GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2003 SEP 23 PM 2:43

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Andrew Altman
Director

DATE: September 19, 2003

SUBJECT: BZA Application 16977- Request filed by Greenstein, DeLorme & Luchs, P.C. for a **special exception** and **three area variances** to expand an existing private school, proposed by Sheridan School, Inc. for 4400 36th Street, N.W.

APPLICATION
Application of Sheridan School, Inc. for:

Special Exception pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 206 and 3104.1 to for a private school to permit the:

1. Expansion of the existing school building by 1,200 gross square feet;
2. Reconfiguration of parking area and addition of four parking spaces along 36th Street;
3. Increase in the maximum number of students from 215 to 226; and
4. Increase the number of students in the summer educational program from 100 to a maximum of 225.

Three area variances pursuant to § 3103 and:

1. § 2117.4 from the requirement that each required parking space be accessible at all times directly from a street or alley:
2. § 2115.1 from the requirement that each required parking space be a minimum of nine feet wide and nineteen feet long; and
3. § 2101.1 from the requirement that elementary and junior high schools provide two parking spaces for every three teachers and other employees

for property located on the west side of 36th Street, the south side of Alton Place and the north side of Yuma Street, 4400 36th Street, N.W., Square 1968, Lot 10. The property is zoned R-2, one-family, semi-detached dwellings residence district.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION
The Office of Planning recommends approval of the application as submitted by the applicant.

BZA
Case No. 16977
Exhibit No. 49

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 16977
EXHIBIT NO. 49

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject property is currently permitted as a 215-student private school for kindergarten through eighth grade. This application requests:

- an increase in the student population by 11, or 5.1 percent, for a total of 226 students;
- an increase in the student population at the summer educational program from 100 to 226;
- an increase in the total gross floor area by 1,200 square feet or 4 percent (which will result in an increase in the lot occupancy from 31 percent to 31.8 percent),
- an increase in the FAR from 0.49 to 0.51, and
- a reconfiguration parking areas to increase the number of parking spaces on-site from 26 to 37 (a 42 percent increase) through the provision of tandem, compact and subcompact parking spaces.

The application indicates that this request is being made because the school would like to increase flexibility in its admissions process and to increase its revenue to finance the improvements to the school. The number of teachers is to remain the same.

Six building additions are proposed to extend the classrooms on the easternmost portion of the building, providing additional space in eight classrooms. Four of the classrooms are on the north side of the building, with two on the first floor and two on the second floor. The other four classrooms are on the south side of the building, also with two on each floor. The two on the first floor on the south side of the building will include doors that lead out into the existing outdoor play area.

The existing circular driveway on 36th Street will be converted to eight parking spaces (seven compact parking spaces and one handicapped accessible) with a walkway bisecting the spaces providing access to the building from the curb. On the north side of the walkway is a group of three compact parking spaces and one handicapped accessible space, and on the south side is a group of four compact parking spaces. The walkway is to be used as a drop-off point for students entering the school. The existing parking lot on Alton Place is to be expanded slightly to the south on the west side of the lot to allow for the provision of twelve tandem subcompact parking spaces, four compact spaces, one handicapped accessible space and twelve standard parking spaces. No visitor parking will be provided on-site. The total number of parking spaces provided on-site will be thirty-seven.

On May 21, 1963, the Board of Zoning Adjustment granted the establishment of "a private school for pre-school, kindergarten and grades 1 through 8 for Sheridan School..." subject to the following conditions:

a. "In compliance with the provisions of subparagraph (c) of paragraph 3101.41 of the Zoning Regulations pre-school and kindergarten students shall reside within a ten block radius of this school. Further, the number of such students shall not exceed 50.

b. "Appellant shall provide a landscaping and screening plan which shall stress permanent year-round planting particularly along the west side of the property. Screening materials and type of planting shall be designated on such plan. Approval thereof shall be required by this Board prior to permit issuance.

c. "The maximum number of students shall be 200.

d. "In the event the school abandons hired bus transportation service and substitutes therefor buses of its own, such buses shall be housed in a garage, the design and location of which shall require approval of this Board."

On December 5, 1979, the Board of Zoning Adjustment granted BZA Application No. 13089 to allow the addition "of two staff offices on the first floor and science laboratory on the second floor..."

On June 17, 1992, the Board of Zoning Adjustment granted BZA Application No. 15656 to allow an increase in the number of students from 200 to 215, a building addition containing classrooms, a library, a gymnasium and support facilities, subject to the following conditions:

1. "The layout of the addition shall be as shown on the plat marked as Exhibit No. 107C (Scheme B) of the record.

