PROJECT:
Model Cities Seniors Wellness Center Addition
1901 Evarts Street NE
Washington, DC

REQUEST
Pursuant to 11 DCMR Section 3104.1, the Government of the District of Columbia Office on Aging requests for special exception under Section 205 to allow the construction of an addition to the Model Cities Seniors Wellness Center, as defined in the zoning ordinance as an elderly development center.

BACKGROUND
The DC Office on Aging is the governmental agency designated by the Mayor of the District of Columbia to plan, develop, and implement programs and services for residents 60 years of age and older. The agency's philosophy is to sustain meaningful roles for older citizens in their communities and to promote healthy lifestyles and positive aspects of aging.

The Agency constructed the current Model Cities Senior Wellness Center on the northeast corner of lot 50, square 4124. The property is zoned as R-1-B, and also holds other buildings: Harmony House, Washington Center for the aging (long-term care building), Pleasant Hill, and House of Togetherness.

The current seniors wellness center provides social, educational, and recreational programs to promote the health habits of the neighborhood and Ward 5 senior population. Programs include counseling, health screening, strength-building, aerobics and exercises, dancing, seminars, and computer education. The one-story masonry building contains offices, educational classroom areas, as well as a fitness room for recreation, and a large multi-purpose room to accommodate larger gatherings. Activities primarily take place during daylight hours.

The site fronts on Evarts Street NE to the north. 20th Street NE and Queens Chapel Road NE run along the east side of the property. The site is undeveloped to the south. The surrounding neighborhood contains single family residences and Langdon School directly across Evarts Street to the north.

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PURPOSE
Although the building is in excellent condition, the programs offered at the center are no longer easily accommodated in the current facilities. This project adds space to the building to allow the current programs to better function.

PROPOSAL
The Office on Aging proposes to expand the building in two directions on the north and south. An addition to the west was not planned in order to maintain ample space between the center and the adjacent elderly care homes. The existing parking area at the front will be expanded, resulting in seven additional onsite spaces.

The current fitness room size limits the class sizes for aerobics and exercise programs, even though more seniors wish to participate. The room size and configuration also prevents the exercise equipment from being used without disrupting an ongoing exercise program. A new larger fitness room is planned to the south to easily connect to the building's existing circulation, and an expanded entry lobby and office is proposed to the north. The new fitness room will allow larger classes and will separate exercise machines from the class area.

The addition to the north at the building front entry adds a vestibule to help energy conservation, and adds space for a receptionist and lobby seating for seniors waiting for rides. The new front entrance also proposes a cover over the entry doors and entry walk to protect visitors from the weather at a vehicle drop-off. The director's office is also expanded to provide a conference area for staff meetings. The director and staff currently use the library and other areas designated for instructional use.

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Exhibit No. 5

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17052
EXHIBIT NO. 5

The current classroom is also used for staff conferences and as a library, since no other rooms can accommodate these functions separately. No area exists for computer instruction. A larger, divisible multi-purpose classroom is proposed in the present fitness room to support larger classes and computer instruction.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

- Codes and Licensing:
  The center will continue to meet all applicable code and licensing requirements by the District of Columbia.

- Uses:
  The center will continue to provide activities that promote the health and wellness of the senior population. No new uses are proposed.

- Operation:
  The staggered arrival and departure times of the different activities and programs will be continued. The facility operating hours will remain primarily from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

- Traffic:
  Traffic to and from the center is not expected to increase. The center employs 8 full and part time employees. One onsite parking space for every four employees is required by the zoning regulations. The current 10 spaces provided satisfies this requirement.

  The addition and renovation is proposed to accommodate the current programs, rather than an expansion. Although many seniors walk, arrive by bus or van from local homes, community centers, and institutions, the current onsite parking does not accommodate all users and employees at peak times. Users must compete with school staff and neighbors for street parking on Evarts Street and 20th Street. To help alleviate this problem, an increase in onsite parking is proposed to the northeast of the building front to accommodate seven additional spaces, bringing the total to 17.

- Compatibility with Surrounding Uses
  The center is compatible in scale and height with the surrounding school and two story homes. The proposed addition continues the residential character of the existing building by matching its brick, asphalt roof shingles, and sloping hip roof forms. Its hours of operation, low amount of noise generated by its activities, and distance to closest residences do not disturb the surrounding residential neighborhood.

PROJECT DATA

Existing building area =	7,076	sq ft
Proposed addition =	2,745	
Total proposed building size =	9,821	sq ft
Full time employees =	6	
Part time employees =	2	
Total current/projected employment=	8	
Existing parking capacity =	10	spaces (2 accessible)
Proposed parking capacity =	17	spaces (3 accessible)

Estimated construction cost = $400,000

Funded by District of Columbia Office on Aging
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