



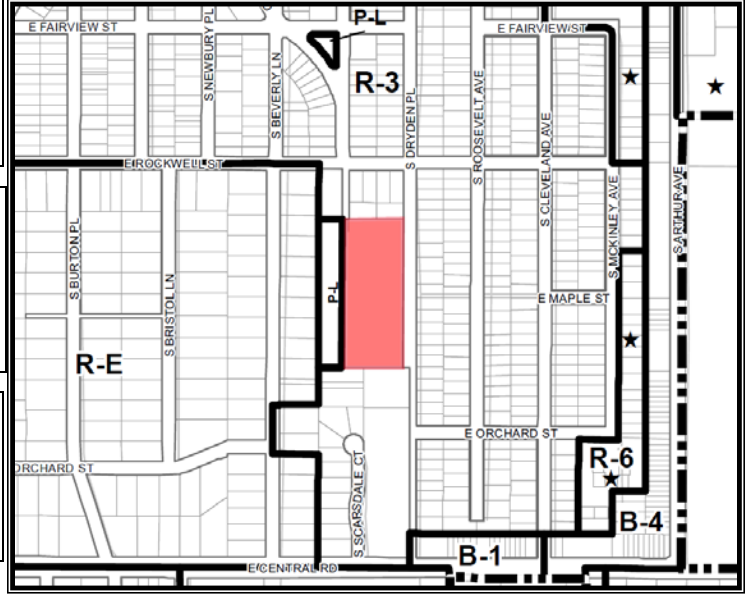
VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS STAFF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Project Number: PC #22-017
Project Title: Dryden School Building Expansion
Address: 722 S. Dryden Place
PIN: 03-32-409-021

To: Plan Commission
Prepared By: Sam Hubbard, Development Planner
Meeting Date: January 25, 2023
Date Prepared: January 20, 2023

Petitioner: Arlington Heights School District 25
Address: 1200 South Dunton Avenue
Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Existing Zoning: R-3, One-Family Dwelling District
Comprehensive Plan: Schools



SURROUNDING LAND USES

Direction	Existing Zoning	Existing Use	Comprehensive Plan
North	R-3, One-Family Dwelling District	Single-Family Homes	Single-Family Detached
South	R-3, One-Family Dwelling District	Dryden Park	Single-Family Detached, Institutional
East	R-3, One-Family Dwelling District	Single-Family Homes	Single-Family Detached
West	P-L, Public Land District	Dryden Park	Parks

Requested Action:

1. Special Use Permit to allow a Public Elementary School on the subject property.

Variations Required:

- Chapter 28, Section 10.4-4, to allow 62 parking stalls where 67 are required.
- Chapter 28, Section 5.1-3.6, to allow a building addition at 25.3' in height where building heights are restricted to a maximum height of 25'
- Chapter 28, Section 5.1-3.3a, to allow a 22.1' front yard setback for the existing building where a minimum 24.1' setback is required.
- Chapter 28, Section 5.1-3.3b, to allow a 10.7' side yard setback (north) for the existing building where a minimum 72.7' setback is required.
- Chapter 28, Section 5.1-3.3d, to allow a 29' rear yard setback for the existing and proposed building where a minimum 30' setback is required
- Chapter 28, Section 5.1-3.5a, to allow 40.5% building lot coverage where maximum building lot coverage is restricted to 35%.
- Chapter 28, Section 6.5-2, to allow a sport court outside of a rear yard and within a side yard.
- Chapter 28, Section 6.15-1.2b, to omit the required landscape islands at the southern end of the eastern most parking row within the North lot.
- Chapter 28, Section 6.15-1.2b, to omit the requirement for interim landscape islands within parking rows containing more than 20 parking stalls, within the South parking lot.

Project Background:

In June of 2022, the Arlington Heights School District 25 community passed a referendum to establish a full day Kindergarten program for all children within District 25. As a result, the District will transition away from the current half-day Kindergarten model where approximately half of the Kindergarten cohort arrives at 9:05am and is dismissed for the day at 11:50am, and the remaining Kindergarten students arrive at 12:50pm and are dismissed at 3:35pm. The full day Kindergarten program is scheduled to begin at the start of the 2024/2025 school year. In order to accommodate the entire Kindergarten cohort within each elementary school building at one time, building additions have been proposed at six of the elementary schools within the district, which will result in an increase to the number of staff, classrooms, and overall student population at each of these six schools.