2. "The parking layout shall be as shown on the plat marked as Exhibit No. 107A (Scheme A) of the record.

3. "Landscaping shall be provided as shown on Exhibit No. 24 of the record. Additional landscaping shall be provided in the 15-foot strip of land directly abutting the gymnasium addition between the addition and the parking area along Alton Place, N.W. All landscaping shall be maintained in a healthy growing condition. There shall be flexibility in the final placement and types of trees to permit the applicant to address any specific concerns raised by the neighbors.

4. "The number of students shall not exceed 215, no more than 50 of which shall be kindergarten students.

5. "The hours of operation shall be between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

6. "Extracurricular activities shall be restricted to those customary to a kindergarten through eighth grade school. After-hours functions which would attract 100 persons or more shall be restricted to a maximum of 12 per year. During the course of such functions, entrance and exit shall be restricted to the main entrance located on 36th Street, N.W.

7. "The applicant shall not make the school available for commercial functions such as dances, concerts, or other events.

8. "No deliveries or trash collection shall occur before 7:00 a.m.; daily.

9. "All mechanical equipment associated with the central heating and cooling systems shall be located in the basement of the school.

10. "The applicant, in cooperation with the Advisory Neighborhood Commission, shall establish a community liaison group, and shall meet no fewer than four times per year. Notice of the meetings of the community liaison group shall be sent to all property owners within 200 feet of the site. The community liaison group shall be established for the purpose of discussion and resolution of any community concerns including, but not limited to the following: the conduct of the school's activities and operations; implementation of the drop-off and pick-up program; encouraging use of public transportation and carpooling by staff and students; and, compliance with the conditions of the Board's order.

11. "The applicant shall submit an annual report to the Zoning Administrator setting forth its ongoing compliance with the terms of this order. The applicant shall provide copies of such annual report to the Office of Planning, ANC 3F, and all members of the community liaison group."

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The property consists of Lot 10 of Square 1968, in the North West quadrant of the District. It is 70,980.66 square feet in area and 235 feet wide. The property has frontage on three streets: Alton Place, 36th Street and Yuma Street. On the fourth side (west) is a public alley along the southern half of the property, and an adjacent semi-detached dwelling on the northern half, fronting on Alton Street.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential, primarily developed with one-family detached and semi-detached dwellings. To the north, across Alton Place, and to the east, across 36th Street, are one-family detached dwellings within the R-1-B Zone District. To the south, across Yuma Street, are one–family detached dwellings within the R-2 Zone District. To the west, are one-family detached and semi-detached dwellings within the R-2 Zone District.

The main entrance to the building is from 36th Street. Vehicular access to the property is from Alton Street and 36th Street.

The site is developed with a two-story, 'L' shaped school building constructed on the northern and western portions of the site. In the northwest corner of the property is a 22-space parking lot, with two points of egress from Alton Place. A dumpster enclosure is located on the east side of the parking lot, between the building and the sidewalk.

On the east side of the building are six off-street parking spaces, in two groups of three on either side of the main entrance to the building. An outdoor play area is located south and east of the building, at the northwest corner of 36th and Yuma Street.

The southern portion of the site, along the Yuma Street frontage, is the most heavily landscaped portion of the property, including many trees. A row of shrubs buffers the existing parking lot on Alton Street.

The topography of the site slopes downward from the south to the north, resulting in the southern portion of the site south of the building and the outdoor play area being hilly. The remainder of the site, including the parking areas, is relatively level. Residences across Alton Place and Yuma Street from the subject property are at higher elevations than the school building and parking lots.

The area has been identified on the Generalized Land Use Map as low density residential, which is described as *"[s]ingle-family detached and semi-detached housing are the predominant uses."*

EXISTING ZONING
The subject property is zoned R-2, one-family, semi-detached residence district.

R-2 Residence Districts
"The R-2District consists of those areas that have been developed with one-family, semi-detached dwellings, and is designed to protect them from invasion by denser types of residential development. It shall be expected that these areas will continue to contain some small one-family detached dwellings." (§ 300.1)

RELIEF REQUESTED:

Special Exception pursuant to § 206– Private Schools and Staff Residences
Section 206 sets forth the specific criteria under which Private Schools may be permitted within a residential district. Those provisions are as follows:

> *206.1 Use as a private school, but not including a trade school, and residences for teachers and staff of a private school, shall be permitted in an R-1 District if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment in accordance with the conditions specified in §3108 of chapter 31 of this title, subject to the provisions of this section.*

This application is for the continuation of the existing private school, which is not a trade school, and an increase in the student population from 215 to 226. It is also to permit the summer educational program, which does not operate concurrently with the school, up to a maximum of 226 students, the same enrollment as the school.

