



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of May 22, 2010**

**DATE:** May 14, 2010

**SUBJECT:** SP #331 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT, PPF OFF 950 N Glebe Road, LLC, temporary conversion of 4,363 sq ft from retail to a commercial use limited to: institution of an educational nature, conversion of the entire sixth floor office space to educational use, and associated signage; 950 North Glebe Road (RPC# 14-053-057).

**Applicant:**

PPF OFF 950 N Glebe Road, LLC

**By:**

Nan E. Walsh  
Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich & Walsh  
2200 Clarendon Blvd., 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Arlington, VA 22201

**C. M. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Approve the site plan amendment for temporary conversion of approximately 4,363 sq ft of ground floor retail to a commercial use limited to: institution of an educational nature with a review by the County Board in five (5) years (May 2015), subject to all previously approved conditions and five (5) new conditions (#76, #77, #78, #79 and #80).
2. Approve the conversion of sixth floor office space to educational use and associated ground floor sign.

**ISSUES:** This is a request for a temporary conversion of ground floor retail space to educational use, conversion of sixth floor office space to educational use and approval of a sign. The proposed sign's size does not conform to the comprehensive sign plan for the project; the sign is, however, consistent with the Zoning Ordinance.

County Manager: BMD/GA

Staff: Marco Antonio Rivero, DCPHD, Planning Division  
Jennifer Fioretti, DES, Transportation Division

PLA-5580

44.

**SUMMARY:** This is a Site Plan Amendment request for a temporary conversion of ground floor retail space to educational use and sixth floor office space to educational use for The George Washington University. Following the completion of construction for the Regent office building in 2007, the 4,363 sq ft ground floor retail space has remained vacant. Adjacent properties are planned for redevelopment including SP #401 (Peck/Staples/Jordan Manor) which is partially under construction. The development will significantly contribute to future commercial/retail activity on the west side of North Glebe Road.

The applicant is requesting to convert existing sixth floor office space to educational use and to install a new wall sign directly above three of the five retail window partitions on the ground floor retail space. There are no issues regarding the conversion of office space to educational use on the sixth floor. The conversion of retail space to educational use on the ground floor however, is inconsistent with long-term goals for this area. Nevertheless, the proposed temporary conversion of this space would ensure that active uses occupy the approved retail space until market conditions allow for greater retail development. At the end of five (5) years, the County Board may reevaluate continuing the temporary, ground floor educational use operation in approved retail space. The applicant has agreed to a storefront transparency condition and public/community use of the space. The proposed sign is larger than called for in the project's comprehensive plan. However, the sign conforms to Zoning Ordinance requirements and remaining retail sign area is available for other tenants under the building's comprehensive sign plan. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the Site Plan Amendment with a County Board review in five (5) years (May 2015), subject to all previously approved conditions and five (5) new conditions, and approval for the conversion of sixth floor office space to educational use and associated sign.

**BACKGROUND:** The request to temporarily convert approximately 4,363 sq ft of retail to educational use and to convert sixth floor office space to educational use, within the Regent office building in Ballston. The Site Plan Amendment for construction of the Regent office building was approved in June 2003 and was completed in 2007. A majority of the building's ground floor space of 14,401 sq ft was approved for retail use. There is currently one retail tenant, First Citizens Bank, which takes up 3,246 sq ft of space on the ground floor area adjacent to the proposed marketing center and classroom space for The George Washington University. This bank received their Certificate of Occupancy in January 2009.

The following provides additional information about the subject site and location:

Site: Located at 950 North Glebe Road, the site is bound as follows:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| To the north: | Fairfax Drive and the Marymount University Building, high-rise office and residential buildings.                  |
| To the west:  | Hotel and office uses adjacent to the site, with residential uses and Interstate 66.                              |
| To the east:  | North Glebe Road and the Arlington Gateway site plan (SP #331).   |
| To the south: | 801, 851, and 901 North Glebe Road. (Arlington Gateway site plan). Single-family detached homes to the southwest. |

Zoning: The site is zoned “C-O 2.5” Commercial Office Building, Hotel, and Apartment District.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as mixed “High-Medium” Residential and “Medium” Office-Apartment-Hotel.

