

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Maxine Brown-Roberts, Project Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: October 30, 2012
SUBJECT: BZA Case 18431 - The Field School, 2301 Foxhall Road, NW.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) **recommends approval** of the special exception relief requested by The Field School, (“School” or “applicant”), in accordance with § 206 for the proposed additions to the existing school buildings, the increase in the number of students and an increase in the number of staff subject to the following conditions, generally carried forward from the previous BZA approved orders with changes noted, and also subject to subject to any conditions recommended by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT);

1. The school buildings and facilities shall be constructed in accordance with the plans filed in the record as Exhibit XX. (*updated*)

Number of Students and Faculty and Staff; Operations

2. The maximum student enrollment shall be limited to 400. (*an increase from 320*)
3. The maximum number of faculty and staff shall be limited to 110. (*an increase from 74*)
4. The applicant shall stagger hours of operation between the Lower and Upper Schools with an 8:00 a.m. start for sixth, seventh and eighth graders and no earlier than an 8:20 a.m. start for ninth through twelfth graders. (*updated*)
5. The applicant shall prohibit students from leaving the campus during the school day except for emergencies, when authorized by a parent or guardian, and for school organized trips.
6. The applicant may not start any outdoor athletic events after 6:00 p.m.
7. No athletic events may be held on Sundays.
8. The applicant may not allow the athletic field to be used for adult baseball.
9. No more than three major evening events beginning after 7:00 p.m. may be held on school property during the school year.

10. The applicant shall schedule all deliveries to take place from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
11. The applicant shall schedule all waste removal to take place from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. (*a new condition*)
12. The applicant may not rent its outdoor facilities to outside groups or persons. (*updated*)
13. The applicant shall permit local residents to use the athletic field and tennis court and to walk or stroll the campus grounds when these areas are not being used for school purposes, provided that the same conditions that apply to the applicant's use of the facilities and grounds shall apply to the public.

Traffic Management¹

14. All traffic entering or exiting the school property must use the-southern entrance, with the exception of emergency vehicles and other vehicles requiring access through the northern entrance that are unable to use the southern entrance. The gate at the northern entrance shall bar any turns from Foxhall Road onto the school property or from the school property onto Foxhall Road. (*updated*)
15. The applicant may not permit more than 106 vehicles to enter the school property during the 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. morning peak hour.
16. The applicant shall require all student drivers to park on school property. The applicant shall establish a school parking sticker program and provide students who qualify under the program with parking stickers authorizing them to park on school property. No parking stickers may be issued to any student who is under the age of 17.
17. The applicant shall require, as part of its school parking sticker program, that students carpool to the maximum extent permitted by the Safe Teenage Driving Amendment Act of 1999, effective April 5, 2000 (D.C. Law 13-73; 47 DCR 2630 (2000)), and other applicable licensing laws.
18. The applicant shall establish pick-up points for the school shuttle buses at off-street locations within established parking lots. These pickup points must be monitored by school staff and/or volunteers.
19. The applicant shall require carpooling and vanpooling for major evening and weekend events.

Parking Lot

20. The applicant shall provide no more than 128 parking spaces. (*an increase from 117*)

¹ A number of conditions of the previous Orders related to Traffic Management, Lighting, and Stormwater Management have been fulfilled, so are not required.

21. The parking lot must be set back at least 100 feet from the adjoining property to the south.
22. The applicant must retain porous pavement technology for its parking lot. (*updated*)
23. The applicant shall install and maintain a 100-foot vegetative buffer between the parking lot and the adjoining property to the south. The applicant shall work with the owner of the adjoining property to ensure that the species, size, and screening provide effective buffering.
24. The applicant shall install and maintain a vegetative buffer between the parking lot and Foxhall Road. (*new condition*)
25. The applicant shall allow visitors to 2207 Foxhall Road to use the school parking lot.

Lighting¹

26. The applicant shall operate all lighting on the parking facilities so that it is directionally down lit with minimum light candle power.
27. The applicant may not install any exterior event lighting on the athletic field or tennis court.
28. The applicant shall turn the lights to the southernmost parking lot off at 9:00.m. The applicant may not turn the lights on at this parking lot on Saturdays and Sundays, except for special events.

