

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 14282 of the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for a special exception under Paragraph 3101.42 to renovate and use an existing structure, Hearst Hall, by the Upper School of the National Cathedral School, in an R-1-B District at premises 3612 Woodley Road, N.W., (Square 1944, Lot 815).

HEARING DATE: April 24 and May 1, 1985
DECISION DATE: May 1, 1985 (Bench Decision)

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The application was originally scheduled for the Public Hearing of April 27, 1985. Because of physical conditions in the District Building on that date, all applications on the afternoon agenda of that date were continued to a special Public Hearing date of May 1, 1985.

2. The National Cathedral School is located on the grounds of the Washington Cathedral, which is bounded by Massachusetts Avenue, Wisconsin Avenue, Woodley Road, 34th Street and Garfield Street, N.W. The Cathedral grounds encompass approximately fifty-seven acres of land on which is located the Cathedral, the National Cathedral School, St. Albans Church, St. Albans School, the Beauvoir School, the College of Preachers and numerous residences and accessory buildings.

3. The subject site, Hearst Hall, is located at premises 3612 Woodley Road, N.W., in the R-1-B District.

4. Since its founding in 1900, the National Cathedral School has firmly adhered to three educational principles: the highest standard of academic excellence, the incorporation of religious values within the educational process, and the creation of an environment conducive to the fullest possible personal and intellectual development of young women. National Cathedral School prepares its students for college and for broader concerns of adulthood. Students in the 1980's continue to be accepted by the nation's finest colleges and universities.

5. This application involves the renovation of Hearst Hall, which faces Wisconsin Avenue between Massachusetts Avenue and Woodley Road. The entrance to the building is

from the Cathedral's north drive. Approximately two-thirds of Hearst Hall is presently leased as offices of unrelated nonprofit organizations and the Parkmont School. These tenants will be moving to new locations away from the Cathedral grounds. The remaining third of the building presently houses the National Cathedral School dining hall, auditorium, bookstore, maintenance and business offices and three classrooms.

6. The applicant proposes to replace the offices and classroom spaces used by the leased tenants with increased classroom and office space for the National Cathedral School. The renovation will significantly improve the School's overall academic facilities and will greatly relieve seriously crowded conditions in its other buildings.

7. Hearst Hall was constructed in 1900 and served as the center of all operations of the School until 1917, when Whitby Hall and Gymnasium were constructed. During the 1950's, growth of the School's population and curriculum necessitated development of additional academic facilities adjacent to Whitby Hall. Though aging visibly, Hearst Hall remained, during this period, the center of the School's residence and its student life.

8. In the early 1960's leaders of the School and the Cathedral determined to move the residence and student activities to new facilities built on the Rosedale Estate at 36th and Newark Streets. Hearst Hall then became a center for the Cathedral's ongoing programmatic, public and volunteer activities. Social changes in the late 1960's and early 1970's depleted the School's boarding enrollment, however, and precipitated its consolidation as a day school, operating solely from the Woodley Road campus. The Rosedale Estate was sold, with the proceeds being divided between the School and the Cathedral. The proposed renovation of Hearst Hall, therefore, will return the School's original home to active use by the School and will again give the School the full amount of classroom and office space it once had.

9. The renovation of Hearst Hall will include the renovation of existing school facilities and the creation of additional classroom, academic and support space from areas presently used by rental tenants. Specifically, on the ground floor, the existing dining hall and kitchen will be upgraded and support space will be provided. The first floor will include an auditorium, classrooms and school administrative offices. The second floor will include classrooms, a music studio and office support space. The third floor will contain a study hall, classrooms, faculty lounge and office support space. The fourth floor will contain space to accommodate the needs of the art, photography and ceramics curriculum. The renovation does not

involve the construction of new space. The renovation will allow the building to be accessible to the handicapped.

10. During the construction phase of the renovation, there will be an incidental temporary office trailer which will be removed when the renovation has been completed.

11. The National Cathedral School presently has an enrollment of approximately 520 students. There are approximately seventy faculty and thirty other staff. The proposed renovation will not increase these levels. The purpose of the project is to improve the academic facilities for the existing student body. The Board finds that it is appropriate to condition approval of this application to the existing number of students, faculty and staff, with an adjustment of five percent to accommodate minor deviations.

12. The school determined that there was a need for additional space after a major feasibility study was undertaken in the summer of 1982. The study concluded that the basic Structure of Hearst Hall was sound and adaptable to new needs. The renovation will restore and enhance the architectural and historical integrity of the structure while providing needed academic space at a cost far below that of new construction.

13. Paragraph 3101.42 of the Zoning Regulations permits the use of land as a private school provided that it is so located that it is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property and that ample parking spaces are provided to accommodate students, teachers and visitors.

