GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Andrew Altman, Director

DATE: November 16, 2004

BZA
Case No. 17235
Exhibit No. 27

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 17235
Bell-Lincoln Multicultural High/Middle School, 3101 16th Street, N.W.
Square 2673, Lot 889

I. APPLICATION SUMMARY

The applicant applied for a special exception from off-street loading requirements of 11 DCMR, §2201.1. The application was first advertised as such, but has since been amended, and advertised as a variance.

II. OFFICE OF PLANNING SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends that the application be approved.

III. SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION *(See Attachments 1 and3)*

The site for which the relief is sought is 4.3 acres (187,116 SF) in northwest Washington. It is part of Square 2673, which is bounded by 16th Street on the west, Park Road on the North, Hiatt Place on the east and Irving Street on the south. A small, dead-end portion of Lamont Street penetrates the Square on the west side.

The site is part of an educational complex. Until recently the Lincoln Middle School fronted on 16th Street, and the Bell Multicultural High School was to the east, fronting on Hiatt Place. Within the last two years, the Lincoln School has been demolished and construction is well underway on a new, consolidated complex for both schools. The new school buildings occupy the southern third of Square 2673. They are three and four stories high and their structural framing has been completed. When the school buildings are finished, the Bell School will be demolished, and the site will be converted into a soccer field.

Within the Square, to the north of the new school buildings, there is a historically designated former embassy that is now the headquarters of the District Department of Parks and Recreation. At the southeast corner of Park Road and 16th Street is the Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

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Board of Zoning Adjustment
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CASE NO. 17235
EXHIBIT NO. 27

There are a variety of land uses near Square 2673. Mid to high-rise buildings line 16th Street. Commercial structures and apartments are concentrated to the east, along 14th Street. Row dwellings, many of which have been converted to flats, predominate north and south of the site, between 14th Street and 16th Street. The new DC USA shopping complex is slated to be built just east of the school complex, between Hiatt Place and 14th Street.

The Columbia Heights Metro station is located one block to the east, at the intersection of 14th and Irving Streets.

III. AREA ZONING AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS *(See Attachment 1)*

The site is zoned R-5-D along 16th Street, and R-5-B along Hiatt Place. Zoning along 16th Street is R-5-D to the south, and R-5-B to the north. Zoning along 14th Street, to the east, is C-3-A. .

The site is not within a historic district. However, there is a historic embassy building now used by the Department of Parks and Recreation. This is located between the new school buildings to the south of the house and the playing fields to the north of the former embassy.

IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is the District of Columbia Public Schools. It is constructing a new 325,215 square foot facility that will consolidate the Bell Multicultural High School and the Lincoln Middle School. The new buildings will be located in the southeast portion of the Square. The Lincoln school has been demolished to clear the site for the new construction. The Bell School will be demolished after the new school buildings are complete. The existing playing fields, to the north of the former Lincoln school, will be refurbished, and a new soccer field will be constructed on the site of the former Bell school. The new school will have its main entrance on 16th street. The buildings' receiving area, loading dock, and parking garage entrance will be located to the east, off of Hiatt Place.

V. RELATIONSHIP OF THE APPLICATION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN *(see Attachment 2)*

The Comprehensive Plan's Generalized Land Use Map designates most of the site as suitable for institutional uses, such as a school. A relatively small portion of the site, now used for playing fields, is designated as appropriate for moderate density residential.

VI. REQUESTED ZONING RELIEF

The following table compares what is permitted on the site under matter of right zoning with what is requested.

ZONING REGULATIONS	Loading Berths		Loading Platforms		Service/Delivery Loading Spaces	
VARIANCE: Loading Berth(s) and Platforms, Service Delivery Spaces, for "Any Other Uses in All Districts" with more than 100,000 sf gfa (Sec. 2201.1)	**Required**	**Provided**	**Required**	**Provided**	**Required**	**Provided**
	(1) 30'deep	***none***	(1) 100 sf	***none***	(1) 20'deep	***none***
	(1) 55'deep	(1) 55'deep	(1) 200 sf	(1) 617 sf		

The applicant is requesting a variance in order not to provide:

- 1 loading berth @ 30 feet deep
- 1 loading platform @ 100 square feet
- 1 service/delivery loading space @ 20 feet deep.