Construction Management¹

29. The applicant shall implement the construction management plan filed in the record as Exhibit XX. (*updated*)
30. During the construction proposed in this application, the applicant shall meet with neighbors and community representatives on a monthly basis to discuss construction activities scheduled for the following month and to review its efforts to resolve any objectionable conditions. For purposes of this condition, the term “adjoining property owners” includes owners directly across Foxhall Road. (*updated*)
31. During construction, the applicant shall make available a 24-hour hotline with a live or on-call operator to respond to the callers’ questions about objectionable and unsafe conditions. The applicant shall publicize the hotline number and post it prominently at the site.
32. The applicant shall work with the adjoining property owner along 44th Street to develop and implement a drainage system that will mitigate water runoff from the subject property. (*new condition*)

Community Outreach

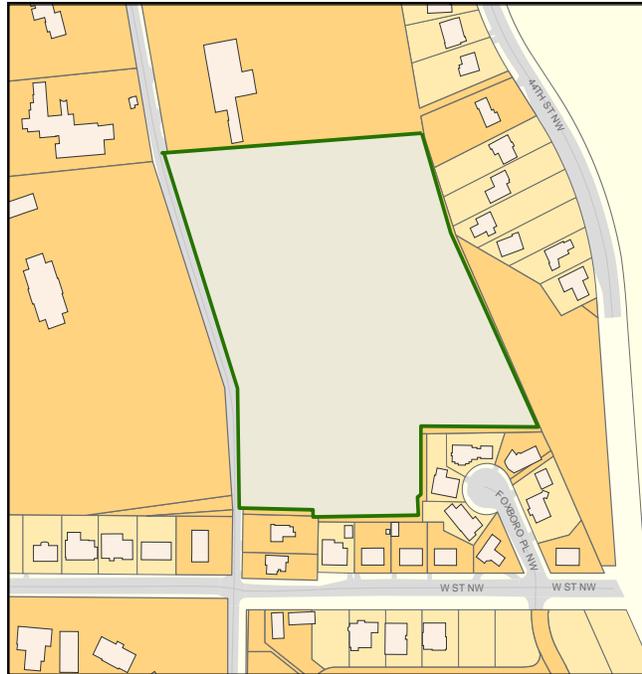
33. The applicant shall coordinate and work with other schools located in the area to address community concerns.

34. After completion of the construction proposed in this application, the applicant shall conduct meetings with neighbors and community representatives no less than once every six months to discuss and review any objectionable conditions.

OP has also recommended that the applicant provide a landscaped plan showing additional screening of the parking lots as viewed for Foxhall Road for review and that the School further demonstrates how it proposes to address the noise from the chillers near the gymnasium and their impact on the adjacent neighbors.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	2301 Foxhall Road, NW
Legal Description	Square 1341, Lots 856, 861, 878, and 879
Ward	3, ANC -3D
Lot Characteristics	The subject property is an irregularly shaped, 10.56 acre site.
Zoning	R-1-A – a private school is allowed by special exception in accordance § 206.
Existing Development	The property is developed with The Field School buildings housing classrooms, academic offices, a 110-seat theater, and a 200-seat gymnasium, 117 parking spaces and two multipurpose, outdoor courts.
Historic District	Not within a historic district.
Adjacent Properties	To the north is the Kreeger Museum; to the east are single family detached residences, part of the Wesley Heights neighborhood; to the south are single family detached residences. Across Foxhall Road and to the west is the Belgian Embassy while to the northwest is the Spanish Embassy and the Foxhall Crescent single family detached residences.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The area surrounding the school is predominantly single family detached residences, with some institutional used such as the Mt. Vernon Campus of George Washington University to the southwest of the site.



Location Plan



Aerial

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The Field School proposes to modernize and expand its existing facilities through the construction of 28,193 square feet of additions to the existing buildings to accommodate academic, administrative and communal space. Additionally, the school proposes to increase the student enrollment cap from 320 to 400 and to increase the faculty and staff cap from 74 to 110.

IV. BACKGROUND

The Field School previously operated in Dupont Circle until its relocation to 2301 Foxhall Road in 2002. The facility has received the following Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) approvals.

BZA Order 16559, approved December 19, 2000 – approved the application with 42 conditions under the following headings:

- Number of Students and Faculty and Staff; Operations:
Student enrollment was limited to a maximum of 260 students with an increase to 320 students on a finding by the Zoning Administrator that morning peak hour be limited to 106 vehicles on a consistent basis and faculty and staff be limited to a maximum of 74.
- Traffic Management;
- Lighting
- Stormwater Management
- Parking Lot
- Construction Management
- Community Outreach

BZA Order 16559-A, approved August 6, 2001 – approval of modification to allow interim use of an existing building by nine staff members and for monthly board meetings to be held on the site.

BZA Order 16559-B, approved August 23, 2002 – approval of modification to conditions 13-24 on an interim basis in relation to Traffic Management, Parking Lot, Lighting and Construction Management. The interim Plan expired on January 31, 2003.