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Bluemont Civic Association, and is proximate to the Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association. Staff contacted the Civic Associations for these neighborhoods and the Ballston Partnership regarding the proposed Site Plan Amendment. All associations including the Ballston Partnership have expressed their support for the Site Plan Amendment. Members of the Bluemont and Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Associations raised questions concerning parking for the building, as well as wanting greater public accessibility to the temporarily converted ground floor retail space.

**DISCUSSION:** The following discusses the three (3) proposed changes.

1) Ground Floor Space: The 4,363 sq ft ground floor retail space at The Regent office building has been vacant since construction of the building was completed in 2007. There have been various efforts to pre-lease the space for retail use during construction and subsequent efforts to market the space for retail use in the years that followed, but the space still remained vacant. The proposed temporary conversion for educational use would utilize the ground floor space as a marketing center for GWU. It will also contain a classroom space and conference room spaces which would be located in the areas immediately adjacent to the retail windows. There would also be deans, faculty and other staff office spaces located within the interior portion of the ground floor space. This temporary use provides an alternative means to activate the street frontage along North Glebe Road.

The marketing and promotional activities will be conducted Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and on Saturdays with limited hours, which would create pedestrian traffic and activity for the area. In order to encourage community use of the ground floor space, the applicant has agreed to a condition that will allow the civic associations to access the ground floor classroom and conference room spaces during two (2) evenings out of the month for community meetings and/or other activities when GWU related classes or activities are not being conducted.

The applicant has also agreed to a condition requiring that the ground floor space remain 80 percent transparent, to ensure activity is visible from the street, and to a condition for installing two power doors on the front entrances of the marketing center and the classroom space located on the ground floor. In an effort to promote public transportation to the site, the applicant has agreed to include within their marketing and other promotional materials the use of public transportation through Metrorail, Metrobus, ART-Arlington Transit, and other modes. These materials will be readily available within the GWU marketing center and throughout their ground floor and sixth floor spaces.

The proposed GWU facility on ground floor retail space does not meet the objectives of the *Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor Retail Action Plan* and is inconsistent with County policy for locating

retail along major commercial streets. The *Retail Action Plan* designates this portion of the site’s frontage along North Glebe Road as a location for “concentrations of large format retailers along pedestrian friendly major arterials and regional or sub-regional shopping centers”. A private university is not considered a large format retailer according to the definition provided in the *Retail Action Plan*. However, given the temporary nature of the proposed ground floor use, the public/community opportunities that will be provided by this space, and the existing, other educational and retail uses near 950 North Glebe Road, staff believes this use will generate pedestrian friendly activity along this site and will be beneficial for the site’s overall development. Also, as properties on the south and west sides of North Glebe Road begin to develop including SP #401 (Peck/Staples/Jordan Manor) which is partially under construction, retail development will become more conducive to the area. At the end of five (5) years, the County Board may reevaluate the temporary, ground floor educational use based on the commercial/retail development generated from new development near this site. A five (5) year review on the temporary conversions of retail space for educational uses is consistent with previous practice. In April 2009, a Site Plan Amendment was approved for SP #328 (1515 North Courthouse Road) allowing for 2,430 sq ft of ground floor retail space to be converted to educational use for Troy University, with a review in five (5) years.

2) Sign: The applicant is proposing to install a wall sign located directly above three of the five retail window partitions on their proposed space. Specific details for this sign are included in the following table, and a visual representation of the sign is attached to this report.

