



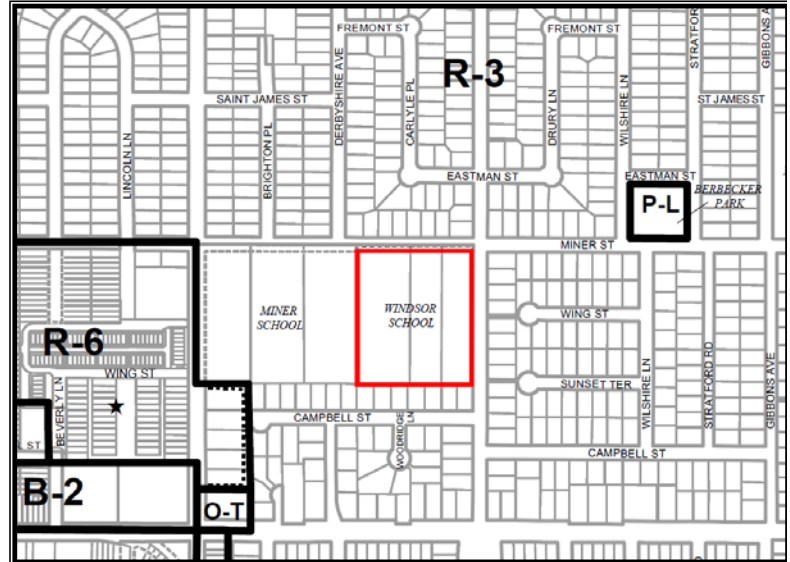
# VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS **STAFF DEVELOPMENT** **COMMITTEE REPORT**

**File Number:** PC #16-026  
**Project Title:** Windsor Elementary School Addition  
**Address:** 1315 East Miner Street  
**PIN:** 03-29-412-015 thru -016, 03-29-412-042

**To:** Plan Commission  
**Prepared By:** Sam Hubbard, Development Planner  
**Meeting Date:** January 25, 2017  
**Date prepared:** January 20, 2017

**Petitioner:** Don Hansen  
**Address:** 350 W. Ontario St. – Suite 200.  
 Chicago, IL 60654

**Existing Zoning:** R-3, One-Family Dwelling District



## **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	Single-Family Homes	Single-Family Detached
East	R-3, One-Family Dwelling District	Single-Family Homes	Single-Family Detached
West	R-3, One-Family Dwelling District	Recreational playing fields	Parks

**Requested Action:**  
 Amendment to Special Use Ordinance #90-082 to allow an addition to the existing Elementary School.

## **Variations Required:**

- 1) Variation from Section 5.1-3.6 of Chapter 28 to decrease the required exterior side yard setback from 40' to 12.9' for the existing building.
- 2) Variation from Section 5.1-3.8 of Chapter 28 to increase the maximum allowed impervious surface coverage from 50% to 50.1%.
- 3) Variation from 11.4-4 to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 218 spaces to 90 spaces.

### **Background:**

The subject property is approximately 7.53 acres in size and contains the Windsor Elementary School and associated recreational areas to the west of the school building. Windsor School is one of seven elementary schools operated by District 25 and has a current enrollment of 509 students. Enrollment is expected to increase in the future, with future enrollment estimated at 518 in the near future and 595 students over the next five years. The school has two temporary classrooms housed in a trailer on the west side of the building, which trailer would be removed upon completion of the proposed building addition. Additionally, a portion of the library has been portioned off to create a third temporary classroom, which would also be removed upon completion of the proposed building addition. Windsor School is home to two district-wide special education programs for students in grades K-5.

The proposed project involves the expansion of the southern wing of the school, which would create six new classrooms, three new offices, and new bathroom facilities. The existing gym would also be expanded to the west, and new storage areas and receiving areas would be created. The parking lot along the western side of the site would be reoriented, which will cause the removal of one of the recreational fields that currently exists in this area, and a new curb cut along Miner Street has been proposed. Additionally, the asphalt play area along the south of the building will be relocated to the west side of the proposed addition, and the play area on the southern end of the site will be removed and replaced at a slightly smaller size. There is no bussing to Windsor School and this will not be changed as a result of the proposed addition.

In 1990, the Windsor School was approved for a Special Use Permit to allow the existing elementary school, which was done in conjunction with a building expansion that was completed at that time.

### **Prior Ordinance History**

The following is a brief summary of prior approvals relative to the Windsor School:

- 1990: Ordinance 90-082 approved a Special Use Permit to allow an Elementary School on the subject property, as well as a Variation to waive the parking lot landscape requirement along the western and southern sides of the parking lot and a Variation to reduce the required parking to allow only 83 parking spaces on the subject property. These approvals were granted to allow a building addition to the existing Elementary School.
- 1993: Ordinance 93-054 approved the installation of "No Parking" signs along the east side of Windsor Drive between Miner Street and Campbell Street. These signs were installed at the request of the residents living along Windsor Drive to prevent drop-off and pick-up traffic from parking along both sides of Windsor Drive and obstructing the flow of traffic on this street.

