



ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING
STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: SP201500011, Montessori Community School	Staff: Claudette Grant, Senior Planner
Planning Commission Public Hearing: September 1, 2015	Board of Supervisors Hearing: To be determined.
Owner(s): The Montessori Community School of Charlottesville	Applicant(s): Montessori Community School of Charlottesville represented by Eugene Ryang
Acreage: 9.18 acres	Special Use Permit for: Educational School under Section 23.2.2(6) of Zoning Ordinance.
TMP: 078000000012A0 and 078000000011B0 Location: 440 Pinnacle Place (See Attachment A)	By-right use: CO, Commercial Office - allows offices, supporting commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre) and HC, Highway Commercial - allows commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/acre).
Magisterial District: Rivanna	Conditions: Yes
Proposal: To amend special use permits SP2006-38 and SP2009-001 for revisions to site layout, concept plan and conditions. (See Attachment B)	DA (Development Area): Neighborhood 3
Requested # of Dwelling Units/Lots: N/A	Comp. Plan Designation: Urban Density Residential - residential (6.01-34 units/acre) and supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and service uses and Urban Mixed Use – retail, commercial services, office, and a mix of residential types (6.01 – 34 units/acre).
Character of Property: The subject properties have the existing school, associated parking, and outdoor fields.	Use of Surrounding Properties: The area is surrounded by a mix of commercial and residential uses.
Factors Favorable: 1. There are no anticipated detrimental impacts to the use or on adjacent property resulting from the proposed revisions to the special use permit and conditions. 2. The proposed revisions will provide a more cohesive physical layout of the site that will enhance vehicular and pedestrian connections.	Factors Unfavorable: 1. No unfavorable factors.
Recommendation: Based on the findings contained in this staff report, staff recommends approval of SP 2015-00011, Montessori Community School with conditions.	

STAFF CONTACT:

Claudette Grant, Senior Planner

PLANNING COMMISSION:

September 1, 2015

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

TBD

PETITION:

PROJECT: SP201500011/Montessori Community School

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rivanna

TAX MAP/PARCEL: 07800-00-00-012A0 and 07800-00-00-011B0

LOCATION: 440 Pinnacle Place

PROPOSAL: To amend special use permits SP2006-38 and SP2009-001 for revisions to site layout, concept plan and conditions.

PETITION: Educational School on 9.18 acres under Section 23.2.2(6) of Zoning Ordinance. No dwelling units proposed.

ZONING: CO, Commercial Office which allows offices, supporting commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre); school of special instruction under Section 23.2.2(6) and HC, Highway Commercial which allows commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre).

ENTRANCE CORRIDOR: Yes

MANAGED STEEP SLOPES: Yes

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Urban Density Residential – residential (6.01-34 units/acre); supporting uses such as religious institutions, schools, commercial, office and service uses and Urban Mixed Use – retail, commercial services, office, and a mix of residential types (6.01 – 34 units/acre) in Neighborhood 3-Pantops.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA:

This site is developed with a school campus. The immediate surrounding area consists of a mix of commercial and residential uses. The North Pantops Townhouses are located adjacent to the north and east of the subject property. The Rite Aid Pharmacy is also located adjacent to the east side of the subject site. A portion of this site is the former American Legion property, which is now part of the Montessori campus. The Carmax Superstore is located to the west of the site. To the south, and across U.S. Route 250, is a variety of commercial uses along with the Rivanna Ridge\Giant Shopping Center inclusive of the Giant grocery store.

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY:

- The Montessori Community School located at the Pantops Mountain site in 1991.
- ZMA 82-03 rezoned the property from R-15 to CO zoning district and included proffers.
- ZMA 95-12 and SP 95-22 eliminated the previous proffers and permitted up to 120 students at the school. On May 12, 1999 SP 99-04 was approved to allow expansion of the school with 9 modular buildings, multi-purpose building, an increase of 25 additional parking spaces and an increased enrollment up to 300 students and additional grade levels.
- SP2006-38 was an approved amendment to allow for replacement of modular trailers with permanent buildings for 40,700 square feet of total building area.
- SP2009-01 was approved to extend the approval of SP2006-38.
- SP2014-02 was recently approved to amend special use permit conditions regarding fencing on the site and construction of proposed buildings (requirements for certain fencing were eliminated).

DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL:

The applicant is requesting to amend special use permits SP2006-38 and SP2009-001 in order to revise the site layout, concept plan and conditions. The school recently purchased the adjacent property, formerly known as the American Legion parcel (TMP: 078000000011B0) and converted the existing building on the property to a middle school. The former American Legion parcel is zoned HC (Highway

Commercial) which allows a private school use by right. The school intends to improve the campus with a more cohesive, continuous layout, inclusive of vehicular, pedestrian, and landscape improvements that will connect the two properties. The applicant wishes to provide an improved campus environment that integrates the various age groups represented at the school. The proposed improvements to the campus include the following:

- Vehicle circulation for school drop-off and pick-up operations;
- Extension of the existing access drive to the Arts & Gymnasium building on the northern side of the campus to the east toward the main entrance and to the west to connect to the adjacent middle school;
- Re-work the Children House and Art & Gymnasium parking lot layouts on the northern side of campus to accommodate parking in addition to pick-up/drop-off circulation;
- Remove the existing parking facilities immediately surrounding the former American Legion building, the current middle school, to install outdoor learning/play environment and an outdoor play court;
- Construction of a new parking lot which accommodates pick-up/drop-off circulation for the middle school facilities;
- Connection of the main campus access drive and middle school parking to Rt. 250 using the existing driveway connection for the former American Legion property. The existing commercial entrance on Route 250 will be modified to allow only right turn exiting movements;
- Construction of an outdoor amphitheater. The amphitheater will be created through manipulation of grades to create earthen terraces between the existing ball field and the middle school building;
- Re-locate/re-work existing stormwater management facilities and construct new stormwater management facilities as required to comply with County and State Code.

The approved maximum enrollment of 300 students will remain unchanged.

ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST

Section 33.8 of the Zoning Ordinance states that the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors shall reasonably consider the following factors when reviewing and acting upon an application for a special use permit:

No substantial detriment. The proposed special use will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent lots.

No substantial detriment is anticipated. The school is existing in its current location. Enhancements to the physical layout of the site is not anticipated to impact adjacent properties. There is no other change to the use on site with this Special Use Permit request.

Character of district unchanged. The character of the district will not be changed by the proposed special use.

The character of the district will not be changed by the proposed changes to the site layout, concept plan or SP conditions.

Harmony. The proposed special use will be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter.

The approved Special Use Permit will remain in harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter with the proposed changes to the site layout, concept plan and conditions.

...with the uses permitted by right in the district

The proposed changes will not prohibit or affect permitted uses of adjacent property.

...with the regulations provided in section 5 as applicable,

There are no supplemental regulations in section 5 applicable to this use.

...and with the public health, safety and general welfare.

Staff has identified no aspects of this proposal which is contrary to the general public health, safety, and welfare.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The use will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Pantops Master Plan (PMP) recommends this site for Urban Density Residential and Urban Mixed Use.

Urban Density Residential – Uses are intended for densities of 6.01 – 34 residential units per acre with support uses and some non-residential uses. Urban Density Residential areas accommodate all dwelling types as well as institutional uses such as places of worship, public and private schools, and early childhood education centers including day care centers and preschools. Urban Density Residential areas accommodate small areas of non-residential land uses on the scale of Neighborhood Service, to serve residential uses. This may include corner stores, less than 4,000 square feet; live/work units above office and/or retail; small office buildings less than 20,000 square feet; and studios/cottage occupations.

Urban Mixed Use – Uses allowed in this designation include retail, commercial services, office, and a mix of residential types with density of 6.01 – 34 units/acre.

The existing school and the proposed amendments to the site layout, conceptual plan and to the conditions remain consistent with the designations for these properties and to other such established uses in the immediate area as described in the PMP. As previously mentioned in this staff report, the applicant proposes revisions to address: parking, travelway circulation, outdoor “play and learn” areas, stormwater management concerns and minor changes to the special use permit conditions.