	Dimensions	Total Sign Area	Allowed within Comprehensive Sign Plan?	Dimensions Allowed within Comprehensive Sign Plan	Total Area Allowed within Comprehensive Sign Plan	Section of Arlington County Zoning Ordinance Affected
<b>Proposed Wall Sign:</b>	1.42' x 39.92'	56.6 sq ft	No	Sign "Type B": 8.66' x 1.33'	11.51 sq ft	34.G.1

The proposed backlit, channel letter sign will measure 1.42’ x 39.92’ with a total sign area of 56.6 square feet and will read “The George Washington University”. The linear frontage of the proposed space is 75.5’. The sign will be mounted 7.5” away from the building façade. The proposed sign does not conform to the current comprehensive sign plan for 950 North Glebe Road which allows retail tenant signs of up to 8.66’ x 1.33’ or 11.51 square feet. The comprehensive sign plan allows for a total of 178.73 square feet of signage area, 109.73 square feet is already used by the Regent office building’s identification signs and the First Citizens Bank wall sign. This leaves 69 square feet of retail signage which is more than the proposed 56.6 square foot sign requested by GWU.

Given the linear frontage of the proposed space and the total sign area permitted for retail/commercial tenants, a wall sign of this size could be approved under Section 34 of the Zoning Ordinance and would be consistent with the standards of the *Sign Guidelines for Site*

*Plan Buildings* if the proposed use was a traditional commercial use.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, staff supports approval of the proposed wall sign for GWU.

3) Conversion of Sixth Floor Office Space: The proposed sixth floor office space for educational use will contain up to 17 classrooms and will accommodate approximately 300 students during evening and daytime hours and throughout the year with classes in the fall, spring and summer semesters. Approximately, 30-40 faculty and staff would use the facility regularly each week. Additional information is attached to this report regarding the use of space for The George Washington University. There are no issues with the university's occupying the sixth floor space.

Parking for the proposed use will be accommodated within the existing office building garage, which is open to the public during evening and weekend hours. Condition #62 requires that the first level of the parking garage be available to the public after regular business hours. After hours, all three (3) levels of the parking garage are open to the public. For those individuals who drive to the site, parking will be available within the garage. Faculty, staff, and students may elect to purchase a monthly parking permit (which is currently done with office tenants) or park at the hourly/daily rate in the garage. GWU will be identifying other parking options in the area and discouraging parking in the adjacent residential neighborhoods. The surrounding streets west of North Glebe Road have residential permit parking weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**CONCLUSION:** The proposed temporary conversion of retail space to educational use provides an immediate practical alternative until sites located on the west and south sides of North Glebe Road develop and become more conducive to ground floor retail uses. Even though the proposed educational use for the ground floor retail space is not consistent with the existing *Retail Action Plan*, this temporary use will allow for street and pedestrian activity and will also provide for a variety of public/community opportunities. The applicant has also agreed to maintain a transparent storefront, providing a visually active streetscape for pedestrians. The size of the proposed sign does not conflict with the remaining retail sign area available under the building's comprehensive sign plan. Therefore, staff recommends approval of approximately 4,363 sq ft of ground floor retail to a commercial use limited to: institution of an educational nature with a review by the County Board in five (5) years (May 2015), subject to all previously approved conditions and five (5) new conditions, and approval for the conversion of sixth floor office space to educational use, and associated sign.

**The following conditions apply to the George Washington University at the Regent office building at 950 North Glebe Road only:**

76. The applicant agrees that the temporary conversion of approximately 4,363 square feet of retail space (as shown on the floor plan, "Option B" dated March 10, 2010) to use by an institution of an educational nature shall be reviewed by the County Board in five (5) years (May 2015). At the time of review, the County Board will have the opportunity to

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<sup>1</sup> Section 34.G.1 of the Zoning Ordinance states: "On the walls of commercial buildings in all "C" and "M" Districts, up to three (3) signs for each tenant, up to a maximum total sign area of sixty (60) square feet per tenant, or a total sign area of one (1) square foot per linear foot of the tenant's frontage, whichever is greater. In addition, each tenant may have one (1) flat sign with two (2) faces mounted perpendicular to the building wall with a maximum sign area of three (3) square feet on each face".

determine the continuation of this use or if the space shall revert to retail use, with no further action by the County Board.

