



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Crystal Myers, Case Manager
MBR Maxine Brown-Roberts, Associate Director for Development Review

DATE: September 21, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA #17429B: Modification with Hearing to construct a new private middle school

I. RECOMMENDATION

Vestry of St. Patrick's Parish and St. Patrick's Episcopal Church and Day School (Applicant) submitted an application and requested a Modification With Hearing to BZA Order 17429, Condition 7 which related the "Foxhall Fields" in the 1800 block of Foxhall Road, NW.

The application also request special exception review for a private school use, a new middle school, and to reduce the loading requirement and variance from the building height requirement for the school building. At the Whitehaven Campus, which is governed by several BZA Orders, the latest being BZA Order 18465A. No Modification with Hearing was requested. OP has reviewed the proposed variance and special exception as being related to BZA Order 18465A et.al. and not as a modification to BZA Order 17429.

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the Modification with Hearing to BZA Orders 18465 and 18465A et.al. (Whitehaven Campus) and BZA Order 17429 (Foxhall Field) pursuant Subtitle Y § 704 based on the following variance and special exceptions requested:

Whitehaven Campus

1. Special Exception for Private School Use and Private School Plan
 - Subtitle U § 203.1(m) for Private School Use, pursuant to X§ 104 to construct a new Middle School and increase the enrollment at the Whitehaven Campus from 485 students and 105 staff to 555 students and 140 faculty/staff;
2. Area variance pursuant to Subtitle X § 1002:
 - Subtitle D § 203.6, Building Height setback (31 ft. min. required; 12 ft. 6 in. existing; 7 ft. 6 in. provided);
3. Special Exception pursuant to Subtitle X § 901:
 - Subtitle C § 901.1 Loading (1 loading berth & 1 delivery space required; none existing; none provided) pursuant to C § 909.2; and

Foxhall Field

- Modification of BZA Order 17429, Condition 7 by Temporary Modification Agreement.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

Applicant	Goulston & Storrs on behalf of the Vestry of St. Patrick’s Parish and St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church and Day School
Address	4700, 4707, 4751, 4753 Whitehaven Parkway, NW & 1800 block of Foxhall Road, NW
Legal Description	Square 1346, Lot 827 (Foxhall Road property) Square 1372, Lot 817 and Square 1374, Lots 15, 838, 839 (Middle School site is on Lot 15, Whitehaven Campus)
Ward / ANC	Ward 3/ANC 3D
Zone	R-1B - detached residential. Private schools are permitted by Special Exception
Historic District or Resource	None
Site Development	Whitehaven Campus: To the north of Whitehaven Parkway is the St. Patrick’s gymnasium, performance center building, a playing field and buildings used as offices. To the south of Whitehaven Parkway, the campus also includes the St. Patrick church, elementary school, and early childhood building. Foxhall Fields: The campus includes Foxhall Field, which is along Foxhall Road. NW.
Adjacent Properties and Neighborhood Character	The Whitehaven campus is adjacent to a single-family residential community, and various other schools and institutional uses. The Foxhall Fields is adjacent to a single-family residential community.

SITE LOCATION



III. BACKGROUND/PREVIOUS APPROVALS

St. Patrick’s Episcopal Day School began as a nursery program and gradually expanded into a larger private school, which led to the purchase of the Whitehaven Campus and these subsequent BZA approvals:

- BZA 11933/11307- Approved for private school use on the Whitehaven Campus property.
- BZA 16517 - The property was also approved for a gymnasium and performance center.
- BZA 18465- Approval to increase student and staff capacity to 485 students and 105 staff.
- BZA 18465A- Approved the Campus to include two existing former single-family houses
- BZA 17429- Approved for a new middle school, high school, and playing field with spectator seating, and developing new houses. (the middle school and school were never constructed)

IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Applicant proposes to relocate its middle school from 4590 MacArthur Boulevard, NW to the Whitehaven campus. The school would be accommodated in a new, four-story building adjacent to the existing gym and performance center. It would provide access at street level as well as a second-floor entrance that leads to the adjacent gym and performance center.

