

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Joshua Mitchum, Development Review Specialist
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director, Development Review
DATE: May 8, 2025

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21247: Request for special exception relief to allow for the increase the permitted number of students and staff at an existing private school use.

I. BACKGROUND

The Jewish Primary Day School (JPDS), in operation since 1988 in the District, opened its first campus at 6045 16th Street NW, serving as the school's "North Campus". As the school grew, it opened a second campus at 4715 16th Street NW, serving as the "South Campus". The subject application applies to the South Campus only. The Jewish Primary Day School has received the following Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) approvals:

Order	Date	Activity
14919	January 4, 1989	(1) Approval of a special exception to establish and operate a private school with a maximum of 125 students and 14 faculty/staff. (2) Approval of a variance to deviate from parking size requirements.
18399	November 27, 2012	(1) Approval of a variance to deviate from the off-street parking requirements. (2) Approval of a special exception to increase the private school student enrollment cap from 125 to 130 students, and to increase the faculty/staff cap from 14 to 26 faculty/staff.

II. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The Applicant (The Jewish Primary Day School) requests approval to modify conditions of approval granted in BZA Order 18399 to increase the private school student enrollment cap from 130 students to 150 students, and to increase the faculty/staff cap from 26 faculty/staff to 37 faculty/staff. No physical alterations, additions, or exterior construction is proposed as part of the subject application.

III. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following special exception pursuant to Subtitle C § 703 and Subtitle X § 901:

- Minimum Vehicle Parking Requirements, C § 701.5 (25 spaces required, 25 spaces existing; 7 spaces proposed)

OP recommends **approval** of the following special exception pursuant to Subtitle U § 203, Subtitle X § 104, and Subtitle X § 901:

- Increase of the maximum student enrollment cap from 130 to 150, and the increase of the faculty/staff cap from 26 to 37.

IV. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	4715 16 th Street NW
Applicants:	Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital Inc.
Legal Description:	Square 2707, Lot 0033
Ward, ANC:	Ward 4, ANC 4E
Zone:	R-1B, Low, Moderate-Density Residential
Historic Districts:	N/A
Lot Characteristics:	The 18,682 square-foot corner lot is irregular in shape and has 100 feet of frontage along 16 th Street NW, 193.87 feet of frontage along Decatur Street NW, and 101.33 feet of frontage along Piney Branch Road NW.
Existing Development:	The lot is currently improved with a two-story building that currently operates as a private school.
Adjacent Properties:	The property is bounded to the north across Decatur Street NW by a church use, to the south by single-family detached dwellings, to the east across Piney Branch Road NW by single-family row houses, and to the west across 16 th Street NW by an event venue and a church use.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The surrounding neighborhood character consists of low to moderate-density single-family dwellings and community uses.

V. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

R Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height D § 303	40 ft. max.	Not given	No change	None requested
Lot Width D § 202	50 ft. min.	100 ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Area D § 202	5,000 sq. ft. min.	18,682 sq. ft.	No change	None requested
Lot Occupancy D § 210	40% max.	Not given	No change	None requested
Rear Yard D § 207	25 ft. min.	Not given	No change	None requested
Side Yard D § 208	8 ft. min.	Not given	No change	None requested
Parking C § 701	2.0 spaces per 3 employees/staff (25 spaces)	25 spaces	7 spaces	Special exception requested

VI. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Subtitle C § 703 SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS FROM MINIMUM PARKING NUMBER REQUIREMENTS

703.2 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant a full or partial reduction in the number of required parking spaces, as a special exception pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9, and subject to the applicant's demonstration to the Board's satisfaction of at least one (1) of the following: (relevant criteria included in analysis below)*

- (a) *Due to the physical constraints of the property, the required parking spaces cannot be provided either on the lot or within six hundred feet (600 ft.) of the lot in accordance with Subtitle C § 701.8;*

The Applicant purports that the shape and configuration of the property makes it impractical to provide the required 25 parking spaces. As shown in the applicant filings, the property is currently improved with a 2-story private school building, seven existing surface parking spaces, and a play area for students, leaving no room for an additional 18 on-site spaces.

