



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
Item # 7
10/4/07

September 20, 2007

MEMORANDUM—MANDATORY REFERRAL

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief *JAC*
Community-Based Planning Division

Khalid Afzal, Team Leader, Georgia Avenue Planning Team
Community-Based Planning Division *KA*

FROM: Frederick Vernon Boyd, Community Planner (301.495.4654)
Georgia Avenue Planning Team *FVB*
Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 07502-MCPS-1: Brookhaven Elementary School
Gymnasium Addition – 4610 Renn Street, Rockville, R-90 Zone, Aspen
Hill Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with the following comments:

1. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) must prepare and submit a separate mandatory referral application should it decide to construct a future classroom addition.
2. Any new application must include a traffic study.
3. MCPS should submit a detailed Final Tree Save Plan to the M-NCPPC staff before sediment control permits are approved. This plan must include detailed evaluations of impacted trees and specific tree preservation measures.
4. MCPS should provide additional plantings within the tree stand on the eastern boundary of its property; the Final Tree Save Plan must include a planting plan, with planting sufficient to close the tree canopy, that will be approved with the Final Tree Save Plan.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Montgomery County Public Schools is proposing to add a gymnasium to Brookhaven Elementary School in Aspen Hill. The new facility will provide indoor recreation for students, and be available to students and local residents when school is not in session.

THE SITE

Brookhaven Elementary School is located at 4610 Renn Street, in the Bel Pre Woods section of Aspen Hill. The school is near the intersection of Renn Street and Marianna Drive, about one-half mile from the intersection of Aspen Hill Road and Marianna Drive. The school's property totals about 8.4 acres and is across Renn Street from the rear of Parkland Middle School. Parkland Middle School was recently modernized and was the subject of a mandatory referral in 2005. The property is generally flat, but there are slopes in the northwest corner and along the eastern boundary. At the northwest corner, there is a downward slope of about 12 percent between the playing area and nearby homes. The slope varies from seven percent to 20 percent along the eastern edge of the property in the vicinity of the proposed gymnasium. The houses on Marianna Drive in this area are situated from seven to ten feet higher than the school.

The school and the adjacent neighborhood are in the R-90 Zone.

The school was built in 1961, and MCPS completed a classroom addition five years later. The building totals about 53,500 square feet on two floors.

A vicinity map of the school and its neighborhood is attached.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

MCPS plans to construct the new gymnasium on the eastern side of the existing school building. The gymnasium will have its own lobby with restrooms. A new office for physical education will be located off the lobby. The gymnasium plans show a vestibule and an exterior canopy as well. The proposed location allows the school system to build a gymnasium that can be easily reached from existing classrooms, is close to existing outdoor play areas and accessible from the school's existing parking lot. The proposed design allows physical education classes to use indoor and outdoor areas without disrupting other classes and creates an accessible gymnasium for local residents that can be open when other parts of the school are closed. In addition to the new gymnasium and physical education office, MCPS plans to add indoor and outdoor storage areas as part of the project.

MCPS has identified an area suitable for additional classrooms to the south of the gymnasium, but no classroom addition is part of the modernization plans or part of this mandatory referral review. Should a classroom addition be built, a mandatory referral will be necessary.

MCPS does not propose alterations to any other part of the existing school. The vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems are unchanged as well.

Drawings of the existing site and the proposed gymnasium, as well as floor plans and elevations, are attached.

ANALYSIS

Master Plan

The 1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan makes no specific recommendations for this property. The Plan acknowledges that the Board of Education relies on a Capital Improvements Program to renovate existing buildings when necessary. The Plan supports modernization of existing public schools.

Development Standards

Standard	Required/Permitted	Proposed
Lot width at street line	25 feet	590 feet
Main building setback from street line	25 feet	130 feet
Main building side setback	25 feet both sides	340 feet both sides
Main building height	35 feet	25 feet
Main building height if site plan approval sought	40 feet	
Building coverage	30 percent	11 percent

Environment

The Environmental Planning Unit of the Countywide Planning Division recommends approval of the mandatory referral, subject to a condition discussed below.

