



Note: Staff reports can be accessed at www.mncppc.org/pgco/planning/plan.htm.

DETAILED SITE PLAN

DSP-97030/01

Application	General Data
Project Name: DeMatha Convocation Center Location: West side of Baltimore Avenue approximately 335 feet south of its intersection with Oglethorpe Street Applicant/Address: DeMatha Catholic High School, Inc. 4313 Madison Street Hyattsville, MD 20781-1692	Date Accepted: 2/21/2006
	Planning Board Action Limit: Waived
	Plan Acreage: 8.4068
	Zone: R-55; M-U-I, DDO
	Dwelling Units: NA
	Square Footage: 76,723
	Planning Area: 68
	Tier: Developed
	Council District: 2
	Municipality: Hyattsville
	200-Scale Base Map: 207NE04

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
76,723-square-foot mixed-use convocation center containing a 1,518-seat basketball gymnasium, a baseball practice facility, wrestling rooms, locker rooms, weight training rooms, classrooms and alumni lounge	Adjoining Property Owners Previous Parties of Record Registered Associations: 06/05/07 (CB-12-2003)
	Sign(s) Posted on Site: 06/05/07

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Ruth E. Grover, AICP	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan, DSP-97030/01,
DeMatha Convocation Center (Special Permit, SP-070006)

The Urban Design staff has reviewed the detailed site plan for the subject property and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of APPROVAL with conditions as described in the recommendation section of this report.

EVALUATION

The detailed site plan was reviewed and evaluated for conformance with the following criteria:

- a. The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance in the R-55 and M-U-I Zones.
- b. The requirements of Section 27-441. Uses Permitted and Section 27-442 Regulations of the Zoning Ordinance regarding development in the R-55 Zone and Sections 27-541 Uses and Section 27-548 Regulations regarding the M-U-I/DDO Zones.
- c. The 2004 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for the Prince George's County Gateway Arts District*.
- d. The requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.
- e. The requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance.
- f. Referral comments.

FINDINGS

Based upon the analysis of the subject application, the Urban Design staff recommends the following findings:

1. **Request:** The subject application requests approval of a 76,723-square-foot convocation center, that will contain a basketball gymnasium, a baseball practice facility, wrestling, locker and weight training rooms, classrooms and alumni lounge. The applicant is also requesting a number of variations to the development standards of the 2004 Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for the Prince George's County Gateway Arts District as part of the application. The proposed accessory uses will benefit an existing private school located on the subject property.

2. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone	R-55 and M-U-I/DDO	R-55 and M-U-I/DDO
Use(s)	Private School	Private School
Acreage	8.4068	8.4068
Parcels	1	1
Lots	27	27
Building Square Footage/GFA	118,178	194,901

OTHER DEVELOPMENT DATA

	REQUIRED	PROPOSED
Total parking spaces	271	327
Of which handicapped spaces	8	12
Loading spaces	2	2

3. **Location:** The site is in Planning Area 68 and Council District 2. More specifically, it is located at 4313 Madison Street in Hyattsville, on the west side of Baltimore Avenue (US 1), approximately 335 feet south of its intersection with Oglethorpe Street.
4. **Surroundings and Use:** The subject property is bounded to the north by residential (single-family) and commercial land use (a restaurant diagonally across the intersection of Madison Street and US 1); to the west by residential (single-family) land use; to the east by commercial (a gas station and an automobile repair establishment directly across the street) land use and to the south by residential (multi-family and the EYA Hyattsville townhome development) land use.
5. **Previous Approvals:** The site is the subject of stormwater management concept approval 15267-2006, which is effective for three years. The site is also the subject of Special Exceptions SE-478, SE-3032 and SE-3458, Variances VSE-478, VSE-3032 and VSE-3458, Detailed Site Plan DSP-97030, Variance VD-97030, ROSP-SE-478 and AC-94011. Please note that the requirements of all other prior approvals have been superseded by the most recent of these approvals, Detailed Site Plan DSP-97030 and its companion variance case Variance VD-97030.
6. **Design Features:** The proposed convocation center will be located internally to the existing Dematha Catholic High School. It will be accessed from either Madison Street or 44th Avenue, with parking located on the southern side of Madison Street and eastern side of 44th Avenue. The project also establishes a pedestrian-scale, accessible pedestrian plaza flanking the intersection of Baltimore Avenue and Madison Street on its western side. Lastly, the scope of the proposed project includes the renovation of an existing monastery on the subject property.

