

## DRAFT LETTER OF INTENT

The Catholic Diocese of Madison, as property owner, and Saint Ambrose Academy Inc., as tenant, is applying for an amendment to the existing Planned Development – Specific Implementation Plan zoning at Holy Name Heights, formerly the Bishop O'Connor Catholic Pastoral Center, located at 702 S. High Point Road, City of Madison, the PD-SIP dated March 20, 2015 and recorded in the Dane County Register of Deeds on April 10, 2015, as Document No. 5142076.

If approved, the amendment to the PD-SIP would allow Saint Ambrose Academy Inc. to convert a total of 23,730 square feet of building interior office space (8,644 first floor square footage and 15,086 second floor square footage) previously used by Catholic Charities, along with building interior gym and pool space and exterior athletic field space on a non-exclusive basis, to primary and secondary school utilization. The physical changes to the existing facilities are quite minor: renovation of existing office space into general and specialty classrooms and accessory spaces for students and teachers grades 6th-12th, including but not limited to, new walls, finishes, ceilings, and HVAC upgrades as necessary. In addition to relatively minor interior and exterior changes per the application plans, the PD-SIP Exhibit A – Permitted Uses Civic and Institutional Uses would be amended to allow for School, Public and Private in addition to Places of Worship and Community Event.

St. Ambrose Academy is a NAPCIS accredited 6-12 Catholic school whose mission is to assist parents in the formation of their children by providing a classical education rooted in the Catholic faith.

Upon move in at Holy Name Heights or shortly thereafter:

Grade	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Enrollment	21	22	22	38	37	31	24

Full time faculty/staff: 15

Part time faculty/staff: 13

At the five year make at Holy Name Heights or shortly thereafter:

Grade	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Enrollment	40	40	40	40	40	40	40

Full time faculty: 17

Part time faculty: 10

Full time staff: 6

Normal academic school hours would be between 8:00 am and 3:15 pm Monday through Friday with occasional weekend and after school programs. The after-school programs would end approximately by 7:00 pm. Summer school or summer camp type programs may be offered for 2 to 3 weeks Monday through Friday from approximately 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

No additional parking for cars or bikes are anticipated. St. Ambrose would have exclusive use of an existing 41 parking stall on the northeast side of the parking lot and would have use as needed of any other additional parking spaces. There are 66 open bike parking spaces, 28 on the classroom side of the building. Based upon prior demand, that should be more than sufficient.

Saint Ambrose held a tenants meeting at the Center on April 27 2023. Attached for additional information is the Post-Town Hall & Survey FAQs: Joint Exploration for St. Ambrose Academy to Become an Anchor Tenant at HNH.

Thank you for consideration of our request to expand the uses at this multi-use religious facility.



## **Post-Town Hall & Survey FAQs: Joint Exploration for St. Ambrose Academy to Become an Anchor Tenant at HNH**

- 1. Why does St. Ambrose Academy wish to relocate at Holy Name Heights campus rather than have its own building and campus?**

There are numerous and significant benefits in choosing to partner with the Diocese in this building as a long-term anchor tenant. The proximity affords St. Ambrose Academy an opportunity to partner ever more closely with the bishop, diocesan leadership, and clergy in our shared mission to provide children an opportunity to grow in virtue in a Christ-centered environment. As a “20-year-young” institution, this close bond would substantially enhance community awareness and goodwill towards our school. The pastoral setting is ideal for the dedicated work of study and formation with our young people, and the location is conveniently accessible. The site, beautifully preserved from the days it operated as a high school seminary, offers comprehensive and highly desirable amenities, including the large worship space, gymnasium, and ball fields. Importantly, we estimate the long-term cost of renting vs. owning to be advantageous to the sustainability and growth of our operation.

- 2. What hours would the school operate, and how long is the school year?**

The school day is between 8:00 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. Monday through Friday. Student drop-off is between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and pick-up is 3:15 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. The school year begins the day after Labor Day and ends the week before Memorial Day. During summer, a handful of staff and faculty administrators would continue to work from their school office during the day. The school offers two weeklong summer educational camps for up to 15-20 students each week.

- 3. How large is the school enrollment?**

The school currently has 165 students enrolled in grades 6-12. Enrollment is projected to grow over time but will be capped at a maximum of 280 students.

