

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT  
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Application of  
Georgetown Day School

BZA Application No:  
ANC: 3E03

**STATEMENT OF THE APPLICANT**

**I.  
Nature of Application**

This application is made by Georgetown Day School (the “**School**”, “**GDS**”, or “**Applicant**”) for a special exception to consolidate the School’s Lower/Middle School and the existing High School to create a unified campus at 4200 Davenport Street NW (Square 1672, Lots 4, 14, 804, 812, 815; Square 1673, Lots 822, 824) (the “**Property**”). The application requests special exception relief pursuant to 11-D DCMR § 203.1(l) and 11-X DCMR § 104 to permit a private school, partially within a residential zone district. The consolidated School development will conform to the Zoning Regulations in all other respects.

**II.  
Jurisdiction of the Board**

The Board has jurisdiction to grant the relief requested pursuant to Subtitle X, §901.1 of the Zoning Regulations (11-X DCMR §901.1).

**III.  
Description of Property and Surrounding Area**

The Property is located on Davenport Street NW in the Tenleytown neighborhood of Washington, DC. It is comprised of approximately 345,861 square feet of land area and is bounded by River Road and Chesapeake Street NW to the south, 43<sup>rd</sup> Place NW to the west, Ellicott Street NW to the north, and 42<sup>nd</sup> Street NW to the east. Davenport Street NW partially bifurcates the site. The site includes the current High School, small residential lots, and the now-closed Safeway store and parking lot. The Property is split-zoned, occupying the R-2, R-3, and

MU-4 Zone Districts. The Property drops approximately 30 feet in grade from 42<sup>nd</sup> Street to 43<sup>rd</sup> Place and River Road.

The Property is located between the Friendship Heights neighborhood to the north and west and the Tenleytown neighborhood to the south. Further to the east are the Chevy Chase and Forest Hills neighborhoods. The Property is located less than three blocks from the Tenleytown Metrorail station and is well-served by a number of Metrobus routes particularly along Wisconsin Avenue.

The surrounding areas features a variety of uses and zone categories. To the east along Wisconsin Avenue is a mix of commercial, retail, and residential uses located in the MU-4 and MU-7 Zone Districts, and beyond that Fort Reno Park in the R-1-B Zone District. To the north, west, and south are primarily single-family residential uses located in the R-2 and R-1-B Zone Districts.

#### **IV. School Background and Proposed Program**

Georgetown Day School is a private, independent school established in 1945 as the first racially integrated school in the District of Columbia. The School was founded by seven families who wanted to create a school committed not only to academic excellence and educational innovation but also to a value system emphasizing appreciation and respect for others. Because they wanted children of all races to learn together, the founders established GDS as a school where all would be welcome. The School strives to maintain a diverse community of students, teachers, and parents. In this light, GDS provides approximately \$6 million per year in need-based financial aid to students and families. Committed to fostering the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of its students' lives, GDS encourages respect for the variety of beliefs represented in the student body.

Pursuant to a series of BZA approvals, the GDS Lower/Middle School is currently located at 4530 MacArthur Boulevard, NW, in Washington, DC. It was established at its present location in 1965. The School is permitted to enroll up to 575 students and employ 120 full time equivalent faculty and staff. In furtherance of the School's mission, students are required to complete a rigorous, multidisciplinary academic program, and all students work with faculty to participate in community service projects.

Pursuant to a series of other BZA approvals, the GDS High School is located on the Property and was established at its present location in 1985. The School is permitted to enroll up to 500 students and employ 100 full time equivalent faculty and staff. In furtherance of the School's mission, students are required to complete a rigorous, multidisciplinary academic program, and all students must complete a minimum of 60 hours of community service prior to graduation. Students participate in a variety of community service projects, including serving organizations such as Kid Power Inc., Friendship Terrace, Friendship Place, Sibley Hospital, and Martha's Table, among many others.

The School has envisioned creating a consolidated campus for both the Lower/Middle School and the High School, and the Property presents such an opportunity. In addition to the educational benefits of consolidation, creating a unified campus will lead to efficiencies that will enable GDS to realize more fully its mission around accessibility. Therefore, GDS proposes to create a consolidated campus by locating the Lower/Middle School on the existing Safeway parcel and integrating it with the existing High School at the Property (the "**Project**").

