

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Conditional Use Permit & Site Plan Review
BZZ – 6297

Date: December 2, 2013

Address of Property: 1611 46th Street East

Project Name: Hiawatha Academies—Northrop School Renovation and Addition

Applicant: Charter Schools Development Corporation

Contact Person and Phone: Dan Peterson, U+B Architecture & Design Inc. (612-870-2538)

CPED Staff and Phone: Janelle Widmeier (612-673-3156)

Date Application Deemed Complete: November 4, 2013

End of 60-Day Decision Period: January 3, 2014

Ward: 11 **Neighborhood Organization:** Field, Regina, Northrop Neighborhood Group

Existing Zoning: R3 Multiple-family Residential

Proposed Zoning: Not applicable

Zoning Plate Number: 32

Legal Description: Not applicable

Proposed Use: Grade school

Concurrent Review:

- Conditional use permit to allow an expansion of a grade school.
- Site plan review to allow a 15,380 square foot building addition.

Applicable zoning code provisions: Chapter 525, Article VII, Conditional Use Permits; Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.

Background: The applicant proposes to renovate and build a 2-floor, approximately 15,380 square foot addition to the existing building located at the property of 1611 46th Street East. The site is the former Minneapolis Public School's Northrop campus and occupies the entire block bounded by 46th Street East, 17th Avenue South, 47th Street East, and 16th Street East. The applicant is proposing to continue to use the site for a grade school with grades K-4. The addition would be located on the south end of the building where a surface parking area is currently located. The displaced parking spaces will be relocated to an existing paved area adjacent to and with access provided from 17th Avenue South. The

parking area at the northeast corner of the site will remain, but will be expanded to include a loading and refuse storage area. A playground, athletic field and paved play area are located at the south end of the site. No changes are proposed in those areas other than the addition of a parking area as previously mentioned. The grade of the site slopes down from 46th Street to 47th Street. This affects how the floors of the existing building and the proposed addition align. The upper floor of the addition will align with the existing first floor while the lower floor will sit on and open to the same level as the play areas on the south end of the site. In the R3 district, a grade school is a conditional use. A conditional use permit is required to allow the expansion of the school. Upon approval of a conditional use permit, the action must be recorded with Hennepin County as required by state law. Site plan review is required for any non-residential building that would increase its gross floor area by 1,000 square feet or more.

As of the writing of this staff report, staff has not received any correspondence from the neighborhood group. Staff will forward comments, if any are received, at the City Planning Commission meeting.

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT: to allow an expansion of a grade school.

Findings as required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application and from the findings below concludes that the establishment, maintenance, or operation of the proposed conditional use:

1. Will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare.

Expansion of a grade school on the site would not prove detrimental to public health, safety, comfort or general welfare provided the development complies with all applicable building codes, life safety ordinances, site plan review requirements as well as Public Works Department standards.

2. Will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the vicinity and will not impede the normal or orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.

The site is located in a primarily low-density residential neighborhood and is separated from surrounding properties by public streets. There is a higher concentration of nonresidential uses located on Cedar Avenue (2 blocks east from the site) and on Bloomington Avenue (one block west of the site). The building was originally constructed for educational purposes, but has not been occupied since 2005 and is in need of repair. The applicant will renovate the building. The scale and character of the proposed addition is in keeping with the existing building and will not create adverse effects on surrounding properties. Reestablishing a school on the site will benefit the surrounding community.

3. Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, necessary facilities or other measures, have been or will be provided.

Utilities and access roads are existing and adequate. The new parking area will be accessed from 17th Avenue. The Public Works Department will review the project for appropriate drainage and

stormwater management as well as to ensure the safety of the position and design of improvements in or over the public right of way.

4. Adequate measures have been or will be provided to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

The applicant has provided the following information pertaining to traffic demands for the proposed school:

- Grades: K-4 when at capacity
- Number of students: 390 when at capacity in 2017-18 school year
- Arrival/dismissal times: 7:50 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. (Monday through Thursday); 7:50 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Friday)
- Number of buses: 9 when at capacity
- Anticipated student traffic splits: 370 by bus / 20 by private vehicle / 0 alternate modes of transportation

Adequate measures will be provided to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets. All required vehicle parking (23 spaces) would be provided on-site. Thirty-five parking spaces exist. The applicant is proposing to maintain the same number of parking spaces by relocating the spaces that are displaced by the construction of the proposed addition to a new parking area that would be accessed from 17th Avenue South. The applicant has indicated that most of the children would arrive by bus. Buses would load and unload on 46th Street and 16th Avenue as shown on the attached bus parking location site plan. No on-site drop-off parking spaces have been designated as the school does not deem them necessary. The school administration does not release children from the building unless they take the bus or have signed out with their parents. All parents are required to pick up their children inside the building. Students and employees would have options for alternate modes of transportation. There are four nearby bus routes that travel on Bloomington Avenue, Cedar Avenue and 46th Street. The applicant will provide 24 bicycle parking spaces.

5. Is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan.

The future land use designation of the site is urban neighborhood¹ in *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*. One block west of the site, Bloomington Avenue is designated as a community corridor. A designated neighborhood commercial node is also located at Bloomington Avenue and 46th Street East. Two blocks east of the site, Cedar Avenue is designated as a community corridor. The area between 47th Street and 48th Street East on Cedar Avenue is designated as a neighborhood commercial node as well. According to the principles and policies outlined in the plan, the following apply to this proposal:

¹ Urban Neighborhood — Predominantly residential area with a range of densities, with highest densities generally to be concentrated around identified nodes and corridors. May include undesignated nodes and some other small-scale uses, including neighborhood-serving commercial and institutional and semi-public uses (for example, schools, community centers, religious institutions, public safety facilities, etc.) scattered throughout. More intensive non-residential uses may be located in neighborhoods closer to Downtown and around Growth Centers. Not generally intended to accommodate significant new growth, other than replacement of existing buildings with those of similar density.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
BZZ – 6297

Land Use Policy 1.2: Ensure appropriate transitions between uses with different size, scale, and intensity.

