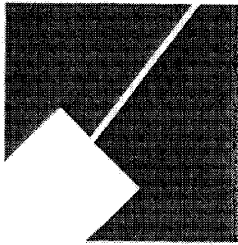


M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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MCPB
Item # 2, 3
2/24/05

February 17, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division *JAC*
Glenn Kreger, Team Leader *GK*
Community-Based Planning Division

FROM: Margaret K. Rifkin, Planner Coordinator/Urban Designer
Community-Based Planning Division (301/495-4583)

SUBJECT 1: Forest Conservation Plan for Mandatory Referral No. 04105-M-1:
King Street Art Center Building and Parking Garage Site Selection
for the Takoma Park Campus of Montgomery College. King Street
Art Center located in the Former Giant Bakery and the Parking
Garage site located along the CSX railroad tracks adjacent to CBD-
1 and I-1 Zones, Silver Spring CBD.

Mandatory Referral No. 04105-M-1: King Street Art Center Building
and Parking Garage Site Selection for the Takoma Park Campus of
Montgomery College. King Street Art Center located in the Former
Giant Bakery and the Parking Garage site located along the CSX
railroad tracks adjacent to CBD-1 and I-1 Zones, Silver Spring
CBD.

This combined staff report provides recommendations for the Montgomery College Expansion; the King Street Art Center reuse of the Giant Bakery building and the required Forest Conservation Plan for that project, the site selection for a new parking garage, and the use of Jesup Blair Drive.

SUBJECT 1: Forest Conservation Plan
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

SUBJECT 2: Mandatory Referral No. 04105-M-1 King Street Art Center
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval to transmit the following comments:

1. Parking Garage Site Selection:
 - a. Select a different site and use the proposed site to help activate the park. Consider offices, classrooms, studios or housing.
 - b. If this site is used, then place an activating use facing Jesup Blair Park. The design should be visually compatible with the park. Vehicular access must be from King Street with none from Jesup Blair Drive.
2. Jesup Blair Drive:
 - a. Prior to application for a park construction permit, investigate relocating the access to the loading docks and faculty/staff parking so that Jesup Blair Drive is not used. Continue to coordinate with the M-NCPPC to address items in the attached memorandum for the Park Development Division.
 - b. Remove the turnaround from park property. Enlarge the radius of the drive as it turns the corner of the building to accommodate the largest vehicles. Screen views of the loading dock from the park.
3. Submit a Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) for the Georgia Avenue (west) campus to M-NCPPC staff by April 30, 2005. Include a parking analysis for the entire campus and the information requested in the Transportation memo (attached).
4. Provide a design concept and circulation plan for the entire Georgia Avenue (west) campus, including an integrated system of landscaped campus open spaces and paths, with the submittal of the Cultural Arts Center mandatory referral.
5. Where buildings are shown crossing lot lines, remove the extra lot lines to avoid building permit delays.
6. For pedestrians: provide a sidewalk between the King Street Art Center parking and the park, and revise the design of the emergency stairway area to create an attractive pathway.

Previous Planning Board Actions

The Planning Board has taken a series of actions since 2000 related to the expansion of Montgomery College. The Planning Board approved site selection for the expansion (June 8, 2000), and then Phase One (May 31, 2001), which included the Health Sciences Center, the bridge, the realignment of Fenton Street and the location of the Cultural Arts Center in Jesup Blair Park. The Planning Board subsequently approved the 70% design for the bridge (November 1, 2001). Revisions to the bridge and the new Cultural Arts Center location were approved subsequently (February 6, 2003) after the College purchased the Giant Bakery property. The bridge segment over Fenton Street received administrative approval (March 31, 2003) followed by Planning Board approval of the Student Services Center (July 2003).

OVERVIEW OF COLLEGE EXPANSION

The College's Facilities Master Plan shows the expansion planned through 2012. A diagram of concept is shown in the attachments. The expansion is taking place in several phases. The first phase is completed and included the realignment of Fenton Street, the bridge connecting the two sides of the campus, and the Health Sciences Center. The second phase is under construction and consists of the Student Services Center and the connecting bridge. The King Street Art Center, which is the subject of this review, is the next phase. The Cultural Arts Center will follow and be located at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Burlington Avenue. The College also plans to build a new parking garage to serve the Cultural Arts Center. The site selection for the garage is part of this review. Other expansion plans include the campus along Fenton Street as shown in the concept diagram.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The King Street Art Center involves adapting and reusing the former Giant Bakery building and part of the site. The building is east of the new Health Sciences Center and adjacent to Jesup Blair Park. It is approximately 124,000 square feet on a tract of 5.87 acres owned entirely by the College. Part of the existing building will be demolished as shown in the attachments.