Environmental Guidelines – There are no stream valley or other environmental buffers on this site, and it is not within a Primary Management or Special Protection area.

Forest Conservation – A Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation has been approved for this application and an exemption to the Forest Conservation Law has been granted. The Environmental Planning Unit notes that the project's limits of disturbance were altered following issuance of the exemption, but indicates that this act, while improper, does not compromise the exemption itself.

The property is subject to a Tree Save Plan, and approval of that plan by technical staff is a condition of the approval of this Mandatory Referral. Initial tree save submissions by consultants to MCPS indicate preliminary techniques for preserving existing significant and specimen trees. The Environmental Planning Unit indicates that construction of a retaining wall as part of the gymnasium project limits available preservation techniques and requires removal of two specimen trees. Root pruning associated with the construction may lead to loss of additional trees. The unit recommends that a detailed Tree Save Plan be reviewed by unit staff before sediment control permits are approved. Detailed analysis of the project's impact on the existing tree stand is included in the attached memorandum from the Environmental Planning Unit.

Sustainable Building Design – The staff encourages the use of sustainable building design in all public projects, in keeping with the work of the U.S. Green Building Council on Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). The proposed new additions for this project offer an opportunity to use building techniques and materials that apply sustainable building design concepts and procedures. While MCPS will not pursue LEED certification on this project, the agency intends to use sustainable building techniques and has indicated that it will evaluate its building techniques in light of LEED criteria and attempt to maximize conformance with LEED guidelines.

Transportation

The Transportation Planning Unit of the Countywide Planning Division has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval. The addition does not alter the school's program capacity and does not change existing vehicular or pedestrian circulation systems. The unit recommends that a traffic study be prepared if a classroom addition that adds to the school's program capacity is built.

Public Outreach

MCPS convened a facilities advisory committee to review designs for the proposed project. The committee included a number of neighbors of the school, and met three times in the fall of 2006, providing local residents the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the project.

Residents adjoining Brookhaven Elementary School have been notified of this mandatory referral review, as have local civic associations.

CONCLUSION

The proposed project meets the applicable standards and guidelines for the environment and proposes no changes that affect the adequacy of public facilities. A public school at this location is consistent with the Aspen Hill Master Plan. The Department recommends areas for additional landscaping and requires the approval of the submitted tree save plan. With those comments, the staff recommends approval of this mandatory referral and transmittal of the comments.