> *206.2 The private school shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions.*

The private school, which has been operating at this location for almost forty years, will not become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic or number of students.

Noise

The academic school hours are from 8:25 AM to 3:30 PM with extended day hours from 7:45 to 6:00 PM. The existing BZA Order permits the school hours to be between 7:30 AM and 6:00 PM. The hours of operation coincide with standard school and work hours and should not result in a noise impact to the adjacent neighbors.

Number of Students

This application is for an increase in the maximum number students permitted at this existing private school by 11. The increase is small, amounting to only 5.1 percent of the total student population. In addition, as the summer educational program is no larger than the student population during the school year, it too will not cause the private school to become objectionable. The increase in the number of students is expected to be spread throughout the school and will not result in an increase in the number of teachers and other employees, and none of the students are old enough to drive.

Traffic

Based on review of The Sheridan School Transportation Study, July 30, 2003, prepared by Wells and Associates, LLC and submitted with the application, the intersections around the school all operate at Level of Service (LoS) A and an increase in enrollment to 226 students will be "inconsequential" and the intersections will "continue to operate at LoS A at all times of day" (page 13). The application has been referred to the District Department of Transportation for their review and recommendation.

Parking

The proposed reconfiguration of the parking areas is to accommodate more parking on-site, reducing the demand by the school for on-street parking, and thus its impact on adjoining and nearby properties.

206.3 Ample parking space, but not less than that required in chapter 21 of this title, shall be provided to accommodate the students, teachers, and visitors likely to come to the site by automobile.

No increase in parking is necessary as per § 2101.1 of the Zoning Regulations. Combined with the proposed increase in the number of parking spaces on-site, adequate parking will be available as defined by § 2101.1.

Variance relief pursuant to § 2117.4- Access, Maintenance, and Operation

"Except as provided in § 2117.15, each required parking space shall be accessible at all times directly from improved streets or alleys or shall be accessible from improved streets and alleys via graded and unobstructed driveways that form an all-weather impervious surface. Improved streets or alleys providing access to required parking spaces shall have a minimum width of ten feet (10 ft.) and be paved in compliance with the standards of the D.C. Department of Transportation."

Twelve of the parking spaces within the Alton Place parking lot are proposed to be tandem, with six of the spaces blocked by the other six. Although six of the spaces will not be accessible at all times directly from an improved street, they will be indirectly accessible. These spaces will be used by employees of the school only, and not by visitors. The school will maintain a system within its office allowing the vehicles to be moved when necessary.

The site is unique due to the exceptional slope and topography of the property. A practical difficulty would result for the school to provide all parking per Code. The school could not provide parking along the Yuma Street side of the site due to the slope and the existing playground. To provide an extended parking lot along either 36th Street or Alton Place would result in a practical difficulty for the applicant to meet the drop off, pick-up and circulations flow of the site.

Variance relief pursuant to § 2115.1- Size of Parking Spaces

> "Except as otherwise provided in this section, a required automobile parking space shall be a minimum of nine feet (9 ft.) in width and nineteen feet (19 ft.) in length, exclusive of access drives, aisles, ramps, columns, office or work areas and shall be striped according to the requirements of § 2117.3. Parking shall also be in compliance with the requirements of the District of Columbia Architectural Barriers Act of 1980, effective July 1, 1980."

The application is proposing 37 off-street parking spaces. Twenty-three of the proposed parking spaces, or 62 percent, are smaller than the minimum required parking space size of 9' by 19'. Eleven of the twenty-three spaces, or 30 percent, meet the minimum dimensions for compact spaces of 8' by 16' required by § 2115.

Section 2115.2 permits up to 40 percent of the parking spaces (when more than 25 spaces are provided) to be compact. The application complies with these sections.

The applicant is requesting a variance to provide:

- Twelve parking spaces at 8' by 15' 6". These spaces are smaller than the minimum size permitted for a compact parking space and will be provided as the twelve tandem parking spaces; and

The site is unique due to the exceptional slope and topography of the property. A practical difficulty would result for the school if required to provide all parking per Code. The school could not provide sufficient parking for the teachers and facility without extending the parking lot areas. Due to the slope and the existing playground, a parking lot could not be practically provided from Yuma Street, and to accommodate additional parking through an extended parking lot along either 36th Street or Alton Place would result in a practical difficulty for the applicant to meet the drop off, pick-up and circulations flow of the site.