- 4. Where would school staff, students, and visitors park? How would they come and go, and when?**

The proposal anticipates that the second row of the northeast parking lot would be reserved for school parking. Approximately 40 stalls are used during a typical school day between staff, high school students able to drive, and parent or volunteer visitors. After school or occasional weekend

activities may be slightly more or less. The driveway circle near the main entrance and a route through the northeast lot leading to the stalls adjacent to the sidewalk would be used for morning student drop-off and afternoon pick-up. Families would use either High Point or Junction roads for entry and exit, depending on preferred routes. We do not offer open campus lunch, so traffic would be limited to the morning drop-off times between 7:30 – 8:00 a.m. and 3:15 – 3:45 p.m., a low number of volunteers and part-time teachers during the day, and occasional offsite appointments for students. Additional signage may need to be added regarding parking restrictions, speed limits, and any other matters requiring special attention.

**5. Would the school be isolated from the rest of the building?**

The school's primary educational activities would occur on segregated floors one and two in the northeast side of the building, which are currently occupied by Catholic Charities. Greater than 85% of the school day is engaged in instruction and would be contained on these two floors. The gymnasium would be used for physical education class and lunch recess during inclement weather. The practice fields would also be used for recess and physical education.

**6. Where would students be allowed to go within the building?**

At the beginning and end of the school day, students would pass through the main entrance to and from the two restricted school floors under staff supervision. During the school day, students would traverse common areas under staff supervision to the oratory (chapel) for worship, to the gymnasium for physical education, or to the fields outside for play. Students would stay within the boundaries specified in a lease contract. They would not be in any areas not agreed upon for school use: apartment hallways, resident garden, fitness center, garage, common areas, and courtyards. These expectations would be clearly communicated in Family and Student Handbooks, and any noncompliance would be dealt with according to disciplinary policy.

**7. What entrances, hallways, and staircases would the school use?**

Students would use the main entrance for morning arrival and afternoon departure, passing through to and from the secure school entrance (the current Catholic Charities main entrance on floor one). The school is investigating potential to add a new staircase within the segregated floors for self-contained travel, thereby leaving other stairwell use unnecessary except in the event of an emergency. Otherwise, the middle stairwell in the northeast wing could serve the occasional travel needs between the two floors, under supervision. The north side entrance would be used to and from the fields during the day for physical education or play, and to gain access from the outside to the gymnasium and renovated swimming pool area, once complete. School visitors would not have access to the rest of the building from this entrance.

**8. Would the school use the elevator? Would the elevator and staircases be access controlled?**

The school would not require regular use of the elevator except in the case of a student or staff member with a temporary or permanent disability. No such case exists today. Occasional use may arise to transport heavy or awkward items for use on one of the two school floors. Current access control technology in the northeast wing and throughout the building would be reviewed to maximize the privacy and security for both residents and school members.

**Would the school be using the oratory chapel?**

Being a Catholic school, fostering a vibrant spiritual life incorporating prayer and the Sacraments is essential for the formation of our students. We anticipate all-school liturgies in the oratory chapel three days per week following homeroom to begin our school day, starting at 8:10 a.m. School liturgies would be separate from the current diocesan schedule of daily noon Masses, Monday through Friday.

**9. Would additional safety/security measures be put in place and, if so, would they impact residents' ability to move through the building and grounds?**

Additional safety and security measures would be implemented for the school areas. These measures would be determined during the project design process with the architect and engineers. These new safety and security measures would not impact the residents' ability to circulate through the building and grounds.

**10. What is the plan for the unused swimming pool area?**

The school intends to renovate that area into a multipurpose room with a small kitchen. This area could be made available for diocesan use when not being used by the school. Separate doors would be added for emergency evacuation purposes.

**11. Would residents be able to use the gymnasium and fields?**

The gym and fields would continue to be shared when the school is not using these spaces for physical education, athletics, and other infrequent recreational activities. Currently, there are seven physical education classes during the school week spread out between Monday – Thursday. After school or early evening athletic practices are expected. St. Ambrose basketball and cross-country teams have been practicing at Holy Name Heights for years, so this is nothing new. A schedule of gymnasium and field use can be posted for resident awareness. The proposal calls for the locker rooms and gymnasium storage room to be dedicated for school use.

