

May 11, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Glenn Kreger, Acting Chief, Area 2 Planning Division *GK*
Khalid Afzal, Planning Supervisor, East County Team *KA*
Area 2 Planning Division

FROM: Luis R. Estrada Cepero, Planner Coordinator/Urban Designer (301/495-4641)
East County Team, Area 2 Planning Division *LRE*

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 2011205-DGS-1: Kensington Fire Station #25
Renovation - 3227 Bel Pre Road, Silver Spring, PRC Zone (Unrestricted),
1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVAL** to transmit the following comments to the
Montgomery County Department of General Services:

1. Any future improvements at the subject fire station must be submitted for a Mandatory Referral, with a traffic study if it will increase the number of staff persons on site.
2. The site plan should provide handicapped ramps or at grade curbs within the southern parking area.
3. The site plan should show the location of bike racks for at least four bikes near the main entrance.
4. Comply with the approval conditions listed in the regulatory review of the related Forest Conservation Plan.

This staff report reviews and makes recommendations for the Kensington Fire Station #25 renovation only. The Planning Board must act on the related Forest Conservation Plan, which will be addressed by a separate staff report.

Project Description

Montgomery County Department of General Services (DGS) is proposing to renovate the existing Kensington Fire Station #25, located at 3227 Bel Pre Road in Silver Spring. The project will consist of expanding and renovating the existing facility built in 1990, with three vehicular bays and associated living quarters. Although the building is well maintained, the angular configuration of the layout limits internal circulation by forcing staff to walk through one occupied area to access another. Fire and Rescue Service staff has also indicated that each of the existing program areas is insufficient for current staffing levels.

The proposed building will contain approximately 26,281 square feet, expanding from an existing 12,947 square feet. Maximum building height shall remain close to that of the existing facility, at about 39 feet at the tower. The facility will be modernized by replacing the angular layout with a rectilinear configuration to improve efficiency, which will result in greater functionality for individual spaces and quicker response times.

Construction will be phased to allow the facility to remain in use during the renovation. New sleeping quarters and additional apparatus storage will be built first, to be followed by the renovation and expansion of the existing living quarters, and the renovation of the existing apparatus bay.

ANALYSIS

Master Plan

Kensington Fire Station #25 is within the area covered by the 1994 *Aspen Hill Master Plan*. The facility had been recently built at the time of the Master Plan adoption, so the Plan anticipated the facility would "have an operation use well into the 21st century" (p.193). Although no specific recommendations were made for this property, the Plan deferred to Fire and Rescue Services' long term planning to establish needs for the area. With this proposal, FRS provides a renovation that is compatible with the recommendations in the Master Plan, and that will provide for the increasing safety needs of the area.

Neighborhood Compatibility

Walkability - Adequate and safe pedestrian access is already available around the property. The existing system of sidewalks along Connecticut Avenue and Bel Pre Road will remain unchanged. Public transit is accessible with an existing bus stop at the property, on Bel Pre Road. The project will accommodate bicyclists by providing bicycle racks for staff and visitors.

Building Scale - The surrounding neighborhood is residential in character, consisting mostly of apartments and townhomes. The proposed facility will use building materials commonly used in residential construction like brick and siding, and reflect the residential character of the area by maintaining the pitched roof outline which is also used frequently in adjacent residential properties.

Transportation - There are currently two access lanes into the property, one for fire rescue apparatus and one for parking, both along the Connecticut Avenue side of the property. Apparatus circulation inside the property will change, and parking areas for staff and visitors will be expanded, but the access points into the property will remain unchanged. Staffing levels will not be increased after the renovation.

Zoning Analysis

The site is zoned PRC (Planned Retirement Community), which, like other planned unit development zones, has few specific requirements and restrictions. It is intended mainly for the establishment of a planned retirement community development, accessible to or providing within it most of the day-to-day services required by residents. A limited number of supporting uses are permitted, besides residential, and fire prevention and safety is one of them.

The requirements of the PRC Zone are primarily intended for parcels of 750 acres or more. Below are development standards that are applicable for smaller parcels within the zone.