1.2.1 Promote quality design in new development, as well as building orientation, scale, massing, buffering, and setbacks that are appropriate with the context of the surrounding area.

Land Use Policy 1.3: Ensure that development plans incorporate appropriate transportation access and facilities, particularly for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit.

1.3.2 Ensure the provision of high quality transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access to and within designated land use features.

Public Services and Facilities Policy 5.2: Support the efforts of public and private institutions to provide a wide range of educational choices for Minneapolis students and residents throughout the city.

5.2.2 Encourage new educational institutions to locate in existing school buildings, or at sites that take advantage of proximity to transit such as neighborhood commercial nodes or commercial and community corridors.

Urban Design Policy 10.13: Work with institutional and public partners to assure that the scale and form of new development or expansion will occur in a manner most compatible with the surrounding area.

10.13.1 Concentrate the greatest density and height in the interior of institutional campuses with stepped-down building design as it transitions to the neighborhood.

10.13.2 Develop building forms on the edges of institutional property which are most reflective of neighboring properties as the preferred option, while recognizing that in certain circumstances greater bulk and density may be preferable to expansion beyond existing campus boundaries.

10.13.3 Encourage institutional uses and public buildings and facilities to incorporate architectural and site design that is reflective of their civic importance and that identifies their role as focal points for the community.

10.13.4 Promote active uses at the ground floor level.

Urban Design Policy 10.18: Reduce the visual impact of automobile parking facilities.

10.18.1 Require that parking lots meet or exceed the landscaping and screening requirements of the zoning code, especially along transit corridors, adjacent to residential areas, and areas of transition between land uses.

10.18.17 Minimize the width of ingress and egress lanes along the public right of way in order to provide safe pedestrian access across large driveways.

Staff comment: The proposed use is consistent with the policies of the comprehensive plan. The existing building was originally constructed as and previously used for a grade school. The site is in close proximity to public transit and bicycle parking will be provided on-site. The scale, character and exterior materials of the proposed addition are in keeping with the existing building and reflects its civic importance. It will comply with all yard requirements. Landscaping will be installed between the parking areas and the adjacent public streets to reduce their visual impacts. Through the site plan review, staff is recommending conditions of approval to implement several other landscaping improvements as well that would improve the transition to surrounding residential

properties. The plans show two different dimensions, 25 feet and 35 feet, for the proposed 17th Avenue curb cut width. Through the site plan review, staff is recommending a condition of approval that the curb cut not be allowed to exceed 25 feet width in order to minimize potential conflicts with pedestrians.

6. And, does in all other respects conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located upon approval of this conditional use permit.

The use of the site for a grade school will conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located upon the approval of the conditional use permit and site plan review.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Findings as required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for the site plan review:

- A. The site plan conforms to all applicable standards of Chapter 530, Site Plan Review. (See Section A Below for Evaluation.)**
- B. The site plan conforms to all applicable regulations of the zoning ordinance and is consistent with applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable small area plans adopted by the city council. (See Section B Below for Evaluation.)**

Section A: Conformance with Chapter 530 of the Zoning Code

BUILDING PLACEMENT AND DESIGN:

- Placement of the building shall reinforce the street wall, maximize natural surveillance and visibility, and facilitate pedestrian access and circulation.
- First floor of the building shall be located not more than eight (8) feet from the front lot line (except in C3S District or where a greater yard is required by the zoning ordinance). If located on corner lot, the building wall abutting each street shall be subject to this requirement.
- The area between the building and the lot line shall include amenities.
- The building shall be oriented so that at least one (1) principal entrance faces the public street. In the case of a corner lot, the principal entrance shall face the front lot line.
- Except in the C3S District, on-site accessory parking facilities shall be located to the rear or interior of the site, within the principal building served, or entirely below grade.
- For new construction, the building walls shall provide architectural detail and shall contain windows as required by Chapter 530 in order to create visual interest and to increase security of adjacent outdoor spaces by maximizing natural surveillance and visibility.
- In larger buildings, architectural elements, including recesses or projections, windows and entries, shall be emphasized to divide the building into smaller identifiable sections.
- Blank, uninterrupted walls that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements, shall not exceed twenty five (25) feet in length.
- Exterior materials shall be durable, including but not limited to masonry, brick, stone, stucco, wood, metal, and glass.
- The exterior materials and appearance of the rear and side walls of any building shall be similar to and compatible with the front of the building.
- The use of plain face concrete block as an exterior material shall be prohibited fronting along a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or adjacent to a residence or office residence district.
- Entrances, windows, and active functions:

- **Residential uses:**

Principal entrances shall be clearly defined and emphasized through the use of architectural features such as porches and roofs or other details that express the importance of the entrance. Multiple entrances shall be encouraged. Twenty (20) percent of the walls on the first floor and ten (10) percent of the walls on each floor above the first that face a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot, shall be windows as follows:

 - a. Windows shall be vertical in proportion.
 - b. Windows shall be distributed in a more or less even manner.
- **Nonresidential uses:**

Principal entrances shall be clearly defined and emphasized through the use of architectural features such as roofs or other details that express the importance of the entrance. Multiple entrances shall be encouraged. Thirty (30) percent of the walls on the first floor and ten (10) percent of the walls on each floor above the first that face a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot, shall be windows as follows:

 - a. Windows shall be vertical in proportion.
 - b. Windows shall be distributed in a more or less even manner.
 - c. The bottom of any window used to satisfy the ground floor window requirement may not be more than four (4) feet above the adjacent grade.
 - d. First floor or ground floor windows shall have clear or lightly tinted glass with a visible light transmittance ratio of 0.6 or higher.
 - e. First floor or ground floor windows shall allow views into and out of the building at eye level. Shelving, mechanical equipment or other similar fixtures shall not block views into and out of the building in the area between four (4) and seven (7) feet above the adjacent grade. However, window area in excess of the minimum required area shall not be required to allow views into and out of the building.
 - f. Industrial uses in Table 550-1, Principal Industrial Uses in the Industrial Districts, may provide less than thirty (30) percent windows on the walls that face an on-site parking lot, provided the parking lot is not located between the building and a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway.
 - g. In multiple tenant buildings, each individual ground level tenant space that faces a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot shall comply with the minimum window requirements of this section.

Minimum window area shall be measured as indicated in section 530.120 of the zoning code.
- **Ground floor active functions:**

Except for industrial uses in Table 550-1, Principal Industrial Uses in the Industrial Districts, the first floor or ground level of buildings shall be designed to accommodate active functions by ensuring that parking, loading, storage, or mechanical equipment rooms are limited to no more than thirty (30) percent of the linear building frontage along each wall facing a public street, public sidewalk, or public pathway.
- **The form and pitch of roof lines shall be similar to surrounding buildings.**
- **Parking Garages:** The exterior design shall ensure that sloped floors do not dominate the appearance of the walls and that vehicles are screened from view. In addition to compliance with minimum window requirements, principal and accessory parking garages shall comply with provisions requiring active functions on the ground floor. In the downtown districts, the more restrictive parking garage provisions of Chapter 549, Downtown Districts, shall apply.

Conformance with above requirements:

- Twenty-foot wide front yards are required adjacent to 16th Avenue and 17th Avenue South. The addition would be located 28 feet from 16th Avenue and 104 feet from 17th Avenue. A 10-foot wide corner side yard is required adjacent to 47th Street East. The addition would be located 282 feet from 47th Street. Because the addition would be located well outside of the required yards, alternative compliance is required for the placement of the building addition (please see the alternative compliance section of this report for further analysis).
- Landscaping will be provided between all sides of the building and the adjacent streets.
- The principal entrance is located on the north side of the building and faces 46th Street East.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
BZZ – 6297

- The existing parking area at the northeast corner of the site is located between the building and the adjacent streets. The proposed parking area will be located at the interior of the site. Landscaping will be provided between both parking areas and 17th Avenue and 46th Street to reduce their visibility.
- All sides of the building will include architectural elements, such as recesses and windows to divide the building into smaller identifiable sections.
- There would not be any blank, uninterrupted walls on the addition that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements exceeding 25 feet in length, except on the west end of the south building elevation. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance (please see the alternative compliance section of this report for further analysis).
- The primary exterior materials of the addition would be brick and glass. Please note, exterior material changes at a later date would require review by the Planning Commission and an amendment to the site plan review.
- The exterior materials and appearance of all sides of the addition would be similar and compatible with the front of the existing building.
- Plain face concrete block is not an exterior material proposed for the addition.
- The principal entrance is located on the north side of the existing building. Architectural elements exist that emphasize its importance.
- The south, west and east building walls of the addition are all subject to the minimum window requirements because they face public streets. Existing buildings are required to maintain compliance with the minimum window requirements as well. The applicant is proposing to remove windows on the east building elevation. These walls are included in the following analysis.
 - *West, ground floor (basement level):* At least 30 percent of the ground floor wall of the addition facing 16th Avenue, measured between 2 and 10 feet above the adjacent grade, is required to be windows. Thirty percent of that area of the ground floor wall is equal to 104 square feet. The proposed amount of windows is approximately 24.1 percent. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance (please see the alternative compliance section below for further analysis).
 - *West, first floor:* At least 10 percent of the upper level wall of the addition is required to be windows. Ten percent of the upper floor wall is equal to 75 square feet. The proposed amount of windows is approximately 33.4 percent.
 - *South, ground floor (basement level):* At least 30 percent of the ground floor wall of the addition facing 47th Street East, measured between 2 and 10 feet above the adjacent grade, is required to be windows. Thirty percent of that area of the ground floor wall is equal to 298 square feet. The proposed amount of windows is approximately 35.5 percent.
 - *South, first floor:* At least 10 percent of the upper level wall of the addition is required to be windows. Ten percent of the upper floor wall is equal to 161 square feet. The proposed amount of windows is approximately 25.1 percent.
 - *East, ground floor (basement level):* At least 30 percent of the ground floor wall of the addition facing 17th Avenue, measured between 2 and 10 feet above the adjacent grade, is required to be windows. Thirty percent of that area of the ground floor wall is equal to 112 square feet. The proposed amount of windows is approximately 5.9 percent. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance (please see the alternative compliance section below for further analysis).
 - *East, first floor (proposed addition):* At least 10 percent of the upper level wall of the addition is required to be windows. Ten percent of the upper floor wall is equal to 73 square feet. No windows are proposed. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance (please see the alternative compliance section below for further analysis).