77. The applicant agrees to share proposed ground floor classroom and conference room spaces for public (civic association) meetings, workgroups, forums or other such activities. This space shall be made available to the public for two (2) days out of each month between the hours of 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and only when university classes and marketing activities are not being conducted at the subject space.
78. The applicant agrees to install two (2) sets of power doors at the two (2) front entrances of the affected ground floor spaces. One set will be located at the main entrance of the proposed marketing center space and the second set will be located at the proposed classroom space, next to the proposed marketing center.
79. The applicant agrees to include within their marketing and other promotional materials, the promotion of public transportation to their location at 950 North Glebe Road. The applicant will provide marketing materials encouraging students, faculty, staff, and visitors to use alternative modes of transportation (Metrorail, Metrobus, ART-Arlington Transit) and other forms of public transportation. Materials will also identify other parking options in the area (excluding those within the adjacent residential neighborhoods). Materials such as maps, schedules, and brochures will be readily available at the marketing center and throughout the spaces within the ground floor and sixth floor university spaces.
80. The applicant agrees that the portion of the retail storefront windows of the ground floor space (4,363 square feet) that is located between three and eight feet from existing grade, shall be at least 80 percent transparent, with a final window design plan to be approved by the County Manager or his designee as consistent with this condition, prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. The purpose of this condition is to allow pedestrians to view the activity within the space and to allow persons within the space to view activity on the sidewalk and street. "Transparency" shall mean using glass or other transparent exterior material offering a view into an area of the space where human activity normally occurs and shall not be satisfied by views into areas blocked by display cases, the rear of shelving, interior walls, blinds, or the like.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

February 5, 1974	Deferred rezoning request (Z-2026-74-2) from “C-2”, “C-3” to “C-O” and related site plan to the June 1, 1974 meeting.
June 1, 1974	Granted rezoning (Z-2026-74-2) to “C-O” and approved related site plan subject to conditions.
August 2, 1975	Extended site plan approval (Z-2026-74-2) from June 1, 1975 to June 1, 1976.
August 31, 1976	Accepted withdrawal of site plan (Z-2026-74-2).
July 16 1998	Approved Rezoning request (Z-2446-98-1) for 2014 and 2018 Clarendon Boulevard and identified as Real Property Code numbers 17-012-010 and 17-012-111 are hereby reclassified from zoning district from “C-2” Service Commercial - Community Business District, to “C-O” Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts.  Approved Site Plan (SP #328) for a 257,110 square foot office/retail building (associated requests for variation to building height, parking, coverage, setbacks, and for storage in the garage to be excluded from floor area ratio calculations) at 2014 and 2018 Clarendon Boulevard and 1515 North Court House Road, subject to the conditions set forth in an excerpt from the July 16, 1998 Board minutes.
January 1, 2001	Approved a site plan amendment for two rooftop signs including one rooftop sign reading “Sapient” accompanied by the Sapient logo of a total of approximately 72 square feet, and one rooftop sign reading “washingtonpost.com” of a total of approximately 120 square feet, both located higher than 35 feet from the ground floor of the building and illuminated.
March 12, 2005	Deferred a site plan amendment for a temporary sales and leasing office to the April 16, 2005 County Board meeting.
April 16, 2005	Carried over a site plan amendment for a temporary sales and leasing office to the May 7, 2005 County Board meeting.
May 7, 2005	Approved a site plan amendment for a temporary sales and leasing office for a period of four (4) years (May 2009).

November 15, 2008

Approved a site plan amendment for a 39.9 square foot rooftop sign for Solers, Inc., pursuant to all previously approved conditions, and three (3) new conditions (#73, #74, and #75).