The building’s design incorporates a pitched roof along with brick, glass, and standing-seam metal roofing to create a visual relationship with St. Patrick’s Church and the elementary/nursery school located across the street. The new school would include a multipurpose space on the second and third floors, allowing the existing gymnasium to be dedicated more fully to athletic events.

Parking for the middle school would be accommodated within existing on-site campus parking facilities and reserved spaces along Whitehaven Parkway. The middle school’s operating hours would be 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

V. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND RELIEF REQUESTED

R-1B	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Modification and Zoning Relief
Lot Width D § 202	50 ft. min.	211.3 ft	No Change	Conforming
Lot Area D § 202	5,000 sq. ft. min.	161,235 sq. ft.	No Change	Conforming
Height D § 203.6	90 ft. max	60.5 ft (gym)	71 ft.	Conforming
Height Setback D § 203.6	31 ft (distance of height that exceeds R-1B height max)	N/A	12 ft. 6in. (side lot line) 7ft. 6in. (Whitehaven)	Variance Relief Requested

R-1B	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Modification and Zoning Relief
Lot Occupancy D § 302	40% max.	11%	19%	Conforming
Rear Yard D § 207	25 ft. min.	54.3 ft. (existing gym)	58.5 ft.	Conforming
Side Yard D§ 208.2	8 ft. min.	N/A.	12.5 ft.	Conforming
Parking C § 701	93 space (all Whitehaven campus)	119 spaces	119 spaces	Conforming
Loading C § 901	1 service/delivery space 1 loading berth	None provided	None provided	Special Exception Requested

VI. ANALYSIS

Modification with Hearing – Whitehaven Campus

704.1 Any request for modification that cannot be processed pursuant to Subtitle Y § 703 shall require a public hearing.

The modification would allow the construct of a middle school on an R-1B zoned property at the Whitehaven Campus.

A. Special Exception - Private School Use pursuant to Subtitles U § 203.1(m)(1), X § 104, and X § 901

Subtitle U § 203.1(m)(1)

Private schools and residences for teachers and staff of a private school, but not including a trade school, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions;*

Noise

The proposed middle school building would be placed close to Whitehaven Parkway, and would be separated by mature vegetation from the residences to the north which front on U Street, NW and 48th Street, NW. BZA Order 18465A contains stipulations that the buffer should be maintained in order to minimize noise and light spills into the adjacent properties. The application seems to indicate that the buffer would be maintained. In order to minimize potential noise disturbances to the residents. The school along with the existing gym and

performance arts building and together should not generate significantly more noise on the property to affect the adjacent institutional uses.

Traffic

The proposed middle school would alter current traffic to and from the campus, The existing school currently operated under a TDM Plan. The Applicant has provided an amended TDM Plan which has been reviewed by DDOT ([Exhibit 34](#)) who recommends that the Applicant implement a Transportation Management Plan, comprising a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan; a Management Plan (focused on the pick-up and drop-off activities); a Loading Management Plan (LMP); a Parking Management Plan; and a Monitoring Plan. The report states that with the implementation of the TDM Plan, the impact on traffic should be minimal.

Number of Students and Staff/Faculty

The middle school building would have a capacity of 150 students which would increase the maximum number of students at the Whitehaven Campus from 485 to 555 students. Also, the maximum number of staff/faculty would increase from 105 to 140. The new school building’s location away from residential properties and the relatively modest increase in capacities should not cause objectionable impacts to the surrounding neighborhood.

Other Objectionable Conditions

The DDOT report identified that there are both Heritage and Special Trees on the site and that the Applicant should work with the Ward 3 arborist to address any of these trees which may be impacted by the new building. The Applicant has also provided a [construction management plan](#) to address potential impacts during construction.

- (2) *Ample parking space, but not less than that required by this title, shall be provided to accommodate the students, teachers, and visitors likely to come to the site by automobile*

With the addition of the middle school, there would be a requirement of 93 spaces for all the uses on the campus. However, the Applicant proposes to retain the 118 spaces at various locations which are currently serving the campus and exceeds the requirement. DDOT believes that the number of parking spaces along with the approved TDM Plan, parking should be adequate to serve students, teachers and visitors to the campus.