- *East, first floor (existing building):* At least 30 percent of the ground floor wall of the existing building facing 17th Avenue, measured between 2 and 10 feet above the adjacent grade, is required to be windows. The applicant is proposing to remove windows in the wall adjacent to where the catering kitchen will be located. Where windows are adjacent to bathrooms, obscured glass with an etched texture will be installed. These changes will reduce the amount of windows that comply with the window standards; however, the remaining amount of windows will still exceed 30 percent of the wall area.
- The required windows would be vertical in proportion, distributed in a more or less even manner and would allow views into and out of the building at eye level.
- The windows used to meet the ground floor window requirement would not be more than 4 feet above the adjacent grade.
- The applicant has indicated that the proposed windows in the addition would have clear glass.
- Each of the walls facing a street would accommodate active functions exceeding 70 percent of the linear frontage.
- The roof of the addition would be flat. The existing roof is flat. Most of the buildings in the immediate area have pitched roofs, but are primarily single-family dwellings.

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION:

- **Clear and well-lighted walkways of at least four (4) feet in width shall connect building entrances to the adjacent public sidewalk and to any parking facilities located on the site.**
- **Transit shelters shall be well lighted, weather protected and shall be placed in locations that promote security.**
- **Vehicular access and circulation shall be designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrian traffic and surrounding residential uses.**
- **Traffic shall be directed to minimize impact upon residential properties and shall be subject to section 530.150 (b) related to alley access.**
- **Site plans shall minimize the use of impervious surfaces.**

Conformance with above requirements:

- A 7-foot wide walkway will continue to connect the principal building entrance to the 46th Street public sidewalk.
- A transit shelter is not proposed or adjacent to the site.
- All circulation would occur on-site. No changes are proposed to the vehicle access for the parking area located at the northeast corner of the site, which has access from 46th Street East and 17th Avenue South. The proposed parking area will be accessed from 17th Avenue South as well. The plans show two different dimensions, 25 feet and 35 feet, for the proposed 17th Avenue curb cut width. The maximum allowed curb cut width in the R3 district is 25 feet per section 541.240 of the zoning code. Staff is recommending a condition of approval that the curb cut not be allowed to exceed 25 feet width in order to minimize potential conflicts with pedestrians. The existing curb cut on 16th Avenue will be closed. With the adoption of the staff recommendation, the site design should have minimal conflicts with pedestrians and surrounding residential properties.
- No alley exists on the block.
- The applicant is proposing to eliminate 11,615 square feet of impervious surfaces. The proposed site plan minimizes the use of impervious surfaces.

LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING:

- **The composition and location of landscaped areas shall complement the scale of the development and its surroundings.**

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
BZZ – 6297

- Not less than twenty (20) percent of the site not occupied by buildings, including all required landscaped yards, shall be landscaped as specified in section 530.160 (a).
- Required screening shall be six (6) feet in height, unless otherwise specified, except in required front yards where such screening shall be three (3) feet in height.
- Except as otherwise provided, required screening shall be at least ninety-five (95) percent opaque throughout the year.
- Screening shall be satisfied by one or a combination of the following:
 - A decorative fence.
 - A masonry wall.
 - A hedge.
- Parking and loading facilities located along a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway shall comply with section 530.170 (b), including providing landscape yards along a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway and abutting or across an alley from a residence or office residence district, or any permitted or conditional residential use.
- The corners of parking lots where rows of parking spaces leave areas unavailable for parking or vehicular circulation shall be landscaped as specified for a required landscaped yard. Such spaces may include architectural features such as benches, kiosks or bicycle parking.
- In parking lots of ten (10) spaces or more, no parking space shall be located more than fifty (50) feet from the center of an on-site deciduous tree. Tree islands located within the interior of a parking lot shall have a minimum width of seven (7) feet in any direction.
- All other areas not governed by sections 530.160 and 530.170 and not occupied by buildings, parking and loading facilities or driveways, shall be covered with turf grass, native grasses or other perennial flowering plants, vines, mulch, shrubs or trees.
- Installation and maintenance of all landscape materials shall comply with the standards outlined in section 530.210.
- The city planning commission may approve the substitution or reduction of landscaped plant materials, landscaped area or other landscaping or screening standards, subject to section 530.80, as provided in section 530.220.

Conformance with above requirements:

- The zoning code requires that a least 20 percent of the site not occupied by buildings be landscaped. The lot area of the site is 155,071 square feet. The existing building and the addition would occupy 27,760 square feet of the site. The lot area minus the building footprint therefore consists of 127,311 square feet. At least 20 percent of the net site area is 25,462.2 square feet. Approximately 75,518 square feet of the site would be landscaped. That is equal to 59.3 percent of the net lot area.
- The zoning code requires at least one canopy tree for each 500 square feet of required green space and at least one shrub for each 100 square feet of required green space. The tree and shrub requirement for this site is 51 and 255 respectively. The applicant is proposing to provide 29 trees (4 new and 25 existing that includes canopy, decorative and coniferous trees) and 254 shrubs on the site. Alternative compliance is requested for the tree and shrub requirements (please see the alternative compliance section of this report for further analysis).
- The remainder of the landscaped area would be covered with sod, perennials and wood mulch.
- Landscaped yards, screening and trees are required between the parking and loading areas and 17th Avenue and 46th Street.
 - 46th Street East: Between the existing parking area and 46th Street East, an 8 foot wide landscaped yard, screening that is 3 feet in height and at least 60 percent opaque, and 5 canopy trees are required. The existing width of the landscaped yard is 9 feet or greater. Shrubs will be provided between the parking spaces closest to the street and the public sidewalk. However, the proposed bird's nest spruce shrubs are slow growing, reaching a 2 foot height after 10 years. Further, they can continue to grow to 8 feet tall, 12 feet wide, which would overwhelm the

landscaped yard. No screening would be provided in the landscaped area adjacent to the 46th Street driveway. Three ornamental trees exist in the landscaped yard. No additional trees are proposed. Alternative compliance is requested for the screening and tree requirements (please see the alternative compliance section of this report for further analysis).