14. The proposed renovation of Hearst Hall will not be objectionable due to noise. The building is located within the Cathedral grounds and is constructed of masonry materials. The renovation will include installation of materials that provide additional sound insulation. The use of the building will be limited to quiet, academic functions that will not generate objectionable levels of noise.

15. The proposed renovation will not be objectionable due to traffic. Since many of the existing uses in Hearst Hall will be moving off the Cathedral grounds and since the School will not be increasing the number of students, faculty, staff and visitors, traffic conditions will improve. Fewer people will be traveling to the site overall. Existing traffic levels are not objectionable due to the excellent mass transit available and car pooling. Further, pedestrian traffic across Woodley Road will be reduced. This traffic will continue to be monitored by a crossing guard.

16. The National Cathedral School has existed in the neighborhood since 1900. The renovation of Hearst Hall does

not involve new construction nor will it increase enrollment. Other uses in the immediate vicinity are varied. Large high rise apartment buildings as well as commercial structure are found along Massachusetts and Wisconsin Avenues. Single family detached and semidetached homes predominate in the areas surrounding the Cathedral grounds away from Massachusetts and Wisconsin Avenues. The Board finds that the proposed use will not be objectionable to neighboring property.

17. Ample parking spaces are provided on the subject site, exceeding the number required by the Zoning Regulations. Since there will not be an increase in students, faculty or staff, no additional parking spaces are required. Article 72 of the Zoning Regulations requires seventy-six spaces for the School. Over 350 parking spaces are provided on the Cathedral grounds. Demand for parking spaces will decrease after the renovation because existing tenants in Hearst Hall that use available parking will move to new locations.

18. Numerous bus routes serve the site from Wisconsin Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, and Garfield Street.

19. The Office of Planning (OP), by memorandum dated April 17, 1985, and through testimony of a representative at the public hearing, recommended approval of the application. The OP reported that the proposed renovation will not result in an intensification of use at the subject site but rather will permit the restoration of Hearst Hall in a manner consistent with the structure's architectural and historical integrity. There will be minimal impacts on neighboring properties since the renovation will not increase the number of students, faculty or staff. There are parking spaces in excess of the number required for the school. The Board concurs with the findings and recommendation of the Office of Planning.

20. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C, by letter dated March 29, 1983, reported that it unanimously endorsed the proposed renovation and restoration of Hearst Hall. The ANC however, urged the National Cathedral School and the National Cathedral Foundation to give further consideration to the bus "out-turn" on Woodley Road and to the possibility of reducing or eliminating this traffic by making the buses return to Wisconsin Avenue.

21. The Board is required by statute to give "great weight" to the issues and concerns of the ANC when those issues and concerns are reduced to a written resolution. The Board concurs with the general resolution of the ANC on this application. As to the issue of the bus "out-turn" on Woodley Road. The Board finds that it has no jurisdiction over the issue. The matter should be brought to the attention of the Department of Public Works.

22. There was no opposition to the application at the public hearing or of record.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND OPINION:

Based on the findings of fact and the evidence of record, the Board concludes that the applicant is seeking a special exception to allow the renovation of an existing building to be used as a private school. The granting of that special exception requires that the proposed use meet the requirements of Paragraph 3101.42. The Board further must determine that the relief requested can be granted as in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property.

The Board concludes that the applicant has met the requirements for the special exception to implement its proposal. The proposed renovation and school use will comply with Paragraph 3101.42. There will be no objectionable traffic or noise conditions. There will be ample parking spaces. The number of students will not increase. Traffic conditions will improve since existing tenants of the subject structure will be moving to new locations.

The Board concludes that it has accorded "great weight" to the issues and concerns of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C. Accordingly, it is hereby ORDERED that the application is GRANTED SUBJECT to the following CONDITIONS:

- A. A minimum of eighty parking spaces shall be provided on-site. Those spaces shall be clearly designated as for the exclusive use of the school during its hours of operation.
- B. The number of students enrolled shall not exceed 546. The number of faculty and staff shall not exceed 105.

VOTE: 4-0 (Maybelle T. Bennett, Charles R. Norris, William F. McIntosh and Carrie L. Thornhill to grant; Douglas J. Patton not present, not voting).

BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED BY: _____


STEVEN E. SHER
Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: _____

20 MAY 1985

UNDER SUB-SECTION 8204.3 OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS, "NO DECISION OR ORDER OF THE BOARD SHALL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL TEN DAYS AFTER HAVING BECOME FINAL PURSUANT TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT."

THIS ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER, UNLESS WITHIN SUCH PERIOD AN APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING PERMIT OR CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS.

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