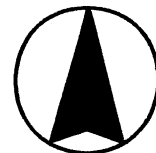
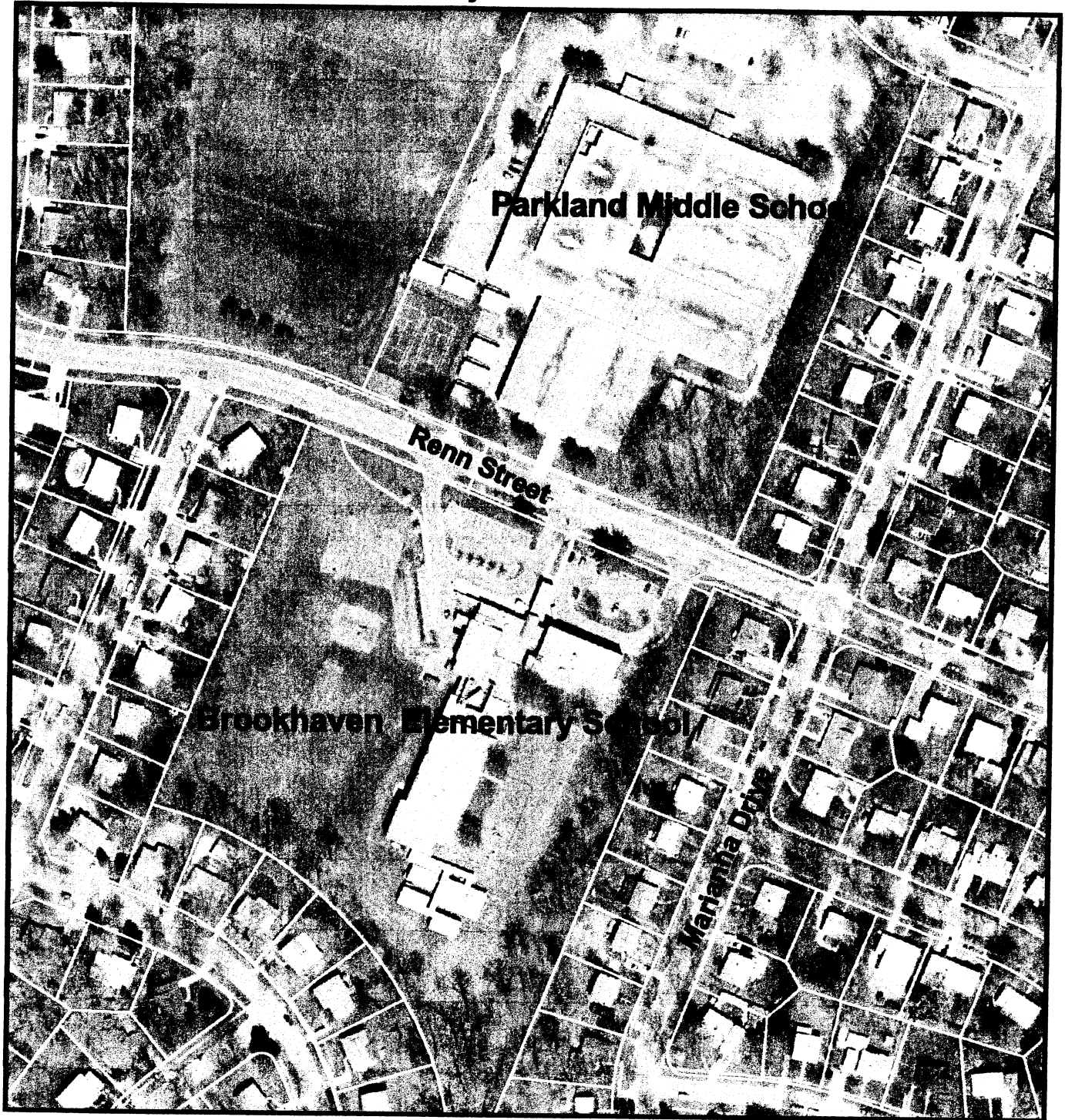
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Attachments

1. Vicinity Map
2. Existing Site Plan
3. Proposed Site Plan
4. Existing Floor Plans and Elevations
5. Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations
6. Memorandum from Environmental Planning Unit