- *17th Avenue South, existing parking area:* Between the existing parking area and 17th Avenue South, a 20 foot wide landscaped yard, screening that is 3 feet in height and at least 60 percent opaque, and 2 canopy trees are required. The existing parking area is set back one to 13 feet from the front lot line. Proposed shrubs will provide screening that is 3 feet tall and 60 percent opaque. No trees are proposed. Alternative compliance is requested for the tree requirement (please see the alternative compliance section of this report for further analysis).
- *17th Avenue South, proposed loading area:* Between the proposed loading area and 17th Avenue South, a 20 foot wide landscaped yard, screening that is 6 feet tall in height and at least 60 percent opaque, and 3 canopy trees are required. A 42-foot landscaped yard will be provided. Shrubs are proposed that will provide screening that is at least 6 feet in height and 60 percent opaque. There are 3 existing canopy trees that are located between the loading area and the street that will fulfill the tree requirement.
- *17th Avenue South, proposed parking area:* Between the existing parking area and 17th Avenue South, a 20 foot wide landscaped yard, screening that is 3 feet in height and at least 60 percent opaque, and 4 canopy trees are required. The parking area will be set back 20 feet from the front lot line. Four canopy trees are proposed. Shrubs will be provided to screen the parking area. However, the proposed bird's nest spruce shrubs are slow growing, reaching a 2 foot height after 10 years. Further, they can continue to grow to 8 feet tall, 12 feet wide, which would overwhelm the surrounding landscaping. Staff is recommending that a different type of shrub be provided in lieu of the bird's nest spruces that will meet the above screening requirements.
- For the most part, the areas of the parking lot unavailable for parking or vehicle circulation would be landscaped. There are a couple of areas that are currently paved in the existing and proposed parking areas where paving would not be removed. The applicant will be reducing the overall amount of impervious surfaces on the site by more than 11,000 square feet and installing landscaping improvements around both parking areas.
- One of the parking spaces in the existing parking area and 2 of the parking spaces within the proposed parking area would not be within 50 feet of the center of an on-site deciduous tree. Alternative compliance is requested for this requirement (please see the alternative compliance section of this report for further analysis).
- Installation and maintenance of all landscape materials must comply with the standards outlined in section 530.210.

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS:

- All parking lots and driveways shall be designed with wheel stops or discontinuous curbing to provide on-site retention and filtration of stormwater. Where on-site retention and filtration is not practical, the parking lot shall be defined by six (6) inch by six (6) inch continuous concrete curb.
- To the extent practical, site plans shall minimize the blocking of views of important elements of the city.
- To the extent practical, buildings shall be located and arranged to minimize shadowing on public spaces and adjacent properties.
- To the extent practical, buildings shall be located and arranged to minimize the generation of wind currents at ground level.
- Site plans shall include crime prevention design elements as specified in section 530.260 related to:
 - Natural surveillance and visibility

- **Lighting levels**
- **Territorial reinforcement and space delineation**
- **Natural access control**
- **To the extent practical, site plans shall include the rehabilitation and integration of locally designated historic structures or structures that have been determined to be eligible to be locally designated. Where rehabilitation is not feasible, the development shall include the reuse of significant features of historic buildings.**

Conformance with above requirements:

- The existing parking area is defined by continuous concrete curbing and is not proposed to be altered. The proposed loading area will have discontinuous curbing to allow on-site retention and filtration of stormwater in the adjacent landscaped area. Concrete wheel stops will be provided in the proposed parking area to allow stormwater to drain to the adjacent landscaped area.
- The addition would not impede any views of important elements of the city, significantly shadow the adjacent streets or properties or increase the generation of wind currents at ground level.
- The site includes crime prevention design elements. The addition would have an abundant amount of windows on the east and south elevations. Staff is recommending conditions of approval requiring additional windows to be provided on the west elevation. Landscaping and walkways will define natural access control.
- The existing structure on the site will be rehabilitated.

Section B: Conformance with All Applicable Zoning Code Provisions and Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Applicable Small Area Plans Adopted by the City Council

ZONING CODE: The property of 1611 46th Street East is zoned R3. A grade school is a conditional use in this district.

Proposed Lot Area: The proposed lot area is 155,071 square feet.

Off-Street Parking and Loading:

Minimum automobile parking requirement: A grade school is required to provide a minimum of one space per classroom plus one space per 5 students of legal driving age based on the maximum number of students attending classes at any one time. The K-4 grade school would have 23 classrooms and no students of driving age; therefore the minimum parking requirement is 23 spaces. The applicant is proposing to provide 35 spaces. Of the spaces provided, at least 2 are required to be accessible. Two accessible spaces would be provided.

Maximum automobile parking requirement: The maximum parking requirement for a grade school is one space per classroom plus one space per 3 students of legal driving age based on the maximum number of students attending classes at any one time. With 23 classrooms and no students of driving age, the maximum parking requirement is 23 spaces. There are 35 spaces that exist on the site. The addition will be constructed over an existing parking area, displacing some of those spaces. The displaced parking spaces will be relocated to the new parking area. Because the applicant is not proposing to increase the number of parking spaces, nonconforming rights to exceed the maximum parking requirement are maintained and a variance is not necessary. Currently, a zoning code amendment that would change the maximum parking requirement to two spaces per classroom plus one space per 3 students of legal driving age based on the maximum number of students attending classes at any one time is in process to be considered by the City Council.

