



Montessori Community School

ARCHITECT: GGA Architects
308 West Rosemary Street
Chapel Hill, NC

February 23, 2017

ENGINEER: Coulter Jewell Thames
111 West Main Street
Durham, NC

DEVELOPERS STATEMENT

Rev. November 9, 2017

MONTESSORI COMMUNITY SCHOOL

4512 Pope Road

Durham, NC

PROJECT LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The project site is located on the west side of Pope Road north of Ephesus Church Road. The school currently operates out of this site on a 9.42 acre campus, and they would continue operations in the existing space throughout the work under this request. No demolition of existing buildings or facilities is anticipated. The school has purchased an adjacent 3.81 acres and would like to expand their campus onto this land. The parcels have already been recombined into a 13.23 acre single parcel. The campus sits on land that is zoned OI-2 and the additional space is currently zoned R-2. The proposed scope of work will result in an allowable density, and the use is allowed in both current zones. Therefore there will be no rezoning required for this request.

PROJECT GOALS

The Montessori Community School is seeking to add value and educational opportunity to the student and parent community it now serves. The school now has approximately 275 students enrolled and has a long range plan with a 300 student cap, an increase of only 25 students. The facilities proposed under this request include additional classroom space for older, adolescent, students; a new administration building and a gymnasium/auditorium and a facilities maintenance structure. These new building facilities will be sustainably designed and sustainable strategies including solar thermal capture, vegetated roofing and daylighting will all be explored. The school will retain their existing half size gym to serve younger children. Though the expansion is a material increase in space, the student body would increase by only 25 students maximum. The majority of the building and parking increase is intended to better serve the school's curriculum. The ratio of 170 square feet of space per student, after the facilities proposed here are completed, will be roughly what other elementary schools have.

The proposed project also consists of an expansion to the existing parking lot. Total parking will increase from 93 spaces to 122 spaces. Associated with this project will be stormwater treatment, buffer plantings, and other required development improvements.



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PROJECT TIMING AND PHASING

The school is requesting that they be allowed to develop the improvements under this request in phases over a 12 year period. Funds for school development are directly related to fundraising among the families that the school serves. Based on past experience and fundraising projections the school believes it will take a minimum of 12 years to raise funds for, and start, the different buildings under this request.

In the case of the 2005 Special Use Permit, MCS received approval for 3 buildings and site infrastructure improvements. With about 250 students and about 185 families, MCS initiated fundraising and was successful in developing funds for the infrastructure improvements and a single classroom building (Phase 1 of the 2005 SUP). MCS then initiated fundraising for Phase 2, a fine arts and music building. This fundraising was successfully completed in 2008. \

Phase 3 of the 2005 Special Use Permit met a stiff headwind. The recession of 2008/11 made fundraising difficult, if not impossible. Phase 3 improvements were made sporadically as small amounts of development funding became available and the total number of Phase 3 improvements were not completed.

It is now 12 years since the 2005 SUP was approved. All of Phase 1 and Phase 2 work was completed but Phase 3 work (principally the Gymnasium) has now been incorporated into this new SUP request.

We are requesting a 12 year timeline because of the proven relationship between MCS fundraising and future economic cycles.

We also anticipate 3 phases for this Special Use Permit. The phases include the following scope of work:

Phase 1. This phase will include the construction of the classroom building, provision of 10 bicycle parking spaces, the maintenance building and all of the infrastructure except the pedestrian plaza area between the gymnasium and the administration building and pedestrian walkways serving the administration building.

Phase 2: This phase will include the construction of the administration building, the provision of another 10 bicycle parking spaces, walkway access to this building and infrastructure that directly serves this building (underground water, sewer, cable and electric).

Phase 3: This phase will include the construction of the gymnasium, the provision of an additional 10 bicycle parking spaces, the pedestrian plaza between this building and the administration building and infrastructure extension that serves the gymnasium (i.e. sprinkler pipes, grease trap, etc.)



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PROJECT SITE DEVELOPMENT

The current site layout operates with one entry drive and one exit drive. There is a left turn lane on Pope Road for vehicles entering the site. Site vehicular access for the majority of trips would remain in the same location, and vehicular movement would remain the same – generally a one way driveway with parking bays accessed off that drive. The new layout would provide an increase in the number of parking spaces within the site, and would also provide a drop off lane. New pavement will be non-asphalt materials to minimize solar heat island effects for the site. There is an existing driveway on the new parcel of land. That driveway was used to access residential buildings which have previously been demolished. That driveway location would be moved north along Pope Road and would provide access for maintenance, service, and emergency vehicles, and would access 8 parking spaces which will be allocated for administrative staff. That second driveway would not be used by parents and the two vehicular access points will not be connected within the site. Additional emergency access routes and sidewalk connections will be made within the site. The parking areas will comply with tree shading/island and location requirements. In addition , we intend to include conduit for electric vehicle charging stations.

A mid-block pedestrian crossing on Pope Road will be explored subject to DOT approval and conditioned on no road widening and obtaining adequate sight distances.

There is a requirement for 40% tree coverage on site. That requirement will be satisfied with 28% retained existing woods and the remainder will be satisfied with new tree plantings. Some of the tree coverage will also satisfy landscape buffer and parking lot shading requirements. Stormwater management will be handled through expansion of the existing north pond and will meet the Town and State requirements. Trash and recycling will be handled in a new location adjacent to the proposed maintenance building and behind a screen. Garbage truck and fire truck access will be improved to meet Town standards.