private pre-school and elementary school (St. Patrick's School). The existing building on the site is a combined church and school building. Through the facility, the church and school offer a wide range of sectarian and non-sectarian community services.

Established on the present site in 1976, the school currently provides instruction for approximately 390 students at levels ranging from pre-school through grade 6. Admission decisions are made without regard to race, sex, religious affiliation or national origin of the Applicant. The school currently provides scholarships to 39 students, ten percent of the student body.

Since it was originally established, the school has expanded its scope of instruction to include pre-school through sixth grade levels. The curriculum has also been expanded to

Ex. No. 25

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 275

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.275

include art, mu[redacted], physical education, science and [redacted]ibrary programs.

The proposed addition would add approximately 5,400 square feet of classroom space to the existing building through the enclosure of the ground level of the building. This portion of this level that will be enclosed is currently used for 14 parking spaces. The addition of classroom space through this enclosure will not change the footprint of the building in any way.

The addition is needed to accommodate the existing programs and to maintain consistent class sizes. It is not related to an attempt to substantially increase enrollment at the school. Currently, the enrollment is approximately 390 students. The proposed enrollment in the enlarged building will average 427 students per year over a six year period with a maximum of 440 students. A slight increase in enrollment will permit the addition of new sections to the lower grades to address the attrition that the school experiences at the fourth grade level when several students transfer from St. Patrick's to other private schools.

The proposed renovation will have no adverse effects on the character of the neighborhood and will improve the appearance of the existing structure. On September 18, 1990, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D, voted to support the application thereby evidencing the positive impacts of the school on the area.

III.
Jurisdiction of the Board

The Board has jurisdiction to grant the requested relief as a special exception pursuant to Paragraph 207.1 and Subsection 3108.1 of the Zoning Regulations.

IV.
Points in Support of the Application

Before proceeding with the discussion of the merits of this application, the following exhibits are submitted:

Exhibit A: Copy of portion of the Baist Atlas showing the subject property outlined in red.

Exhibit B: Copy of a portion of the Zoning Map indicating that the zoning of the subject site, which is outlined in red, is R-1-B.

Exhibit C: Copy of memorandum to BZA, signed by the Chief of the Zoning Branch indicating that BZA approval is necessary for a special exception for the proposed addition.

Exhibit D: Photographs of the existing site and building.

Exhibit E: Plans for the proposed enclosure.

Exhibit F: Outline of the testimony of Robert Peterson, Headmaster of St. Patrick's School.

Exhibit G: Outline of the testimony of Peter Grina, Project Architect.

Exhibit H: Report of Robert L. Morris, traffic engineer.

Exhibit I: Copy of BZA Order No. 14009 dated December 23, 1983 for an addition to an existing child development center and private elementary school.

V.
Compliance With Section 207 and Subsection 3108.1 of the Zoning Regulations

As the Board is aware, a special exception use is a use predeemed compatible with other uses permitted in that particular zoning classification provided certain requirements are met. In reviewing applications for a special exception under Section 207,

the Board's scope of authority is limited to determining whether the proposed use satisfies the special exception criteria enumerated in Section 207 and the general requirements for special exceptions included in Section 3108.1 of the Regulations. First Baptist Church of Washington v. District of Columbia, 432 A.2d 695 (D.C. 1981). If the BZA determines that the proposal satisfies the enumerated criteria, it must grant the requested relief. Through the exhibits, testimony and other evidence before the Board, the Applicant will establish that it complies with all applicable provisions under the Zoning Regulations.

