

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

November 14, 2008

TO: The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, sitting as the District Council for Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery County, Maryland

FROM: Montgomery County Planning Board

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT NO: 08-2: THOMAS BUILDING. Request by Stabler 1848, LLC, for amendment of the Schematic development plan approved in Local Map Amendment G-627, located at 900 Olney Sandy Spring Road, Sandy Spring, consisting of 91,914 square feet of total floor area within the total gross tract area of 4.84 acres (Parcel A Sandy Spring Subdivision, Lot 1, Earnshaw Subdivision and unrecorded Parcel 426), in the O-M zone.

At its regular meeting on November 13, 2008, The Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission reviewed Development Plan Amendment No. 08-2. The amendment proposes construction of a three-story, 40,000 square-foot office and school building, and a two-level parking garage and surface parking lot. The site is zoned O-M, but under the original approval the site is restricted to the development standards of the C-T zone. On a motion by Vice-Chairman Robinson, seconded by Commissioner Alfandre, with Chairman Hanson and Commissioner Presley voting in favor of the motion, and Commissioner Cryor voting against the motion, the Board recommended (4-1), that DPA 08-2 be approved, with certain revision to the applicant's binding elements.

Technical staff in its report to the Board recommended approval of the application on the grounds that the proposed project would be appropriate for the site and would be compatible with existing development and future lands uses planned for the area. Technical staff found the proposed project to be in substantial compliance with the Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan and the Rural Village Overlay Zone. Staff noted that design adjustments to the proposed building could be considered at site plan.

Community representatives expressed to the Board at the public hearing that the proposed building, which would sit at the edge of the historic district and at the entryway to the village, would be out of character with Sandy Spring in terms of the size and massing of

the building and parking deck. The project was seen as inconsistent with the design characteristics of the other buildings in the historic district and rural village overlays zone. Community representatives argued that the design and scale of the building should be revised to fit better into the rural and historic character of the area.

The Board carefully reviewed the issues raised by the community and the comments of the applicant. The Board was not opposed to development of the site for office and school use, but were of the opinion that any new building be restricted to a 30-foot, 2 1/2 –story height limit, in the fashion of other buildings within the Sandy Spring Village and Historic District, and limiting the total additional, maximum Floor Area to 35,000 square feet, would ensure a more compatible relationship with development within the surrounding area. The design and scale of the project will be carefully considered by the Board at site plan to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area.

For these reasons, the Board recommends that the DPA 08-2 be approved and that the binding elements proposed by the applicant be revised as follows to address the Board's concerns:

1. The number of buildings must not exceed 4;
2. The gross floor area of all buildings must not exceed 86,077 square feet, and the gross floor area of the proposed building must not exceed 35,000 square feet;
3. The height of the proposed building must not exceed 30 feet or 2 1/2 stories; and
4. Development of the property must not exceed the standards of the C-T zone, as they existed on April 25, 1989.

A copy of the Technical staff report is attached.

Royce Hanson
Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board