On the Property, GDS will construct a new four-story building, which will house the Lower School, Middle School, and supporting spaces. The School will also construct a partially-below grade parking facility with a playing field on the roof. In addition to the School building and

parking facility, the Property will contain green space, some of which will be used programmatically, and some of which will be playground. No changes are proposed to the existing High School building facility or fields as part of the application.

The Project will create a seamless GDS campus that will combine with the existing High School on the Property. The Project will also include a request to the Council of the District of Columbia to close the remainder of Davenport Street that dead-ends into the Property. The Project will create a new vehicular entrance on River Road and utilize the public alley off of Ellicott Street NW in addition to the current Davenport Street access point, providing three access points to the GDS parking facilities, which will allow all parking, loading, and queuing for GDS to occur on the Property.

The total gross floor area included in the Project (including the existing High School) is approximately 219,754 gross square feet, with a total lot occupancy of 25%. The Project will have a maximum height of 50 feet, as measured at the midpoint of the Property's 42<sup>nd</sup> Street frontage. The new Lower/Middle School building will be located entirely within the MU-4 portion of the Property and will have an FAR of 1.49. The Project will contain approximately 283 parking spaces (including the existing) as well as loading and service spaces compliant with the Zoning Regulations, and space for the queuing of the School's pick-up/drop-off operations.

The Project will create a consolidated GDS campus with ample green space, state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor programming, and facilities for the community to enjoy outside of regular School hours and events, including reasonable access to the playground, scheduled access to athletic facilities, and access for certain events at the new Lower/Middle School building. Additionally, the Project will create an enlivened streetscape along the west side of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and a better site circulation surrounding the entire Property.

Finally, as part of the Project, GDS seeks a maximum enrollment of 1200 students in the three divisions on this campus with 260 faculty/staff. The current combined enrollment is 1075 and the additional 125 students would be phased in over a period of years.

**V.**  
**Description of Relief Requested**

Pursuant to 11-D DCMR § 203.1(l), the Board may grant a special exception for relief to allow private schools in the R-2 and R-3 Zone Districts, subject to certain considerations. Pursuant to 11-X DCMR § 104, the Board may grant a special exception for general education use by a private school, subject to similar considerations. The Applicant proposes to consolidate its Lower/Middle School with the existing High School at the Property, part of which is located in the R-2 and R-3 Zone Districts, and therefore requests special exception relief pursuant to 11-D DCMR § 203.1(l) and 11-X DCMR § 104. The new Lower/Middle School building is located entirely within the MU-4 Zone District, where private education uses are permitted as a matter of right.

Both 11-D DCMR § 203.1(l) and 11-X DCMR § 104 set forth the standard for consideration of special exception to permit a private school and are discussed in more detail below.

**VI.**  
**Satisfaction of Standards for Relief**

Under both 11-D DCMR § 203.1(l) and 11-X DCMR § 104, the proposed private school must “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.” Additionally, 11-D DCMR § 203.1(l)(2) requires “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.” Finally, under 11-X DCMR § 901.2, in order to obtain general special

exception relief, an applicant must show that the requested relief will be in harmony with the intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps and will not adversely affect neighboring properties. As detailed below, the Project meets these standards for special exception relief.

A. The Applicant will not Create Objectionable Impacts on Neighboring Properties

The School consolidation is not likely to create objectionable impacts on neighboring properties due to noise, traffic, the number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions. While the Project includes an increase in students from those currently at the Property, both through the addition of the Lower/Middle School and the slight enrollment increase, the Project is designed to minimize any impact on neighbors. The new Lower/Middle School building will be located on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, NW, as far away from the residential neighborhoods around the Project as is possible. To the north of the new School building is a WMATA property, to the south is the existing High School, to the west is additional School property, and to the east is 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and adjacent commercial properties. Therefore, the School building's location minimizes any noise or other impacts on adjacent neighbors.

Additionally, the new Lower/Middle School field on top of the parking structure and the play space, which are located closer to neighboring properties, will have little impact. Outdoor activities will be within normal School hours, so it will not disrupt nearby residential properties in the early morning or late evening hours. Additionally, the field will not have external lighting. For outdoor space, the Project will incorporate fencing and landscaping that will serve as a noise and visual buffer for adjacent neighboring properties. The existing High School's operation will not change significantly based on the Project, and therefore it will also not have an objectionable impact due to noise or the increase in the number of students.