The proposed uses fall into the following categories: art education, computer network operations, community artists and organizations, central plant and underground parking. The primary use is the School of Art and Design at Montgomery College. The School is expanding to include the former Maryland College of Art and Design. There will be studios, offices and gallery space as well as an outdoor sculpture yard. Part of the building will include the computer network operations center serving all of Montgomery College's campuses. There is also rental incubator space for professional artists and community organizations. It includes 26 studios with 24-hour access for artists. The basement of the building will be converted to underground parking for faculty and staff.

Access to the loading docks and underground faculty/staff parking is proposed to be from Jesup Blair Drive. On the north side of the building near King Street there is a public entrance and the existing surface parking lot. The southwest quadrant of the building is removed to create a courtyard with a primary student entrance facing the park. The courtyard includes a variety of spaces including a kiln enclosure. The hours of operation for the King Street Art Center are continuous, 24-hours a day. The art education activities however, are limited to 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

The parking garage site that is also the subject of this review, is proposed for the area east of the King Street Art Center and adjacent to Jesup Blair Park. It is to provide 350 parking spaces to support the 500-seat Cultural Arts Center auditorium.

ISSUES

1. Whether to recommend the area next to the King Street Art Center and Jesup Blair Park for a parking garage.

2. Whether to allow the use of Jesup Blair Drive for access to the King Street Art Center for loading and faculty and staff parking.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The College conducted a public meeting on November 18, 2004, to provide an opportunity for the community to learn about the proposal and to comment. No major community concerns have been identified at the time of this writing.

The community has access to information on the M-NCPPC website. The website contains information about the submittal and how to contact the M-NCPPC and the College. One e-mail inquiry was received about safety and the possibility of closing the existing Burlington Avenue parking lot entrance.

The College briefed the City Council of the City of Takoma Park on the proposal. The City of Takoma Park is considering creating a committee of citizens to meet with the College on an on-going basis about the campus expansion, which also includes proposals for the campus along Fenton Street in Takoma Park.

PROJECT ANALYSIS - FINDINGS

Finding #1 – The King Street Art Center project is consistent with the Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan.

The connectivity and activation of Jesup Blair Park were key features of the “Jesup Blair Park Concept Plan” shown in the Sector Plan. The Concept Plan shows a vision for the future where there is a strong and active connection across the tracks to each of the College’s future buildings, which are distributed like stepping-stones from the Takoma Park campus through the park to Georgia Avenue.

The King Street Art Center and its creation of a primary student entrance and provision of active outdoor spaces facing the park significantly contribute to achieving those same objectives.

Finding #2 – The project is consistent with the Forest Conservation Law and Environmental Guidelines.

The Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan shows that Montgomery College will plant trees that exceed the afforestation requirement (see attached memorandum).

The proposal is consistent with the Environmental Guidelines, in that there are no protection measures needed due to the absence of streams, wetlands, erodible soils or other environmental features warranting protection.

Montgomery College submitted a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) checklist to indicate the degree the building meets LEED certification criteria. The King Street Art Center is reusing the building shell and structure, using low emitting materials, designing water efficient landscaping, and is optimizing building systems for

energy efficiency. As a result, The King Street Art Center will meet all of the LEED prerequisites for sustainable sites, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality.

Finding #3 - The project will be consistent with the Development Standards for the I-1 Zone, the R-60 Zone and the CBD-1 Zone for private development with the following exceptions to be resolved as described:

The inconsistencies involve setbacks in two locations: along the master plan right-of-way for King Street, and at the property line with the park.

There is no building setback shown from the master plan right of way for King Street for part of the building where standards call for a 10-foot setback. The proposal is acceptable primarily because a good design is possible nonetheless. An additional consideration is that the building is already in place and has been for many years. Creating the setback could require taking down an exterior wall. The standard may ultimately not be applicable if King Street is not continued as a public street. The College is considering keeping it as a college-owned street. King Street is discussed in more detail in the attached memo from Transportation Planning.

