


FROM	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET, 8 TH FLOOR		
	SUBJECT	BMZA / 1900 Gough Street f.k.a. 245 South Wolfe Street		

TO Mr. David Tanner, Executive Director
Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals
417 East Fayette Street, 14th Floor

DATE: December 27, 2011

REQUEST

The Department of Planning has received Alan Nethen's Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) application, on behalf of Wolfe Street Academy, to install two non-illuminated wall signs above the front entrance to the existing building on Wolfe Street. We understand that this appeal is scheduled for hearing on January 10, 2012.

SITE

1900 Gough Street is located on the northeast corner of the intersection with Wolfe Street and extends along the north side of Gough Street to Chapel Street. This property measures approximately 140' by 135' and is currently improved with a two-story detached school building measuring approximately 132' by 96'. This site is zoned R-8 and is located within the Upper Fells Point National Register Historic District.

ANALYSIS

Use: In this zoning district, a non-illuminated identification sign on a non-residential building may not exceed 18 square feet (§11-319.b.). The proposed signs would cover an area approximately 5'8" high by 11' wide (primary sign stating "Wolfe Street Academy") and 1' by 4'6" (secondary sign for "Baltimore Curriculum Project") but the actual sign area should be determined by the area of each pin-mounted letter or graphic device to be placed on the front wall of the building. Because this is a conspicuous building in a historic district, this Department considers final design review of the proposed installation important. The applicant should be required to submit a detailed drawing of the signs showing actual letter dimensions as a condition of approval of this application.

Height Variance: The Board may grant a variance to authorize a height that is more or less than that otherwise allowed by the applicable regulation (§15-204.a). In this case, the proposed height of the primary sign is 19' which exceeds the permitted height of 16' by 16%. The proposed primary sign would be centered in an existing color band of brick, itself bordered by contrasting brick bands, and it would be an unnecessary hardship to have the brick façade of the existing building replaced in order to have the sign placed 3' lower. In this context, this is also a condition unique to this property and not generally applicable to other properties within the same zoning classification, nor a condition created by any person with a present interest in the property. Placement of the proposed signs on the front wall of the existing building would not be injurious to use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity, and in fact would complement the building's contemporary architecture.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Planning recommends approval of this appeal subject to the applicant receiving final design approval for the proposed signs from this Department.

TJS/wya/mf

cc: Alan Nethen, Appellant

Southeast