- (3) *After hearing all evidence, the Board of Zoning Adjustment may require additional parking to that required by this title;*

OP does not recommend additional parking.

Special Exception - Subtitle X § 104 - Private School Plan

104.1 Education use by a private school shall be permitted as a special exception subject to review and approval by the Board of Zoning Adjustment after its determination that the use meets the applicable standards of Subtitle X, Chapter 9 and conditions of this section.

The proposed middle school and Foxhall Field would be educational uses by a private school and meets the standards of X § 901 and the conditions listed below.

104.2 The private school shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions.

As discussed in more detail in the above Subtitle U § 203 analysis, it appears that the middle school and fields would be located to not become objectionable to neighboring properties because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions.

104.3 The development standards for a private school shall be those of the zone in which the private school is located.

The property is in the R-1B zone. As shown in the table in section VI of this report, the proposed building would meet the standards for a private school in that zone, except for instances where the Applicant has requested variance and special exception relief which would meet the standards analyzed below.

104.4 In calculating density, the land area shall not include public streets and alleys, but may include interior private streets and alleys within the school boundaries.

There are no private streets or alleys within the campus boundary.

Subtitle X § 901

Is the proposal in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps?

The proposal to add a middle school use at the Whitehaven campus complies with all the private school use and school plan requirements of Subtitles U § 203.1(m)(1) and X § 104 analyzed above and is therefore in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps.

Would the proposal appear to tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the zoning regulations and maps?

The proposal should not adversely impact the neighboring properties. The new middle school would be located almost a minimum of 60 feet away from the single-family houses to the north and would also be separated by vegetation. The other surrounding properties are occupied by other institutional uses to which the use would be compatible. The new middle school's noise, traffic, and student/staff numbers in conjunction with the existing uses should not adversely impact the surrounding properties.

(B) Area Variance – Height Setback, D § 203.6 pursuant to X § 1000

An institutional building or structure may be erected to a height not exceeding ninety feet (90 ft.) with no limit on number of stories; provided that the building or structure shall be removed from

all lot lines of its lot a distance of not less than one foot (1 ft.) for each one foot (1 ft.) of height in excess of that authorized in the zone in which it is located.

The proposed middle school building would have a maximum height of 71 feet which is 31 feet above the 40 feet allowed in the R-1B zone. Therefore, the building is required to be setback 31 feet from all property lines. However, in the proposal the required 31-foot setback from Whitehaven Parkway and the adjacent property to the west would not be met and therefore the Applicant has requested an area variance.

Extraordinary or Exceptional Situation

There are challenging site conditions that limit the buildable area and prevent the proposed middle school building from meeting the required 31-foot setback. The property has a 46-foot grade change between the Whitehaven Parkway frontage and the northern portion of the property, substantial bedrock which causes difficulty in construction and areas on the property to build, in addition to heritage and special trees located at the rear of the property, all of these factors combine to restrict placing the building from further away from Whitehaven Parkway.

Resulting Practical Difficulty

In order to meet zoning requirements, the school would need to either reduce the building height or to setback the building 31 feet from Whitehaven Parkway neither of which would be a practical option because the building must accommodate the space and acoustical needs of a contemporary middle school. Locating the building in the flatter portion of the site, where a 31-foot setback could be met, is also not realistic. In that location, the school would have no viable vehicular or pedestrian access and an ADA-compliant route cannot be constructed without impacting the heritage trees, which must be preserved.

Secondly, expanding the ground-floor or below-grade footprint would mean having to cut into bedrock to create additional buildable area which would place an unnecessary expense and significant burden on the applicant. Providing the required setback would move the building further north into the campus and could affect additional heritage and special trees which must be preserved. All these factors combine to be a practical difficulty in providing the building setback.

No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

Most of the adjacent properties are owned by institutional uses. The property next to the 12-foot-6-inch setback on the west side is owned by the Lab School and is currently used as an administrative building. Setback relief along Whitehaven Parkway should not pose an issue because the Parkway is 120 feet wide and the properties across Whitehaven Parkway are also institutional uses, including several parcels owned by the Applicant. Therefore, granting the area variance should not create a substantial detriment to the public good.