Bicycle parking requirement: The minimum bicycle parking requirement for a grade school is 3 spaces per classroom. Not less than 50 percent of the required bicycle parking must meet the standards for short-term parking. All required bicycle parking spaces must be accessible without moving another bicycle and its placement shall not result in a bicycle obstructing a required walkway. Bicycle racks shall be installed to the manufacturer's specifications, including the minimum recommended distance from other structures. In addition, short term spaces must be located in a convenient and visible area within 50 feet of a principal entrance and must permit the locking of the bicycle frame and one wheel to the rack and must support a bicycle in a stable position without damage to the wheels, frames or components. No bicycle parking exists. With 22 classrooms, 66 spaces are required. However, the school was established before the requirement took effect. Therefore, bicycle parking is required for only the new classrooms. Eight new classrooms are proposed. Therefore, 24 spaces must be provided. The applicant is proposing to provide 24 short-term spaces.

Loading: For a 51,095 square foot building, the minimum loading requirement is two small loading spaces. A new loading area with 2 small spaces will be provided.

Maximum Floor Area: The lot area is 155,071 square feet. The maximum FAR allowed in the R3 district is 0.5. The building would have a total of 51,095 square feet, which is an FAR of 0.33.

Minimum Lot Area: For a grade school, the minimum lot area required is 20,000 square feet and the minimum lot is 100 feet. The lot area is greater than 20,000 square feet and the lot width is greater than 100 feet.

Building Height: In the R3 district, the maximum height is limited to 2.5 stories or 35 feet, whichever is less. The proposed height of the addition is two stories as the basement level extends more than 12 feet above grade. It is also 28 feet tall as measured from 16th Avenue South.

Yard Requirements:

Front yard requirements: Front lot lines are adjacent to 16th Avenue and 17th Avenue South. The minimum front yard requirement in the R3 district is 20 feet unless an adjacent residential structure on the same block face is set back more. Because the subject site occupies the entire block, the minimum required front yard is 20 feet. No part of the building addition, the proposed parking area, including the curbing, the loading area, or trash enclosure would be located in the required front yards. The proposed bicycle parking adjacent to 16th Avenue South is currently not a permitted obstruction. As of the writing of this report, a text amendment to allow bicycle parking in required front yards for institutional uses is in the process of being considered.

Corner side yard requirements: Corner side yards are required adjacent to 46th Street and 47th Street East. The minimum corner side yard requirement is equal to $8+2x$, where x is equal to the number of stories above the first floor, or 20 feet (the applicable front yard requirement), whichever is less. The addition would be 2 stories in height; therefore a 10 foot wide corner side yard is required. No additional encroachments into the corner side yard are proposed.

Building Coverage: In the R3 district, the maximum allowed building coverage is 50 percent. With a lot area of 155,071 square feet, up to 77,535 square feet of building coverage is allowed. The total proposed footprint is 27,760 square feet in area, which covers 17.9 percent of the site.

Impervious Surface: In the R3 district, the maximum allowed impervious coverage is 65 percent. With a lot area of 155,071 square feet, up to 100,796 square feet of impervious surfaces are allowed. The proposed amount of impervious surface area is 42,292 square feet, which covers 27.3 percent of the site.

Specific Development Standards: Grade schools are subject to the following development standards from section 536.20 of the zoning code:

School, grades K--12.

- (1) The use shall include a regular course of study accredited by the State of Minnesota.
- (2) To the extent practical, all new construction or additions to existing buildings shall be compatible with the scale and character of the surroundings, and exterior building materials shall be harmonious with other buildings in the neighborhood.
- (3) An appropriate transition area between the facility and adjacent property shall be provided by landscaping, screening and other site improvements consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

The scale and materials of the addition will be compatible with the surrounding area. The site is separated from surrounding residential uses by streets.

Refuse screening: Refuse and recycling storage containers are required to be enclosed on all four sides by screening compatible with the principal structure not less than two feet higher than the refuse container or shall be otherwise effectively screened from the street, adjacent residential uses located in a residence or office residence district and adjacent permitted or conditional residential uses. The applicant has indicated that a new 8 foot tall wood trash enclosure is proposed on the east side of the building with additional landscaping for screening.

Lighting: Lighting must comply with Chapter 535 and Chapter 541 of the zoning code including:

535.590. Lighting. (a) *In general.* No use or structure shall be operated or occupied as to create light or glare in such an amount or to such a degree or intensity as to constitute a hazardous condition, or as to unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of property by any person of normal sensitivities, or otherwise as to create a public nuisance.

(b) *Specific standards.* All uses shall comply with the following standards except as otherwise provided in this section:

- (1) Lighting fixtures shall be effectively arranged so as not to directly or indirectly cause illumination or glare in excess of one-half (1/2) footcandle measured at the closest property line of any permitted or conditional residential use, and five (5) footcandles measured at the street curb line or nonresidential property line nearest the light source.

- (2) Lighting fixtures shall not exceed two thousand (2,000) lumens (equivalent to a one hundred fifty (150) watt incandescent bulb) unless of a cutoff type that shields the light source from an observer at the closest property line of any permitted or conditional residential use.
- (3) Lighting shall not create a sensation of brightness that is substantially greater than ambient lighting conditions as to cause annoyance, discomfort or decreased visual performance or visibility to a person of normal sensitivities when viewed from any permitted or conditional residential use.
- (4) Lighting shall not create a hazard for vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- (5) Lighting of building facades or roofs shall be located, aimed and shielded so that light is directed only onto the facade or roof.

CPED staff shall review the details of the fixtures in the final review prior to permit issuance.