The architecture of the proposed new building includes a mix of EIFS, brick, and storefront glass in a visually interesting design. Large glazed areas allow natural light to illuminate the interior of the building. In an almost nautical motif, small windows like portholes pierce the ground floor of the building on its east and south sides. This repetitive detail is picked up on the uppermost story by the use of a brick or EIFS rectangular detail breaking up the mass of the bricked upper story and reflecting the detail on the ground floor. The roofline is varied, reflecting the use of the different materials, but also use of repeated inverted trapezoids floating above the roofline.

Like the proposed convocation center, the design of the pedestrian plaza along US 1 employs brick and EIFS as its main building materials. Brick columns support a roof structure that incorporates a DeMatha identification sign on the northern side of the intersection. A trellis feature visually connects the entire street frontage, with a blue metal element offering an appearance of separation with some visual continuity. Paving materials underfoot include brick and concrete and are organized in a regular grid-like pattern. The crosswalk north to south on the western portion of the intersection of Madison Street and Baltimore Avenue is specified as brick, while the crosswalks across US 1 are proposed to be painted white.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. **Zoning Ordinance:** The subject application has been reviewed for compliance with the requirements in the R-55 Zone and the site plan design guidelines of the Zoning Ordinance:
 - a. The subject application is in conformance with the requirements of Section 27-441, which governs permitted uses in residential zones. The proposed private school is a permitted use in the R-55 Zone.
 - b. The proposal is also in conformance with the requirements of Section 27-442, Regulations, regarding additional regulations for development in residential zones.
 - c. The proposed revision to DSP-97030 does not affect the previous finding of compliance with Section 27-443 additional requirements for private schools.
 - d. Lastly, the proposal is in substantial conformance with Section 27-548.25 (b) that requires that in approving a detailed site plan, the Planning Board shall find that the site plan meets applicable Development District Standards. The subject detailed site plan meets applicable Development District Standards with several exceptions for which the applicant has requested relief. To approve deviations from the Development District Standards, the Planning Board must find that the alternative Development District Standards proposed by the applicant will benefit both the proposed project and the development district and will not substantially impair the implementation of the sector plan. Please see finding 8 for a more detailed description of the requested deviations from the standards.
8. **The 2004 Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for the Prince George's County Gateway Arts District:** The Sector Plan superimposes a Development District Overlay Zone over the subject site, with designated subareas called character areas. The proposed project is located in the "town center" character area under the sector plan. Further, the Plan establishes development district standards for each subarea with respect to site and building design and public space to help ensure that development in the subareas meets sector plan goals. The subject application is generally in compliance with those requirements, except as indicated below. Staff has listed each development district standard below from which a variation is requested in boldface type and followed it by staff comment. The required finding necessary to grant the variation is that the alternative development district standard will benefit the proposed project and the development district and will not substantially impair the implementation of the sector plan.

Building and Streetscape Siting

- 1. Development shall meet all applicable build-to lines with the optional variation shown in DDS Table 1. If the development is located on a street corner, it shall meet both build-to lines. Along US 1, excluding the segment from Jefferson Street to Farragut Street the build to line shall be 10 to 12 feet behind the R-O-W with a variation of +4 feet.**

Urban Design Comment: The convocation center is proposed to be located in the northwestern quadrant of the intersection of 44th Avenue and Madison Street, the only area on the campus large enough to accommodate a building providing for all the desired interior functions. The above-mentioned northwestern quadrant is currently used for student and faculty parking, which would be relocated to a portion of the campus located between 44th Avenue and US 1, should the subject application be approved.

The intent of this design standard is to create a consistent streetwall and pedestrian zone along US 1. Since the portion of the campus fronting US 1 is not large enough to accommodate the building, the applicant is proposing that the standard be met by locating a wall/fence/entrance feature with overhead trellis ("proposed wall feature") proximate to the location of the build-to line and an enhanced streetscape along US 1. The proposed wall feature would not only provide an urban edge, but would also provide an entrance feature for the DeMatha campus and a screen for the adjacent parking area as well as providing the desired pedestrian zone along US 1. The enhanced streetscape is proposed to include specialized paving, including brickwork predominantly, seven benches placed along the wall feature, some grassed areas and other enhanced landscaping. Thus it may be said that the alternative development district standard solution would benefit the development, the development district and would not substantially impair the implementation of the Plan.