Dryden Elementary School is one of the six schools that needs additional space for the full day Kindergarten program. In order to accommodate anticipated kindergarten enrollment, as well as to have the appropriate capacity to absorb future variations in student population, the School District is proposing four new classrooms, an expansion of the gymnasium, additional storage spaces, and an expansion of the administrative offices. The building addition would be located at the southern end of the existing school.

The site has two parking lots; the primary parking lot ("South Lot") is located along Dryden Place and contains 49 parking stalls with a northern and southern curb cut along Dryden, the secondary parking area ("North Lot") contains eight spaces and is located at the northwest side of the school with access from Lincoln Street. Circulation through the Dryden parking lot, which is used as a student drop-off area in the mornings, operates in a one-way orientation that loops around the parking spaces. Traffic flow is configured to where the northern curb cut provides ingress and the southern curb cut provides egress. In sum, the site currently contains a total of 57 parking spaces.

Through reconfigured striping within the South Lot that will reduce parking space widths from 9' to 8.5', and modifications to the ADA parking stalls, three parking stalls will be added to the South Lot. The North Lot will add striping to an unused area of the lot to incorporate an additional two parking spaces, bringing the site total up from 57 to 62 as a result of this project. Full depth asphalt removal and reconstruction will occur in both parking lots, which will each be replaced within their existing footprints.

Dryden School currently has 478 students, 56 employees, and 24 classrooms. The school is expected to have 526 students, 61 employees, and 28 classrooms as a result of the building addition and full day Kindergarten program. It should be noted that the proposed building addition is meant to provide capacity at 15% above the five-year enrollment and staffing projections in order to accommodate possible future "bumps" in enrollment beyond five-year projections.

There are four busses that currently serve the school and there is no change anticipated to bussing as a result of the full day Kindergarten. The standard 9:05am arrival and 3:35pm dismissal times would remain unchanged. The existing asphalt playground located on the south side of the existing school would be removed to create space for the building addition. This play area is proposed for reconstruction at the south end of the proposed building addition. The existing mulched play area at the far southern end of the school is located on Park District property and part of Dryden Park. The equipment there may be reconstructed in conjunction with this project, however, this would need to be initiated by the Park District and review/approval of any such changes would occur separate of this petition.

Zoning and Comprehensive Plan

The subject property is zoned R-3, One-Family Dwelling District, which allows schools only through issuance of a Special Use Permit. Dryden School has never been approved for a Special Use Permit, and due to the proposed building expansion, a Special Use Permit is now required for the site. The School District has submitted a written response explaining how the existing school and proposed building addition comply with the three standards for Special Use Permit approval, which standards are summarized below. The written response from the School District has been included in the materials provided to the Plan Commission:

- ***That said special use is deemed necessary for the public convenience at this location.***
- ***That such case will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the health, safety, morals or general welfare of persons residing or working in the vicinity.***
- ***That the proposed use will comply with the regulations and conditions specified in this ordinance for such use, and with the stipulations and conditions made a part of the authorization granted by the Village Board of Trustees.***

Staff concurs that the necessary criteria for Special Use Permit approval have been met for the following reasons; 1) the need for the school and building addition at this location is illustrated by the expected growth in enrollment and passage of a community referendum to provide a full-day kindergarten, 2) the school has existed on this site for many years and is part of the established character of the neighborhood, and 3) the school is regularly inspected by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for compliance with ISBE health and safety regulations which will protect the safety, morals, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the vicinity.

The Village's Comprehensive Plan designates the future use of the subject property as "Schools" and the proposed Special Use Permit is compatible with this designation.

In addition to the Special Use Permit, several variations are required for the proposed site improvements and existing school building. These variations will be discussed in detail within the various sections of the report below, and for each variation the petitioner has submitted a written response documenting compliance to the four hardship criteria necessary for variation approval, which criteria has been outlined below:

- ***The proposed use will not alter the essential character of the locality and will be compatible with existing uses and zoning of nearby property.***
- ***The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances, which may include the length of time the subject property has been vacant as zoned.***
- ***The proposed variation is in harmony with the spirit and intent of this Chapter.***
- ***The variance requested is the minimum variance necessary to allow reasonable use of the property.***

Neighborhood Meeting

On Wednesday, October 19th, 2022, District 25 held a neighborhood meeting to present their conceptual plans to surrounding property owners and solicit early feedback to understand any potential concerns with the project. According to the petitioner, one resident attended the meeting. Questions related to clarifications on screening of the rooftop mechanical units, stormwater impacts, playground spaces, and traffic/drop-off and pick-up. The petitioner's written summary of the discussion has been included as part of the materials provided to the Plan Commission.