Zoning Section	Development Standard	Required/ permitted	Proposed
59-C-7.45 (b)(1)	Setbacks	Not less than setbacks of adjacent zones (*)	±77 ft (Conn. Ave) ±115 ft (Bel Pre Rd)
59-C-7.46 (b)	Lot Coverage	50% max	Less than 50%
59-C-7.47 (b)	Building Height	100 ft max	39 ft (at tower)

(*) Adjacent properties are larger parcels, also zoned PRC. For these, setbacks requirements are as follows, per 59-C-7.45(a)

- (1) Along not more than 40 percent of the length of the tract boundary the setback must be at least 40 feet.
- (2) Along the remainder of the tract boundary, the setback shall be at least 100 feet.

The project is in compliance with the requirements of the PRC Zone.

Environmental Analysis

Site Description - The site slopes down to Bel Pre Road from the northeastern corner. It is located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Bel Pre Road and Connecticut Avenue. The property is surrounded on two sides by Aquarius Local Park. The 4.99-acre site contains 0.94 acres of forest, and has no streams, wetlands, or environmental buffers. The property is within the Lower Rock Creek sub-watershed, a Use I watershed. The proposed project does not have any proposed activities within any streams, wetlands, or environmental buffers, and is in compliance with the Environmental Guidelines.

Environmental Guidelines - The applicant submitted and received approval of a Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD), number 420102280, on July 19, 2010.

Forest Conservation - Forest conservation issues are covered in a separate regulatory memo to the Planning Board. In summary, this property is subject to the Chapter 22A, Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law, and a Forest Conservation Plan has been submitted for approval. There are 0.94 acres of existing forest contiguous with the forest on the adjacent M-NCPPC parkland, of which 0.29 acres will be removed and the remaining 0.65 acres of forest will be retained.

Sustainability - Montgomery County has a number of goals that work toward creating a sustainable community. These goals include reducing the carbon footprint of proposed development, promoting walkability, reducing urban heat island effect, and protecting air and water quality. Public projects should lead the way in promoting sustainability by becoming examples of the multiple benefits of sustainable development to future generations.

Carbon footprint - Carbon footprint analysis can be divided into three basic categories – embodied energy (energy utilized while constructing the building), transportation energy (energy associated with traffic to and from the building), and building energy emissions (energy emissions created as a result of every day building operations).

- Embodied energy - Locally-sourced and recycled material will be used to construct the new building, and a construction waste management plan will divert 75% of demolished materials from waste disposal.
- Transportation energy - Bicycle racks will be provided at the renovated fire station to encourage alternative modes of transportation. Bus stops are located on both sides of Bel Pre Road and on Connecticut Avenue, and are served by four different Ride On and Metro bus routes.
- Building energy emissions - Site lighting will reduce light pollution by utilizing downlights and complying with lighting power densities per ANSI/ASHRAE/IESNA Standard 90.1-2007.

Urban Heat Island Effect - The new roofing material will be of a reflective color with a solar reflectance index of 29 or greater to minimize heat island effect.

Stormwater Management - A Stormwater Management concept plan was approved by the Department of Permitting Services. Both quantity and quality will be achieved on site.

Green Buildings - This project will need to comply with County Council Bill 17-06, Montgomery County Green Buildings Law. The project is registered with the United States Green Building Council under the LEED 2009 Rating System and will achieve a minimum of LEED Silver Certification.

Transportation Analysis

Area 2 Transportation Planning staff reviewed the Mandatory Referral for compliance with the requirements of the LATR/PAMR Guidelines and recommends approval with conditions. Relevant comments from their report are excerpted below.

Since no increase is proposed to the number of staff persons on site, the project would not generate any new peak-hour trips during the weekday morning peak hour (6:30 to 9:30 a.m.) and evening peak-hour (4:00 to 7:00 p.m.). Therefore, a traffic study was not required to satisfy Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) of the Adequate Public Facilities (APF) Ordinance. With no new peak-hour trips generated by the project, no mitigation of new trips is required to satisfy PAMR (Policy Area Mobility Review) requirements of an APF test.

Parks Department

Parks Department staff had no comments on the application.

Community Notification

DGS held a public meeting on March 24, 2011, for the community members to review the proposed plans. At this meeting, DGS staff reassured attendees of their commitment to sustainable, low environmental impact development. No major issues were raised by attendees.