Parking and Loading

- 5. The maximum number of off-street surface parking spaces for uses other than artist studio, residential and live/work shall be equal to 80 percent of the minimum number of required off-street parking spaces in accordance with Section 27-568(a) of the Zoning Ordinance. If additional parking is provided, it shall be structured. Parking may be on or off site but shall be located within one quarter mile of the development site.**

Urban Design Comment: The total number of parking spaces required for DeMatha is based upon the following calculation as per Part 11 of the Zoning Ordinance (Section 27-568(a)):

1 space per 6 students (9th Grade) for 275 students: 49 parking spaces

1 space per 3 students (10th – 12th Grade) for 675 students: 225 parking spaces

Total number of parking spaces required: 274 parking spaces

The Plan limits the amount of off-street surface parking spaces to 80 percent of the amount required under Section 27-568(a) or 218 spaces. The applicant is requesting a variance from the applicable development district standard by proposing 327 spaces. Additionally, the Plan requires that excess parking should be accommodated in structured facilities. The applicant argues that a parking structure is not financially feasible for DeMatha, that the construction of a parking structure would jeopardize the viability of the entire project, and that the additional parking being

proposed is necessary to accommodate both the daily requirements of the students and faculty as well as the anticipated requirements of the convocation center. The applicant believes that it would be preferable to accommodate the parking generated by the convocation center on-site and has requested an amendment to the sector plan to allow the additional parking spaces. Staff is supportive of this argument because of on-going tensions between the applicant and the surrounding community regarding transportation impacts of the school on the surrounding area. Noting that the applicant has ameliorated some of the community's concerns regarding rerouting traffic so as to minimize impacts on the surrounding area, staff is supportive of minimizing the number of student's cars and anticipated patrons of the new convocation center parked off-site. Lastly, the applicant has proffered and a recommended condition below would ensure that, should additional square footage be added to the school in the future, structured parking will be built to accommodate the additional parking demand. Thus it may be said that the alternative development district standard solution would benefit the development and the development district and would not substantially impair the implementation of the Plan.

4. Parking shall not be located between the sidewalk or street and the building.

Comment: As indicated above, the new parking areas are technically located between the sidewalk and the building. However, they are completely concealed behind an urban edge, in this case created by a wall feature and will not be visible from the street. Since the intent of the standard will be fulfilled in an esthetically pleasing way, it may be said that the alternative development district standard solution would benefit the development and the development district and would not substantially impair the implementation of the Plan.

Fences, Walls, Screening and Buffering

1. Opaque walls and fences, with the exception of required screening, shall not exceed four feet in height. Non-opaque walls and fences shall not exceed six feet in height.

Urban Design Comment: The applicant is proposing an entry gate and screen wall along its enhanced US 1 streetscape that will include an arcade pavilion, decorative paving, plaza area, trellis and benches. The entry gate will be approximately 18.6 feet in height and the main wall will be approximately 10 feet in height, transgressing the above requirement. The staff agrees with the applicant's argument that the proposed entry gate, screen wall, and arcade will be a significant screening element, and when combined with the plaza, will create a lively pedestrian area. The entry gate, wall, and pavilion function in this case as an urban edge in lieu of an actual building; so the additional wall height is not only justified but necessary, and will benefit the development and the development district.

4. Front yard fences and walls shall be a maximum of four feet in height.

Urban Design Comment: The proposed entry gate and screen wall will range from 10 to 18.6 feet in height. The purpose of this wall is not only to screen the parking areas from US 1, but to create an urban edge and lively pedestrian plaza. The additional height of the fence/wall feature is necessary to accomplish this goal. Additionally, the proposed fence meets the intent of the fencing section to delineate private property while improving the appearance of the character area by screening unsightly elements such as parking lots. Thus it may be said that the alternative development district standard solution would benefit the development and the development district and would not substantially impair the implementation of the plan.

Signage

1. Freestanding, monumental signs, or billboards shall not be allowed.

Urban Design Comment: The applicant is proposing signage that will be incorporated into the gateway entrance from Madison Street and, therefore, has requested an amendment to the Plan to allow this design. The sign is an integral element of the wall/gate that helps create an urban edge along US 1. The identification sign on the gateway entrance to the school is simply stated and serves to identify the location of the school and assist in safer vehicular and pedestrian circulation, without detracting aesthetically from the streetscape, and thus can be said to benefit the development and the development district.