...

- (g) *Quantity of existing public, commercial, or private parking, other than on-street parking, on the property or in the neighborhood, that can reasonably be expected to be available when the building or structure is in use;*

To mitigate the relief request, the Applicant has stated that they have entered into an agreement with the 19th Street Baptist Church for the use of eighteen of the church's parking spaces. With this agreement, JPDS will have a combined parking amount of 25, consistent with the property's minimum parking requirement per Subtitle C § 701.5.

Subtitle U § 203 SPECIAL EXCEPTION USES – R-USE GROUPS A, B, AND C

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

The proposed modification to the student enrollment and faculty/staff caps should not introduce elements that would become objectionable to adjoining and nearby properties.

Noise

The proposed increase in the caps for students and faculty/staff is minimal and should not lead to an increase in noise levels that would be objectionable to adjoining or nearby properties. Furthermore, as the application does not propose any physical alterations, no noise would be generated from construction. Lastly, the Applicant has stated in their statement of justification that they will be implementing measures, such as staggering outdoor play activities, to reduce potential noise impacts.

Traffic

The Applicant has provided a transportation statement (Exhibit 22B) assessing the impact of the cap increases for students and faculty/staff. The statement notes that increases would lead to an estimated 17 additional morning peak hour vehicle trips and an estimated 21 additional afternoon peak hour vehicle trips. Both of these additional trip categories are below the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) threshold for requiring a full Traffic Impact Statement. Furthermore, the Applicant has also provided a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan (Exhibit 22B) that details their strategy to mitigate any potential increases in vehicular traffic as a result of the cap increases.

- (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 subject property is required to provide 25 off-street parking spaces. Currently, the Applicant provides seven on-site spaces. The Applicant has proposed to provide 18 spaces through their agreement with the 19th Street Baptist Church, located approximately 0.1 miles from JPDS. The Applicant states that, should JPDS's agreement with the 19th Street Baptist Church expire, the Applicant will take good faith efforts to find a similar off-street parking arrangement.

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

Based on the Applicant's proposal, OP does not recommend that the BZA require additional parking for the subject application.

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 all conditions of this section.*

This criterion is inapplicable to the subject application, as a private school use is not being proposed.

- 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 subject application is for an existing private school, and no changes to its use or location are being proposed.

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

This criterion is inapplicable to the subject application, as it does not propose any physical alterations, exterior construction, or additions.

- 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.*

This criterion is inapplicable to the subject application.

Subtitle X § 901 SPECIAL EXCEPTION REVIEW STANDARDS

901.2 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment is authorized under § 8 of the Zoning Act, D.C. Official Code § 6-641.07(g)(2), to grant special exceptions, as provided in this title, where, in the judgment of the Board of Zoning Adjustment, the special exceptions:*

- (a) *Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;*

The special exception, if granted, should be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the R-1B Zone, which are to “protect and stabilize residential areas and promote a suitable environment for family life”. The existing private school use is permitted in the R-1B Zone, and the proposed cap increases and deviation from minimum parking requirements should not compromise the property’s ability to continue functioning as a private school with the intent of the regulations in this zone.

- (b) *Will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps; and*

The proposed cap increases and deviation from minimum parking requirements should not adversely affect the use of neighboring properties. As stated above, no physical alterations, exterior construction, or additions are proposed with the subject application.

- (c) *Subject in specific cases to the special conditions specified in this title.*

This criterion is inapplicable to the subject application.

VII. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

As of the date of this report, comments from other District agencies have not been received.