No Substantial Impairment to the Intent, Purpose, and Integrity of the Zoning Regulations

The height of the proposed middle school building is appropriate for a modern middle school and is compatible with the institutional character along this portion of Whitehaven Parkway. Its height is not expected to negatively affect adjacent properties granting this variance relief would not impair the Zoning Regulations or Maps.

(C) Loading, C § 909 pursuant to X § 901

909.2 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant full or partial relief from the number of loading berths or service/delivery spaces required by Subtitle C § 901.1, or from the size and layout requirements of Subtitle C § 905, as a special exception under Subtitle X, Chapter 9, and under the Applicant's demonstrations to the Board's satisfaction that:*

- (a) *The use or structure will generate a lower loading demand than the minimum loading standards of Subtitle C §§ 901 and 905 require, as a result of:*
 - (1) *The nature of the use or structure; or*
 - (2) *A loading demand management plan filed in the case record in accordance with Subtitle Y § 300.14 and approved by District Department of Transportation, the implementation of which shall be a condition of the Board of Zoning Adjustment’s approval, that will result in a lower loading demand than the minimum loading standards of Subtitle C §§ 901 and 905 require; or*

The existing uses currently do not provide the required loading berths and service/delivery facilities. The Applicant states that most of the loading, service and deliveries would be consolidated with what currently comes to the Whitehaven Campus. The Applicant has provided a TDM Plan which includes Loading Management Plan and states that loading activities on the Whitehaven Campus will occur in a manner that will not create objectionable impacts on nearby properties. As part of the larger Whitehaven campus, the middle school’s loading needs can be accommodated by consolidating deliveries and services with those of the existing elementary school. The Applicant also coordinates with the Lab School and Our Lady of Victory School, to use shared service providers, thereby reducing the overall number of deliveries in the area. The DDOT Report support the relief.

Subtitle X § 901 General Special Exception

The Relief is Harmonious with the General Purpose and Intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps

The proposal to consolidate the loading activities associated with the middle school with that of the existing elementary school and the coordination with the adjacent schools would meet the General Purpose and Intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps that the loading activity not impact the operations on other properties, circulation and traffic.

The Relief Will Not Tend to Adversely Affect the Use of Neighboring Property

The requested loading relief is not expected to adversely affect neighboring properties. The Applicant has submitted a loading management plan and will continue coordinating loading activities with nearby schools to minimize truck trips in the area.

Modification with Hearing - BZA 17429, Condition 7

The Applicant proposed a modification to BZA Order 17429, the Foxhall Road portion of the St. Patrick’s campus, which was approved for a middle and a high school and associated playing fields.

The construction of the schools has not materialized, and the Applicant is now proposing to place the middle school at the Whitehaven campus governed by BZA Order 18465A et. al, as discussed above. The playing fields and gardens are currently in operations and serve students of the Whitehaven Parkway and MacArthur Boulevard campuses.

The Whitehaven campus also has fields which the Applicant is proposing to be used as a staging area during the construction of the middle school. To accommodate this, the Applicant is proposing that the middle school and the elementary school use the fields at the Foxhall property. To accommodate this the Applicant has requested a temporary modification to Condition 7 of BZA Order 17429 which states:

“The School shall fully implement and comply with the St. Patrick's Operations Plan, marked in the record as [Exhibit No. 86](#).”.

The Operations Plan, includes rules for operating Foxhall Field. During the time of construction, the Applicant is requesting to replace relevant sections in the Operation Plan with their [Temporary Modification Agreement](#) (Exhibit 30B), which is an agreement between the Applicant, the 1801 Homeowners Association and Colony Hill Neighborhood Association, Inc. This agreement, allows expanded use of Foxhall Field while the middle school is under construction and would remain in effect until a certificate of occupancy is issued for the middle school or until September 30, 2028, whichever occurs first. OP supports the requested modification.

COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

DDOT provided a report at Exhibit 34. There are no other District Agency comments in the record.

ANC COMMENTS

ANC 3D submitted a [letter of support](#) to the record.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Currently, there are six letters of support in the record, which include neighboring property owners.