9. **Landscape Manual:** The proposed development is exempt from the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*. Specifically, the project is exempt from the requirements of section 4.2 (Commercial and Industrial Landscaped Strip Requirements) as the proposed project does not involve an increase in gross floor area (GFA) of the lesser of 10 percent or 5,000 square feet. Additionally, the project is exempt from the requirements of Section 4.3 because it does not necessitate an increase in the number of parking or loading spaces beyond the number currently existing. Lastly, it is exempt from the requirements of Section 4.7 because it does not involve an increase in GFA of the lesser of 10 percent or 5,000 square feet and no part of any new structure extends closer to an adjacent property in a less intense use category than would normally be allowed by the provisions of Section 4.7 of the *Landscape Manual*.
10. **Woodland Conservation Ordinance:** The site is exempt from the requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance. In a letter issued July 21, 2005, the Environmental Planning Section stated that the applicant's request for exemption from the Woodland Conservation Ordinance was reviewed and approved because the site contains less than 10,000 square feet of woodland and there was no previously approved tree conservation plan. Staff also noted that the subject property contains 4.33 acres and is zoned R-55 and that the proposed use of the property is for the construction of a driveway entrance to the school. The issued letter of exception will remain valid for two years, or until July 21, 2007.
11. **Referral Comments:** The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:

Historic Preservation—In revised comments dated March 21, 2007, the Historic Preservation Section stated that the proposed project would have no effect on historic resources.

Archeological Review—In a memorandum dated March 20, 2006, the staff archeologist stated that she would not recommend a Phase I (Identification) archeology survey because a search of current and historic photographs, topographic and historic maps, and locations of currently known archeological sites indicated that the probability of identifying archeological sites within the subject property is low and the site has been disturbed. She noted, however, that Section 106 review may require an archeological survey by state or federal agencies.

Community Planning—In a revised memorandum dated April 23, 2007, the Community Planning Division stated that the subject application was not inconsistent with the 2002 General Plan Development Pattern policies for the Developed Tier. In addition, they stated that the subject application conforms to the mixed-use-infill land use recommendations of the 2004 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for the Prince George's County Gateway Arts District* but does not meet all the development standards of the Gateway Arts District Development District Overlay Zone. In itemizing the deviations from the standards, the

Community Planning Division stated that the deviations do not impair the integrity of the sector plan, because the proffered alternative design solutions reinforce the goal of the town center character area to enhance the walkability of the town center by creating a framework for high-quality, mixed use, pedestrian-oriented development, incorporating human-scale buildings, an attractive streetscape, and landscaping.

Urban Design Section Comment: The Urban Design Section is of the opinion that the US 1 pedestrian plaza meets the above requirements.

Transportation—In comments dated March 13, 2006, the Transportation Planning Section said that while they had no objection to the proposed use, the plan includes a parking area that was proposed to be lotted out by the EYA Hyattsville's (the development immediately to the south) preliminary plan of subdivision. The applicant in that case, however, has recently revised its detailed site plan to exclude those lots and is in the process of selling them to DeMatha. Additionally, the indicated 45-foot of right-of-way for 44th Avenue Extended must be reviewed and found acceptable by the City of Hyattsville. In closing, they stated that the right-of-way line shown on US 1 respects the build-to line established pursuant to the guidance of the Gateway Arts District Sector Plan. The Transportation Planning Section confirmed that these comments were still applicable on May 9, 2007.

Subdivision—In a memorandum dated March 27, 2006, the Subdivision Section stated that the property is the subject of record Plat BDS 1@84, recorded on February 10, 1910. Additionally, they stated that pursuant to Section 24-111 of the Subdivision Regulations, a preliminary plan of subdivision is not required for the development of more than 5,000 square feet of gross floor area where the development of more than 5,000 square feet of gross floor area, constituting at least ten percent of the total site area, was constructed pursuant to a building permit issued on or before December 31, 1991. In order for the applicant to vest the existing development in order to remain exempt under the above section of the Subdivision Regulations, the applicant must file a record plat prior to razing any existing structures. If such demonstration of conformance is not made, a new preliminary plan of subdivision would be required. Staff has included a recommended condition of approval below that would ensure that such demonstration is made prior to signature approval of the plans. The Subdivision Section confirmed that these comments were still applicable on May 9, 2007.