ATTACHMENT 1

Brookhaven Elementary School

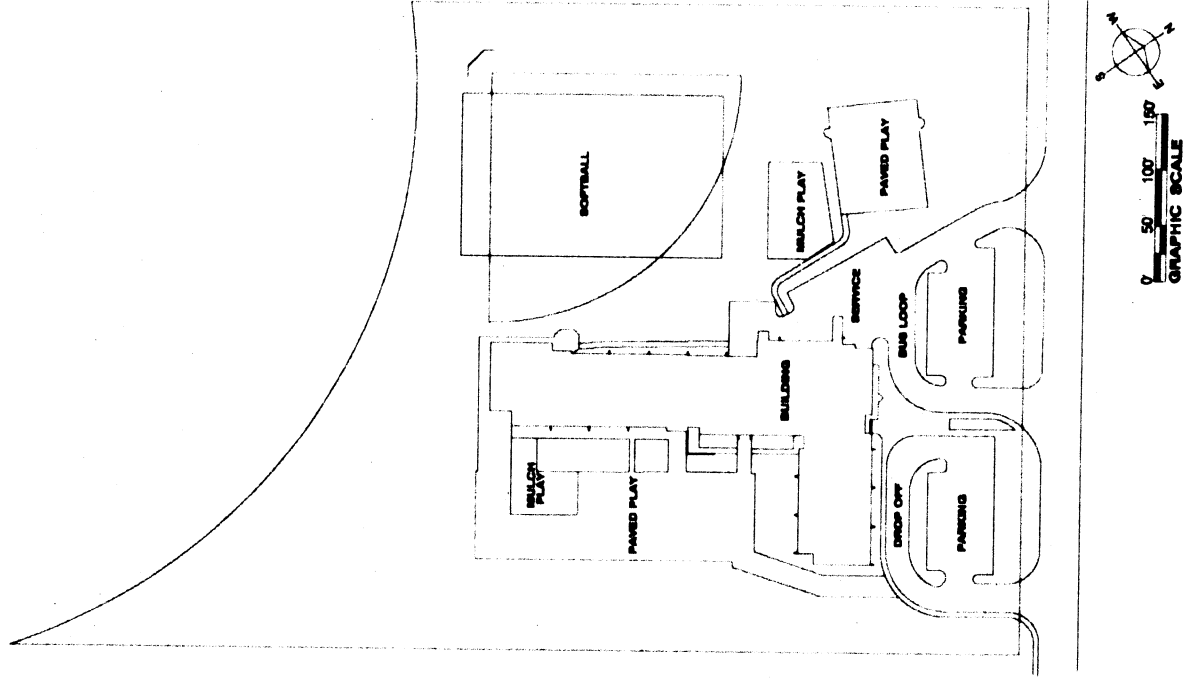


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