Finally, regarding traffic, the School consolidation on the Property will not cause adverse impacts. With the increase in students coming to the Tenleytown campus, the Applicant is aware of the important traffic considerations and will undertake appropriate measures to ensure that no adverse traffic impacts befall the neighborhood. The Project has numerous advantages due to the Property's features that make it ideal for a consolidated School campus. The overall size of the Property, with multiple surrounding streets, allows the School to have multiple access points, including from 42<sup>nd</sup> Street to Davenport Street, River Road, and Ellicott Street. These access points will disperse incoming and exiting vehicular traffic to the School onto multiple streets, minimizing its impact. Additionally, due to the Property's size and the Project's configuration, the Project is able to accommodate all queuing on site. The Project provides ample parking for the School and also eliminates the large, unsightly surface parking lot on the Safeway site. Finally, with the Project's close proximity to Wisconsin Avenue NW and the nearby Tenleytown Metrorail station, there are numerous opportunities for public transit for students and employees.

In addition, the School has engaged Wells + Associates, a traffic engineering firm, which will produce a comprehensive transportation review ("**CTR**") in consultation with the District Department of Transportation ("**DDOT**") that will be submitted to the Board in advance of the public hearing. The CTR will account for the maximum proposed number of students and faculty/staff at the Property and will include a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management Plan ("**TDMP**") and an Operations Management Plan that the Applicant will adopt to minimize the number of necessary automobile trips to and from the Property and to manage traffic to and from the Property. Accordingly, the proposed number of students and faculty/staff at the Property in conjunction with the TDMP will not cause adverse traffic impacts on the neighborhood.

The goal of the TDMP will be to significantly reduce the number of vehicle trips coming to and from the School. The School may use variety of approaches to achieve this trip reduction, including a more aggressive carpooling program, incentives to use public or alternative means of transit, and/or outreach to and education of students, parents, faculty, and staff. The TDMP will be enforced at the School and will be evaluated through an annual monitoring plan to confirm that the School is meeting the trip reduction goals. The School acknowledges that the TDMP and the traffic study are still in process and commitments are likely to change prior to the public hearing as the School continues conversations with ANC 3E, the community, and District agencies.

Finally, GDS looks forward to continued opportunities to work in collaboration with the neighbors, the surrounding community, and ANC 3E, through opening its Property for community use, such as ANC meetings, and being a general asset to the neighborhood.

B. The Project includes Ample Parking

The Project provides ample parking for the School's demands. The Zoning Regulations would require 261 spaces for the consolidated School campus. The High School would generate a requirement of 166 parking spaces and the Lower/Middle School would generate a requirement of 95 parking spaces. The existing High School has 196 parking spaces, but 8 parking spaces will be displaced at the High School to better accommodate the flow of traffic around the surface parking lot and to better accommodate the new curb cut off River Road. As the Lower/Middle School addition will include 95 parking spaces, a total of 283 parking spaces will be provided for the consolidated campus. Therefore, the Project will provide more than the amount of parking required by the Zoning Regulations.

In addition to providing more parking than required, Wells + Associates has determined, based on parking counts conducted at the two existing campuses, the parking provided is in excess



of the anticipated typical peak demand at the consolidated School. While some increase in parking would be expected with the increase in enrollment and employees, the Project's TDMP, referenced above, will decrease vehicular trips to the Property and therefore the parking provided will be more than sufficient for the School's demands. As detailed above, the ample parking, coupled with the circulation at the Property and the TDMP, prevent the Project from having an adverse traffic impact on the surrounding community.

C. The Proposed Expansion is Harmony with the General Purpose and Intent of the Zoning Regulations

The proposed special exception is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations, as it balances the needs of the School with the surrounding community. The Project, as discussed, will not adversely affect neighboring property from noise, traffic, design, or other conditions, and the Project provides adequate parking, so the requested special exception will satisfy the standards stated in the Zoning Regulations. Therefore, the approval of the School's consolidation will be consistent with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations.

**VII.**  
**Conclusion**

For all of the above reasons, the Applicant is entitled to the special exception relief requested in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Allison C. Prince

  
Meghan Hottel-Cox