

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Karen Thomas, Case Manager
J Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: February 24, 2015
SUBJECT: BZA Case 18929, 2607 Military Road, NW – St. Johns High School.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) **recommends approval** of special exception relief pursuant to §§ 206 and 3104 to allow 15,650 square feet of additions to an existing private school, including a:

- 2,700 square foot covered student center walk;
- 12,300 square foot classroom addition; and
- 650 square foot boiler storage addition.

II. LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Address | 2607 Military Road, NW |
| Legal Description | Square 2308, Lots 804 through 807 |
| Ward | 3/ANC 3G02 |
| Lot Characteristics | The property is comprised of three large lots of variable topography. |
| Zoning | The site is zoned R-1-A, which permits private school use as a special exception under § 206. |
| Existing Development | The 23.8 acre site is improved with a principal school building, accessory buildings, surface parking lots, and athletic fields, permitted in this zone. |
| Adjacent Properties | The Property abuts 27 th Street to the west, Military Road to the south, and Oregon Avenue to the east. |
| Surrounding Neighborhood Character | The area around the property is characterized by federal park land and residences. Specifically, to the east and south of the property is Rock Creek Park. To the north and west are predominately single family detached dwellings. Across from the school, at the northwest corner of Military Road and 27 th Street, is the Elizabeth R. Shoemaker Home. |

III. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

St. John's College High School (hereinafter, the "Applicant") proposes an expansion of the approximately 177,576 gross square feet of the existing campus by an addition of 15,650 square feet, which would include a:

- 2,700 square feet student center walk
- 12,300 square feet classroom addition; and
- 650 square feet boiler storage addition.

The school gross floor area would be increased to 193,226 square feet. Increases in students, faculty or staff *are not* proposed.

BACKGROUND

The school has approximately 1,100 students and 125 faculty and staff, and it has been operating in the District since 1846, and at its current location since 1946. The school's special exception approvals¹ in prior years were to allow:

- 1991 and 1998 - construction of additions to the school's gymnasium;
- 2001 - a new science and technology center;
- 2008 - a 3,800 square feet field house containing offices, lockers, and a press box, among other features, such as:
 - bleachers containing approximately 90 seats and a dugout adjacent to the existing baseball field,
 - a 5,516 square feet cafeteria;
 - a covered colonnade adjacent to 27th Street N.W.;
 - an expanded 500 square feet entrance vestibule for the principal building facing 27th Street with a 42-foot tall glass tower element; and
 - A layby along the school's 27th Street side.
- 2010 - Installation of a stealth telecommunication tower by a wireless carrier (CricKet).

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

| R-1-A | Required | Existing | Proposed | Relief |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Lot Area § 401 | 7,500 sq. ft. min. | 1,036,160 sq. ft. | No Change | Conforms |
| Lot Occupancy § 403 | 40% max. | 10.7% | 11.5% | Conforms |
| Parking Spaces § 2101 | 170 min. | 318 | No Change | Conforms |

¹ BZA Order No. 15518 (1991), BZA Order No. 16324 (1998), and BZA Order No. 16683 (2001). BZA Order No. 17849 (2008) and BZA Order No. 18025 (2010).

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Special Exception Relief pursuant to § 206

- i. The Applicant seeks special exception relief under §§ 206 and 3104 as follows:

206.1 Use as a public school that does not meet the requirements of chapter 4 of this title or as a private school, but not including a trade school, and residences for teachers and staff of a private school, shall be permitted as a special exception in an R-1 District if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment under § 3104, subject to the provisions of this section.”

This subject private school existed in this location and R-1-A zone district since 1946. Relatively minor additions are proposed to the school.

206.2 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 expansion to the boiler room, the new classroom and the student walk would be located in the interior of the site, as shown in the site plan (page 5), thereby minimizing any impacts on neighboring properties. In general, the new facilities are intended to better accommodate existing school activities and should not result in any objectionable level of noise or traffic.

As shown in the plans and submitted photographs of the existing conditions, the proposed student center walk will be located in the courtyard area and would connect both wings of the Academic Building, thereby providing improved circulation for students.

The 12,300 square-foot classroom addition would be located north of the 27th Street Academic Wing, as shown on the proposed site plan (page 7). This addition and renovation would provide improved instruction rooms for instruction and classrooms in support of the school’s music program.

The 650 square-foot boiler room addition would provide improved storage for equipment and parts and electrical transformer.

The number of students, faculty and staff are not proposed to be increased and the intended renovations should not become objectionable because of noise or traffic. It is anticipated that any staging for construction would take place on the campus and the school would work with the neighborhood to resolve any construction related issues, as customary.

206.3 Ample parking space, but not less than that required in chapter 21 of this title, shall be provided to accommodate the students, teachers, and visitors likely to come to the site by automobile.

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

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

The Applicant has met the criteria for special exception relief pursuant to § 206 and, as specified under § 3104.1, granting the relief “will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.”

iii. 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.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS / ANC

The ANC Commissioner (ANC 3/4G02) submitted its report to the record (Exhibit #27), dated February 16, 2015, indicating unanimous support of the application.

VII. U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

A letter from the Commission of Fine Arts, dated November 21, 2014, indicating concept approval of the design and associated site work is submitted to the record (Exhibit #21).



LOCATION AND ZONING MAP