**12. Besides sports, what other extracurricular activities would be offered to students after school or on weekends?**

Our school offers an award-winning musical theater program for students to develop public performance skills, with rehearsals immediately after school and on Saturday mornings. The actual performances are held offsite at a local theatre. We also offer debate and forensics opportunities, strategy board game sessions, and periodic learning opportunities such as computer programming. These activities occur immediately after school for those who participate.

**13. How late do practices usually run into the evening?**

Most athletic practices and drama rehearsals are completed by 7:00 p.m. or earlier.

**14. As enrollment grows, does the school anticipate offering more sports and/or increasing use of the gym and practice fields either for practice or competition?**

As enrollment grows, we anticipate being able to offer more stand-alone athletic opportunities for our students on-site, such as volleyball and baseball.

**15. Would there be further efforts to mitigate noise between the proposed school floors and the apartments above and below?**

Additional sound testing would be conducted in an architectural review, both regarding sound and vibration transmission between the proposed school floors and the floors with apartments above and below, as well as in the gymnasium. Appropriate state-of-the-art acoustical mitigation treatments would be specified and implemented.

**16. Would the school use either of the courtyards for play, recess, or gym?**

The school would not use the courtyards for instructional or recreational use. The school may request rare use of a courtyard to host an evening parent or donor appreciation function, and only with appropriate permission regarding availability in light of other tenants' needs for the space.

**17. Would the school have regular truck deliveries?**

The school typically has only small package and mail deliveries and has no need for a loading dock, pallet trucks, etc. The school has no hot lunch program, which would require larger loads.

**18. Would the school have its own receptacles for garbage?**

Like Blue Plate Catering, the school would have its own receptacles for garbage and recycling at a yet to be determined location that would not inconvenience residents.

**19. Would residents be required to undergo specific training per diocesan requirements for adult volunteers?**

Only adults with access to the segregated school floors in either an employed or volunteer fashion would be required to meet the diocesan requirements for child "safe environment" standards.

**20. How would monthly school fire and other safety drills be managed? Would they impact residents?**

Per the city fire marshal and representatives from the fire alarm equipment company, the current fire alarm system can be configured (zoned) such that fire drills can be isolated to the two segregated school floors and affect only the school occupants. No other persons in the building would receive alarm notification during a drill and would not need to evacuate during a drill. Additionally, the school intends to use the fortified gymnasium structure as an assembly point for severe weather drills – again, not affecting residents.

**21. Is it better to add more apartments rather than adding a school?**



The Diocese of Madison will decide whether to invite St. Ambrose Academy to become an anchor tenant, impacted by historical (legacy), mission, and economic considerations.

Unlike the addition of more apartments, the school's presence would largely be limited to daytime, weekday hours and only from September through May. This solution provides a long-term permanent plan for the school by forging a unique partnership between the Diocese and St. Ambrose which allows both entities to be good stewards of what has been entrusted to them and to support one another's mission. It is very much in line with the "recalibration of resources" proposed by the Diocese's *Into the Deep* strategic plan for greater evangelization for generations to come.

**22. Would the addition of the school affect or increase my rent?**

The addition of a reliable and long-term tenant such as St. Ambrose Academy would contribute to the overall economic stability of the entire Holy Name Heights community. It would also be a significant benefit having another "good neighbor" paying close attention to the safety and harmony of the campus. The presence of the school at Holy Name Heights shouldn't have any direct effect on either the residential apartment rents, or the rent of the other current business tenants (i.e. the Diocese of Madison, Blue Plate Catering, etc.)

**23. When would construction renovation begin if the school becomes a tenant?**

The school is currently working with an architect and contractor to define a construction schedule and budget which would allow for occupancy in the Fall of 2024. If that is feasible, full construction on the two floors is estimated to begin in January 2024. A basic construction timeline of details and periodic updates would be shared with residents for awareness.

**24. What measures would be taken to mitigate construction noise, mess, and inconvenience to the residents?**

Construction would be limited to daytime hours only, and only professional, licensed contractors would be hired who have the experience to control construction activity and keep impacts to a minimum (noise, safety, traffic, and mess). Restrictions would be implemented regarding workers' vehicles, equipment placement and delivery of materials to lessen the impact upon residents during the construction period.

***If you have additional questions, please email Diane Marsland at [diane.marsland@ambroseacademy.org](mailto:diane.marsland@ambroseacademy.org).***