### **Plat and Subdivision**

On November 30, 2016, the Plat and Subdivision Committee met to discuss the proposed project. The subcommittee was supportive of the building addition and felt that, given the fact that changes to the parking lot were proposed, it would be a great opportunity to address some of the traffic issues in the neighborhood during arrival and dismissal. They hoped the School District would explore the possibility of bringing some of the drop-off/pick-up operations on-site to keep these cars off the street. The subcommittee stressed the importance of working to improve drop-off/pick-up operations and encouraged the applicant to move forward.

### **Neighborhood Meeting**

On January 18, 2017, the District 25 held an information meeting for neighboring residents of Windsor School. According to a summary of this meeting provided by District 25, there were some concerns about student drop off during construction. The District has said that some student drop off will be brought onsite during construction as there will be a construction entrance along Windsor. Additionally, the District clarified that the mobile classrooms will be removed in February of 2017 and students will have a fenced off temporary play area within the parking lot as well as a play area in the fields to the west. There were some concerns about the adequacy of parking given growing enrollment at the school and concerns about parking along Windsor Drive. The District expressed that they are committed to being a good neighbor and would work with individuals on their concerns.

### **Design Commission**

Met on January 10, 2017, the Design Commission held a public hearing to discuss the proposed building addition. The project received a unanimous recommendation of approval subject to a condition requiring additional landscape plantings along the existing building adjacent to Miner Street and Windsor Drive, and recommendation to consider shaded glass in the upper windows of the gym and some type of shading device on the south facing classroom windows. The draft minutes from this meeting are included within the Plan Commission packet.

### **Zoning and Comprehensive Plan**

The subject property is within the R-3, One Family Dwelling District, and all schools within the R-3 District are required to obtain a Special Use Permit. As indicated above, the subject property was granted a Special Use Permit to allow the existing elementary school via Ordinance #90-082. In order to allow the proposed expansion, Ordinance #90-082 must be amended.

The Village's Comprehensive Plan designates the future use of the subject property as "Schools". The proposed Special Use amendment is therefore consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Site Plan, Building and Landscaping**

Staff has reviewed the plans relative to all bulk and setback requirements and identified the need for two Variations relative to these requirements. The first Variation relates to the existing school building, which does not comply with required 40' side yard setback along Windsor Drive and maintains a 12.9' setback in this location. Staff supports the proposed setback Variation as it is for an existing condition and will not alter the essential character of the locality. Additionally, to require the School District to correct this non-conforming setback would create an undue financial burden that would prevent the School District from obtaining a "reasonable return" on the subject property. The petitioner has submitted the required written justification to the Variation approval criteria, as summarized below:

- The property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the regulations in that zone.
- The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances.
- The variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

Staff concurs with the petitioner that the criteria for this Variation has been met.

The second Variation identified relates to the proposed impervious surface coverage. Within the R-3 Zoning District, all properties are allowed a maximum impervious surface coverage not to exceed 50%, and the proposed impervious surface coverage on the subject property is calculated at 50.1%. Staff supports the proposed 0.1% increase in allowable impervious surface coverage as the subject property is part of the overall School District campus in this location, which includes the playing fields to the west of the subject property as well as the Miner School property. When taking into consideration the entire campus, the overall impervious surface coverage is well below the maximum allowed 50% restriction. Staff concurs with the petitioner that all necessary approval criteria for this Variation have been met.

The existing gymnasium stands at 24 feet in height and the proposed addition to the gym will maintain this height. The single-story classroom addition is proposed at 14'8" in height. The R-3 District allows maximum building heights of 25', and therefore the proposed work conforms to all height regulations.

Relative to site illumination, staff notes that the proposed photometric plan is showing illumination levels that may create a glare when viewed from neighboring residential properties, most notably to the north. Although it appears that illumination levels at all property lines will conform to code requirements, the intensity of on-site illumination at certain light fixtures may become problematic. Therefore, staff recommends a condition of approval that requires the School District to provide additional side shielding on the parking lot fixtures to minimize impact to neighboring residential areas should it be determined (at time of final inspection) that light spillover has created a nuisance to neighboring residential properties.

The School District has proposed a wire mesh screening system on one of the restrictors within the utility system, which screen is not acceptable to the Public Works Department due to their concerns that it will clog easily and require frequent maintenance. As the District believes that a wire mesh screen will provide the most efficient means to allow flow into the restrictor, in lieu of requiring the District to change this screening system, the Public Works Dept. has proposed a maintenance agreement that assigns responsibility for future maintenance of the restrictor screen to the School District. A condition of approval has been added to address this.