Conceptual Plan Review Committee

On October 24, 2022, District 25 appeared before the Conceptual Plan Review Committee. The discussion at this meeting was primarily related to parking and drop-off/pick-up operations. In general, the Conceptual Plan Review Committee was supportive of the project and encouraged the petitioner to proceed with their Plan Commission application.

Design Commission

The Design Commission is scheduled to meet on January 24, 2023, to discuss the design and architecture of the proposed building addition. An update on the discussion will be provided during the Plan Commission hearing on January 25th.

Building and Site

As mentioned above, the proposed building addition would be located at the south side of the existing school building. The building addition complies with many of the Code requirements relating to bulk, height, lot coverage, and building setbacks, however, certain variations are required. The new classroom areas and associated spaces are proposed at one-story in height; the gymnasium expansion would maintain the height of the existing gym, which is 25.3' tall. The R-3 District restricts maximum building heights to no taller than 25 feet and the following variation is therefore necessary:

- ***Variation to Chapter 28, Section 5.1-3.6, to allow a 25.3 foot tall building where building height is limited to 25 feet.***

Given the need to have quality recreation spaces for students, the minor scope of the variation at only 0.3 feet above the maximum allowable height, and the fact that the gymnasium addition will match the height of the existing gym, the Staff Development Committee is supportive of this variation.

Several setback variations are required as part of this project, two of which are required for the existing structure to formally grant entitlements for the current location of the building on the site and one for the proposed building addition, which is summarized below:

- ***Variation to Chapter 28, Section 5.1-3.3d, to allow a 29' rear yard setback for the existing and proposed building where a minimum 30' setback is required.***

The Staff Development Committee is supportive of this variation for the following reasons; 1) the rear yard abuts the Park District property, which includes playgrounds, and does not directly abut any residential homes, 2) the minor scope of the encroachment will not alter the essential character of the locality, and 3) the proposed 29' rear yard setback will match the existing setback of the gym, which is an existing non-conformity.

The variations required for the current building to formally entitle the existing building setbacks are detailed below:

- ***Variation to Chapter 28, Section 5.1-3.3a, to allow a 22.1' front yard setback (east) for the existing building where a minimum 24.1' setback is required.***
- ***Variation to Chapter 28, Section 5.1-3.3b, to allow a 10.7' side yard setback (north) for the existing building where a minimum 72.7' setback is required.***

The Staff Development Committee is supportive of these requests as the variations apply only to the existing building, which has existed in its current location for many years, and no changes are proposed the existing building setbacks in these locations. The requested variations are only necessary to formally allow the current building setbacks, which will remain unchanged.

The reconstructed asphalt play area located to the south of the proposed building addition is classified as a sport court and will be located within the side yard. In residential zoning districts, sport courts are only allowed within the rear yard and accordingly, the following variation is required:

- ***Variation to Chapter 28, Section 6.5-2, to allow a sport court outside of a rear yard and within a side yard.***

The Staff Development Committee is supportive of this variation as outdoor play areas are critical for schools to provide the necessary recess and recreational opportunities for healthy development and growth of children and the site does not include enough room at the rear of the building to accommodate an adequately sized sport court. Additionally, the existing (and to be removed) asphalt play area for Dryden is located in a side yard and the Village is not aware of any issues created by this location.

The final site related variation is for the overall building lot coverage on the site, where code restricts maximum building lot coverage in the R-3 District to 35% of the gross area of the property. Given the proposed building expansion, the resulting building will cover 40.5% of the subject property and the following variation is therefore required:

- ***Variation to Chapter 28, Section 5.1-3.5a, to allow 40.5% building lot coverage where maximum building lot coverage is restricted to 35%.***

The Staff Development Committee is supportive of this variation for the following reasons; 1) there is adjacent land to the southwest of the school, including a small piece of land owned by the School District, which was not factored into the overall lot area and is currently used as open space, 2) a second floor addition to the school to reduce the proposed building coverage is not practical given the existing interior configuration of the building which currently has no second floor areas, and 3) the school site abuts Dryden Park to the south, which provides ample open greenspace in combination with the open areas on the school property.

With regards to emergency vehicle access, there is no substantive change proposed to the existing emergency access to the site. Both the proposed building addition and existing building will be protected by a fire sprinkler system. The Fire Department and Building & Life Safety Department do not take issue with the proposed emergency access at Dryden School.

