



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Karen Thomas, Case Manager
MBR Maxine Brown Roberts, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: June 18, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Case 17703D - Modification without Hearing of BZA Order 17703-C
3825 Wisconsin Avenue and 3720 Upton Street N.W. (Sidwell Friends School)

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) **recommends approval** of the requested Modification Without Hearing to Sidwell Friends School (Sidwell or Applicant) pursuant to Subtitle Y § 703.7 to:

- Modify Condition 3.a. of BZA Order 17703C to reflect the modified timeline for the relocation of the Pick-up and Drop-off (PUDO) area and **add a new Condition 3.f.** as outlined in this report or the Applicant's submission.

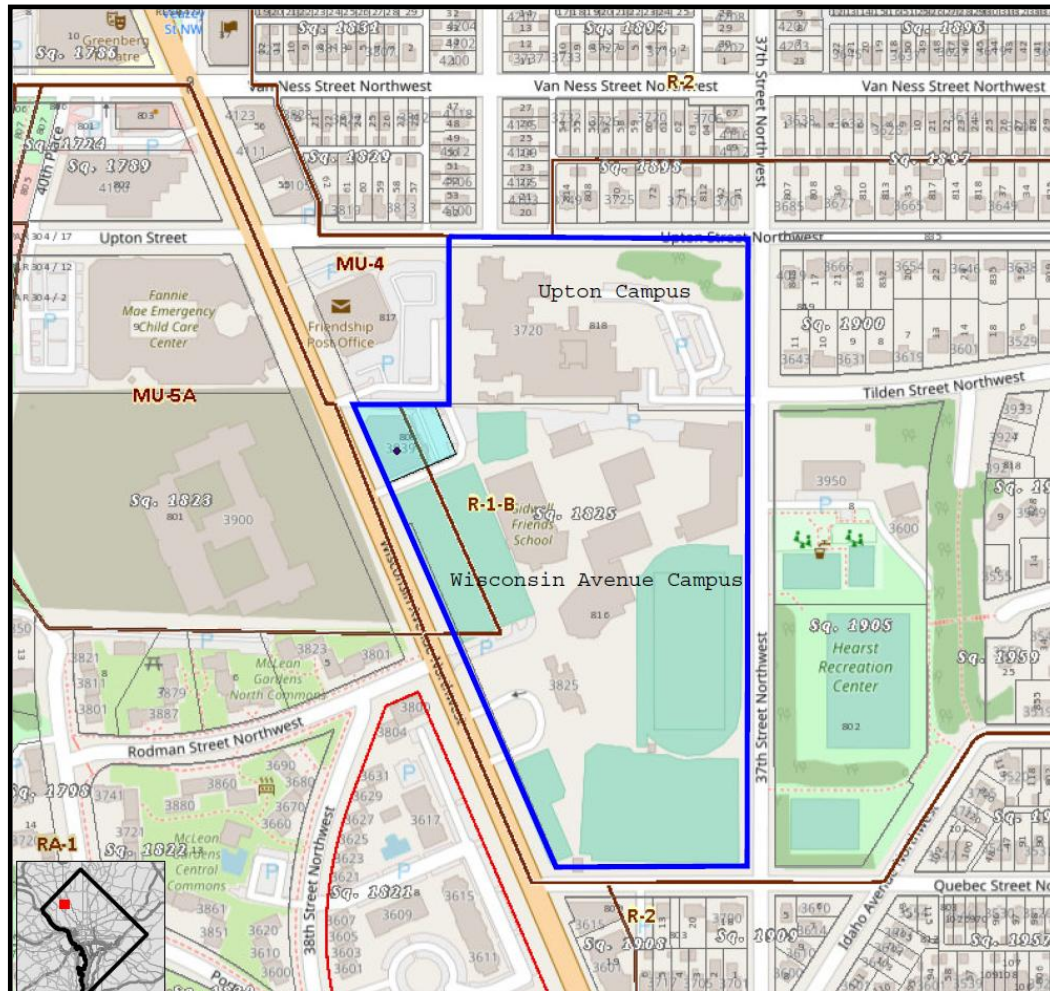
II. LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Address	3825 Wisconsin Avenue, NW and 3720 Upton Street, N.W.
Applicant	Sidwell Friends School
Legal Description	Square 1825, Lots 816, and 818
Ward	3/ANC 3A03, 3F01
Lot Characteristics	The property is comprised of two large lots of variable topography and is bound by Upton Street to the north, 37 th Street to the east, Quebec Street to the south and Wisconsin Avenue, to the west.
Zoning	The site is zoned R-1-B, which permits private school use as a special exception under U § 203.1 (m). A small portion of the site is zoned MU-4.
Existing Development	The subject property is developed with the two main campuses of the Sidwell Friends School, the Wisconsin Avenue campus at 3825 Wisconsin Avenue and the Upton Campus at 3720 Upton Street. The 21.1-acre school property is currently developed with 2 gymnasium buildings, middle and upper school buildings and an art center. In addition, the site also contains the administration building at the historic Zartman House, three athletic fields, eight tennis courts and a six-lane track.