VII. DOES THE APPLICATION MEET THE VARIANCE TESTS?

A. UNIQUENESS: *With respect to exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape, topography or other extraordinary or exceptional situations or conditions of the specific piece of property:*

At the time Section 2201.1 was written, District of Columbia property was exempt from zoning. There was, therefore, no need for the regulations to consider loading requirements for public buildings such as schools. The Zoning Regulations now apply to District property, but Section 2201.1 has not been reviewed and revised in consideration of this. The school's loading requirements are, therefore, specified by the regulations applying to "Any Other Uses in All Districts". It is OP's opinion that the changed status of this District building vis-à-vis the Zoning Regulations constitutes an exceptional situation for this property. It is now subject to requirements that had not been designed with facilities such as public school buildings in mind.

Additionally, according to the applicant, the building permit for the new schools had already been issued, and construction had commenced when the applicant learned of the need for the additional loading facilities. The applicant's architect has told OP that they learned of this requirement while reviewing plans for another high school they were designing for the District. When citing the Lincoln-Bell school loading facilities as a precedent for not needing additional loading facilities for the other school, the applicant was told the Lincoln-Bell permit must have been in error and that they would need to seek relief for the Lincoln-Bell schools retrospectively. OP has asked the applicant for further documentation of the timing and circumstances of this situation.

B. PRACTICAL DIFFICULTY with Respect to Loading Requirement Relief Under Section 2201.1. *(see attachments 4 A-4 through 4-G)*

The Lincoln Bell School is already under construction. In a letter to OP dated November 1, 2004, and received November 5, 2004, the applicant states that the site is already very tight in the loading area,

which is located off of Hiatt Place. Because the first floor is constructed at grade, it would be necessary to ramp area down below grade so that a loading platform would be at vehicle bed height. Lengthening the driveway to achieve such a ramp-down, as well as adding an additional loading berth and loading platform would be difficult since the Lincoln-Bell Schools are already under construction. As the attachments show, the building has already been framed out and walls are going up. The school is exceptional in nature in the context of the loading facilities requirements. It does not engage in commerce, have trade shows or large-scale productions, or have frequent movings-in-and-out of equipment and goods.In OP's opinion, requiring the additional loading berth, loading platform, and service/delivery area loading space would constitute a practical difficulty.

C. Can The Loading Requirement Relief Be Granted Without Substantial Detriment to the Public Good and Without Substantially Impairing the Intent, Purpose and Integrity of the Zone Plan as Embodied in the Zoning Regulations and Map?

The applicant has stated that deliveries to the Lincoln-Bell school facilities are generally limited to "vans and small Ryder trucks". OP believes that the consolidation of loading facilities for the Lincoln and Bell schools at one unified location off of Hiatt Place will be an improvement over the previously separate loading facilities for each of the two schools. OP believes the relief can be granted without detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent of the zoning regulations.

See, also, a summary of the comments of the District Department of Transportation, below.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

There were no community comments on file at the time OP wrote this report.

ANC 1-A was scheduled to consider this application on November 10, 2004.