With regards to stormwater, the District is proposing a large underground stormwater detention vault within the greenspace at the southern end of the site, which will store stormwater water during rain events and slowly release the stormwater into the Village system. Currently, the site is only served with underground pipes to divert stormwater runoff into the Village storm sewers and the site does not have an underground stormwater vault. While the petitioner has preliminarily demonstrated that the proposed stormwater system will be able to comply with all MWRD and Village requirements, final stormwater calculations are needed and minor details/modifications must be incorporated on the engineering plans prior to site development

permit issuance. The petitioner shall continue to work with the Village to provide finalized stormwater information and plans to verify compliance with all MWRD and Village regulations.

Landscaping:

Given the full depth removal of the pavement within each parking lot, compliance with current landscape regulations is required. In general, this means a 3' tall landscape screen is required at the edge of any parking lot where it fronts upon a public street and along the edge of any parking lot where it is adjacent to residentially zoned property. Additionally, landscape islands with a shade tree are required at each end of every parking row, and parking rows that include more than 20 parking spaces must include an interim landscape island to break up the parking row. The reconstructed parking lots are deficient in two areas and variations are required as identified below:

- ***Variation to Chapter 28, Section 6.15-1.2b, to omit the required landscape islands at the southern end of the eastern most parking row within the North lot.***
- ***Chapter 28, Section 6.15-1.2b, to omit the requirement for interim landscape islands within parking rows containing more than 20 parking stalls, within the South parking lot. (the two rows within the South Lot contain 25 and 27 spaces)***

Staff is supportive of the landscape variations identified above. The variations are warranted due to the need to preserve parking areas for the school; the addition of a landscape island in the North Lot would cause the elimination of one parking stall and interim landscape islands in the South Lot would require the elimination of two parking spaces. Additionally, both lots would be reconstructed within their existing footprints and so the scope of the proposed work is somewhat limited. Finally, the area within the North Lot where the code-required landscape island could be added (to avoid elimination of a parking stall) is already occupied by a dumpster enclosure including a transformer. Relocation of this element to incorporate the code required landscape island constitutes a significant hardship that justifies the requested variation.

Parking and Loading:

As mentioned above, both the North Lot and South Lot will have full depth removal of the existing asphalt and will be reconstructed in their existing footprints. Relative to the North Lot, the School District will be incorporating two new parking stalls within an area that is not currently striped for parking but can accommodate code-compliant parking spaces. Within the reconstructed South Lot, parking stall widths will be revised from 9' to 8.5' and the ADA parking stalls will be redesigned to share an accessible aisle. These modifications will increase the overall parking supply by five spaces resulting in an onsite total of 62 spaces. Per Code, 67 parking stalls are required for the Dryden School property and the parking calculations for the site are shown in **Table I** below.

Table I: Parking Calculations

Location	Use		Ratio	Number of Employees	Number of Classrooms	Number of Students	Parking Required
722 S. Dryden Pl.	Dryden School	Elementary School	1 per employee + 1 per 5 classrooms	61	28	526	67
Total							
Total Required							67
Total Provided							62
Surplus/Deficit							-5

The following parking variation is required.

- ***Section 10.4-4, to allow 62 parking stalls where 67 are required.***

The School District has a parking agreement with the Southminster Church that abuts the property to the south of Dryden Park, which allows the school to use the 130 parking spaces located on the church property. This agreement is scheduled to expire in September of 2025, however, the petitioner intends to renew the agreement prior to its expiration. While the 62 onsite parking spaces are expected to accommodate for the daily staff parking demand, the church lot is utilized by families during pick-up times where they park and leave their car to meet their children at the school, or wait in their cars for their children to arrive after dismissal. Given the existing agreement with the church, the Staff Development Committee is supportive of the requested variation. However, should the parking agreement with the Southminster Church ever expire, additional drop-off/pick-up loading areas and/or parking may be required, which shall be at the discretion of the Village. Additionally, should the agreement expire, operation changes to address parking issues or drop-off/pick-up issues may need to be implemented to the satisfaction of the Village. To this effect, a condition of approval has been recommended below.

Per code, 16 bike parking stalls are required. The existing site has approximately 36 bike parking stalls located across four large bike parking racks on the east side of the school.