Trails—In a revised memorandum dated May 10, 2007, the senior trails planner stated that the applicant has revised plans to reflect his original comments made on March 29, 2006. More particularly, he requested a wide sidewalk along US 1, standard sidewalks along internal roads, and the provision of attractive and contrasting crosswalk materials at several key crosswalk locations. Further, he noted that the adopted and approved Gateway Arts District Sector Plan recommends the following with respect to pedestrian crossings on US 1:

Improve all existing and proposed intersections and mid-block crossings of Rhode Island/Baltimore Avenue (US 1) ..., where deemed appropriate. At these locations, pedestrian crossing should be very clearly demarcated and, where missing, pedestrian-actuated signals need to be installed. Crossings of 12 to 15 feet wide and the use of special paving treatments are recommended.

He then suggested that the striped crosswalks indicated for US 1 utilize the same treatment provided across Madison Street and 44th Avenue and that a pedestrian-actuated signal be installed per the recommendation of the sector plan, unless modified by the State Highway Administration.

With respect to streetscape consistency, he noted that the design for the DeMatha project differed significantly from the adjacent EYA Hyattsville project. For this reason, he suggested that the applicant provide one or more color renderings depicting how the streetscapes will look, including the building façade and the transition to the approved EYA streetscape. In closing he noted that the desired minimum of six feet of clear space for pedestrians had been included on the plans.

Two recommended conditions below would implement the senior trails planner's suggestions.

Permits—In a revised memorandum dated April 2, 2007, the Permit Review Section stated that they had no comments on the subject project.

Environmental Planning—In comments dated April 6, 2006, the Environmental Planning Section stated that since the project raises no environmental issues, no memorandum would be forthcoming. In addition, they noted that a stormwater management concept plan had been submitted and that the site is exempt from the provisions of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance.

Fire Department—In a memorandum dated April 23, 2006, the Prince George's County Fire Department offered comment on accessibility, private road design and requirements regarding hydrants.

Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T)— In a memorandum dated March 21, 2006, DPW&T stated that the property is located on the west side of Baltimore Avenue (US 1), approximately 500 feet south of its intersection with Olglethorpe Street. US 1 is a state-maintained highway and, because the project is located within the City of Hyattsville, the local streets are city-maintained. No county roads under DPW&T's auspices are therefore impacted by the proposed project. Additionally, a representative of DPW&T stated that the site plan for the DeMatha-Convocation Center—DSP97030/01, is consistent with approved stormwater concept 15267-2006.

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)—In a memorandum dated March 6, 2006, WSSC stated that water and sewer is available to the site. Further, they prompted that an on-site plan review package be submitted, with a notation on it that water and sewer connections for existing structures will be appropriately abandoned when the buildings are razed.

Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA)—In a letter dated March 14, 2007, SHA stated they had no objection to DSP-97030/01 approval. In addition, they stated that they are currently working with the applicant's consultant engineers to get the improvements at the intersection of US 1 and Madison Street permitted.

Hyattsville—In a letter dated June 11, 2007, a representative of the City of Hyattsville expressed support for the revised DeMatha Catholic High School's detailed site plan. Further, they stated that while the City Council had previously voted to oppose the request, they found the revisions responsive to their concerns and are now able to support the proposed design.

Edmonston, North Brentwood, Cottage City, Bladensburg, Brentwood, College Park, University Park and Riverdale Park—At the time of this writing these municipalities have not offered comment on the subject project.

12. As required by Section 27-285(b) of the Zoning Ordinance, the detailed site plan represents a reasonable alternative for satisfying the site design guidelines of Subtitle 27, Part 3, Division 9 of the Prince George's County Code without requiring unreasonable cost and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation and analysis, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and APPROVE Detailed Site Plan DSP-97030/01 for a convocation center for a private school, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to signature approval of the plans, the applicant shall revise the plans for the project as follows and/or submit the following additional materials:
 - a. Applicant shall file a record plat and demonstrate that at least ten percent of the total development on the site was constructed pursuant to a building permit issued on or before December 31, 1991.
 - b. Show on the plans improved crosswalk treatment across US 1 at Madison Street in order to be consistent with crosswalk treatments internal to the subject site (12 to 15 feet wide, utilizing a special paving treatment), unless modified by the State Highway Administration.
 - c. Show on the plans pedestrian actuated signals at the US 1 and Madison Street intersection, unless modified by the State Highway Administration.
 - d. Applicant shall add a note to the plans stating: "Should additional square footage added to the school in the future be determined to increase trip generation to the school, structured parking will be built to accommodate the additional parking demand. Such structured parking would be designed in accordance with the requirements of the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance, the requirements of the applicable sector plan, and with the guidance of the Transportation Planning Section."