Surrounding Neighborhood Character	A U.S Postal Office abuts the site to the west. The neighborhood to the east of 37 th Street and north of Upton Street is primarily developed with single-family detached homes. Hearst Elementary School and Recreation Center are located east across 37 th Street immediately opposite the school campus. Residences in the vicinity of Hearst are primarily single-family detached homes. Across Wisconsin Avenue are the McLean Gardens condominiums.
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Site Location



III. BACKGROUND

Sidwell's operation at this location since 1937, including the Middle and Upper Schools, have had several Board approved modifications and expansions, detailed below. The Lower School located in Bethesda, MD was approved for relocation to this campus under Order 17703-A. The historical context of the site's development is provided in the following table:

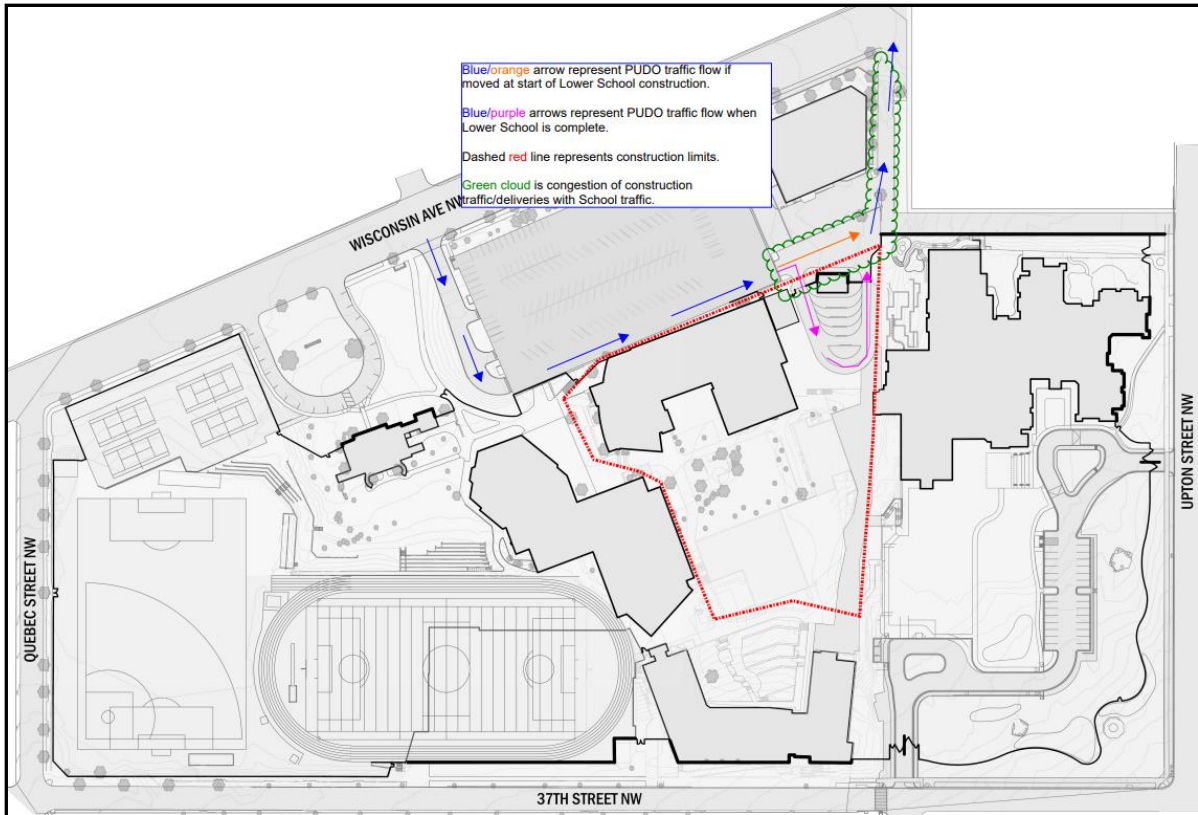
BZA Approvals (1970 – Present)	Granted	Conditions
1970 –Appeal #10460	2nd and 3rd story additions to the Middle School's building.	Unknown (OP has not information)

