

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6410



WALKER JONES SCHOOL NEW SCHOOL BUILDING, COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER AND PUBLIC LIBRARY

100 L Street, NW
Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the District of Columbia Office of the
Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development

January 31, 2008

Abstract

The District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for the Walker Jones School, located at 100 L Street, NW in Washington, DC. The project will include demolition of two existing schools to construct a new school, community recreation center, and public library; as well as to provide new playing fields, surface parking, and landscaping. The facility will be jointly managed by the District of Columbia Public Schools, the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation, and the District of Columbia Public Library.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site and building plans, pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary and final site and building plans for the construction of the Walker Jones School, Washington, DC, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 31.30(38.00)42427.

Commends the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and the development team on a well-planned design that respects the historic L'Enfant streets of the District of Columbia and will contribute to neighborhood growth.

Notes that prior to construction of this project, a Transfer of Jurisdiction and related Highway Plan Amendment will be required to reestablish the historic L Street and 1st Street rights-of-way.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for the Walker Jones School, which is the first major project to be implemented as part of the District's Northwest One Master Plan. In coordination with several other District of Columbia agencies as well as the neighborhood ANCs, the applicant has designed a new facility to replace two existing District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) facilities - Terrell Junior High School and Walker Jones Elementary School.

Site



LOCATION PLAN

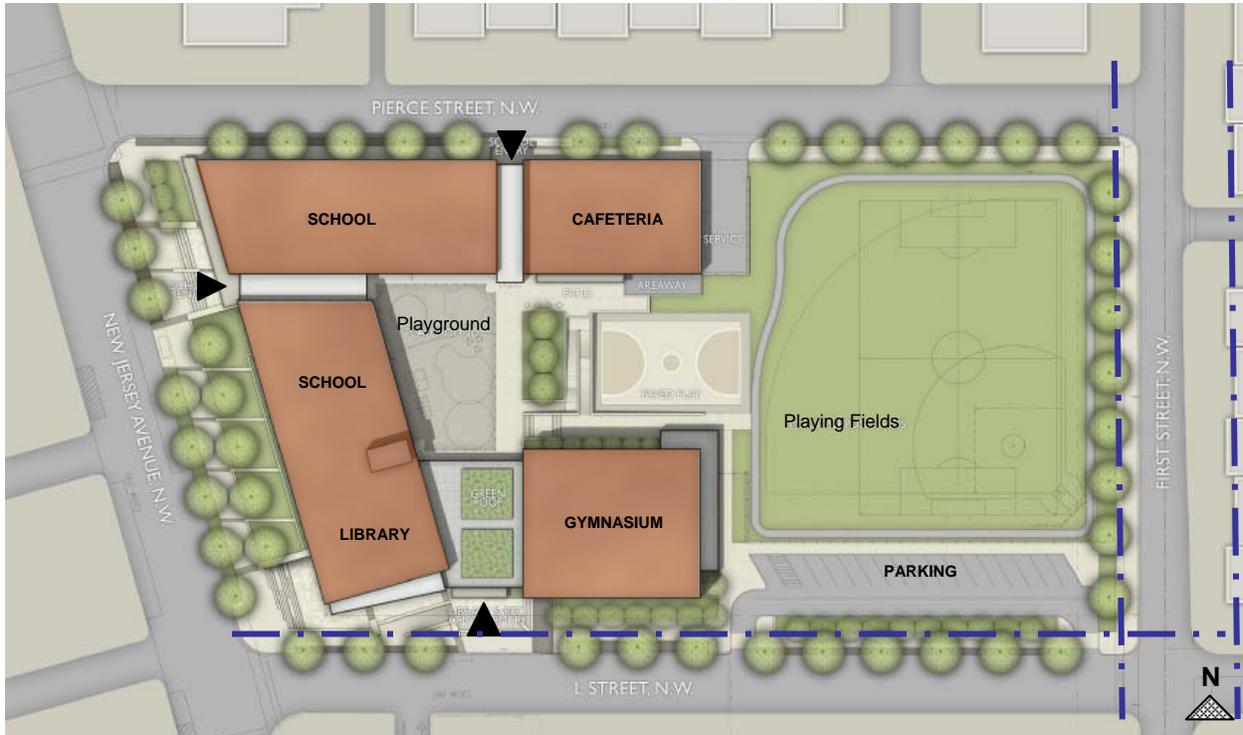
The school will be located in the Sursum Corda neighborhood of northwest Washington, DC, on a 4.5 acre parcel that is bounded by New Jersey Avenue to the west, L Street to the south, 1st Street to the east, and Pierce Street to the North. The new building is located on the west side of the site, with the east side being used for playing fields and off-street surface parking. Landscaping, streetscape elements, and site lighting will also be included in the project.