BZA Order 16559-C, approved May 12, 2004 – approval of modification request for a one-month extension of the School's alternate transportation management plan.

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Special Exception relief pursuant to § 206

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.

The property is within the R-1-A district which allows private schools if the requirements of § 206 are met.

206.2 The 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 application states that The Field School has operated with minimal impact on surrounding community since 2002. The School has a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan that allows students and staff to arrive through multiple modes of transportation and ample on-site parking also reduces the potential for objectionable impacts on neighboring properties. Increases in the existing noise and traffic congestion are not anticipated to be mitigated and therefore not be objectionable to the neighboring community.

Noise

Formerly, the school was restricted to grades 7 to 12, with grades 7 to 8 being the middle School and grades 9 to 12 the high school. However, due to the D.C. Public School's change to include 6th grade in the middle school category (now to be 6th, 7th, and 8th grades) the applicant states that it is anticipated that there will be an increase in demand for this grade level.

The additions to accommodate these new students, faculty and staff will be generally within the area currently developed and will not intrude into the existing setback areas which will continue to mitigate the impact of noise. School activities are between 8:00 am and 2:45 pm while afterschool activities result in departures between 3:00 and 6:15 pm. Therefore, the noise is likely to be not a major problem.

As shown on the School's site plan, the buildings and facilities on the campus are set back from the adjacent properties. A 100-foot wide vegetative buffer provides additional visual and auditory shield from the parking lot to the south. There is no lighting on the fields which ensures that noise after daylight hours is not a problem to the residential neighbors.

The School will retain the existing Operations Plan that has kept noise on the site to a minimum as it prohibits the School's facilities from being rented by outside groups and prohibits students from leaving campus during the school day. The Operations Plan also commits the School to quarterly meetings with representatives of the community via a Liaison Committee and to coordination with the other schools in the area to address community concerns. The applicant stated that they have met these commitments.

There have been complaints from the ANC that noise from the air handling units on the east side of the gymnasium are a problem and have recommended that the noise level from the chiller be reduced by 20%. To help address the situation, the school states that they have significantly reduced the hours of use and that their engineers are exploring ways to lessen the noise by the use of quieter units, additional noise attenuation measures to limit the noise from the units, improve or redesign enclosure, or other ways to reduce the sound from the units. OP recommends that the School continue to work with the neighbors to reduce the noise from the chillers to an acceptable level.

The neighborhoods also have concerns regarding the trash pick-up from the area adjacent to the gymnasium. The School has stated that they will limit pick up to between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. This has been added as a new conditional of approval.

Traffic

The school has an extensive TDM program which include private bus shuttles, carpooling, staggered schedule for the middle and high school, minimal student parking. The campus has ample space for queuing which minimizes spill over on Foxhall Road. The School stated that the additional students and faculty/staff will be incorporated into the current TDM program and it should continue to have minimal impact on the neighboring community. Full analysis of the traffic and TDM program will be provided under separate cover by DDOT.

Number of Students

BZA Order 16559 approved a cap of 320 students and 74 faculty/staff. The applicant states that they are currently above the caps with 327 students and 84 faculty/staff. The proposed addition to the school would accommodate the proposed 400 students and 110 faculty/staff. OP does not see an adverse impact from the number of students, other than the potential impact of additional vehicles. The cap should relate to the goals set by the applicant for traffic demand management, and permission to expand beyond the 320 students should be related to the school's success in meeting their vehicle targets during AM peak hour. This issue will be addressed more fully by DDOT.

Other Objectionable Conditions

The neighbors have requested that landscape screening be provided along Foxhall Road to screen the parking lot. The School has agreed to provide the screening consistent with the existing hedge screening, and will provide a plan to demonstrate this at the public hearing.

There have also been complaints that leaves are blown onto adjacent properties and onto Foxhall Road, the School have committed to curtailing this practice.

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.

The school currently provides 117 parking spaces. The Zoning Regulations requires 2 spaces per 3 teachers plus 1 space per 10 seats for the largest area useable for public assembly. The School proposes 110 faculty-staff and a 500 seat assembly space for a total of 123 spaces required. The School proposes 128 spaces to accommodate the students, faculty/staff and visitors. To accommodate the additional spaces over what is currently provided, the School will not expand the paved area, but will restripe the area to accommodate 128 parking spaces. OP is supportative of the applicant not expanding the paved area and being able to accommodate the additional parking in the existing space. Further analysis of the parking and its impact will be provided by DDOT.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

The District Department of Transportation will submit a report under separate cover.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC-3D reviewed the proposal at their October 3, 2012 meeting and recommended approval of the application with a number of conditions.