BZA Approvals (1970 – Present)	Granted	Conditions
1979 – Order #12945	Gym, Art Center; Maintenance building and an increase in parking spaces from 110 to 145.	700 Students; 100 faculty; 30 staff; 145 parking spaces
1993 – Order #15769	Classroom addition; increase in employee cap from 100 to 130.	No conditions
1996 – Order #16139	Addition to Upper School building to accommodate library; increase student cap from 700 to 780 and employee cap from 130 to 190	No conditions
2004 – Order #17149	Increase in student cap from 780 to 800 and to 850 after 1 year for grades 5-12; Staff increase to 190; building additions, primarily including: - Renovation and expansion of the Zavitz Middle School; construction of a below-grade garage; expansion of athletic fields; construction of a new gymnasium; construction of a new Quaker meeting house; and renovation of the Kenworthy Gym for conversion to arts teaching space.	Two phases, TMP Plan, annual reports to ANC 3C, 3F and BZA.
2008 – Order #17703	Modification of the approved plan under BZA # 17149 referenced above, including; - Placement of new athletic facilities for the middle and upper school underneath an existing football field, instead of above grade as previously approved. The Kenworthy Gym would no longer be used for athletics. - Reuse of the Kenworthy Gym as the Quaker Meeting House, instead of building a new meeting house. - Provision of a daycare center for faculty and staff in the Senser Building for 16 children and 6 staff members.	Order approved March 10, 2008, with conditions.
2016 – Order #17703A	Expansion of the campus, including the addition of the Lower School to the Upton Campus as well as building additions and related site improvements.	Order valid until April 1, 2018
2018 – Order #17703B	Extension of order 17703A requested	Order valid to April 1, 2020
2020 – Order #17703C	Modification of BZA Order 17703A, including (<i>in brief as reproduced for reference from Exhibit 2</i>): - Construction of a new Lower School building - Relocation and consolidation of academic divisions - Improvements to internal circulation and campus operations - A detailed phasing and sequencing plan during school operation while construction over multiple phases and years	Order continues to be valid.

IV. PROPOSAL

The construction for Sidwell’s Lower School is anticipated to begin in summer 2026. Detailed construction planning determined that the timing requirement in Condition 3.a of the BZA Order 17703C would introduce safety and operational conflicts during active construction adjacent to the planned Middle School pick-up/drop off (PUDO) location. Limited on-campus space and maintenance of school operations during construction, show that the required construction staging

area directly overlaps with the area designated for the relocated PUDO - as shown in the Applicant's submission ([Exhibit 2B](#)) and reproduced for reference below.