In obtaining approval of a special exception pursuant to Section 207, the Applicant has the burden of showing that the school will be located so as not to "become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions", and that ample parking shall be provided. Compliance with the requirements of Section 207 is set forth as follows:

A. 207.2: The Proposed Addition Will Not Be Objectionable Because of Noise, Traffic, Number of Students or Otherwise.

As previously stated, the expansion of the facility is not related to an attempt to substantially increase enrollment at the school. Rather, the expansion is needed to accommodate the existing program and to address the current trends in enrollment which result in a reduction in class size beginning at the fourth grade level. The Applicant intends to restrict the maximum enrollment to 440 students for an average enrollment of 427 over the next six years. A slight increase in enrollment will permit the creation of new sections for some of the lower grades. The

number of faculty and staff will not exceed 60.1/ The proposed addition is an effort by the Applicant to maintain consistency in the class sizes for all of the grades and reduce classroom crowding.

The impact of the proposed plans on the adjoining and nearby property owners will be minor. Since the footprint of the building will not change, the aesthetic impact will be minimal. Through the encouragement of car pooling and a private bus service, the number of cars traveling to the site each day is controlled. The school officials will continue to make every effort to limit the number of cars coming to the site on a daily basis and to stagger arrival and departure times. The trips that are generated by the use do not coincide with the evening peak hours. Because of the after school programs, the afternoon trips to and from are staggered over a three hour period.

It is noteworthy that the school and church provide a wide variety of community services that are beneficial to the neighborhood. The Applicant operates a senior citizens center. In addition, the facilities are made available to a variety of groups including Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous. St. Patrick's has an important role in the community and views community service as an integral part of its mission.

B. 207.3 Ample Parking Space Will Be Made Available.

Section 207.3 requires that ample parking space be made available. Although the section does not specifically quantify the term "ample number of spaces", it states that there shall not be

---

1/ The hearing advertisement refers to a maximum staff on faculty of 61. The maximum has been reduced to 60.

fewer spaces than are required by Chapter 21 of the Zoning Regulations.

Currently, the school and church have 49 parking spaces, 32 of which are located on the north side of Whitehaven Parkway. The enclosure of the ground floor level of the building will result in the loss of fourteen of the existing parking spaces. Eight of these spaces will be replaced on the site through the striping of an existing paved area. This area can accommodate a total of 14-16 spaces through stacked parking.

Section 2101.1 of Chapter 21 requires the provision of two spaces for every three teachers or other employees. With the proposed increase in staff to a maximum of 60, a total of 40 parking spaces will be required when the maximum staff size is reached. Under the proposed plan, 40 spaces will be provided. This number does not include the additional car that can be accommodated through stacked parking. The number of parking spaces will be sufficient in light of the reduction in cars due to the car pooling and van service.

VI.
The Granting Of The Special Exception Will Be In Harmony With The General Purpose And Intent Of The Zoning Regulations And Will Not Tend To Affect Adversely The Use Of Neighboring Property

St. Patrick's School has served the neighborhood for almost 14 years. Through the community outreach programs sponsored by the church and school, the area has received substantial benefits. In granting the application its support, ANC 3D expressed its acknowledgement of the important role of the school in the community.

The parking spaces provided on the subject site will insure that the traffic impacts of the use are minimal. The parking that is provided is adequate to accommodate the needs generated by the

use. Through continued efforts to encourage carpooling and the use of the van service, the number of cars travelling to the site each day will be further reduced.

In summary, the renovation of the school to enclose the ground floor level of the school will enhance its ability to serve the students and the community. It will not involve a significant increase in enrollment and therefore will not create objectionable conditions relating to noise or number of students. It will, however, enable the school to continue effectively in its important role in the neighborhood.

VI.
Witnesses

A. Robert Peterson, Headmaster, St. Patrick's School

B. Peter Grina, Project Architect

C. Robert L. Morris, Traffic Engineer

VII.
Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant respectfully requests that the special exception requested be granted to permit the proposed increase in classroom space and related increase in enrollment, faculty and staff.

Respectfully submitted,

WILKES, ARTIS, HEDRICK & LANE
CHARTERED

By: Whayne S. Quin
Whayne S. Quin

Allison C. Prince
Allison C. Prince

1666 K Street, N.W.
Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20006

Counsel for Applicant

Date:

October 3, 1990