



Community Development
Department

STAFF REPORT

Commission Meeting Date:	June 20, 2023
Agenda Title:	Special Use Permit 2023-01 St John the Evangelist
Requested Action:	Hold a Public Hearing & Recommend to Town Council
Decision Deadline:	July 27, 2023
Staff Lead:	Denise Harris, Planning Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Special Use Permit (SUP) 2023-01 St John the Evangelist, the Applicant, and the Owner, the Catholic Diocese of Arlington (St Johns Catholic School Tees), seeks to amend a June 3, 1986, SUP approval to allow for the demolition of an existing building and the construction of a new 13,000 square foot office building. The subject parcel is located in the Residential (R-10) District of the Town of Warrenton Zoning Ordinance and is designated as Live/Work on the Future Land Use Map. The subject parcel (GPIN 6984-36-7135-000) is located at 271 Winchester Street on approximately 11.0664 acres.

Planning Commission held a Work Session on April 18, 2023⁶ and a Public Hearing on May 16, 2023. Three members of the public spoke to the application. Items brought up included proximity of the new building to Winchester Street, potential loss of old growth trees, noise “bounce back” to residences, no crosswalk on Winchester to entrance, water run-off, topo/grade changes, no lighting on building, loss of green space, question if additional parking is necessary, and support for the existing building to be demolished. The Planning Commission requested the Applicant work to address items missing on the SUP Plans and issues raised. The Planning Commission also suggested the Applicant look at the potential of green space vs additional parking. The Planning Commission voted 3-0 (Lawrence, Lasher absent) to hold the Public Hearing open until the June Planning Commission meeting.

On June 1, 2023, the Applicant submitted an updated SUP Plan to address the requested missing information, including parking, topography, improvements on the site, refuse locations, adjacent properties, and other miscellaneous items. The Applicant piloted a new student pick up/drop off pattern to address draft Condition of Approval 9.b and found it to be successful in preventing stacking in the public-right-of way. In addition, the Applicant requested the language “evergreen shrubs” be added to draft Condition of Approval 10 as an acceptable buffer and shield of vehicle headlights on the northern

portion of the property. Finally, staff worked to rewrite draft Condition of Approval 7.c to be more precise in the intent related to stormwater management. The Applicant accepted the new language.

The updated information is available for the June 20, 2023, Planning Commission Public Hearing.

BACKGROUND

In 1986, St Johns the Evangelist received a Special Use Permit for a school. The minutes from the Town Council meeting indicate the intent was to allow:

1. Construction of the School in two phases
2. Phase 1 enrollment 270
3. Phase 2 enrollment 540
4. Relocate the convent
5. Obtain Right of way dedication to centerline of King Street (aka John E Mann Street) and Winchester

When the church school sought an expansion in 2017, a Zoning Determination letter found the building expansion could proceed without a Special Use Permit amendment as the enrollment numbers were not changing. However, during the Site Development Plan (SDP 2017-01), the Town indicated that *“as new projects are proposed by the Church, the additional work will be considered accumulative to this plan and will trigger the Commonwealth’s SWM Regulations.”* The Town’s willingness to work with the applicant in 2017 was predicated on the shared knowledge that the next proposed improvement would include a comprehensive update of the site’s uses and existing conditions.

During agency review of the application, staff raised several potential issues and asked the applicant to address them. Highlights of issues include the potential inability to meet landscaping buffer requirements, no details on lighting, preliminary stormwater design, proposed refuse locations, and no height and dimensions of the building, retaining walls, parking, travelways, setbacks, and landscape buffers for staff to ensure the proposal will meet requirements. Staff is aware that stormwater and landscape buffer solutions can be expensive to engineer. Staff sought to help the applicant understand that staff cannot ensure this proposal works without more information and/or requested waivers.

The Planning Commission held a work session on this proposal on April 18, 2023. During that meeting the Planning Commission discussed buffers and landscaping along the length of the northern boundary of the property; energy, water, and sewer demands; intentions of existing building and timing of demolition; parking overflow into adjacent neighborhoods and stacking in the public right-of-way; elevations from Winchester Street and the request for artist’s rendering; appropriate stormwater, sediment control, and boundary line adjustments; and ARB approvals.

This Special Use Permit application is the opportunity for the applicant to bring the last 37 years of property uses up to date. Similar SUPs in recent years have included notes on SUP Plans that include number of students, parking calculations, stacking and movement of vehicles, stormwater locations, dimensions, refuse locations and screening, and acknowledgement of the waivers that will be required as part of the Site Plan approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission continue the Public Hearing on SUP 23-01 St John Catholic Church.

Suggested Motions

1. I move that the Planning Commission recommend approval of SUP 23-1, St John Catholic Church, to Town Council to amend the approved SUP in June 3, 1986, to allow for the 13,000 square foot accessory use building the church and school, subject to the draft Conditions of Approval dated June 20, 2023, sheets 1 through 4 of the Special Use Permit Plan created by Carson Land Consultants dated February 10, 2023 and revised through May 30, 2023.

OR

2. I move that the Planning Commission forward SUP 23-1, St John the Evangelist to the next Planning Commission meeting.

OR

3. I move an alternative motion.

OR

4. I move to recommend denial of SUP 23-01 to the Town Council for the following reasons...

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment A – Maps
2. Attachment B – May 13, 2023, Staff Analysis
3. Attachment C – May 30, 2023 Special Use Permit Plan
4. Attachment D – June 20, 2023 Draft Conditions of Approval
6. Attachment F – Statement of Justification
7. Attachment G – Overall Site Access Plan
8. Attachment H – March 23, 2023/Revised April 27, 2023 Comment Response Letter

9. Attachment I – Applicant Draft Conditions and Town Council 1986 Meeting Minutes
10. Attachment J – Artist Renderings from Winchester Street
11. Attachment K – Staff Presentation from May 16, 2023 Public Hearing