Noted in the plan, is the area outlined in green which shows where the PUDO area conflicts with proposed construction. The school is therefore proposing to defer construction of the PUDO area until the Lower School construction is completed. Sidwell plans to continue using the existing PUDO area in the 3900 block of 37th Street, NW, across from Hearst Elementary School.

The Applicant therefore requests:

- A limited modification to only the timing component of Condition 3.a.
- Relocation of the Middle School PUDO within six months after completion of Lower School construction, rather than prior to or at its commencement.
- Completion of the Lower School construction in **late summer 2028**.
- A new condition 3.f. in support of the intent of the modified Condition 3.a as shown in the table below.

Existing Condition	Revised Condition(s) (New text is shown in bold underline)
3. The provisions of the TMP that the Applicant implements shall include, but not be limited to: a. Relocation of Middle School drop-off and pick-up from its existing location on 37th Street, N.W. to locations on campus as soon as practicable but no later than the beginning of construction of the Lower School;	3. The provisions of the TMP that the Applicant implements shall include, but not be limited to: a. Relocation of Middle School drop-off and pick-up from its existing location on 37th Street, N.W. to locations on campus <u>within six (6) months after completion of construction of the Lower School.</u> b. . . . <u>f. Hiring a Traffic Control Officer at 37th and Upton Streets—beginning at the start of the 2026–2027 school year.</u>

VI. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

SUBTITLE Y § 703 CONSENT CALENDAR – TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO FINAL ORDERS

703.7 For the purposes of this section, “a modification without hearing” is a modification in which the impact may be understood without witness testimony, including, but not limited to a proposed change to a condition cited by the Board in the final order, or a redesign or relocation of architectural elements and open spaces from the final design approved by the Board. Determination that a modification can be approved without witness testimony is within the Board’s discretion.

The Applicant seeks a modification to **only the timing outlined in Condition 3.a.** of the Order, specifically the deadline for relocating the Middle School PUDO area. The underlying requirement to relocate the PUDO area remains unchanged, and no physical design, programmatic, or operational elements of the approved plan would be altered. This proposal constitutes a change to a condition in a final order, which Subtitle Y § 703.7 identifies as eligible for a modification without hearing.

Detailed construction planning for the Lower School demonstrates that the approved timing in Condition 3.a. did not anticipate the construction staging needs and safety constraints associated with active construction adjacent to the planned PUDO location. The staging area’s direct overlap with the PUDO lane would make relocation prior to construction infeasible and potentially unsafe. The requested modification aligns the condition with the actual construction phasing and physical constraints of the site, which was not fully understood during the initial planning phase.

Subtitle Y § 703.7 allows a modification without hearing when the impacts can be understood without witness testimony. The proposed modification does not introduce any new impacts beyond those already evaluated in the approved Campus Plan and Order 17703-C. The PUDO relocation will still occur; the modification adjusts only the timing, shifting relocation to within six months after completion of Lower School construction. The Applicant will also implement a new **Condition 3.f.** - hiring a Traffic Control Officer at 37th and Upton Streets—beginning in fall 2026, ensuring continued traffic management during construction. The operational implications of the timing shift are straightforward and are fully documented, and no expert testimony is required to understand them.

The purpose of Condition 3.a.- to relocate the Middle School PUDO area to an on-campus location—remains fully intact. All other conditions of the Order remain unchanged and in full force.

The request meets the criteria of Subtitle Y § 703.7 because:

- It involves a change to a stated condition in the final order;
- The impacts are fully understandable without witness testimony; and
- The modification is limited, technical, and non-substantive with respect to the approved Order.

Therefore, OP recommends **approval** of the requested **Modification Without Hearing**.

VII. AGENCY COMMENTS

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) submitted its report at Exhibit 6 of the record and stated “*the proposed action will not have adverse impacts on the District’s transportation network. DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application.*”

No other District agency comments were included in the record at the writing of this report.

VIII. ANC COMMENTS

At its regularly scheduled meeting on April 21, 2026, ANC 3A voted unanimously in support of the request for a modification without hearing. [Exhibit 3A](#)