Due to extent of existing development on site, the scale of the proposed changes, and unique location and site characteristics (site topography and relationship to adjacent properties and road frontages), a full analysis of the neighborhood model principles is not provided. In general, the principles of the Neighborhood Model Principles have been addressed to the extent that the site characteristics permit. Site planning that respects terrain will need to be carefully managed on this site as there are a few relatively small areas on the plan that show disturbance to managed critical slopes and existing wooded areas due in part to the construction of sections of the proposed travel way and SWM/BMP. The applicant has indicated mitigation of these disturbances with a grading plan and installation of native landscaping. Since the slopes shown are managed, staff does not anticipate problems with the minimal disturbance shown.

This site is located in the Entrance Corridor and the proposal has been reviewed by the ARB staff and there are no objections to the proposal.

The existing Special Use Permit conditions are also being modified to; 1) make a technical change to

language of the maximum enrollment condition (no change to the maximum enrollment number); 2) reference the proposed application plan; and, 3) modify the time period for commencement of construction before expiration of the Special Use Permit from 2 years to 3 years.

SUMMARY:

Staff has identified factors which are favorable to this proposal and has identified no unfavorable factors:

Factors favorable to this request include:

1. There are no anticipated detrimental impacts to the use or on adjacent property resulting from the proposed revisions to the special use permit and conditions.
2. The proposed revisions will provide a more cohesive physical layout of the site that will enhance vehicular and pedestrian connections.

Factors unfavorable to this request include:

1. No Unfavorable factors.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Based on the findings contained in this staff report, staff recommends approval of SP 2015-00011, Montessori Community School with the following conditions (blackline):

1. ~~Maximum Enrollment shall not exceed~~ be three hundred (300) students;
2. Development of the use shall be in general accord with the "Mountaintop Montessori School, Sheet 2, entitled Master Plan", prepared by Water Street Studio, dated February 17, 2015, revised June 15, 2015, Montessori Pantops Mountain Community School Sheets SP01-SP-03", prepared by Neal R. Deputy, Architecture & Master Planning, last revised January 16, 2007, as determined by the Director of Planning and the Zoning Administrator. To be in general accord with the plan, development shall reflect the general size, arrangement, and location of proposed B buildings A, B, C, D, and E, Central Lawn, the Amphitheatre, playgrounds and ball fields, wooded natural area, and parking areas. Minor modifications to the plan which do not conflict with the elements above may be made to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance; and
3. Construction of [e.g., for example "building identified as the New Upper Elementary & Laboratory Space shown on"] the "Master Plan" referenced in Condition 2 above proposed buildings as shown on the concept plan shall commence by three (3) years from the Board of Supervisors approval date on or before March 11, 2015 or this special use permit shall expire.

Conditions (Clean copy):

1. Enrollment shall not exceed three hundred (300) students;
2. Development of the use shall be in general accord with the "Mountaintop Montessori School, Sheet 2, entitled Master Plan", prepared by Water Street Studio, dated February 17, 2015, revised June 15, 2015, as determined by the Director of Planning and the Zoning Administrator. To be in general accord with the plan, development shall reflect the general size, arrangement, and location of buildings, the Amphitheatre, playgrounds and ball fields, wooded natural area, and parking areas. Minor modifications to the plan which do not conflict with the elements above may be made to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance; and
3. Construction of [e.g., for example "building identified as the New Upper Elementary & Laboratory Space shown on"] the "Master Plan" referenced in Condition 2 above shall commence by three (3) years from the Board of Supervisors approval date or this special use permit shall expire.

Motions:

Special Use Permit

- A. Should the Planning Commission choose to recommend approval of this special use permit:
I move to recommend approval of SP 201500011 Montessori Community School with the conditions outlined in the staff report.
- B. Should the Planning Commission choose to recommend denial of this special use permit:
I move to recommend denial of SP 201500011 Montessori Community School with reasons for denial.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – [Location Map](#)

Attachment B – [Mountaintop Montessori School, Sheet 2, entitled Master Plan, prepared by Water Street Studio, dated February 17, 2015, revised June 15, 2015](#)