GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

Application No. 12576 of Eleanor D. Ditzen et al, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 and Paragraph 8207.11 of the Zoning Regulations, for a special exception under Paragraph 3101.42 to permit a private school (the Washington International School) and for a special exception under Section 7203 to reduce the required parking by less than twenty-five percent, and for a variance from the driveway width requirement (Sub-section 7206.5) in the R-1-A District at the premises 3100 Macomb and/or 3029 Klingle Street, N. W. (the Tregaron estate), (Square 2084, Lots 830, 835 and 836).

HEARING DATES: February 15, 1978, March 22, 1978 and May 17, 1978
DECISION DATES: March 1, 1978, May 31, 1978

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The case was heard on February 15, 1978.

2. When the case came before the Board at its March 1, 1978 meeting for decision, one of the owners of the property appeared before the Board and stated that she had not given her consent to the filing of the application. The Board therefore determined that it would schedule a further hearing on this matter, in accordance with Section 5.3 of the Supplemental Rules of Practice and Procedure. The scope of the hearing was limited to the following questions: (1) Who are the owners of the subject property (Square 2084, Lots 830, 835 and 836). (2) Does the Washington International School by its attorney Robert C. Zimmer have the authority of the owners to file this application with the Board?

3. Further hearing was held on March 22, 1978. As a result of the testimony taken at that hearing and the written evidence of record, the Board finds that all owners have given their consent to the filing of the application by the school, and that Attorney Robert C. Zimmer does have authority to file this application and act on behalf of the Washington International School.

4. When the case again came before the Board at the Board's March 5, 1978 meeting, the Board was unable to make a decision because certain specific information was lacking. The Board therefore ordered further hearing in accordance with Section 5.3 of the Supplemental Rules of Practice and Procedure on the following four specific issues: (1) The topography of the site, the location of existing trees and other natural features and the compatibility of the proposed plan with the site. (2) Clarification

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of the School's efforts to buy the property, and the intentions of the School to remain at this location. (3) The possibility of providing the total required parking somewhere on the lot. (4) The possibility of providing parking in a lot somewhere on the site rather than on the driveway.

5. At the May 17, 1978 hearing the applicant withdrew his request for a special exception to reduce the required parking by less than twenty-five percent and the request for a variance from driveway width requirement of fourteen feet to ten feet.

6. The amended application is therefore solely a request for a special exception under Paragraph 3101.42 of the Zoning Regulations to permit a private school in an R-1-A District at the premises 3100 Macomb Street, N. W.

7. The subject site, known as Tregaron is 20.68 acres in area and is improved with five buildings. The buildings are within the core area of the site, and are set back approximately 350 feet from the Macomb Street entrance and 520 feet from the Klingle Road exit. A fifteen to eighteen foot private roadway curves and winds through the site which has an irregular and sloping topography.

8. The surrounding uses include the Embassy of China to the immediate west, single family detached residences to the north to the south is Woodley Park and to the east is Klingle Valley Park. The Cleveland Park and Zoological Park Metro stations are located on Connecticut Avenue approximately two and three blocks east of the subject site.

9. In 1959 by Order No. 5745-46 dated December 21, 1959, the Board granted permission to use the Mansion House and adjacent areas as facilities for the School of Advanced Studies of International Communications and Understanding.

10. In 1963 by Order No. 7085, dated February 13, 1963, the Board granted permission on behalf of the Comsat Corporation to use the grounds for office space.

11. In 1966 by Order No. 8857, the Board granted permission for a private school on the site for 100 students and fourteen teachers.

12. The property stands on a Knoll, which slopes down to the north and to the south and east. The property is rather steep but it offers unique qualities. All of the structures are on the top of the ridge, which is very flat and allows for good circulation. Another amenity of the site is two open streams which are part of the stream valley system of the City, and which drains into part of Rock Creek Park.

13. The core of the site is substantially set back from surrounding properties and buffered by park land. This minimizes the potential adverse impact that the proposed use would have on the surrounding area in terms of noise, traffic or other objectionable conditions.

14. The existing structures are the main building, which is the mansion and has two stories with an attic plus a large basement, the carriage house, the green house,the back shed, the cottage and a farm house.

15. The Washington International School is a private day school whose students are from the local international community. At the present time 230 students in elementary, junior high and high school are enrolled in programs at Tregaron. The International School also operates a school for children under age nine at 2735 Olive Street, N. W.

16. The applicant seeks the Board's permission to expand the enrollment for children above age nine from 230 to 350 students, fifty-four full and part time teachers and three custodial and twenty seven administrative staff members.

17. The applicant is presently leasing the subject site. The lease will expire on July 1, 1978. A new one year extension has been executed by the majority of the owners and is being circulated for signatures by the remaining owners.