After receiving the Mandatory Referral and Forest Conservation Plan applications, the Planning Department staff notified local citizen associations, adjoining and nearby property owners and other interested parties of the submittal, and invited comments. Staff did not receive any comments or requests for information during their review of the proposal.

CONCLUSION

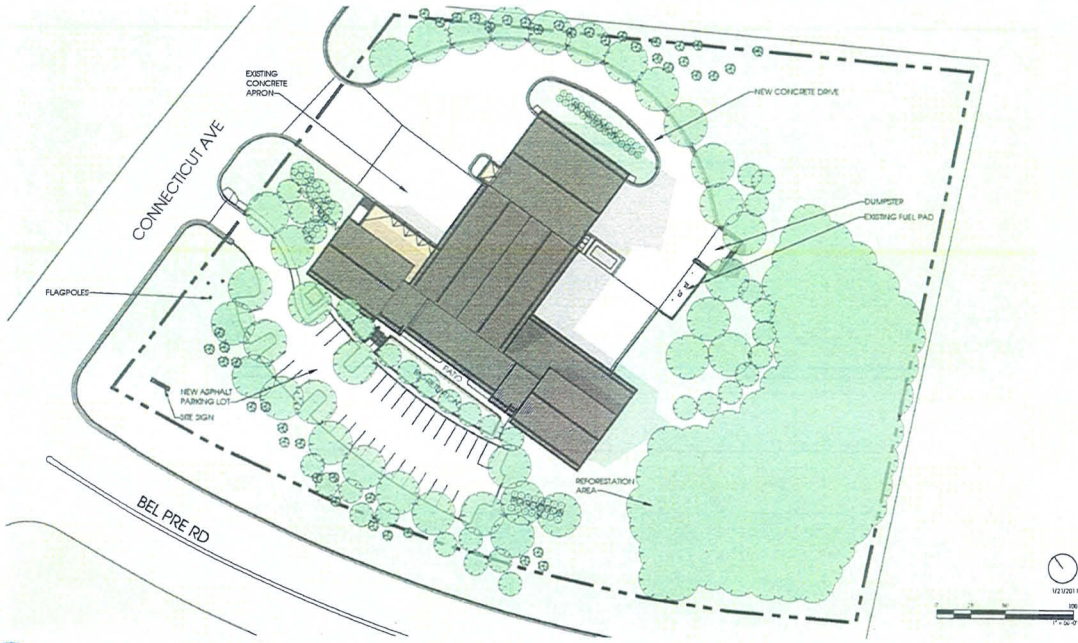
Based on information provided by the applicant and the analysis contained in this report, staff concludes that the proposed Mandatory Referral meets the applicable standards and guidelines for the environment, the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance as well as the development standards for the PRC Zone. Staff recommends approval of the Mandatory Referral with comments listed at the front of this report.

LRE:ha: M:\Area 2\Mandatory Referral\MR2011205 Kensington FS #25\MR2011205-DGS-1 Kensington FS-25.doc

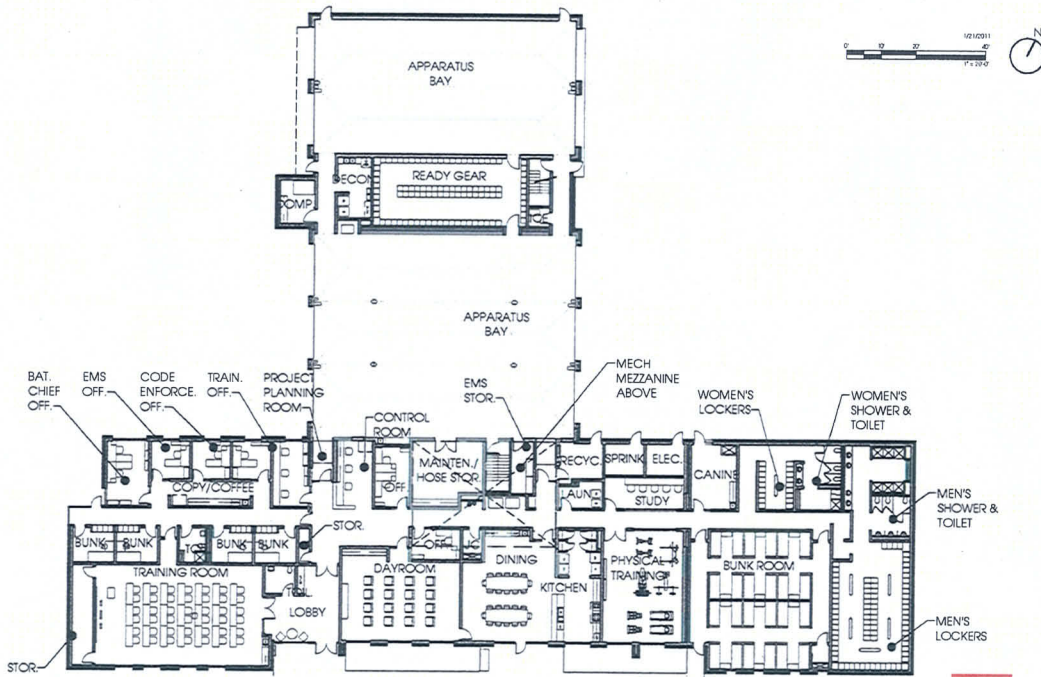
Attachments:

1. Proposed Site Plan and Floor Plan
2. Proposed Phasing Plans and Building Views
3. Proposed Building Elevations

ATTACHMENT 1: PROPOSED SITE PLAN AND FLOOR PLAN



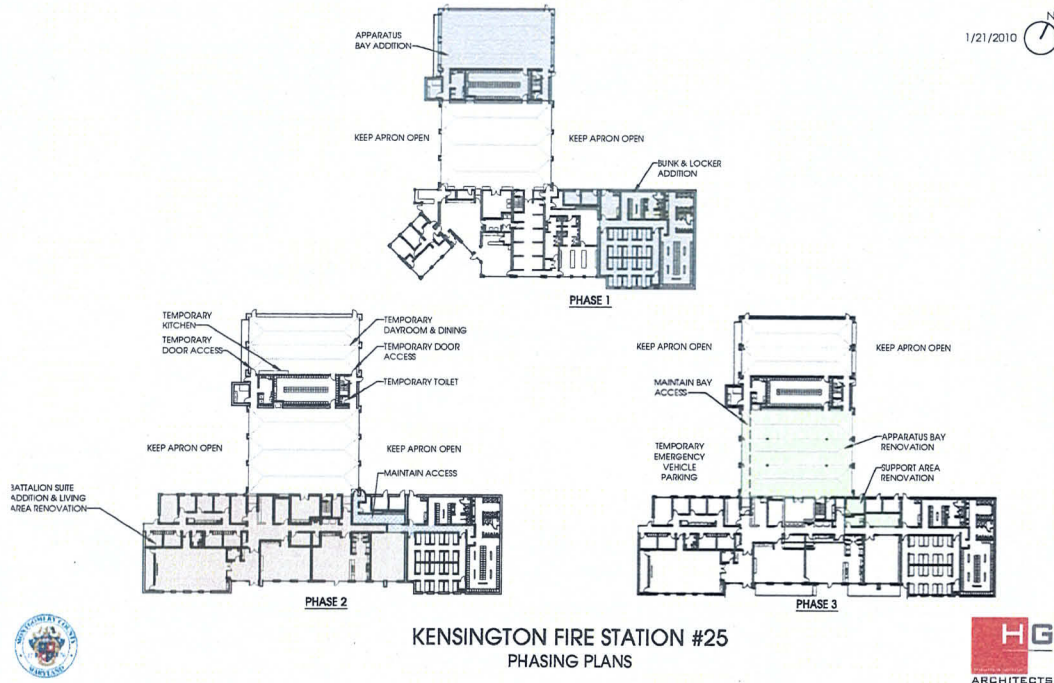
KENSINGTON FIRE STATION #25
SITE PLAN



KENSINGTON FIRE STATION #25
FLOOR PLAN



ATTACHMENT 2: PROPOSED PHASING PLANS AND BUILDING VIEWS



VIEW FROM BEL PRE RD



VIEW OF APPARATUS BAY

ATTACHMENT 3: PROPOSED BUILDING ELEVATIONS