All of the off-street parking spaces are intended for long-term parking by employees of the school, and not as high turnover spaces, such as in a retail center. The use of smaller spaces typically works best when turnover rates are low, as with employee parking for a school.

Variance relief pursuant to § 2101.1- Schedule of Requirements for Parking Spaces
"On and after May 12, 1958, all buildings or structures shall be provided with parking spaces as specified in the following table:"

USES	NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES REQUIRED
SCHOOLS	
Elementary and Junior High School:	
All Districts	2 for each 3 teachers and other employees

The application is proposing 37 off-street parking spaces, sufficient for a total of 55 teachers and other employees. The school currently has no more than 55 teachers and other employees. However, over the next ten years the school anticipates an increase in the number of teachers and other employees to 60. A variance is required in order to enable the school to increase its teachers and other staff when it is ready. The additional 5 teachers and staff will increase the parking requirement by 3 to 40. Therefore, this variance is to reduce the parking required from 40 to 37.

There is no additional area on-site that is available for parking due to the location of the existing building and parking lot, and the topography of the site on the south side of the property along Yuma Street. However, parking is permitted along the Yuma Street frontage of the subject property and most of the 36th Street frontage, providing adequate space for the three additional parking spaces. No parking is permitted on Alton Place along the subject property's frontage.

The site is unique due to the exceptional slope and topography of the property. A practical difficulty would result for the school if it were to meet the full parking requirements. The school could not provide sufficient parking for the teachers and facility without extending the parking lot areas. Due to the slope and the existing playground, a parking lot could not be practically provided from Yuma Street, and to accommodate additional parking through an extended parking lot along either 36th Street or Alton Place would result in a practical difficulty for the applicant to meet the drop off, pick-up and circulations flow of the site.

The variances can be granted without substantially impairing the intent and purpose of the zone district. The impact of the variances is contained within the site with no adverse impact on the adjoining neighborhood.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
This proposal is consistent with the following preface of the Ward 3 Element:

> *"Like many other areas, Ward 3 is primarily a residential sector of the District, rather than a center for commercial or industrial activity. Because of this, Ward 3's role in contributing to the District's economic development is limited to:*
>
> *(1) Maintaining existing commercial and institutional uses;"* (§1401.1(a))

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The attorney for the applicant has informed the Office of Planning that **ANC 3F** voted 6-0 in support of the application at their meeting on September 15, 2003. They have indicated a resolution, including conditions, will be submitted for the record.

AGENCY COMMENTS

Comments were requested from the District Department of Transportation, but none were received. They have stated that a separate report will be submitted.

CONCLUSION

The Office of Planning has reviewed the application in terms of the property's zoning, the intensity of use, the character of the neighborhood and the standards for special exception and variance relief. The use is a special exception which is presumed compatible subject to a finding of no adverse impact.

It is the Office of Planning's conclusion that the applicant has satisfactorily met the criteria for special exception relief of § 205, and variance relief of §§ 2117.4, 2115.1 and 2101.1 and *"that the relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zone plan as embodied in the Zoning Regulations and Map"* (§ 3103.2),

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Office of Planning recommends approval of the following:

Special Exception pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 206 and 3104.1 to for a private school to permit the:

1. Expansion of the existing school building by 1,200 gross square feet;
2. Reconfiguration of parking area and addition of four parking spaces along 36th Street;
3. Increase in the maximum number of students from 215 to 226; and
4. Increase the number of students in the summer educational program in excess of 100 up to a maximum of 225.

Three area variances pursuant to § 3103 and:

5. § 2117.4 from the requirement that each required parking space be accessible at all times directly from a street or alley, allowing for 12 tandem parking spaces;
6. § 2115.1 from the requirement that each required parking space be a minimum of nine feet wide and nineteen feet long, allowing for 11 parking spaces at 8' by 16' and 12 parking spaces at 8' by 15'6"; and
7. § 2101.1 from the requirement that elementary and junior high schools provide two parking spaces for every three teachers and other employees, reducing the parking requirement for 60 teachers and other staff from 40 to 37.

AA/sjm$_{AICP}$



Feature Key

Zoning Boundaries

Square Index

Ortho-Photography was taken in 1999.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Application No. 16977

DC Office of Planning
September 12, 2003

Scale 1:1012

25 0 25 50 75 100 Feet

N

Attachment 1