

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Karen Thomas, Case Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: September 11, 2024

SUBJECT: BZA Case 18929 B, 2701 Military Road, NW – St. Johns College High School.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) **recommends approval** of:

A modification of significance pursuant to Subtitle Y § 704, to include the subject property in the existing private school plan and related Order, for administrative functions and faculty housing uses, including:

Special exception relief pursuant to X §901.2 under:

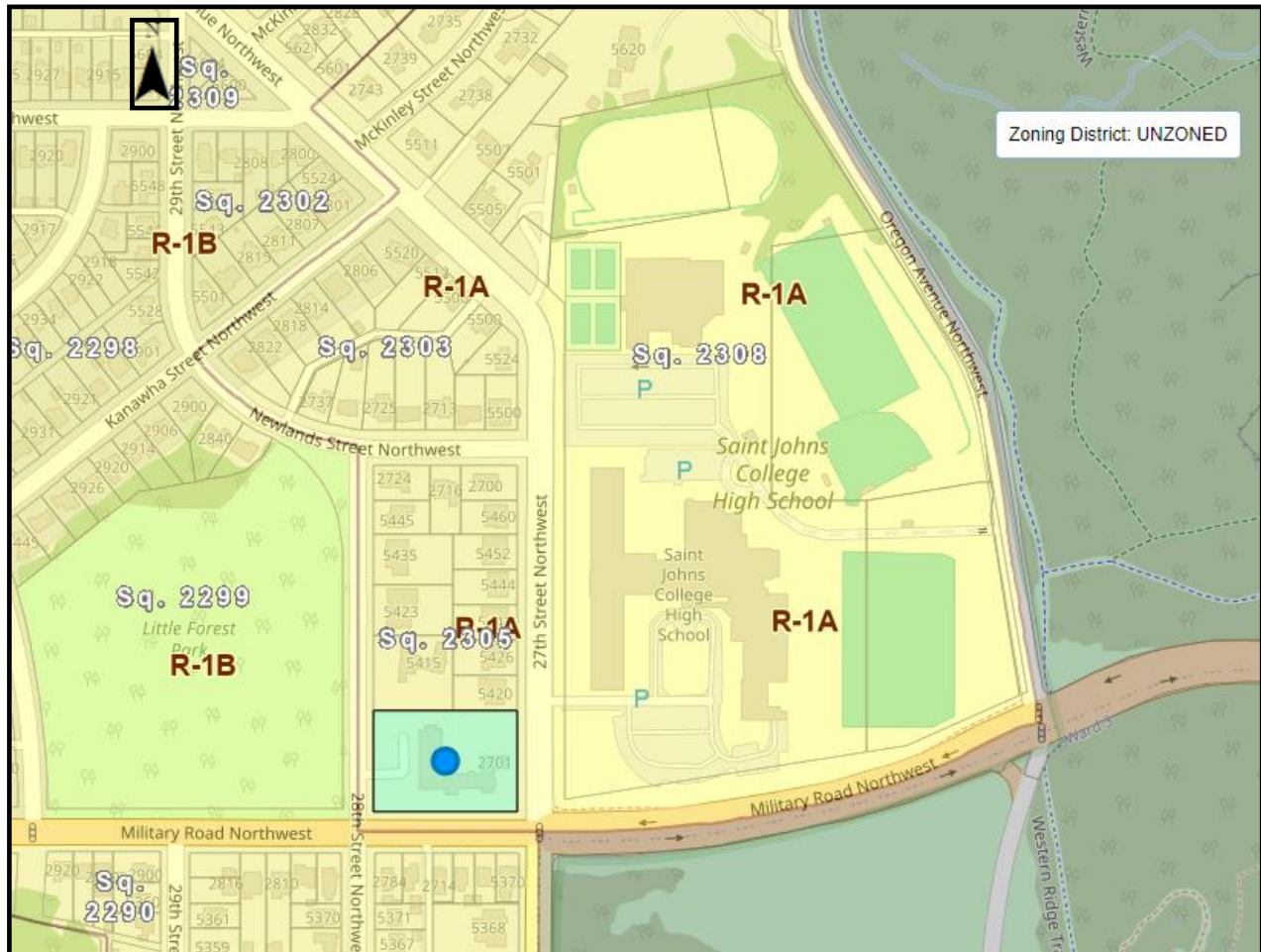
- Subtitle U §104, Private School Plan - to allow the use of the property as an extension of the school, consistent with the standards for a private school; and
- Subtitle U § 203.1 (m) - to allow a private school

Increases in the numbers of students or staff members are not proposed.

II. LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Address	2701 Military Road, NW
Legal Description	Square 2305, Lot 803
Ward	Ward 4, ANC 3/4G
Lot Characteristics	57,460 square foot rectangular lot.
Zoning	The site is zoned R-1-A, which permits private school use as a special exception under U § 203.1 (m).
Existing Development	A former assisted care facility with related surface parking, permitted prior to the 1958 Regulations.
Adjacent Properties	The corner property abuts 27 th Street to the east, Military Road to the south, and 28 th Street to the west. The property line to the north abuts the side yards of residential homes fronting 27 th Street and 28 th Street.

Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The area around the property is characterized by a mix of federal park land and residences. Specifically, to the west across 28 th Street is the Little Forest Park. To the north and south are predominately single family detached dwellings. Across from the subject property to the east is the existing St. Johns College campus and Rock Creek Park.
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Location and Zoning Map

III. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

St. John’s College High School (hereinafter, the “Applicant”) proposes an expansion of the existing campus through acquisition and incorporation of the former assisted care facility at 2701 Military Road, across from the main campus at 2607 Military Road NW. The existing two-story with basement building has 35,660 square feet of area. Eleven surface parking spaces are accessed through a curb cut at 28th Street.

The building is proposed for administrative use and on-site housing for up to 20 faculty and staff. The basement and upper two levels would have dedicated 13,100 square feet of office and building services combined and up to 22,500 square feet towards faculty housing. Exterior changes or additions are not proposed with this modification request.

IV. BACKGROUND

Based on recent past records, the school had approximately 1,100 students and 125 faculty and staff. It has been operating in the District since 1846, and at its current location since 1946. The school's prior years special exception approvals included:

Year Issued	BZA Order	Proposal
7/25/1946	1611	School established at 2607 Military Road NW (Prior to 1958 Regulations)
10/26/1959	5717	No info in OZ records
2/24/1960	5804	No info in OZ records
7/12/1991	15518	SE to allow addition to existing gymnasium
5/8/1998	16324	SE to allow an addition to an existing gymnasium
4/12/2001	16683	SE to allow the construction of a new science and technology center
12/3/2008	17849	SE to allow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a 3,800 square feet field house containing offices, - bleachers containing approximately 90 seats and a dugout, - 5,516 square feet cafeteria, - a covered colonnade adjacent to 27th Street N.W. - an expanded 500 square feet entrance vestibule - A layby along the school's 27th Street side.
2/5/2010	18025	SE to allow installation of a stealth telecom tower by wireless carrier (Cricket).
3/12/2015	18929	SE to - construct new walkway and 15,560 sf addition to academic building 12,300 square feet classroom addition; and 650 square feet boiler storage addition
12/3/2015	18929A	SE to renovate and expand gym subject to conditions (Summary Order)
TBA	18929B	SE to permit expansion of the campus to include 2701 Military Road, which will be used for administrative functions and faculty housing. The number of students, faculty and staff are not proposed to be increased under this application.

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

Main Campus: **2607 Military Road NW**

R-1A	Allowed	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Area D § 202	7,500 sq. ft. min.	1,036,160 sq. ft.	No Change	Conforms
Lot Occupancy D § 210	40% max.	11.5%	No Change	Conforms
Height D § 203	90 feet max.	36 ft. 2 ins.	No Change	Conforms
Parking Spaces C § 2101	170 spaces min.	318 spaces	No Change	Conforms

Administrative Office and Faculty Housing: **2701 Military Road, NW**

R-1A	Allowed	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Area D § 202	7,500 sq. ft. min.	57,460 sf	No Change	None required
Lot Occupancy D § 210	40% max.	Not provided	No Change	None required
Height D § 203	90 feet max.	Not provided	No Change	None required
Parking Spaces C § 2101	9 spaces min.	11 spaces	No Change	None required

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

- A.** *11-Y DCMR § 704.2 – An application for a modification of significance shall be made in an appropriate manner provided by the Director. The applicant shall furnish two (2)*

copies of all information required by the form at the time of filing the application, including the following:

- 1. A completed application form; [Exhibit 1](#)*
- 2. The nature of, reason(s), and grounds for the modification of significance; [Exhibit 3](#)*
- 3. The name and addresses of the owners of all property located within two hundred feet (200 ft.) of the subject property and two (2) copies of self-stick labels printed with their names and addresses; [Exhibit 5](#)*
- 4. A copy of the resume of any expert witness who will be testifying in the case; [Exhibit 9, 10](#)*
- 5. A written summary of the testimony of all witnesses; [Exhibit 7](#)*
- 6. A copy of any Board final order, map, plan, or other action or relief proposed to be modified or corrected; and [Exhibit 8](#)*
- 7. Proof of service to all parties [Exhibit 16](#)*

The Applicant provided the requirements to the record as exhibits noted above and demonstrated the submissions in its [Statement of Support at Exhibit 3](#), pages 5/6

B. Special Exception Relief pursuant to X § 104

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.*
- 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.*

The proposed use of the property as offices and faculty housing should not have a greater adverse impact due to traffic to the site or noise than would otherwise exist with the former care facility. Student activity, such as classes or extracurricular usage, would not be held on this property. Traffic to and from the site is not anticipated to increase due to the proposed change of use. Staff would be encouraged to use public transportation as well as other transportation modes other than private vehicle use.

The proposed use would function as an extension of the school's office uses and is not anticipated to add traffic as an increase in staff is not proposed.

According to the Applicant, the school would continue to provide 318 off-street parking spaces, far more than the minimum required under the regulations. No new parking spaces are being proposed, nor would any spaces be removed, as part of this application. As neither enrollment nor staff numbers would increase, no additional parking spaces would be required.

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

This subject private school has existed in this neighborhood and in the R-1-A zone since 1946. The school recently proposed renovations and expansions to the main campus at 2607 Military Road in 2015 under the original Order 18929 noted prior. No further development is proposed for the main campus or the subject property at 2701 Military Road including expansion of the building's lot occupancy or height or density of the site.

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.

The property does not contain interior private streets and alleys. It is a large single residential lot within the R-1A district.

Special Exception Pursuant to X § 900

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

The proposed addition of the property to the overall campus would not require relief from the bulk and yard requirements, as renovations would only be to the interior of the existing building for retrofitting to faculty housing and administrative offices for the school's use. The Applicant has met the criteria for special exception relief pursuant to X § 104 and granting the relief "will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps."

ii. Would the proposal appear to tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property?

The proposal would not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps, as exterior physical changes would not be made to the subject property. The proposed use would not be a more intensive use than the former use and is not anticipated to impact properties across Military Road and abutting the subject site to the north.

B. Special Exception Relief pursuant to U § 203.1 (m)

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

- 1. (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;*

The proposal to use the existing structure as an administrative office and housing for staff would be a consistent use to what existed prior. The proposed use would not increase any potential adverse impacts on the neighborhood. There would be fewer residents than previously existed and the number of office staff may be similar to the former facility. Student uses would not be included on the expansion site, including classes or extracurricular activities.

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; and*

The site has eleven parking spaces and staff would be encouraged to use alternative modes of transportation to and from the site. The number of parking spaces would satisfy the proposed administrative and residential use.

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 on-site parking. The main campus parking is more than that required for the overall campus.

Special Exception Pursuant to X § 900

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

The proposal is in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Regulations, which is to reduce potential adverse impacts of the proposed office and residential use. As discussed, the uses would be in harmony with the intent of the regulations.

ii. Would the proposal appear to tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring property?

The proposed residential and office uses would not have an adverse affect on the use of neighboring property due to obstruction of light and air to properties across 27th Street. New construction is not proposed, and sufficient on-site parking would be provided to mitigate on-street parking in the neighborhood.

VI. AGENCY COMMENTS

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) expressed no concerns regarding the application in an email to OP on 9/9/2024.

VIII. ANC COMMENTS

The ANC Commissions (ANC 3/4G02) submitted its report to the record ([Exhibit 14](#)), indicating no issues or concerns with the application.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of the date of this report, there were no comments from community members in the record.