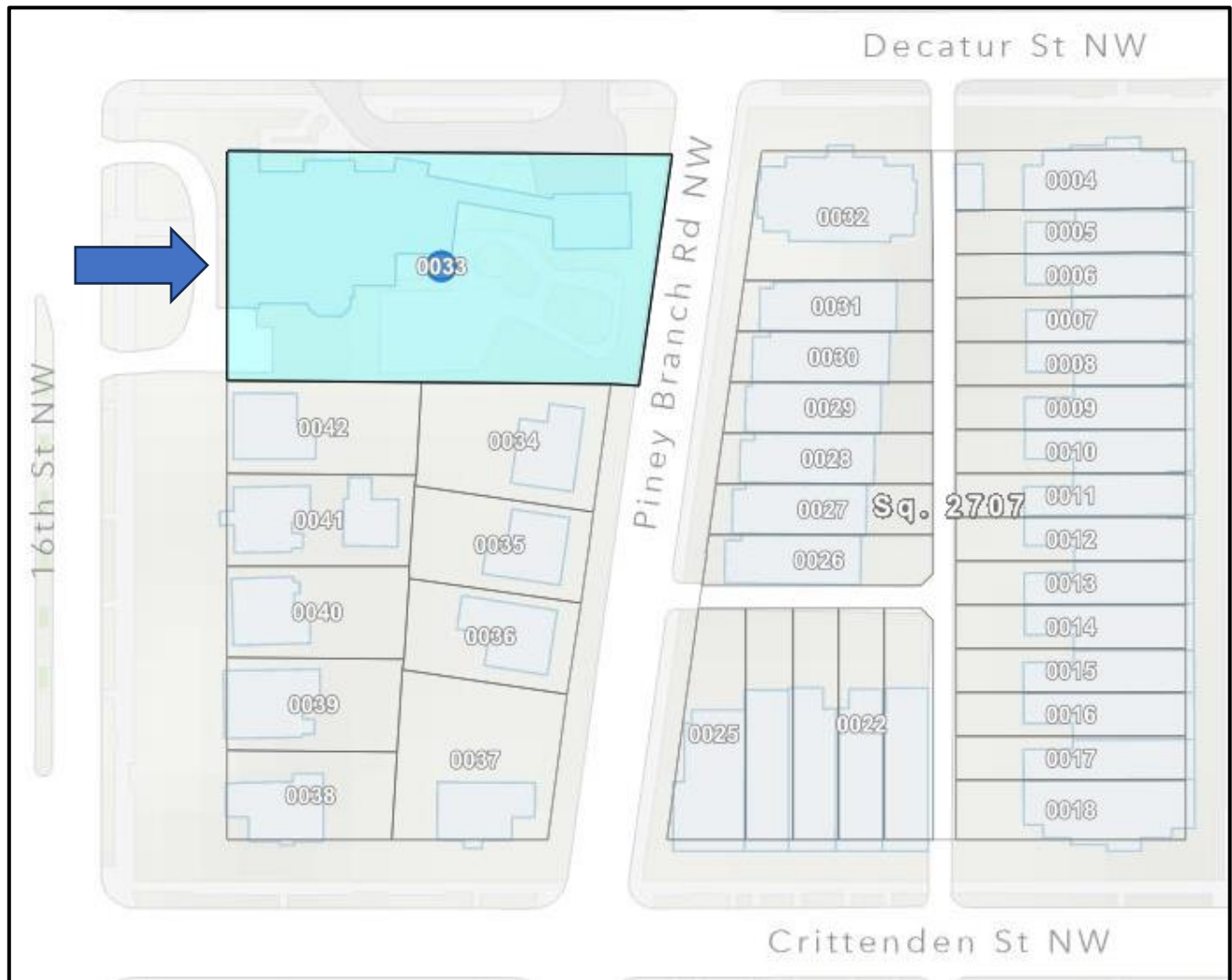
VIII. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

A report from ANC 4E indicating support for the approval of the subject application has been submitted into the record as Exhibit 23.

IX. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of the date of this report, no comments from the community have been received.

Location Map



The blue arrow indicates the location of the subject property.