## REVISED

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING USE BY GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

950 N. Glebe Road

*Updated April 7, 2010*

#### Previous location

- 21,228 rentable square feet of fourth floor of 3601 Wilson Boulevard (Virginia Square)

#### Proposal

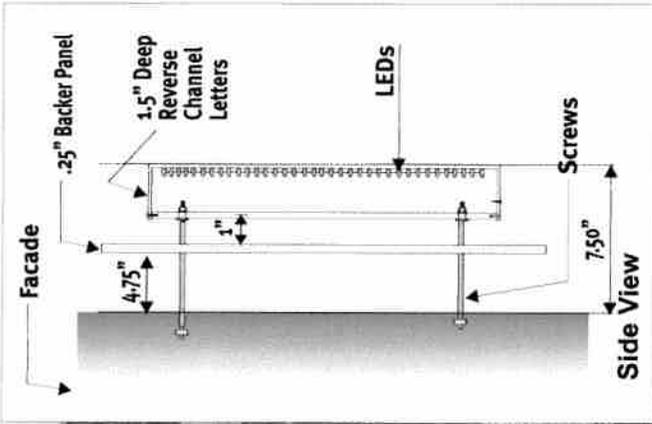
- Upper floor use of up to 17 classrooms
- Approximately 300 students per day during evening and daytime hours.
- Initially offering 14 different degree and certificate program areas, with many very unique degrees (opportunities for the community).
- Approximately 30-40 faculty and staff would use the facility regularly each week
- Classes held all year – Fall, Summer, Spring – semesters, so there would be continuous year-long activity.
- Full-time faculty with teaching and research interests relevant to the area will utilize the facility.
- GWU is working on an articulation agreement with NVCC that will allow their students to complete the last 2 years of the bachelor's degree in Integrated Information, Science, and Technology with GW (relevant because of their Arlington location next door.)
- Marketing and promotional events within the first floor space on a regular basis, driving external traffic/people into the facility and surrounding amenities.
- Anticipated hours
  - Marketing Center (1<sup>st</sup> floor) – Monday through Friday 8:00am or 8:30am until 10:00pm – Saturday limited hours.
  - Classes (1<sup>st</sup> floor and 6<sup>th</sup> floor) – varies based on exact class schedule but generally – Monday through Friday 4:00pm until 10:00pm – Saturday 8:00am until 4:00pm.
- Signage Information (see exhibit)
  - Linear Frontage – approximately 75.5 feet
  - Proposed Signage – approximately 56.6 square feet – approximately 1.5 feet x approximately 39.97 feet

Note: The linear footage of GW space is 75.5' and the sign area is 56.6 sq.ft. (dimension on sign exhibit: 1'5" x 39' - 11 5/8")  
 Total Sign area: 56.6 Sq Ft.

Ltr Hgt: 39'-11 5/8"



Ltr Hgt: 1'-5"



PROJECT: **GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

DRAWING NAME: **Exterior Signage.cdr/pg1**

REVISION #: **04.12.10- JBK**

APPROVED BY:  
THIS IS A NO CONTRACT

DATE:

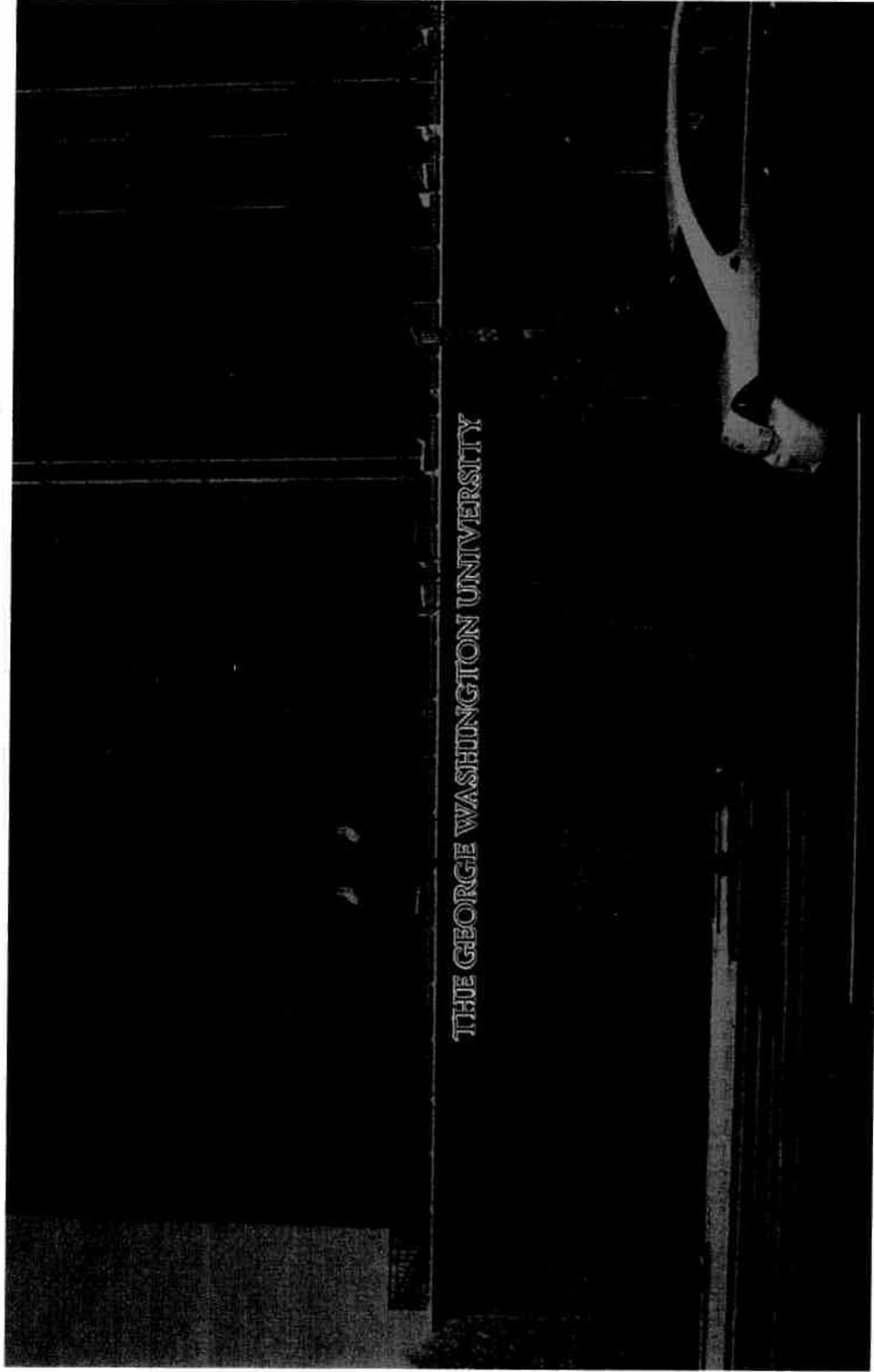
DATE: **04/02/10**

SCALE: **3/32" = 1'**

DRAWN BY: **DH**

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Note: The linear frontage of GW space is 75.5' and the sign area is 56.6 sq.ft. (dimension on sign exhibit: 1'5" x 39' - 11 5/8")  
 Total Sign area: 56.6 Sq Ft.



Ltr Hgt: 1'-5"



PROJECT: **GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**  
 DRAWING NAME: **Exterior Signage.cdr/pgz**  
 REVISION #: **04.12.10- JBK**

DATE: **04/02/10**  
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DATE

APPROVED BY:  
Print Name and Title

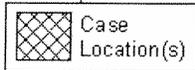


**SP#331**  
**950 N Glebe Rd**  
**RPC: 14-053-057**

Note: These maps are for property location assistance only.  
 They may not represent the latest survey and other information.



Not To Scale



Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development

Planning Division