X. OTHER AGENCY COMMENTS

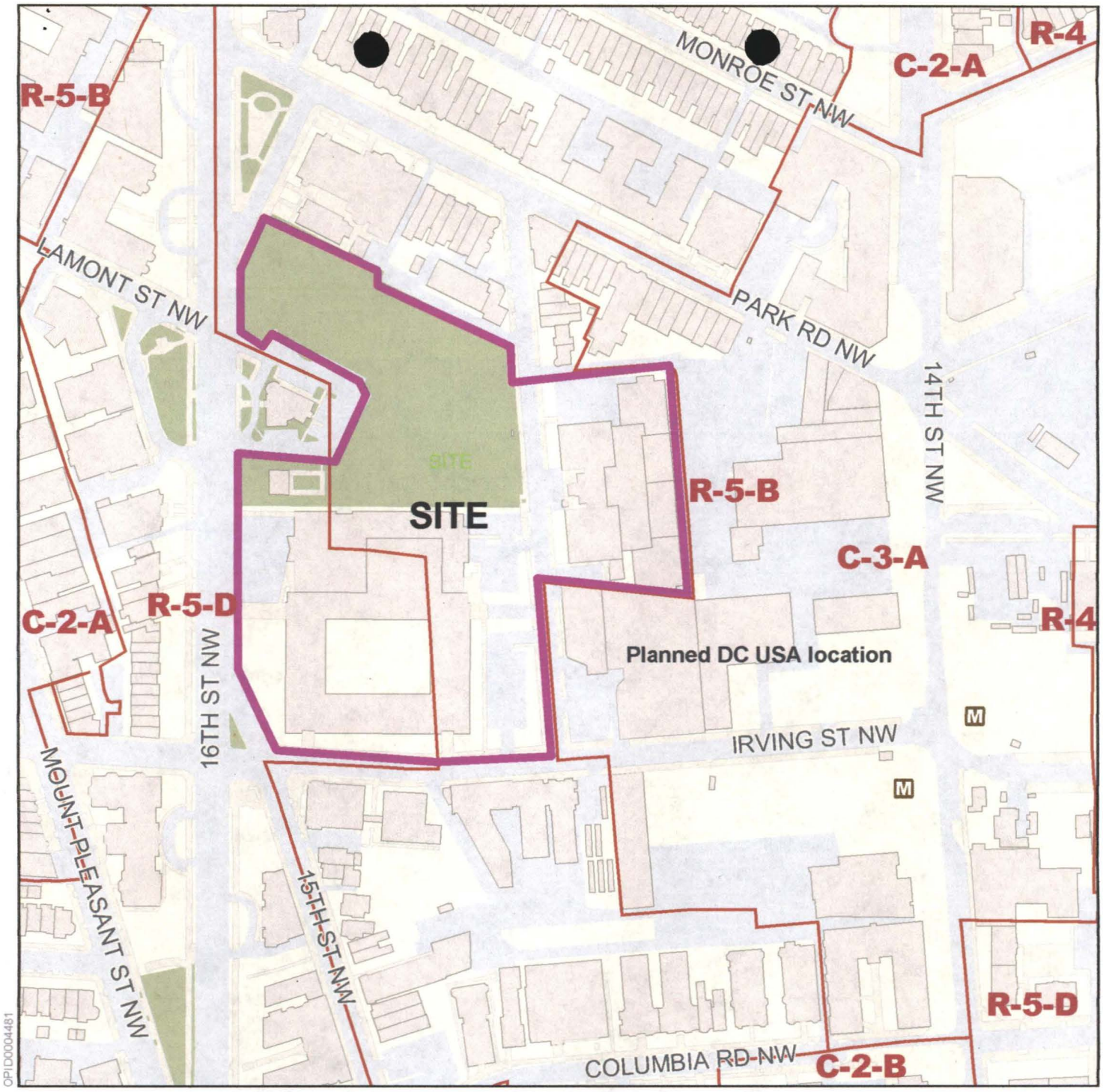
The report of the Department of Transportation (D-DOT) is included at Attachment 4 to this report. DDOT believes the proposed loading facilities to be more than adequate.

XI. OP RECOMMENDATION

OP recommends the Board approve the variance request.
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AA/slc

Attachments



Location, Zoning and Land Use Map
BZA 17235 -- Lincoln-Bell Schools

N

Feet

0 100 200 300

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Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

Office of Planning ~ September 2, 2004

This map was created for planning purposes from a variety of sources. It is neither a survey nor a legal document. Information provided by other agencies should be verified with them where appropriate.

Land Use Legend

M Metro Station Entrances

Attachment 1



Comprehensive Plan Map
BZA Application #17235
Lincoln-Bell Schools

N

Feet

0 250 500

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Generalized Land Use Key

- Residential Low Density
- Residential Moderate Density
- Residential Medium Density
- Residential High Density
- Water
- Commercial Low Density
- Commercial Moderate Density
- Commercial Medium Density
- Commercial Med.-high Density
- Commercial High Density
- Federal
- Institutional
- Local Public
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Production and Technical Employment

Attachment 2



Aerial Photo
BZA Application #17235
Lincoln-Bell Schools

N

Feet

0 100 200

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Office of Planning ~ September 22, 2004

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Oblique imagery ©2003 Pictometry International

Attachment 3

Attachment 4

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Director

Memorandum

TO: Steve Cochran
Zoning and Special Project Planner
Office of Planning

FROM: Kenneth G. Laden
Associate Director

DATE: November 15, 2004

SUBJECT: BZA Application No.17235 – Special exception for loading for the Bell-Lincoln Multicultural High/Middle School located at 3101 16th Street, NW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the request for special exception to reduce the number of loading berths required. The Zoning Regulations would require the provision of two loading berths at 30 feet and 55 feet deep, respectively, plus one service delivery space at 20 feet deep. Instead, the application proposes to provide a 55-foot loading berth located on Hiatt Place, a 24-foot wide roadway. A 55-foot truck cannot maneuver in and out of the loading berth due to the narrow roadway. DDOT believes that a 30-foot berth berth and a 20-foot service delivery space will be more than adequate to meet all the delivery needs of the school.