The setback requirement is not met in one location along the park edge. The existing building crosses the property line by several inches for a total intrusion onto parkland of 87 square feet. An attractive design compatible with the park uses can still be achieved. The College and the M-NCPPC will be able to address the lot line issue as a separate matter.

Near the Health Sciences Center parking lot, the College is showing a new emergency stairway crossing an internal lot line. The lot line should be removed, along with any others internal to the site that are not needed. The emergency stairway extends five feet into the adjacent CBD-1 Zone and into the area used for perimeter landscaping for the parking lot. Development standards call for a four-foot wide perimeter landscape panel, which can be reduced in a CBD in order to achieve a better design solution through the use of walls or fences in conjunction with landscaping. They also call for one shade tree for every 40 feet of lot perimeter. The area should be redesigned to address these inconsistencies. The College is already revising the area to create an attractive building entry and landscaped pathway through the space as part of a more integrated system of campus open spaces.

Development Standards
(items in **bold** do not meet the standards)

Standard	Required/Allowed	Proposed
I-1 Zone		
Height	3 stories/42 feet	2 stories/39 feet
Green Area	10%=(10,700 square feet)	22%=24,370 square feet
Setbacks		
From King Street right of way	10 feet	0 feet
From Park - R-60	One side 8 feet Sum of both 18 feet	0 feet
All others	0 feet	0 feet
Zone R-60 – 0.3 feet into zone		
Height	35 feet or 40 feet*	39 feet
Setback	One side 8 feet Sum of both 18 feet	0 feet
CBD-1 Standard Method 5 feet into zone		
Maximum height	60 feet	38 feet
Setback from right of way	2 feet	More than 2 feet
Adjoining a lot in CBD	15 feet (or less*)	0 feet
* With site plan review		

Finding #4 – The project will be compatible with existing and proposed adjacent uses and structures when conditions are met and comments are addressed.

The King Street Art Center transforms the former industrial building that housed the Giant Bakery, from a massive utilitarian box into a more human scale and lively college building. Illustrations of the facade are in the attachments. They show primary colors as accents on various design elements, which will be shifted to a more subdued palette for compatibility with the park.

The design of Jesup Blair Drive will be compatible with the park when conditions are met. The established streetscape must be used when Jesup Blair Drive is reconstructed. The recommended reconfiguration of the drive to accommodate turns by large vehicles will create space for landscaping on the inside of the curve (see attachment). This landscaping will help to screen views of the loading dock from the park and ensure compatibility.

The proposed building is surrounded on other sides by college uses and the railroad tracks. Its proposed use and design are compatible with these neighboring uses. It will be compatible in appearance and use with the future Cultural Arts Center to the north as well.

Finding #5 - the locations of the structure, open space, and circulation will be adequate, safe and efficient when conditions are met and comments are addressed.

The location of this structure is adequate, safe and efficient. While most of the structure exists, the College is demolishing portions and proposing changes in circulation, particularly for pedestrians and loading. It is also providing new open space. The open space is well located facing the park and provides a welcoming area that transitions from park to college. It is an excellent activating use, which will contribute to the life of the park and ensure safety for park users, including students, faculty and staff passing the park through on their way to classes.

The site is located within walking distance of the Silver Spring and the Takoma Park Metro stations, a MARC station, and various bus stops. Most students driving to the campus will use the Fenton Street garage and walk across the pedestrian bridge to the site. Drivers can drop passengers off directly in front of the building on the King Street side.

Circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists includes access to a new major entrance to the building directly from the park. A 10-foot wide path/sidewalk will connect to the bridge and to the Health Sciences Center. However, some modifications are needed to ensure pedestrian safety and a pleasant environment. A sidewalk should be added connecting to the park from the faculty/staff-parking garage in the basement of the King Street Art Center. An entry sign for the King Street Art Center should be provided that is visible from the bridge.

Bicyclists are able to use the bridge by dismounting and will be able to continue easily to access the King Street Art Center by following the path. Or in reverse, to reach the Metropolitan Branch Trail on Fenton Street. They can also easily use Jesup Blair Drive, particularly due to the limited traffic allowed on it.

Jesup Blair Drive

To ensure a safe, pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly environment, Jesup Blair Drive should only be used by cars and trucks for access to the loading dock and to the faculty parking within the King Street Art Center basement. The only exception is if other access is approved by the M-NCPPC to facilitate construction of the King Street Art Center itself. Vehicular access to any other parking facility in the future should not be provided from Jesup Blair Drive. To further ensure pedestrian safety, the truck turnaround shown on park property should be removed. It currently requires vehicles to back up across the designated pedestrian crossing and then back down the drive to the loading dock. The turnaround should be replaced with one closer to the loading docks. To ensure efficient access to the loading dock for large vehicles the radius of the curve of the drive should be enlarged so that the vehicles can make the turn without maneuvering.

