






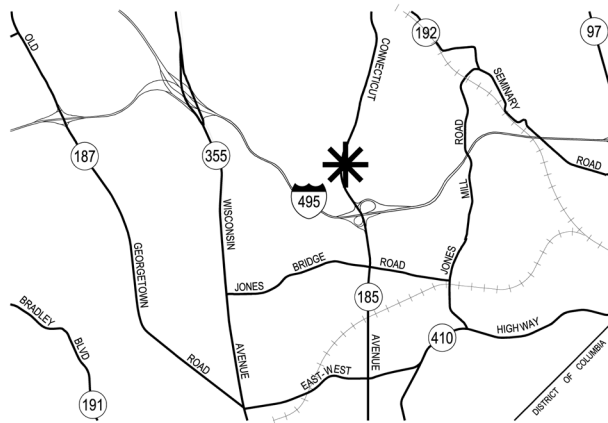
Mandatory Referral No. MR 2021031, Request for the Reacquisition of 9411 Connecticut Avenue

-  Zubin Adrianvala, Planner Coordinator, Mid-County Planning, zubin.adrianvala@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4732
-  Jessica McVary, Supervisor, Mid-County Planning, jessica.mcvary@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4723
-  Carrie Sanders, Chief, Mid-County Planning, carrie.sanders@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4653

Completed: July 8, 2021

Description

- Mandatory Referral for property acquisition in Kensington;
- Location: 9411 Connecticut Avenue;
- Zone: R-90;
- Master Plan: 1989 Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton;
- Size: 10.94 Acres;
- Application Accepted: May 27, 2021;
- Applicant: Montgomery County Department of General Services (MCDGS).



Summary

- Staff recommends approval of the Mandatory Referral and transmittal of comments to the Montgomery County Department of General Services.
- The Planning Board review of the Mandatory Referral is advisory.
- No separate Forest Conservation action is required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends approval and the transmittal of the following comments to the Montgomery County Department of General Services (MCDGS):

1. Any redevelopment is subject to future plans and policies. Applicant should ensure compliance at the time of redevelopment.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Montgomery County Department of General Services (MCDGS) is exercising its Right of First Refusal to reacquire the property at 9411 Connecticut Avenue, the former Larchmont Elementary School. The property was first leased to Grace Episcopal Church for use as a private school in 1983 and was subsequently sold to Grace Episcopal Church for private educational use in 1999. The sale of the property was approved by the County Council through Resolution 13-1487, included as Attachment 1.

The property is currently occupied by the privately owned and operated Grace Episcopal Day School as a school for pre-K through fifth grade students. While the county is reacquiring the property, it will be leased to Grace Episcopal Church and Grace Episcopal Day School, LLC with no changes in physical structure or programming proposed. The existing multipurpose field will continue to be managed through the Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF).

Site Description

The property at 9411 Connecticut Avenue is approximately 10.94 acres and is occupied by an existing school building on the northern portion of the site. The existing building is approximately 35,196 square feet in size and is occupied by the privately owned and operated Grace Episcopal Day School. One driveway from Connecticut Avenue provides vehicular access to the property, including access to approximately 50 surface parking spaces adjacent to Connecticut Avenue. The property has approximately 4.25 acres of tree cover (including 2.81 acres within a Category I Forest Conservation Easement) and 4.0 acres of lawn area, including a multipurpose playing field managed by CUPF.



Figure 1: Location of 9411 Connecticut Avenue

Surrounding Neighborhood

The property is located at the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Dannel Lane. The surrounding neighborhood is primarily characterized by single-family houses to the north, east, and west. The Rock Creek Stream Valley Park, Rock Creek Hiker-Biker Trail, and Beach Drive are located immediately south of the property.

ANALYSIS

Master Plan Conformance

The property is located within the 1989 *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton*. The 1989 Plan acknowledges that former school sites, such as the former Larchmont Elementary School, are valuable resources to serve future community needs, but the Plan does not include specific recommendations or guidance for the property. However, page 139 of the Plan states that, “the County should study the feasibility of locating day care facilities at schools, parks, and park-and-ride lots.” Given that the Grace Episcopal Day School offers pre-school, after-school and summer activities in addition to full day options for pre-K through fifth grade students, the use achieves this recommendation. The proposed acquisition is consistent with the 1989 Plan recommendations.

Development Standards

This review pertains only to the property acquisition. Any future redevelopment is subject to the development standards applicable at the time of redevelopment.

Environmental Analysis

There is an existing Final Forest Conservation Plan on the site (FFCP No. SC2009007). A 2.81-acre Category I Forest Conservation Easement covers the southern end of the property adjacent to Rock Creek Stream Valley Park. No adjustment to the easement or amendment to the FFCP is required for this Mandatory Referral; therefore, no separate Planning Board action is required for this item. The Mandatory Referral is in compliance with Chapter 22A, Forest Conservation, and in conformance with the Environmental Guidelines.

Transportation Analysis

While staff acknowledges that redevelopment of the site is not imminent or planned, staff notes that existing deficiencies must be addressed with any future redevelopment to render the site's frontage and access safe. For example, the existing sidewalk is adjacent to Connecticut Avenue and as a result, people are walking and biking next to high-speed moving vehicles. Future redevelopment would need to accommodate a physical separation, such as a tree-lined buffer, no less than six feet from the roadway. The sidewalk would be required to maintain a continuous, flush grade over the site's driveway (i.e. no sidewalk ramps would be provided into the driveway), and the driveway curb radii and width would ideally be reduced. Finally, there is no stop-controlled crossing convenient to the site, and staff would require an analysis of a stop controlled facility to ensure pedestrians can safely access the site.

Any future development and improvements are subject to the applicable plans and policies relevant at the time of redevelopment.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A public notice was issued asking for comments. As of the date of this memorandum, no comments were received on this proposal.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends the approval of the submitted Mandatory Referral and the transmittal of comments to the Montgomery County Department of General Services (MCDGS).

ATTACHMENT:

1. Resolution 13-1487

ATTACHMENT 1

Resolution No: 13-1487
Introduced: October 27, 1998
Adopted: November 4, 1998

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Councilmember Hanna

Subject: Sale of Larchmont Elementary School and Lease of Belt Junior High School

Background

1. Council Resolution 13-598 established policies and decision-making procedures for the reuse of closed school buildings.
2. Under Resolution 13-598, the County Executive is authorized to negotiate leases with public agency users and private users for the reuse of closed school buildings in accordance with the priorities and restriction placed on the use of the school by the County Council.
3. Larchmont Elementary School has been leased since 1983 to Grace Episcopal Church for use as a private school. The lease includes a right of first refusal to purchase the property. The County Executive and Grace Episcopal Church have negotiated mutually acceptable terms for the sale of Larchmont
4. Belt Junior High School has been approved by the Council for use as elderly housing and for private educational use by Council Resolution 11-708 and 12-1295, respectively. The County Executive has negotiated mutually acceptable terms to lease with an option to purchase Belt Junior High School to Yeshiva of Greater Washington.

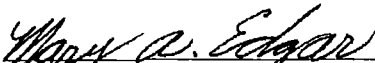
Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

1. The Council approves the sale of Larchmont Elementary School to Grace Episcopal Church for private educational use.

2. The Council approves the Belt Junior High School lease with an option to purchase the school to the Yeshiva of Greater Washington for private educational use, and for day care and worship services as uses incidental to the main use.
3. As a condition of the Council approval of this sale and lease, the playing fields associated with Larchmont and Belt schools must be made available to the community by the respective purchasers under the control of the Office of Community Use of Public Facilities.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Mary A. Edgar, CME
Secretary of the Council