Signs: In the R3 district, a grade school is allowed the following:

- One wall identification sign not exceeding 32 square feet per block face. Maximum height of 14 feet or top of wall, whichever is less.
- In addition, one monument sign not exceeding 32 square feet in area and 8 feet in height. Monument signs may be located in a required front or corner side yard but shall be no closer than 10 feet from the nearest residence or office residence property line.
- Either the wall sign or the monument sign², but not both, may be a dynamic changeable copy sign. The dynamic changeable copy sign portion of the sign shall not exceed 16 square feet.
- Either the wall sign or the monument sign, but not both, may be illuminated.

Two wall signs are proposed. One would be a 31.5 square foot, non-illuminated wall sign placed 14 feet high on the building. The other would be a 24 square foot, non-illuminated wall sign placed 14 feet high on the building. A freestanding sign is also proposed would be non-illuminated, 32 square feet in area and 8 feet tall. The proposed freestanding sign would comply with the above size requirements, but would not comply with the definition of monument sign because the base would not be solid and at least as wide as the sign, or on one or more poles or beams with not more than one foot of open area between the sign face and the ground or base. Variances are not authorized for signs located in residential districts; therefore, the proposed sign will need to be adjusted to meet the monument sign definition. New signage also requires Zoning Office review, approval, and permits.

Mechanical equipment screening: All mechanical equipment must be arranged so as to minimize visual impact and is subject to the screening requirements found in section 535.70 of the zoning. Roof top mechanical equipment is proposed. To minimize visual impacts, the applicant is proposing an approximately 2 foot tall parapet wall and setting the equipment 6 feet or more in from the edge of the roof.

MINNEAPOLIS PLAN: Please refer to the conditional use permit section of this report.

² The zoning code defines monument sign as “A freestanding sign with its sign face mounted on the ground, on a solid base at least as wide as the sign, or on one (1) or more poles or beams with not more than one (1) foot of open area between the sign face and the ground or base.”

ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE:

The Planning Commission or zoning administrator may approve alternatives to any site plan review requirement upon finding any of the following:

- The alternative meets the intent of the site plan chapter and the site plan includes amenities or improvements that address any adverse effects of the alternative. Site amenities may include but are not limited to additional open space, additional landscaping and screening, green roof, decorative pavers, ornamental metal fencing, architectural enhancements, transit facilities, bicycle facilities, preservation of natural resources, restoration of previously damaged natural environment, rehabilitation of existing structures that have been locally designated or have been determined to be eligible to be locally designated as historic structures, and design which is similar in form, scale and materials to existing structures on the site and to surrounding development.
- Strict adherence to the requirements is impractical because of site location or conditions and the proposed alternative meets the intent of this chapter.
- The proposed alternative is consistent with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council and meets the intent of this chapter.

Alternative compliance is requested by the applicant to meet the following standards:

Building placement adjacent to streets

Twenty-foot wide front yards are required adjacent to 16th Avenue and 17th Avenue South. The addition would be located 28 feet from 16th Avenue and 104 feet from 17th Avenue. A 10-foot wide corner side yard is required adjacent to 47th Street East. The addition would be located 282 feet from 47th Street. The addition would be well outside the required yards because the site occupies an entire City block and the existing building is located on the north end of the site. The proposed placement of the addition is compatible with the existing building placement and retains areas on the site used for recreation and green space. For these reasons, staff is recommending that the planning commission grant alternative compliance.

Blank, uninterrupted walls exceeding 25 feet in width

There would not be any blank, uninterrupted walls on the addition that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements exceeding 25 feet in length, except on the west end of the south building elevation. The area of upper and lower level walls that would contain insufficient architectural detail would be 26 feet wide. These walls are adjacent to a conference room and a guided reading room. The applicant is proposing to provide an abundant amount of windows on the remainder of the south facing building walls. While it wouldn't be impractical to provide additional architectural elements, the alternative meets the intent of the ordinance. Therefore staff is recommending that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance.

Minimum window requirements

The south, west and east building walls of the addition are all subject to the minimum window requirements because they face public streets. Alternative compliance is requested for meeting the minimum requirements on the ground floor of the west elevation,

- *West, ground floor (basement level):* At least 30 percent of the ground floor wall of the addition facing 16th Avenue, measured between 2 and 10 feet above the adjacent grade, is required to be windows. Thirty percent of that area of the ground floor wall is equal to 104 square feet. The proposed amount of windows is approximately 24.1 percent. The ground floor level of the addition is partly below grade. If all of the windows that extend above grade were included towards meeting the minimum requirements, more than 30 percent of the ground floor wall

would be windows. Also, the applicant is proposing to provide windows covering more than 30 percent of the first floor wall above. Because these alternatives address the security of the surrounding area and provide visual interest, staff is recommending that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance.

- *East, ground floor (basement level):* At least 30 percent of the ground floor wall of the addition facing 17th Avenue, measured between 2 and 10 feet above the adjacent grade, is required to be windows. Thirty percent of that area of the ground floor wall is equal to 112 square feet. The proposed amount of windows is approximately 5.9 percent. Additional windows could be provided on this level. Because the applicant is proposing to provide an abundant amount of windows on the south elevation, a large amount of windows on the existing building provide views to 17th Avenue and staff is recommending that windows are also provided on the east elevation of the upper level, staff believes that some alternative compliance is warranted. Therefore staff is recommending that the Planning Commission require the applicant to provide windows equal to at least 10 percent of the ground floor wall of the addition facing 17th Avenue, measured between 2 and 10 feet above the adjacent grade. This means that approximately 16 feet of window area will need to be added.
- *East, first floor (proposed addition):* At least 10 percent of the upper level wall of the addition is required to be windows. Ten percent of the upper floor wall is equal to 73 square feet. No windows are proposed. The walls are adjacent to two classrooms and a small storage room. It would not be impractical to provide the required windows. Therefore staff is recommending that the Planning Commission not grant alternative compliance.

