

Government of the District of Columbia

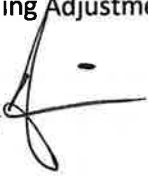
Department of Transportation



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Anna Chamberlin
Neighborhood Planning Manager 

DATE: July 18, 2019

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 20083 – 3423 Holmead Place NW

APPLICATION

Studio Acting Conservatory on behalf of 3423 Holmead Place LLC (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X, Chapter 9, requests a special exception under the use provisions of Subtitle U § 320.1(a) and Subtitle U § 203.1(l), to permit a private school use in an existing vacant church. The site is located in the RF-1 Zone at 3423 Holmead Place NW (Square 2834, Lot 63).

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

DDOT is committed to achieve an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and outstanding access to goods and services. As one means to achieve this vision, DDOT works through the zoning process to ensure that impacts from new developments are manageable within and take advantage of the District’s multimodal transportation network.

The purpose of DDOT’s review is to assess the potential safety and capacity impacts of the proposed action on the District’s transportation network and, as necessary, propose mitigations that are commensurate with the action. After an extensive review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- The Applicant is proposing to convert an existing church to a private school for the Studio Acting Conservatory with a maximum of 52 combined students and faculty on the site at any one time;
- The Applicant is meeting the Zoning requirement of five (5) vehicle parking spaces on-site accessed via the rear alley;
- Pick-up and drop-off is proposed on Holmead Place NW in the existing “No Parking” zone;

- The “No Parking” signage for the church on Sunday along Holmead Place NW is proposed to be updated with school parking restrictions during the school periods. This change will require filing a public space permit application with DDOT;
- The Applicant is meeting the Zoning requirement for bicycle parking: two (2) long-term bicycle parking spaces and three (3) short-term bicycle parking spaces;
- The site’s proposed trip generation does not trigger DDOT’s 25-vehicle in the peak direction criteria for a vehicular analysis;
- The site is located less than ½ a mile from the Columbia Heights Metrorail Station and less than ¼ mile from a Priority Corridor Metrobus Route; and
- The Applicant proposed a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan in the June 24th, 2019 Gorove/Slade Transportation Statement, which DDOT finds acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant’s request and determined that based on the information provided, this proposed action will have no adverse impacts on the travel conditions of the District’s transportation network. The proposed action may lead to a minor increase in vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips. In addition, the project has the potential to generate minor impacts to on-street parking conditions in the area. Vehicle parking demand may increase slightly as a result of the project, inducing a higher level of parking utilization in the immediate area.

Despite these minor potential impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application, on the condition:

- The Applicant implement the proposed Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan from the June 24th 2019 Gorove/Slade Transportation Statement:
 - Identify Transportation Coordinators for the planning, construction, and operations phases of development. The Transportation Coordinators will act as points of contact with DDOT, goDCgo, and Zoning Enforcement. There will be a Transportation Coordinator for the entire site. The Transportation Coordinators will act as points of contact with DDOT, goDCgo, and Zoning Enforcement;
 - Will provide Transportation Coordinators’ contact information to goDCgo, and report TDM activities to goDCgo once per year;
 - Transportation Coordinators will develop, distribute, and market various transportation alternatives and options to employees and students, including promoting transportation events (i.e., Bike to Work Day, National Walking Day, Car Free Day) in any internal building newsletters or communications;
 - Transportation Coordinators will receive TDM training from goDCgo to learn about the TDM conditions for this project and available options for implementing the TDM Plan;
 - Will meet or exceed ZR16 short- and long-term bicycle parking requirements. Long-term bicycle parking will be provided free of charge to all employees. The development will provide two (2) long-term spaces in the rear of the building and three (3) short-term spaces on the Holmead Place frontage;
 - Provide comprehensive transportation information and directions on the school website in a “getting here” section in a visible and prominent location with a focus on non-automotive travel modes. Links will be provided to goDCgo.com, CommuterConnections.com, Capital Bikeshare, DC Circulator, and the Washington

- Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Instructions will be provided for students discouraging parking on-street in Residential Permit Parking (RPP) zones; and
- Provide brochures with information on non-automotive options for traveling to the school available at all times in a visible location in the building.