18. The applicant is in earnest negotiation with the owners of the subject property for the purchase of the site.

19. The applicant has adopted a two phase plan for the development of the site. Phase I of the plan will be implemented while the applicant is leasing the property. There will be no construction of new buildings. All of the required parking will be provided on the site and their will be no parking in the driveways. The maximum enrollment during Phase I will be 250 students, with forty-five teachers.

20. Phase II of the development plan will be implemented upon the purchase of the site. Phase II will include the construction of one multi-purpose structure which would allow for indoor sports activities. This will be the only new structure built on the site. Phase II also includes regrading of one area near the buildings for a soccer field. The maximum enrolled under Phase II will be 350 students, with sixty teachers.

21. In a report dated February 10, 1978, the Municipal Planning Office recommended the granting of the application citing the fact that the core of the site is substantially set back from surrounding properties and buffered by parkland which would minimize potential adverse impacts that the proposed use would have on the surrounding area in terms of noise, traffic or other objectionable conditions. The Board so finds. The MPO recommended approval subject to the following conditions;(1)The applicant must meet and satisfy the requirements of the D. C. Department of Transportation and the D. C. Fire Department, (2)The School undertake to prohibit students from parking on neighborhood streets. (3)That the entrance from Macadam Road and exit to Klingle Road be clearly designated as one-way and strictly enforced, (4)That all students transported to and from the site be dropped off or picked up only on school grounds, (5)That enrollment be limited to a maximum of 350 students.

22. The Department of Transportation in its testimony at the February 15, 1978 hearing offered no objection to the granting of the application. The Department focused attention on the following areas; (1)There are no present traffic problems nor have any been identified for the future, (2)The applicant must insist on maximum car pooling by students and staff, (3)The driveway leading onto the site is eighteen feet wide and has a retaining wall located adjacent to the road. It is not sufficient for parallel parking and movement of traffic. The Department recommends that no parking be allowed on this roadway, (4)Although Metro is located only fifteen hundred feet away from the school, which serves as a plus, there are no pedestrian walkways into the school grounds.

23. Residents of 3103 McComb Street offered no objection or opposition to the school. However the residents did request, that the school restrict the parents of the students to discharging and boarding of students to inside the school grounds and not in front of the school on public streets.

24. The Citizens for City Living Inc., Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Committee, and McLean Gardens Residents Association all supported the application and recommends its approval.

25. The Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3-C supported the application and felt that no adverse impact would result from the continued use of the property for a school.

26. The Board finds that the site is suitable for a school and is large enough to accomodate the number of students projected without adversely effecting the neighborhood and property.

27. The Board finds that the school can be approved without adverse impact on the parks if new construction and regrading is controlled.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Based on the record, including the report from the Municipal Planning Office, and the testimony from the Department of Transportation, the Board concludes that due to the nature of the school and the site, the operation of a private school within the R-1-A District at this site has not in the past and is not likely in the future to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students or other objectionable conditions. The Board further concludes that the operation of this school will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations. Accordingly it is therefore ORDERED that the application is GRANTED subject to the following CONDITIONS:

1. Approval shall be for the Washington International School only.

2. The School shall use the property in accordance with the plans submitted to the Board, including the "Master Plan" and "Stage I Development Plan", both marked as Exhibit 57 in the record.

3. There shall be a maximum of 250 students enrolled in the School during the Stage I plan of the plans, while the School is a tenant on the property. There shall be a maximum of 350 students enrolled in the School after the School acquires ownership of the property.

4. No new building may be constructed on the site unless such building has received the specific prior approval of the Board of Zoning Adjustment as a special exception. The construction of the soccer field shown adjacent to "Area D" on the "Master Plan" marked as Exhibit 57 in the record, including any change in grading or drainage in connection therewith shall also require the specific prior approval of the Board as a special exception.

5. Entrance to the School shall be from Macomb Street, and exit shall be to Klingle Road. Such access drives shall be clearly designated as oneway drives, and compliance with such designation shall be strictly enforced by the School.

6. The School shall undertake to prohibit its students, faculty and staff from parking on neighborhood streets.

7. The School shall require that all students transported to and from the site be dropped off or picked up only on the school grounds.

VOTE:

5-0 (Charles R. Norris, John G. Parsons, Chloethiel Woodard Smith, William F. McIntosh and Leonard L. McCants to grant).

BY ORDER OF THE D. C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED By: Steven E. Sher, by Bjm
STEVEN E. SHER
Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: JUL 21 '978

THAT THE ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS ONLY UNLESS APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING AND/OR OCCUPANCY PERMIT IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER.