



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

June 6, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: John A. Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division, JAC
Khalid Afzal, Team Leader, Georgia Avenue Team, KA
FROM: *me* Marilyn Clemens for the Department of Park and Planning
(301) 495-4572

REVIEW TYPE: Mandatory Referral
APPLYING FOR: Modernization of Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School
APPLICANT: Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)
CASE NUMBER: 02502-MCPS-1
REVIEW BASIS: Article 28, Section 7-112 of the Annotated Code of Maryland

ZONE: R-60
LOCATION: 4710 Saul Road, Kensington, Maryland 20895
MASTER PLAN: 1989 Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton

FILING DATE: April 11, 2002
RESTART DATE: May 10, 2002
**PLANNING BOARD
REVIEW:** June 13, 2002

RECOMMENDATION: Approval to transmit comments to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

1. The project is limited to the modifications proposed based on a core capacity of 640 students. Increases beyond that number and any proposed additions to structures or parking should be the subject of further analysis through the Mandatory Referral process;
2. Submit a COMPLETE landscape and lighting plan that shows trees to be saved, grading, and proposed landscape;
3. Submit a Tree Preservation Plan that shows trees to be saved, critical root zones of all significant and specimen trees, preservation methods and mitigation for the loss of specimen and other large, healthy trees on site; if all mitigation cannot be accomplished on site, identify locations in the same watershed where mitigation can be accomplished (see Attachment 6);
4. Reduce grading and utility work within critical root zones to a minimum;
5. Relocate the Saul Road drop-off and parking area to the front of the school to save healthy specimen trees; and
6. Reduce the width of drive entries, except for the bus loop, to 25 feet to save street trees and promote pedestrian safety.

THE PROPOSAL

Kensington Parkwood is in the Walter Johnson High School cluster. The original Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School was constructed in 1952 and has had four additions, the latest in 1973. Located on a 9.98-acre site including playing fields on its western edge, the school has gone through several modifications over the years. A September 2001 MCPS document states the current enrollment is 395 students in a 35,131 square foot facility with a capacity for 374 students. MCPS has determined the most cost effective modernization is to construct a new building.

MCPS proposes a school of 63,972 gross square feet with an initial capacity of 499 students and a core capacity of 640 students. The proposed school is laid out in an "L" configuration and is partially two-story because of the steep site topography. In the process of meeting with school faculty and community representatives, MCPS agreed to limit on-site parking to 50 spaces, with additional parking along Saul Road. The new building will be fully ADA accessible and will have new mechanical systems and modern computer facilities. The proposed gymnasium has not been funded although its location is included on the current site plan. Because the multi-purpose room, kitchen, and gym are proposed on the southern part of the site, the loading and service area must be located adjacent to these uses, requiring a vehicle entrance off of Franklin Street.

THE SITE

The school site is west of Cedar Lane, north of the Capital Beltway, east of Rockville Pike, and north and east of Beach Drive in Rock Creek Park. It is in the extreme southwest corner of the Kensington-Wheaton planning area. The school is located on the highest part of its site along Saul Road, between Parkwood Drive to the northwest and Franklin Street on the south. The existing site is hilly with many individual specimen hardwood trees as well as stands of pine; play fields are located on a graded flat plane on the lower western portion of the site. The school sits approximately 30 feet above homes to the southwest along Edgefield Road and Franklin Street to the south. The homes along Saul Road to the north are sited above the school and its existing parking. To the west, homes along Parkwood Drive back up to the school. The current bus and vehicle parking entry and exit are via a single lot off Saul Road. Mature healthy street trees and a sidewalk surround the site.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Neighborhood Context

The community surrounding Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School is made up primarily of single-family detached homes built in the 1950's and 1960's in an R-60 zone. Many residents have lived in the neighborhood for a long time. The school serves the function of a community green where residents meet, walk their dogs, and children play. Rock Creek Park and its bike trail are two blocks to the south.

Community Notification

The local neighborhood civic association, the Parkwood Residents Association, was notified of the June 13, 2002 hearing by Planning Board staff. MCPS staff was asked to notify adjacent and confronting residents although no confirmation has been received at the time this report was written. MCPS staff held several meetings with the faculty, the parents, and the residents of the community in the spring of 2001. Community-Based Planning staff attended some of those meetings.

ANALYSIS

Master Plan

The 1989 Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton did not recommend changes to the land uses, the roads, or the zones of the southwest quadrant of the master plan area.

Development Standards for the R-60 Zone

The proposed school modernization meets the setbacks, the height limits, and the coverage of the R-60 zone:

Setbacks: Front - 25 feet

Side - 8/18 feet total

Rear - 20 feet

Height Limit: 35 feet (maximum height proposed exclusive of penthouse: 26 feet)

Coverage: 35% maximum

Transportation

A memorandum from Transportation Planning is attached. Evaluating the material received regarding the number of students and faculty projected, staff concluded that the modernization would add only 19 vehicle trips to the current traffic generated. Staff believes that the proposed project would satisfy the requirements of a Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) study if it had been submitted.

General traffic circulation around the site will be improved by creating separate bus access, a drop-off area and faculty parking. Currently, these activities all take place at the Saul Road frontage.

Recreation

MCPS will supplement the existing ball field, paved play areas, and kindergarten play areas with two overlapping ball fields, basketball courts and a large paved area adjacent to the future gym. For kindergarten children, playground equipment in mulched areas and a small paved surface will be provided.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

1. Site Plan Layout and Building/Loss of Green Space and Trees

Staff believes that many of the issues raised by this proposal stem from the MCPS's policy of trying to keep all elementary school classrooms on one floor. Many of the school sites in the down-County area are smaller than today's site criteria of 12-15 acres, and more compact, multi-story buildings should be considered. MCPS staff has enumerated the programmatic, safety and cost concerns that dictate a primarily single-story school consistent with their current practices. A site plan layout with a two or multi-story building that acknowledged the value of the existing site features, including the mature trees, is what staff and some residents encouraged MCPS to submit.

2. Review of Landscape, Lighting, Sediment and Erosion Control, and Site Development Plans

The landscape, lighting, sediment and erosion control, and site development plans must be revised and submitted to staff for review to reflect verifiable tree conservation. Studying the separate sheets of the plans submitted, dated December 2001, trees proffered to be saved are in fact impacted by grading, utilities, and other site work. Staff is certain that a reduction in tree and green space loss can still be accomplished with adjustments to the plans and believes that saving large trees on this "school-park" site as well as in the public right-of-way is very important to the character of the community and to the environment of the school. For example, the specimen red oaks near the existing building and along Saul Road in the proposed parking area can be described as in perfect health. The tree (#14) 25 feet off the existing building has a garden under its canopy where teachers and volunteers have been observed teaching children gardening. Many other exceptional trees on site will be lost, yet a large grouping near Saul Road and Franklin Street, in serious decline or dead, is proposed to be saved. This is where staff would propose relocating the drop-off and teacher parking. Please refer to Attachment 6.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information provided by the applicant and the analysis in this report, staff concludes that the proposed project would provide a much-needed new elementary school, in line with today's standards. M-NCPPC staff attended several meetings with school staff and local residents and worked to resolve the environmental and community impacts of the proposed project.

MCPS staff concluded that it would not consider a multi-storied school of a smaller footprint at this location for programmatic, safety, and cost reasons. While the new school will be "state of the art" in code compliance, computerization and some construction features, and has been long awaited by faculty and parents, it is unfortunate that it cannot also be a model of open space stewardship.

The comments provided on page one require the submission of revised plans that effectively save specimen and significant trees. Mitigation on site for the loss of large trees through dense landscaping with hardwoods and evergreens can also help buffer existing residents from the new impacts of the expanded school, parking, construction of storm water facilities and the noise generated by trash collection and servicing. Saving significant trees along the school frontage and streets also helps maintain neighborhood character and environmental quality.

MC:ha: a:/clemens1/MRKenparkwood.doc

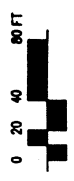
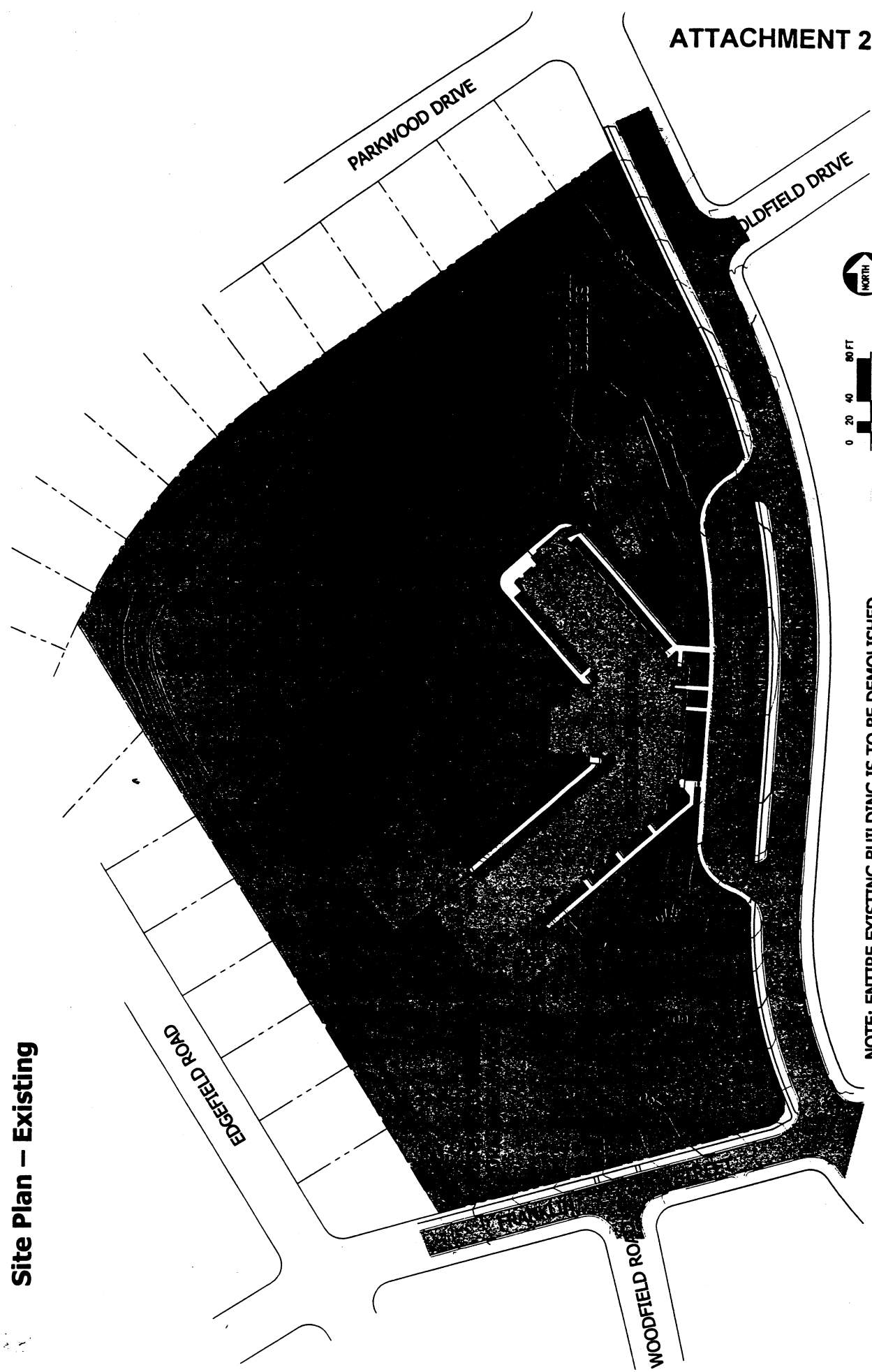
Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Existing Site Plan
3. Proposed Site Plan
- 4a. Existing Floor Plans
- 4b. Proposed Floor Plans
5. Memorandum from Transportation Planning
6. Memorandum from Environmental Planning

**Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School
Modernization**

Preliminary Plans Presentation

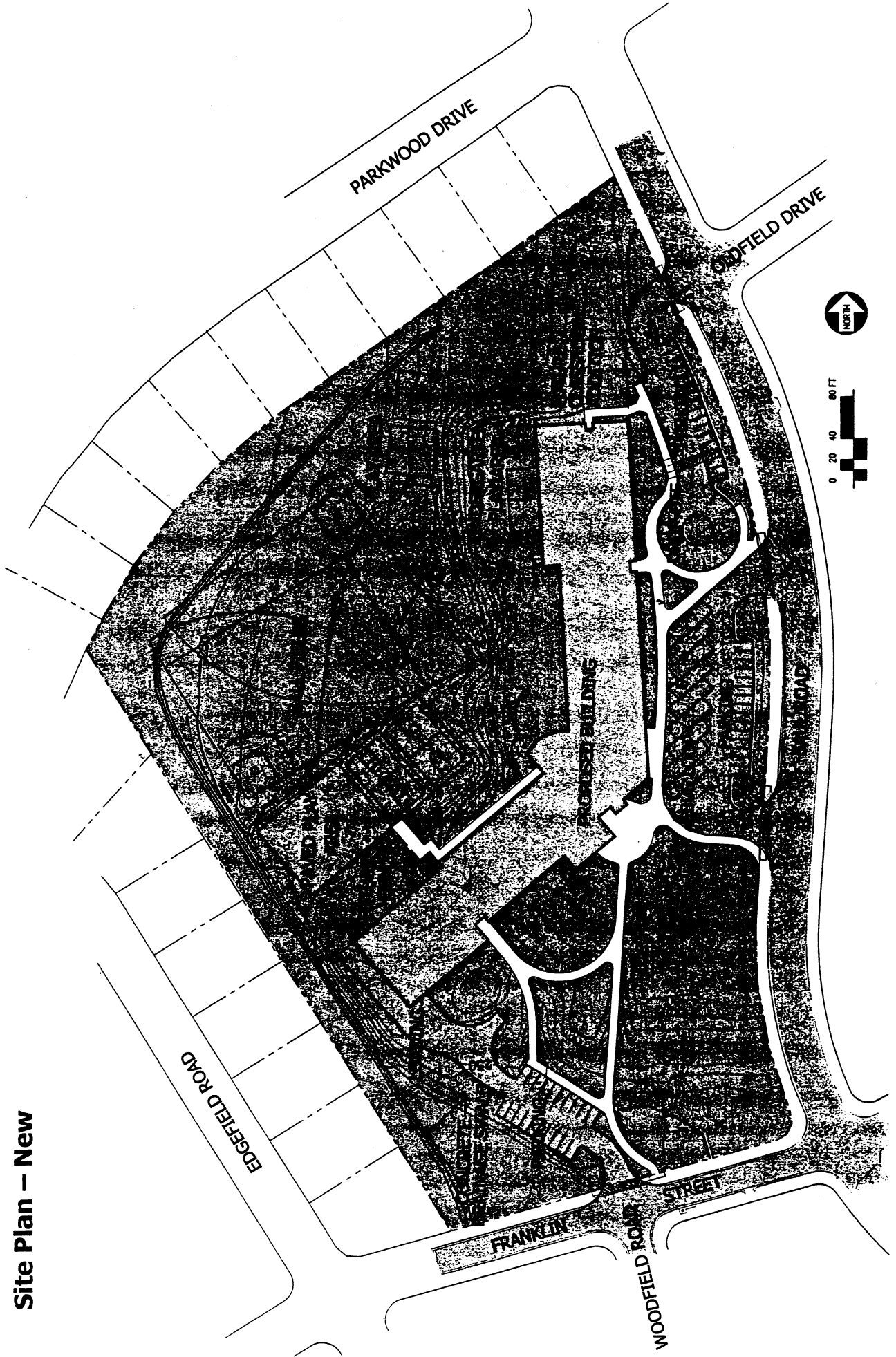
Site Plan – Existing



NOTE: ENTIRE EXISTING BUILDING IS TO BE DEMOLISHED

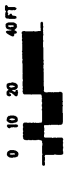
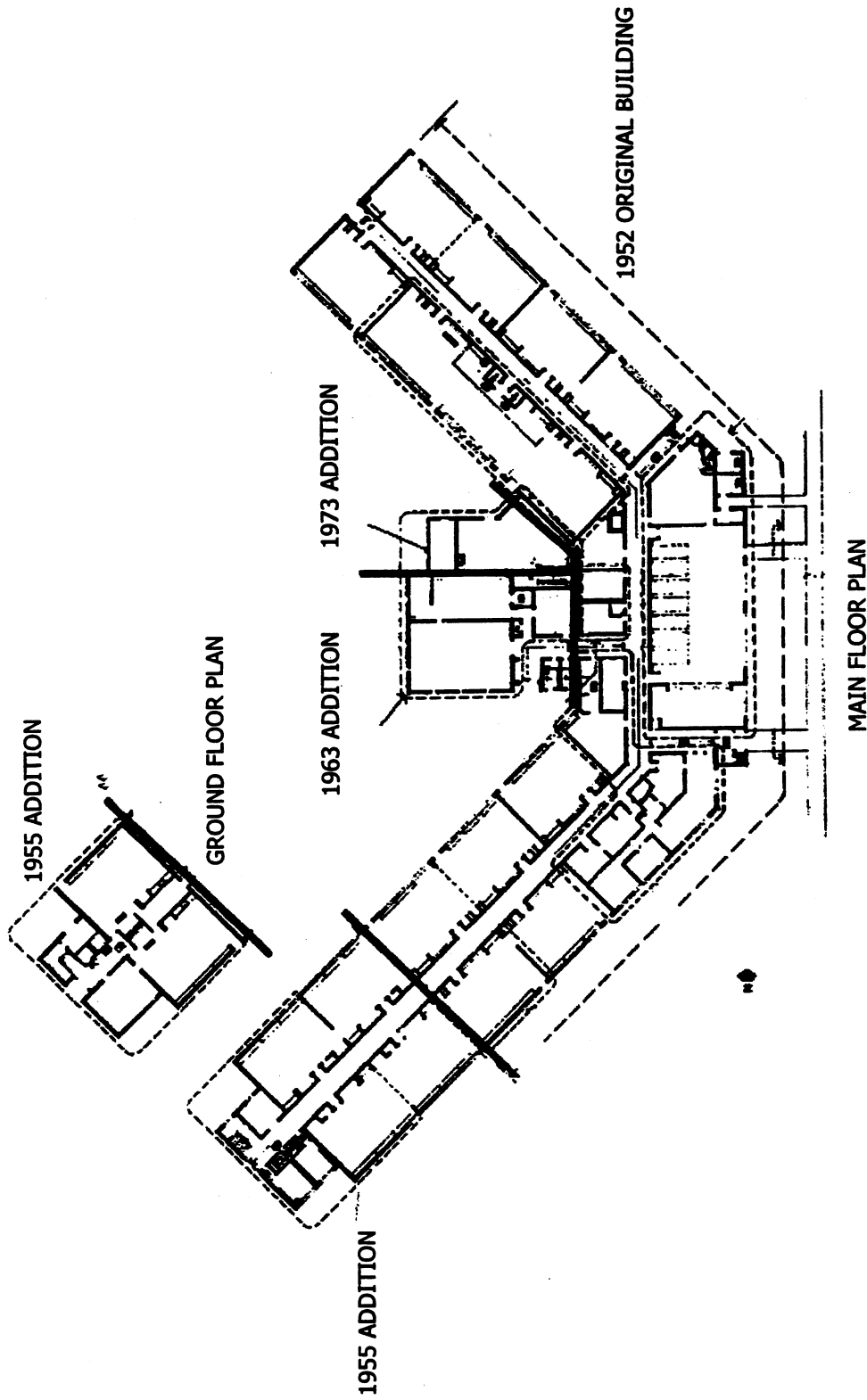
Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School
Modernization

Site Plan – New



Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School
Modernization

Floor Plans - Existing

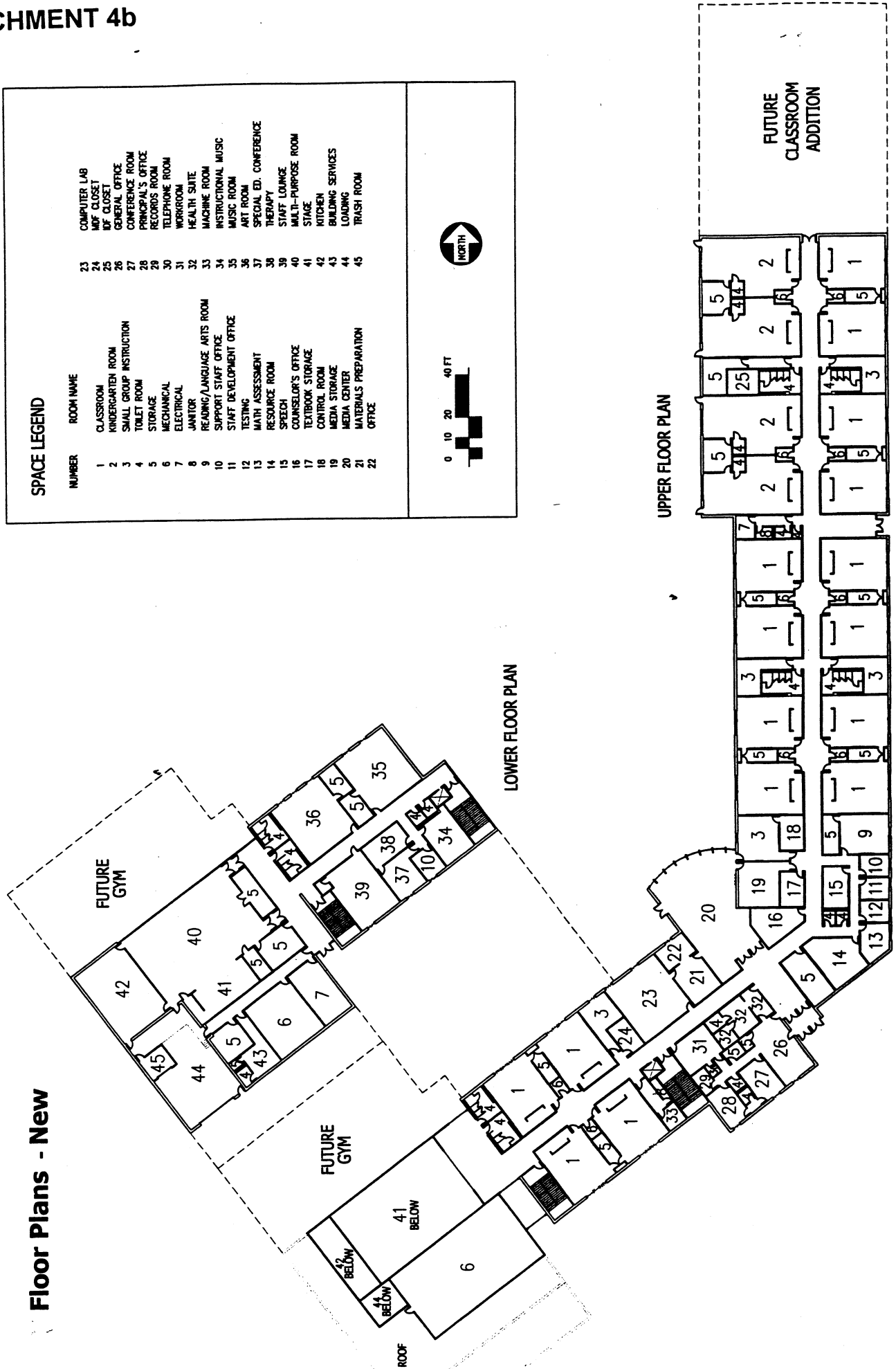


NOTE: ENTIRE EXISTING BUILDING IS TO BE DEMOLISHED

Preliminary Plans Presentation

Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School
Modernization

Floor Plans - New



M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

June 4, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marilyn Clemens, Planner
Community-Based Planning Division

VIA: Daniel K. Hardy, Supervisor *DKH*
Transportation Planning

FROM: Shahriar Etemadi, Coordinator
Transportation Planning *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral: 02502-MCPS-1, Kensington-Parkwood
Elementary School Modernization

This memorandum is Transportation Planning staff's Adequate Public Facilities (APF) review of the subject application

RECOMMENDATION

Transportation planning staff recommends no conditions to support approval of the above-referenced application because it has no significant impact on the area transportation system.

Local Area Transportation Review (LATR)

The school modernization plan has been under consideration for more than a year, although the need for a traffic study to meet LATR requirements, per the Board's Uniform Standard for Mandatory Referral, effective October, 2002 was not determined prior to the April 2002 submission.

Staff reviewed the application after its April 11, 2002 submission and determined that a traffic study would be needed to satisfy LATR requirements. The modernization plan results in an increase in enrollment from 395 students to 459 students. Based on the rates in the 6th edition of Institute of Traffic Engineers Trip Generation Manual, the proposed facility will generate 138 peak hour vehicle trips during the weekday morning peak period, higher than the 50-vehicle threshold specified in the LATR guidelines.

However, the expansion will only add 19 vehicle trips to the traffic already generated by the existing site.

Conducting traffic counts and preparation of a traffic study at this time would delay the review of the project by the Planning Board until next fall. Staff determined that the two affected intersections for evaluation are Cedar Lane at Saul Road and Knowles Avenue at Parkwood Drive. These intersections are located in a predominantly residential neighborhood. There are no traffic data available in our file for these intersections, reinforcing staff's judgment that the two intersections have sufficient capacity to accommodate the 19 additional peak hour trips generated by the site.

It is our judgment that if completed, the LATR study would find that the applicant satisfies LATR requirements.

Policy Area Review/Staging Ceiling Analysis

The site is located within the Kensington-Wheaton policy area, which has a remaining capacity of 2768 jobs and 2533 housing units as of April 30, 2002.

SE:cmd

Kensington-Parkwood ES MR 02502-MCPS-1.DOC



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 6, 2002

TO: Marilyn Clements, Community Based Planning

VIA: Mary Dolan, Environmental Planning Division *MD*

FROM: Marion Clark, Environmental Planning Division *MC*

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. MR-02502-MCPS-1
Parkwood Elementary School

The Environmental Planning staff has reviewed the mandatory referral referenced above. Staff recommends **approval** with the following conditions:

- That a Final Tree Save Plan be submitted to County Wide Planning, Environmental Unit, for approval prior to issuance of erosion and sedimentation control permit. This plan should show proposed subsurface storm water management infrastructure, proposed grading and limits of disturbance. In addition the critical root zone for all specimen trees (30" dbh or larger) and significant trees (24" dbh or larger) must be indicated along with mitigation measures for trees lost as a result of encroachment into the critical root zone of 30% or more.
- That a Storm Water Management Plan approved by MCDPS be submitted to M-NCPPC, CWP, Environmental Unit prior to issuance of sediment and erosion control permit.

Forest Conservation

Exemption of a Forest Conservation Plan has been granted, however the plan is still subject to requirements for a Tree Save Plan for any specimen and significant trees. This site contains 57 significant and specimen trees standing outside of a forest condition. These trees constitute trees of highest priority¹ retention and protection as defined by the Forest Conservation Law. The Law requires that "*any available planning and zoning options that would result in the greatest possible forest retention*" be employed for highest priority forest stands and trees. Staff believes that the applicant is able to employ greater methods of retention than what is indicated on the submitted site plan. Staff believes that the Saul Rd. dropoff proposed for the north end of the site could be relocated to the south side for the purpose of saving a grove of existing specimen trees. Since retention methods were not investigated or maximized, staff recommends mitigation for tree loss be provided as follows:

- (18 trees removed - 18 trees replacement) One tree for every tree between 24" and 30" dbh.

¹ This definition includes any individual tree and its critical root zone that is a specimen of a species.

- (24 trees removed/190") One inch caliper replacement for every four inches dbh for trees 30" dbh and greater located where avoidance is not possible.
- (6 trees removed/229") One inch caliper replacement for every one inch dbh for trees located where avoidance is possible, but not shown.

Mitigation for tree loss on the plan submitted results in a total of 18 replacement trees and 419 inches dbh replacement. Replanting priority is onsite with the remainder to be planted within the Lower Rock Creek watershed. Credit will be given on an inch for inch basis for trees provided by the landscape plan.

Stormwater Management

Full water quality and quantity control shall be expected to protect the integrity of the Lower Rock Creek watershed.