ANALYSIS

Vehicle Parking

Per Subtitle C § 701.5 of the Zoning Regulations the Applicant is required to provide five (5) on-site vehicle parking spaces. The site currently provides five (5) parking spaces accessed via the rear 16-foot public alley and is not proposing any changes.

Pick-up and Drop-off

The Studio Acting Conservatory offers classes to adults and older youth during the school year in the afternoon and early evening Monday – Thursday and workshops on the weekends. In the summer, the school offers summer programs for children beginning at 3:00 PM.

The site has pedestrian connections to several bus and Circulator routes as well as approximately 0.3 miles from the Columbia Heights Metro Station. Given the proximity to public transportation and age of attendees, most trips are expected to take place via transit and generate fewer than 25 vehicle trips in the peak direction as shown in Figure 1.

| Mode | AM Peak Hour* | | | PM Peak Hour | | |
|------------------|---------------|-----|-------|--------------|-----|-------|
| | In | Out | Total | In | Out | Total |
| Auto (veh/hr) | -- | -- | -- | 11 | 11 | 22 |
| Transit (ppl/hr) | -- | -- | -- | 26 | 26 | 52 |
| Bike (ppl/hr) | -- | -- | -- | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Walk (ppl/hr) | -- | -- | -- | 6 | 5 | 11 |

*Classes are not taught in the morning

Figure 1. Multi-Modal Trip Generation Summary (Source: Applicant’s Transportation Statement, Table 4)

There is existing “No Parking” signage for the church on Sunday along Holmead Place NW. The Applicant proposes to maintain the existing two-spaces for pick-up and drop-off and re-sign the space with school parking restrictions during the school periods.

Bicycle Parking

Subtitle C § 802.1 of the Zoning Regulations require two (2) long-term bicycle parking spaces and three (3) short-term bicycle parking spaces. The Applicant is proposing to meet the bicycle parking requirements by providing two (2) long-term spaces in the lower level storage room adjacent to the alley. The short-term spaces will be located near the main entrance in public space. The short-term bicycle parking spaces should be installed using inverted U-racks.

Loading

DDOT’s practice is to accommodate vehicle loading in a safe and efficient manner, while at the same time preserving safety across non-vehicle mode areas and limiting any hindrance to traffic operations.

For new developments, DDOT requires that loading take place in private space and that no back-up maneuvers occur in the public realm. This often results in loading being accessed through the alley network, to which this building is adjacent. Access to this building for loading and unloading, delivery and trash pick-up is an important consideration, and DDOT expects the Applicant to comply with DDOT's standards for loading.

Subtitle C § 901.1 of the Zoning Regulations does not require loading facilities for an educational facility with less than 30,000 square feet gross floor area. With 6,150 square feet gross floor area, the Applicant is not required nor proposing on-site loading facilities. Trash pick-up will take place off of the rear public alley.

Transportation Demand Management

TDM is a set of strategies, programs, services, and physical elements that influence travel behavior by mode, frequency, time, route, or trip length in order to help achieve highly efficient and sustainable use of transportation facilities. In the District, this typically means implementing infrastructure or programs to maximize the use of mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips during peak periods. The Applicant's proposed TDM measures play a role in achieving the desired and expected mode split. The Applicant has agreed to a TDM plan outlined in the recommendation section, which DDOT finds acceptable.

Public Space

DDOT's approval to the application should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. If any portion of the project with elements in the public space requiring approval, such as bicycle racks or street signage, the Applicant is required to pursue a public space permit through DDOT's permitting process.

Additionally, it appears there is a gap between street tree in front of the building. The Applicant should work with the Urban Forestry Division to identify an appropriate location for a new street tree. This may require some work to be conducted in the sidewalk.

DDOT expects the proposed public space design to meet all District standards. The Applicant should refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the DCMR and the most recent versions of DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual and Public Realm Design Manual for public space regulations and design guidance.

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