Proposal

The proposed new building has been designed for a capacity of approximately 850 students in Head Start through grade eight, and will also house a shared gymnasium/community recreation center and branch public library as part of the Northwest One Master Plan development in Northwest Washington, DC. The U-shaped building will be four stories high, with school entrances on New Jersey Avenue and Pierce Streets; an L Street entrance will provide access to the library as well as the community recreation center.

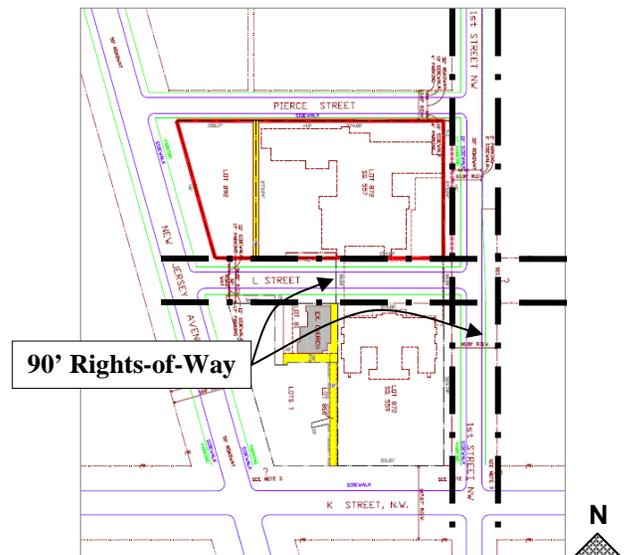
The total building area will be 125,000 gross square feet, with 100,000 square feet for the school, 20,000 square feet for a shared gymnasium/community recreation center, and 5,000 square feet to house the library. A soccer/baseball field, play yard, and service areas will be created on the east side of the site. Parking for approximately 17 vehicles will be provided on the site near L Street; and additional off-site parking will be located across L Street.

The facility will be jointly managed by the District of Columbia Public Schools, District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation, and the District of Columbia Public Library.



SITE PLAN

The development team has identified the alignment of the historic rights-of-way on L and 1st Streets, and is expected to submit separate Transfer of Jurisdiction and Highway Plan Amendment requests (pending completion of a revised plat from the D.C. Surveyor's Office) in the near future. The historic 90-foot rights-of-way will be reestablished.



RIGHTS-OF-WAY



**AERIAL PERSPECTIVE
(From the Southwest)**

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Staff finds the proposed building and site plans to be well developed and compatible with the surrounding area with regard to scale, massing, materials, and details. Additionally, the planned reestablishment of historic L'Enfant streets is to be commended.

As a result of consultation during the project review period with NCPC, DDOT, and other District agencies, the applicant revised the parking area design to remove parking areas from public space along L Street. Staff finds that the revised design, which accommodates parking on the subject property, to be a more appropriate solution that respects the historic right-of-way and provides increased pedestrian use of the public space.

Staff commends the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and their development team on a well-planned design that respects the historic L'Enfant streets of the District of Columbia and will contribute to neighborhood growth.

Additionally, Staff notes that prior to construction of this project, a Transfer of Jurisdiction and related Highway Plan Amendment will be required to reestablish the historic L Street and 1st Street rights-of-way.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the *Preservation and Historic Features* Element of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. The proposed work and pending street realignment conforms to the Historic Plan of Washington, D.C. policies to preserve the historic L'Enfant Plan rights-of-way with regard to both design and function. The proposed project is also consistent with several District Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NCPC does not have NEPA responsibility for District of Columbia projects outside the Central Area. However, the applicant is required to comply with the District of Columbia Environmental Policy Act, DC Code 8-109.01 et seq., enforced through the District of Columbia Department of the Environment (DDOE).

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

NCPC does not have NHPA responsibility for District of Columbia projects outside the Central Area. The applicant has received positive review and comments from the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office (DC-SHPO). The two existing schools proposed for demolition do not qualify for local historic designation.

The applicant has also consulted with the DC-SHPO regarding reestablishment of the historic street layouts within the Northwest One Master Plan area. The DC-SHPO supports the planned restoration of the original L and 1st Streets 90-foot rights-of-way.

CONSULTATION

Coordination Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on November 14, 2007, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies represented; The District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) stated that the applicant should implement the Mount Vernon Street Guidelines along the lot frontages. Participating agencies included DCOP, the District Department of Transportation, the General Services Administration; the National Park Service, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and NCPC.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA)

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts reviewed and approved the project at its meeting on January 17, 2008. The Commission members commented favorably on the site design, but requested additional plantings and shade trees in the playground. The Commission also recommended the use of high quality brick and the use of texture to give the exterior of the building a more sophisticated appearance.