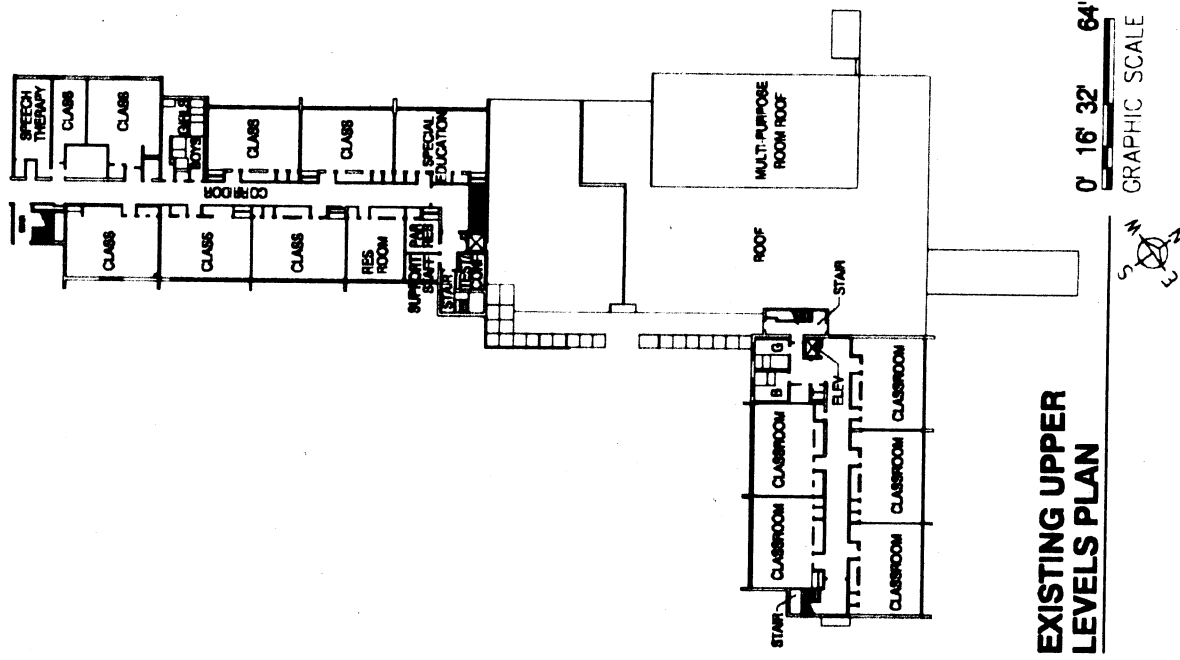
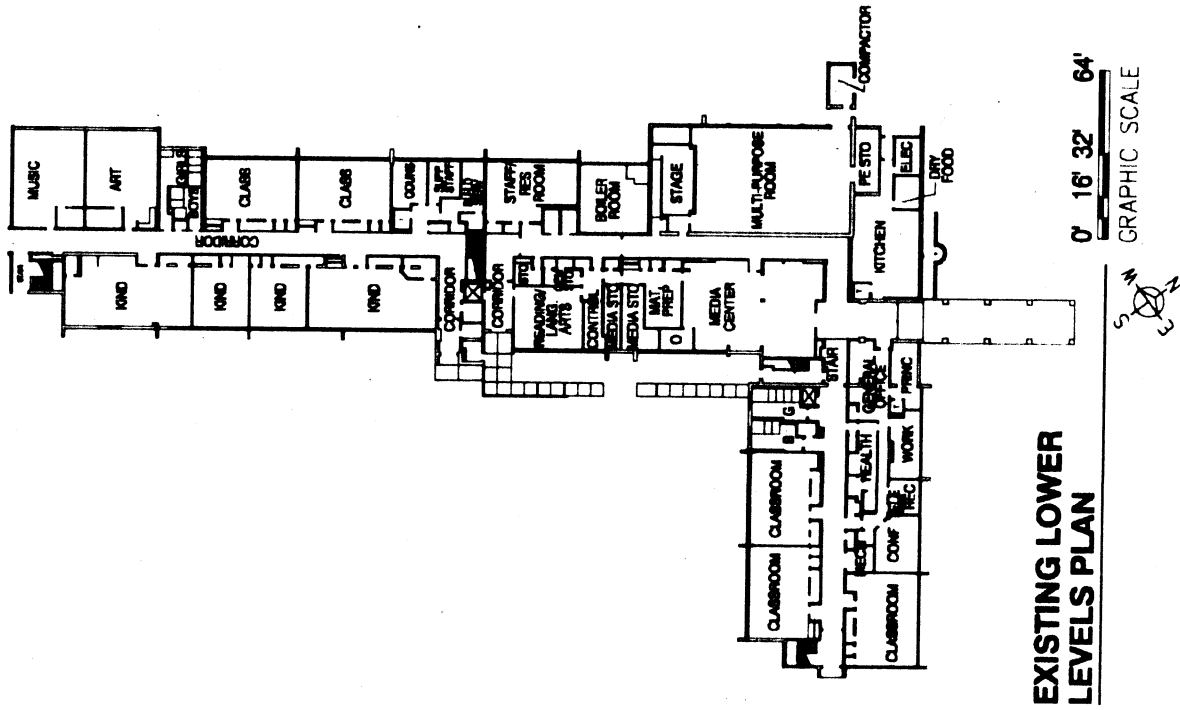
Site Plan