Drop-off/Pick Up

Although morning drop-off occurs within the South Lot, the South Lot is closed to cars in the afternoon as it is used for bus loading at dismissal time. Therefore, afternoon pick-up primarily occurs along the west side of Dryden Avenue between of Rockwell Street and the Southminster Church, with pick-ups also occurring within the church lot. Additionally, some parents have been observed parking along Rockwell Street and on Dryden Avenue north of Rockwell. Furthermore, cars have been observed standing along Rockwell just west of the Dryden intersection, which is a concern as Rockwell west of Dryden is narrow and accommodating both two-way traffic and on-street parking is a challenge. Increased enrollment due to the full day kindergarten will further contribute to the congestion at Dryden/Rockwell and the School District will need to encourage increased usage of the church parking lot for afternoon pick-ups, which should help to relieve pressure at the Dryden/Rockwell intersection.

The School District provided a traffic and parking study from Ericksson Engineering Associates (EEA), which accessed the drop-off/pick-up operations, traffic, and parking at the school. The study was predicated on the School District projections for staffing and enrollment in the year 2026/2027 (526 students and 61 staff), however, it is important to note that the proposed number of classrooms are meant to accommodate capacity at 15% above the 2026/2027 projections to allow for future enrollment “bumps” and potential unanticipated growth. Therefore, the school is proposing to build in capacity to accommodate enrollment beyond the findings as outlined with the EEA study. Staff has concerns that should enrollment increase to fill the 15% excess capacity within the school, unanticipated traffic, parking, and/or drop-off/pick-up issues could be created. In order to manage possible future problems, a condition has been recommended that would require the School District to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of Village staff, that adequate onsite parking can accommodate peak demand and drop-off/pick-up operations will not create unsafe vehicular or pedestrian movements. Should it be determined that improvements to the site or modifications to the drop-off/pick-up procedures are needed to satisfactorily accommodate an increase beyond 526 students, any such improvements or modifications would need to be implemented upon administrative approval by the Village.

RECOMMENDATION

The Staff Development Committee (SDC) reviewed the proposed Special Use Permit to allow a Public Elementary School on the subject property and the following Variations to Chapter 28 of the Municipal Code:

1. Section 10.4-4, to allow 62 parking stalls where 67 are required.
2. Section 5.1-3.6, to allow a building addition at 25.3' in height where building heights are restricted to a maximum height of 25'
3. Section 5.1-3.3a, to allow a 22.1' front yard setback for the existing building where a minimum 24.1' setback is required.
4. Section 5.1-3.3b, to allow a 10.7' side yard setback (north) for the existing building where a minimum 72.7' setback is required.
5. Section 5.1-3.3d, to allow a 29' rear yard setback for the existing and proposed building where a minimum 30' setback is required
6. Section 5.1-3.5a, to allow 40.5% building lot coverage where maximum building lot coverage is restricted to 35%.
7. Section 6.5-2, to allow a sport court outside of a rear yard and within a side yard.
8. Section 6.15-1.2b, to omit the required landscape islands at the southern end of the eastern most parking row within the North lot.
9. Chapter 28, Section 6.15-1.2b, to omit the requirement for interim landscape islands within parking rows containing more than 20 parking stalls, within the South parking lot.

The Staff Development Committee recommends **APPROVAL** of the application subject to the following conditions:

1. If enrollment at Dryden Elementary school exceeds or is projected to exceed 526 students within the proposed building, the school district shall demonstrate, to the satisfaction of Village staff, that adequate onsite parking can accommodate peak demand and drop-off/pick-up operations will not create unsafe vehicular or pedestrian movements. Improvements needed to satisfactorily accommodate such increase shall be implemented upon administrative approval by the Village. If administrative approval is not granted, an amendment to this Special Use Permit shall be required.
2. The petitioner shall continue to work with the Village and neighbors to address any drop-off/pick-up concerns.
3. Should the parking agreement with the Southminster Church expire, additional drop-off/pick-up loading areas and/or parking may be required at the discretion of the Village. Additionally, operational changes to address parking issues or drop-off/pick-up issues may also be required, which changes must be implemented to the satisfaction of the Village.
4. The petitioner shall continue to work with the Village to provide stormwater information to verify compliance with all MWRD and Village regulations to the satisfaction of the Village.
5. Compliance with the 1-24-23 Design Commission motion shall be required.
6. The petitioner shall comply with all Federal, State, and Village Codes, Regulations, and Policies.

January 20, 2023

Charles Witherington-Perkins, Director of Planning and Community Development

Cc: Randy Recklaus, Village Manager
All Department Heads