Minimum tree and shrub requirements

The zoning code requires at least one canopy tree for each 500 square feet of required green space and at least one shrub for each 100 square feet of required green space. The tree and shrub requirement for this site is 51 and 255 respectively. The applicant is proposing to provide 29 trees (4 new and 25 existing that includes canopy, decorative and coniferous trees) and 254 shrubs on the site. Almost the entire south half of the site is occupied by a paved play area, an athletic field and a playground. Because most of the site is not occupied by a building, this has resulted in a higher landscaping requirement. The applicant is proposing to retain most of the existing trees around the building. As an alternative to providing all 51 required trees on the site, CPED staff would like to see the gaps in the tree canopy adjacent to 16th Avenue and 17th Avenue in-filled. Therefore, staff is recommending that the Planning Commission require the applicant, in consultation with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, to install boulevard trees where there are gaps in the tree canopy adjacent to 16th Avenue and 17th Avenue.

Parking and loading landscaping and screening

Landscaped yards, screening and trees are required between the parking and loading areas and 17th Avenue and 46th Street.

- *Screening and trees adjacent to 46th Street East:* Between the existing parking area and 46th Street East, an 8 foot wide landscaped yard, screening that is 3 feet in height and at least 60 percent opaque, and 5 canopy trees are required. All parking spaces are also required to be located within 50 feet of the center of an on-site deciduous tree. The existing width of the landscaped yard is 9 feet or greater. Shrubs will be provided between the parking spaces closest

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
BZZ – 6297

to the street and the public sidewalk. No screening would be provided in the landscaped area adjacent to the 46th Street driveway. Three ornamental trees exist in the landscaped yard. No additional trees are proposed. One of the parking spaces, near the building entrance, would not be within 50 feet of the center of a deciduous tree. The 9+ foot wide landscaped yard will allow adequate room for all of the screening and two more trees to be provided. Therefore staff is recommending that the Planning Commission not grant alternative compliance.

- *Trees between the existing parking area and 17th Avenue South:* Between the existing parking area and 17th Avenue South, a 20 foot wide landscaped yard, screening that is 3 feet in height and at least 60 percent opaque, and 2 canopy trees are required. The existing parking area is set back one to 13 feet from the front lot line. Proposed shrubs will provide screening that is 3 feet tall and 60 percent opaque. No trees are proposed. The proposed shrubs that are needed to comply with the screening requirements will cover most of the landscaped yard area. In lieu of providing all 51 required trees on the site, staff is recommending that the applicant, in consultation with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, install boulevard trees where there are gaps in the tree canopy adjacent to 16th Avenue and 17th Avenue. With this alternative, staff is recommending that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance for the 2 trees.
- *Screening of the parking areas:* Screening that is 3 feet in height and at least 60 percent opaque is required between the parking areas and the adjacent streets. Shrubs will be provided to screen the parking areas. However, one type of the proposed shrubs, the bird's nest spruce, are slow growing, reaching only a 2 foot height after 10 years. Further, they can continue to grow to 8 feet tall and 12 feet wide, which would overwhelm the surrounding landscaping. They are proposed to be planted adjacent to 17th Avenue and 46th Street East. To address this issue, staff is recommending that a different type of shrub be provided in lieu of the bird's nest spruce shrubs that will meet the above screening requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the Conditional Use Permit:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the conditional use permit to allow an expansion of a grade school located at the property of 1611 46th Street East, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The conditional use permit shall be recorded with Hennepin County as required by Minn. Stat. 462.3595, subd. 4 before building permits may be issued or before the use or activity requiring a conditional use permit may commence. Unless extended by the zoning administrator, the conditional use permit shall expire if it is not recorded within two years of approval.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the Site Plan Review:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for site plan review to allow a 15,380 square foot building addition for the property located at 1611 46th Street East, subject to the following conditions:

1. At least 10 percent of the ground floor wall of the addition facing 17th Avenue, measured between 2 and 10 feet above the adjacent grade, shall be windows as required by section 530.120 of the zoning code.
2. At least 10 percent of the upper floor wall of the addition facing 17th Avenue shall be windows as required by section 530.120 of the zoning code.
3. As an alternative to providing all required trees on-site, the applicant, in consultation with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, shall install boulevard trees where there are gaps in the tree canopy adjacent to 16th Avenue and 17th Avenue.
4. Screening that complies with the requirements of section 530.170 of the zoning code shall be provided between the parking area and 46th Street East.
5. At least two canopy trees shall be provided in the landscaped yard between the parking area and 46th Street East as required by section 530.170 of the zoning code.
6. The applicant shall provide an alternate type of shrub for the bird's nest spruce shrubs where they are proposed to screen the parking areas. The alternate shrub type shall comply with the screening and landscaping requirements of sections 530.170 and 530.210 of the zoning code.
7. The width of the new curb cut on 17th Avenue South shall not exceed 25 feet in width as required by section 541.240 of the zoning code.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
BZZ – 6297

8. Signage shall comply with the requirements of Chapter 543 of the zoning code. The applicant shall obtain sign permits from the Zoning Office.
9. Department of Community Planning and Economic Development staff review and approval of the final site, landscaping, lighting, building elevations, and floor plans.
10. Site improvements required by Chapter 530 or by the City Planning Commission shall be completed by December 2, 2015, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.

Attachments:

1. PDR comments
2. Applicant statement of use and responses to findings
3. Zoning map
4. Plans
5. Photos