Traffic on Jesup Blair Drive should be limited as much as possible to create a safe, pleasant pedestrian and bicycling environment within the park. Signs should be located that are visible from Georgia Avenue to limit access on Jesup Blair Drive to allowed uses only. Such signs should also direct other vehicular traffic to King Street stating that Jesup Blair Drive does not have an outlet. There should also be signs that direct College traffic away from Jesup Blair House.

King Street Circulation

Signs directing overflow parking to the College's parking garage on Fenton Street and other public parking facilities nearby should be provided as well.

Lighting

The lighting levels and locations should work with the lighting concept for the park, particularly along the pedestrian route from the bridge to the College. The College should coordinate with Park Police to ensure adequate lighting levels and locations for security and also provide security lighting for the area east of the King Street Art Center closest to the tracks. This area is somewhat remote from activity and it should be well lit.

Finding #6 – The proposed project will satisfy the Adequate Public Facilities Test for transportation requirements when conditions are met:

The College will be providing a traffic study that will evaluate the traffic impact of all the proposed development on the west side of the Takoma Park Campus at one time. It will be provided by the end of April of this year. This approach is preferable to evaluating each project separately, and asking for improvements that may then need to be changed for a later project.

The projects to be included in the traffic study are the Health Sciences Center, the King Street Art Center, the Cultural Arts Center, the proposed parking garage, and another proposed building. The traffic study will be completed so that it can be taken into consideration at the time of the mandatory referral review of the Cultural Arts Center this fall. The information requested for the traffic study and associated parking analysis is described in the attached memo from Transportation Planning. The memo also includes other advisory comments for the College's consideration.

PROPOSED PARKING GARAGE SITE

The proposed parking garage site is not in a good location. It does not contribute to the safety and activation of the park nor does it help to create an attractive and lively sequence of spaces or buildings from the bridge to the King Street Art Center. This area of the park is largely out of view of the new courtyard and would benefit from activating uses.

Consideration should be given to using the location for offices, classrooms, studios or housing. These uses would help to activate the park and create more natural surveillance.

If the College builds the parking garage in the location shown, then there should be an activating use included that faces the park. The use could be in either a separate building or within the parking garage at park level. There should be views that provide natural surveillance as well as a path to the park. The design should be compatible with the park.

USE OF PARK PROPERTY – JESUP BLAIR DRIVE

The College wishes to use Jesup Blair Drive for vehicular access for the King Street Art Center. In the past, the Planning Board has approved College use of Jesup Blair Drive in support of the College's expansion into South Silver Spring. Allowing the College to renovate and use Jesup Blair Drive for limited and specific uses is acceptable provided there are no other reasonable alternatives for access. This is discussed in the attached memo from the Park Development Division. If Jesup Blair Drive were ultimately used by the College then the following would be expected:

- Jesup Blair Drive would be used only for access to the loading dock and to the faculty and staff parking within the King Street Art Center and not for access for any other parking facility or use.
- Montgomery College would renovate Jesup Blair Drive at completion of construction of the King Street Art Center.
- The established streetscape design on Jesup Blair Drive would be continued with a tree panel next to the curb and a sidewalk closest to the building behind the tree panel.
- The final design for Jesup Blair Drive and any other affected areas of the park would be submitted to the M-NCPPC for approval.
- The truck turnaround currently proposed for park property would be removed. The design of the drive should be revised to show a larger turning radius around the corner of the building to accommodate the largest vehicles. The space inside the curve could be planted to screen views of the loading dock from the park.

The College should continue to coordinate with the M-NCPPC to address all the items discussed in the attached memorandum from the Park Development Division. This includes entering into a new legal agreement for construction and future access.

MR:ha: g:\rifkin\King Street Art Center MR

Attachments

1. Vicinity Map
2. Existing Zoning Map
3. West Campus Master Plan
4. Demolition Diagram
5. View from Jesup Blair Park
6. Site Plan and Landscape Plan
7. Memorandum – Park Development Division
8. Memorandum – Transportation Planning
9. Memorandum- Environmental Planning