

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

February 24, 2006

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St., NW, Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20001

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Re: BZA Application No. 17429; 1801 Foxhall Road, NW

Dear Chairman Griffis:

The District Department of Transportation has reviewed the proposed Transportation Impact Study (TIS) for Friends of St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School (FOSP). Upon thorough review, DDOT agrees with most of the conclusions and recommendations of the TIS, and we support the application with further recommendations regarding implementation of physical infrastructure improvements on Foxhall Road, modification of traffic operation on Hoban Road, and full implementation of the proposed transportation management plan that includes carpool initiatives, shuttle bus service, staff parking and staggered arrival and dismissal time plans.

The Department believes that the AM and PM trips utilized by the applicant in the traffic analysis are conservative and accurately reflect participation in car-pooling and shuttle buses. Again, DDOT strongly encourages the applicant to be strategic in reducing the number of trips to the greatest extent possible. DDOT believes the TMP will enable the applicant to control the trips generated during AM and PM peak hours.

FOSP has agreed to install a new traffic signal, warning signs and pavement markings at the proposed school entrance on Foxhall Road. DDOT agrees with the campus design and the main entrance leading to a 1,175 foot two-lane private loop road able to contain 47 vehicles in a single line, or 94 vehicles in double file. FOSP has agreed to build a 4-foot sidewalk adjacent to the eastern side of Foxhall Road that will allow for improved pedestrian access. We would request that this sidewalk be widened to 6 feet to provide an additional margin of pedestrian safety. Currently, there is no sidewalk on this side of Foxhall Road. All intersection improvements, traffic signals, signage, pavement markings and sidewalk design plans and specifications should be reviewed and approved by DDOT prior to construction. Additionally, all improvements to the public space adjacent to the school, including the new intersection shall be provided by the applicant at their expense.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
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Personnel from DDOT have additionally met with representatives from the Colony Hill Neighborhood Association (CHNA), as well as the transportation consultant hired by CHNA, who submitted a series of traffic plan alternatives. Among their recommendations related to the new housing development was the closure of Hoban Road N.W. at Foxhall Road N.W., and creating a new intersection several feet north of this intersection that would serve the proposed new single-family lots. They also proposed modifying the entrance from 45th Street into the new housing development to a pedestrian/bicycle path, only, eliminating 45th Street NW as a means of vehicular access to the new housing. The effect of these recommendations would preclude the new residents any access through the existing Colony Hill community and limit the new housing to one access point at Foxhall Road NW.

While we recognize that the applicant's residential street plan will result in additional traffic on Hoban Road and 45th Street, and cause additional delays as traffic seeks to access Reservoir Road via Hoban Road, we believe that Colony Hill proposal presents greater safety problems. Their proposal limits access into and out of the new residential development to the one newly constructed intersection that replaces Hoban Road's entrance onto Foxhall Road. DDOT would seek to maintain at least two entry points to provide safe access, and would require that 45th Street NW remain as a means of vehicular access to the new residential development, in addition to Hoban Road.

The same flexibility of access into the new housing development can be achieved by modifying Hoban Road from a one way street eastbound from Foxhall Road to Reservoir Road, to a two way street between Foxhall Road and 45th Street, NW. This proposal, with much less disruption, would allow residents of the new housing to exit or enter the neighborhood from Foxhall Road by means of Hoban Road or 45th Street, NW; and provide another method of exiting the community by means of Hoban Road to Reservoir Road.

Additional recommendations of the Colony Hill neighborhood called for directing some of the traffic from the proposed residential community to the school access road. We do not support this recommendation, as it would mix residential and school-related traffic, especially during the morning student drop-off time.

CHNA also submitted a plan for the main school entrance to be installed at a skew intersection at Foxhall Road and Whitehaven Parkway. The DDOT has rejected that recommendation due to significant safety concerns. The intersection entrance may pose a risk to emergency vehicles gaining access to needed areas. The limited site distance due to the horizontal curvature of the roadway does not allow sufficient driver reaction time or visibility of the intersection creating significant driver confusion. A signalized intersection at Foxhall and Whitehaven with two traffic islands, as proposed by CHNA and its traffic engineer, may additionally contribute to unsafe pedestrian travel routes. Lastly, the aspect of having the entrance adjacent to the National parkland is unappealing due to potential environmental impacts. The National parkland borders the north side of the parcel of land FOSP purchased from The Casey Foundation. The Foxhall Citizens Association has previously expressed a very strong desire to preserve the National parkland.

DDOT staff also met with Commissioners from ANC 3-D to share observations on the FOSP proposal. The commissioners agreed with opening the intersection of Foxhall and Hoban Roads to two-way traffic. This action, creating a limited two-way traffic pattern, would reduce vehicle speeds along this portion of Hoban Road. Additional traffic calming within the Colony Hill neighborhood would also allow for circulation of vehicles at slower speeds. The ANC suggested that DDOT be mindful of the various stages of construction at the site and the concern of construction labor parking in the neighborhood. FOSP has responded to this concern noting that all of the developers and associated employees will park their vehicles internally on the parcel of land. Developers and associated employees will not be able to park in the currently existing Colony Hill neighborhood. Terry Armstrong, CFO of St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School, has informed CHNA that developers will have significant repercussions if there is parking outside of the site.

In conclusion, DDOT supports the applicant's recommendations for physical improvements for vehicular and pedestrian access to the proposed middle and upper school from Foxhall Road, NW opposite the entrance of the German Embassy. All costs of intersection improvements and sidewalks shall be borne by the applicant.

We further support providing access to the new residential home sites through a new roadway connection opposite 45th Street, NW, but also propose that traffic also be allowed to access or exit the new housing by making Hoban Road two way from Foxhall to 45th Street, NW. All roadway plans shall be submitted to DDOT for review and approval prior to construction.

We recognize the concerns of residents of Colony Hill that this new traffic could cause congestion and safety concerns at Hoban Road and Reservoir Road. DDOT will agree to monitor traffic conditions at this intersection after construction of the houses, to determine if additional safety improvements at this intersection are required.

DDOT further supports the traffic management recommendations of the applicant's transportation study. We request that the school implement an aggressive carpooling and van shuttle service to reduce vehicle trips to the school. We further recommend that transit subsidies be provided to faculty and staff to encourage transit use. DDOT further recommends that St. Patrick's School coordinate with other private schools along the Foxhall/Whitehaven corridors to consolidate carpool and van shuttle services. Finally, we request that St. Patrick's provide quarterly reports to DDOT and ANC 3-D regarding utilization of carpool and van shuttle services, transit services, and number of vehicle entering and leaving the site on a daily basis.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Laden", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ken Laden
Associate Director