Existing Site Plan

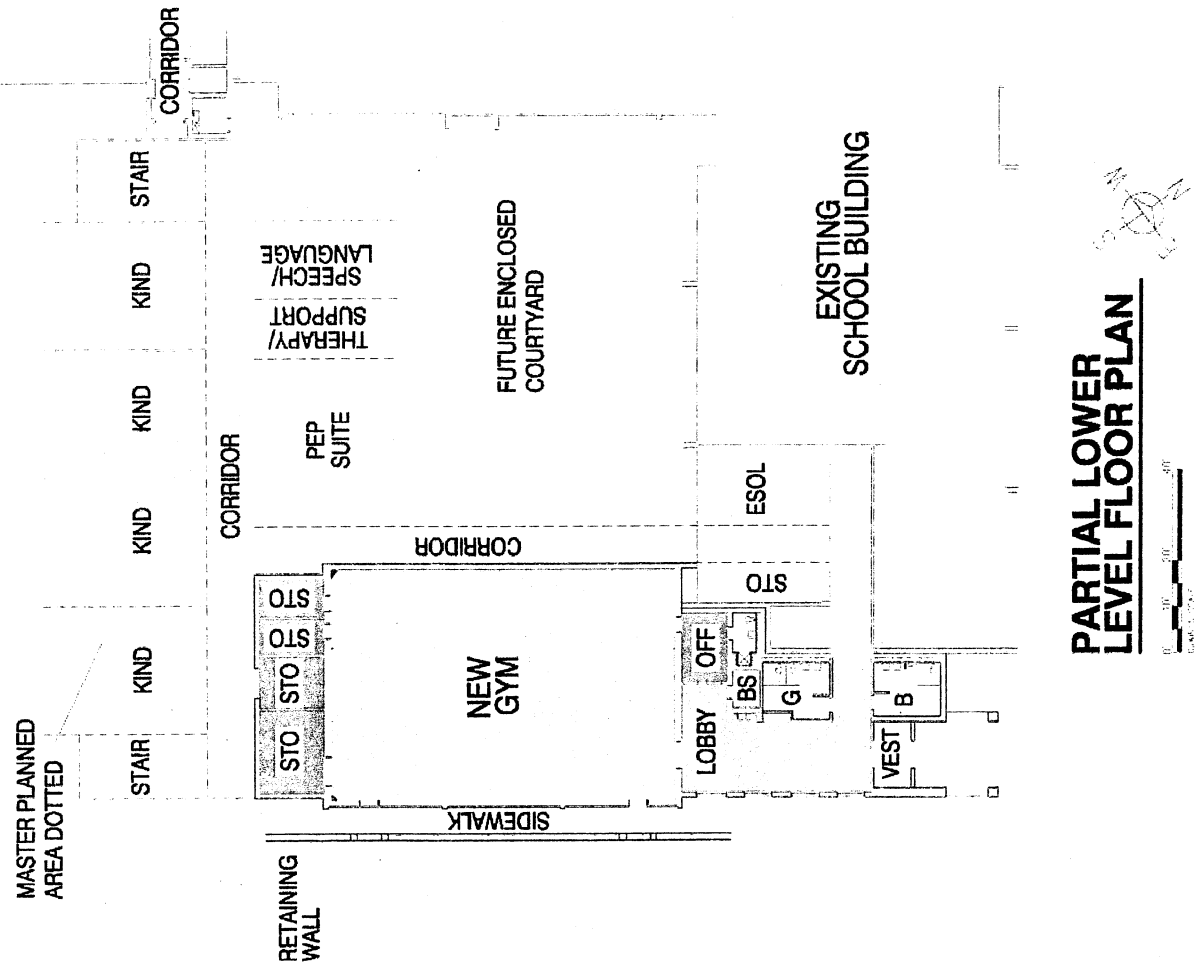


Floor Plans

Existing

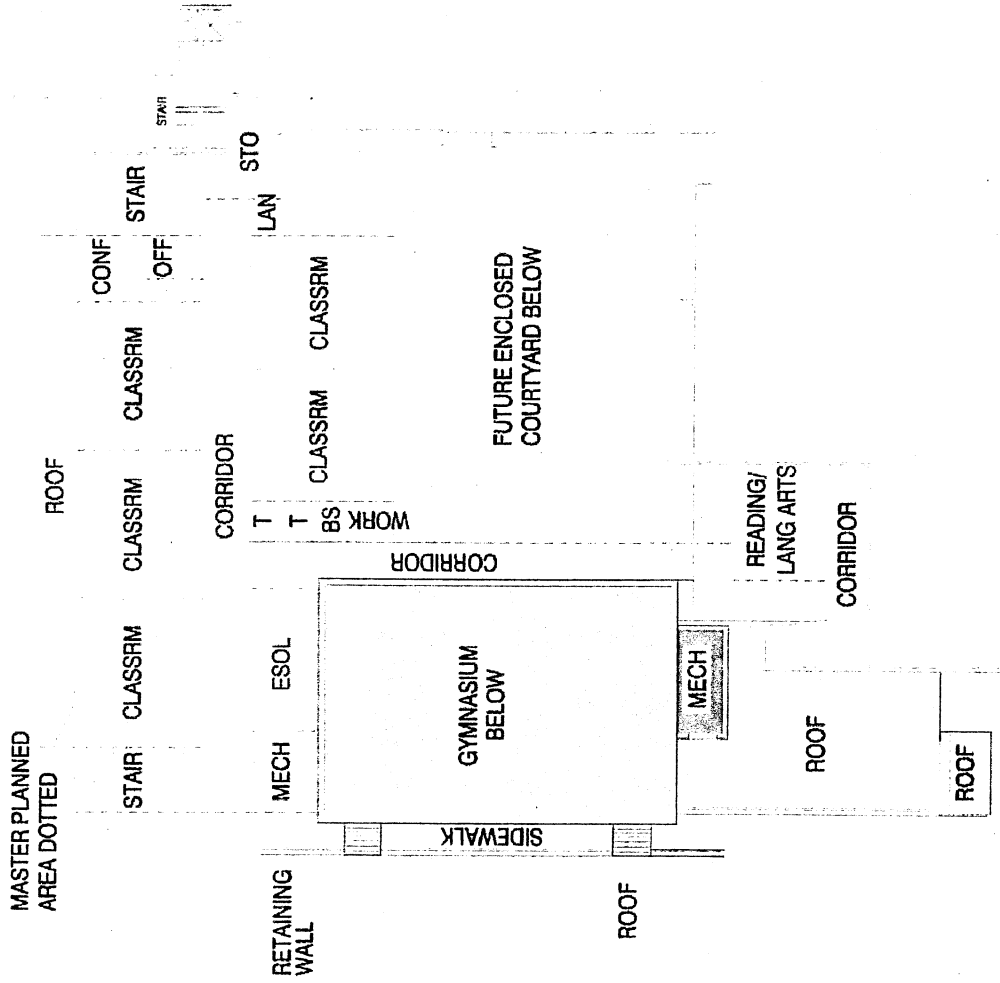


Floor Plans (continued)



PARTIAL LOWER
LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

Floor Plans (continued)



**PARTIAL UPPER
LEVEL FLOOR PLAN**

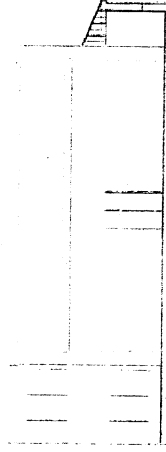


Floor Plans

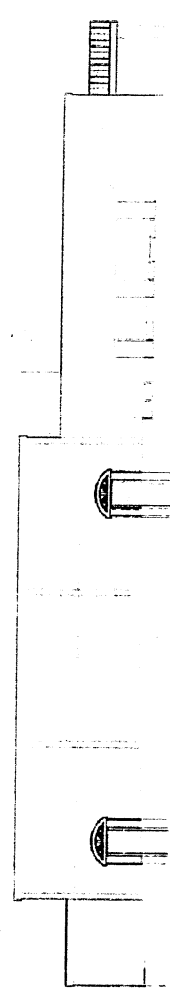
Proposed



FRONT ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION

BUILDING ELEVATIONS



Brookhaven Elementary School Gymnasium Addition
Delmar Architects, P.A.

ATTACHMENT 6



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Frederick Vernon Boyd, Community Based Planning

VIA: Stephen Federline, Supervisor, Environmental Planning

FROM: Amy Lindsey, Environmental Planning

DATE: September 19, 2007

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 07502-MCPS-1
Brookhaven Elementary School

RECOMMENDATION:

Environmental Planning staff recommends approval of the Tree Save Plan, dated September 19, 2007, with the following conditions:

1. A more detailed Final Tree Save Plan must be submitted at time of sediment control plan with detailed and specific tree preservation measures. The Final Tree Save Plan needs to include an arborist's detailed evaluation of impacted trees and specific tree preservation measures based on this evaluation.
2. MNCPPC staff must be present at the preconstruction meeting and will determine if further trees need to be removed, based on field conditions.
3. Additional plantings should be provided within the tree stand on the eastern boundary. A planting plan must be submitted with the Final Tree Save Plan, with both canopy trees and understory plants. Plantings should be sufficient to provide for canopy closure. The planting plan may be amended, subject to field decisions about further tree removal, but must be approved as part of the Final Tree Save Plan.

BACKGROUND

Brookhaven Elementary School is an 8.57-acre existing school located in the Aspen Hill planning area on Renn Street. There is approximately 0.25 acres of forest onsite and numerous large and specimen trees. The trees and forest separate the school from adjacent residences. There are no streams, wetlands or floodplains or any environmental buffers on the property. The property is within the Rock Creek watershed: a Use I watershed. The proposed plan is to build a gymnasium addition, retaining wall, path, and associated stormwater management infiltration trench.

DISCUSSION

Forest Conservation

There is approximately 0.25 acres of forest on-site but this property is exempt from submitting a Forest Conservation Plan as per 42007292E, approved on 6/18/2007. While the limits of disturbance have been enlarged, contrary to the conditions of the approval letter associated with 42007292E, staff believes that this project still qualifies for a Forest Conservation Exemption based on Sec 22A-5(s) – Modification to existing developed property. A Tree Save Plan was required to be submitted at time of Mandatory Referral, as per Sec.22-6(b).

Tree Save

The applicant has submitted a Preliminary Tree Save Plan, prepared and signed by an ISA-certified arborist that shows significant and specimen trees and preliminary tree preservation techniques. A more detailed Tree Save Plan will be required at time of sediment control, showing further construction and tree preservation information.

The proposed development will significantly impact the line of trees along the east property line. The trees are located at the top of a small rise leading up to the adjacent houses. A 2' to 4' retaining wall will be constructed as part of the development of the gymnasium and pathway. Constructing the retaining wall will limit the tree preservation methods available and necessitate root pruning along the limit of disturbance. The specific design of the retaining wall will greatly affect the disturbance to the affected trees. For example, a timber wall that requires horizontal ties will require significantly more disturbance than a poured in place concrete gravity wall.

The applicant has proposed to remove two significant trees in conjunction with the retaining wall development. Staff believes that several more may need to be removed due to root mass loss and scaffolding root loss in proximity to the trunk. For example, T-24 is a 36" white oak listed with root pruning within 10' of the trunk and a loss of more than 33% of the critical root zone. Removing the majority of downhill roots will leave a tree that is potentially unstable and hazardous to both people and property. Additional measures should be applied to mitigate for the loss of roots, as well as a careful evaluation at time of construction.

Under Section 22-6(b) of Forest Conservation Law, the Tree Save Plan provision, the Tree Save Plan may require preservation or mitigation for loss of individual trees. This is further amplified in Section 108F of Forest Conservation Regulations. Section 108F(3)(b) reads "significant tree stands must be replaced so as to replace the function of the stand: for instance, trees which provide screening must be replaced in sufficient kind and number to perform the same function." Because of the high likelihood of tree loss in this area, supplemental plantings should be added to the existing tree stand so that it continues to serve as adequate separation from the adjacent houses. The exact amount of supplemental planting will be determined at time of Final Tree Save Plan, when tree loss

is better understood. The goal of the planting plan is to replace the canopy coverage and provide screening. Native plants of same and complimentary species should be used for this planting.

One additional significant tree will be lost on the west side of the new gymnasium construction.

Stormwater Management

A Stormwater Management Concept Plan was approved by the Department of Permitting Services in February 2007.