### **Parking**

In 1990, Windsor School was granted a parking variation that adjusted the parking formula to allow one parking space per employee plus two parking spaces per classroom (the parking code requires two parking spaces per employee plus one per classroom). The variation to the parking formula equated to 83 parking spaces required in 1990. The parking formula allowed via

the 1990 Variation is still applicable today, however, the number of classrooms and number of staff has changed since 1990, and the current parking requirements are shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Required Parking - Existing and Proposed**

SPACE	PARKING CODE USE	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS	PARKING RATIO	PARKING REQUIRED
Existing Windsor Elementary School	Elementary School	88	29	1 space per classroom plus two space per employee	205
Total Parking Required if No Previous Variation Was Granted					205
Total Parking Required per 1990 Variation					146
Total Parking Provided					89
Parking Surplus/(Deficit) if No Variation Was Granted					(116)
Parking Surplus/(Deficit) per 1990 Variation					(57)
Proposed Windsor Elementary School	Elementary School	93	32	1 space per classroom plus two space per employee	218
Total Parking Required if No Variation Was Granted					218
Total Parking Required per 1990 Variation					157
Total Parking Provided					90
Parking Surplus/(Deficit) if No Previous Variation Was Granted					(128)
Parking Surplus/(Deficit) per 1990 Variation					(67)

The School District is proposing the reconstruction of the existing parking lot west of the school building, which will result in an increase of the total on-site parking by one space for a total of 90 parking spaces. When taking into consideration the previously approved formula via the 1990 Variation, the total deficit in parking spaces is 67 and therefore the applicant has requested an amendment to the 1990 Variation to allow a reduction in parking requirements from 157 spaces to 90 spaces. This equates to a 42.6% reduction in required parking when considering the previously granted variation, and a 58.7% reduction in required parking when considering standard code requirements. Staff notes that enrollment at Windsor School is expected to increase over a five year period from 509 students to 595 students.

The parking study surveyed the parking lot during one day in May of 2016 and noted that the 89 space parking lot was 92% occupied. Given the expected increase in student population, which will result in additional staff, the proposed one space increase may not be able to accommodate future demand. Staff believes that additional capacity exists in the auxiliary parking area between Miner School and Windsor School, however, the parking study has not surveyed capacity in this area. The petitioner should provide an analysis of the auxiliary parking area to determine if sufficient capacity exists to accommodate future demand. Staff notes that ITE parking projections indicate a 595 student elementary school would require 101 parking spaces during peak demand.

With regards to the layout of the proposed 90-space parking lot, staff has identified two issues. First, Section 11.2-8 of Chapter 28 requires a 20' width for all parking rows when one-way 60° angled parking is provided. The northern most parking row is proposed at only 18.5' in width. Staff is unclear why the full 20' width cannot be provided for this parking row and recommends that the applicant adjust the parking layout to comply with this regulation. Alternatively, the applicant can request and provide the written justification for a Variation from this requirement and staff can analyze if the hardship criteria has been met.

The flow of the parking lot does not allow circulation to the axillary parking area if all 90 spaces are occupied. Specifically, if a car enters on the parking lot via the "entrance only" western access drive and proceeds south through the parking lot only to find that the parking row they are traversing is full, this automobile would then have to leave the site and travel onto Miner Street in order to

access the auxiliary lot or to return to the parking lot to search for an open space in a different parking row. The parking lot should be designed to allow internal circulation through all parking areas without requiring a car to return onto a public street in order to access other areas of the parking lot. The northernmost drive aisle and parking rows should be reconfigured to allow westbound only traffic, which would allow access back to the auxiliary parking area without having to enter into the public ROW. A condition of approval has been added to address this issue.

### **Traffic**

Bussing to Windsor School is not provided and therefore all students either walk or bike to and from school or are dropped off/picked up by parents with cars. The western parking lot is used for drop-off/pick-up of children in the Special Education program. Utilization of the onsite pick-up/drop-off for all school populations may help to improve pick-up/drop-off operations. The western side of Windsor Drive abutting the school is posted as a student pick-up/drop-off zone from 8:00am-9:00am and from 3:00pm-4:00pm on school days, and the east side of Windsor Drive is posted as "No Stopping or Standing - 8:00am to 4:00pm on school days". Finally, the Village recently added "Do Not Enter" signs at the intersection of Windsor Street and Campbell Street that restrict northbound traffic on Windsor Drive from 8:30am to 9:15am. Staff is aware that these signs are not always effective and have recently begun installing cones in this location to prohibit northbound traffic on Windsor Drive.

Staff has analyzed the traffic study to determine how the proposed building addition and projected increase in enrollment will impact these operations. The traffic study has concluded that the proposed addition will have a minimal impact on the traffic generated by the school due to the small increase in number of students. However, staff has concerns with this conclusion as the traffic study indicated that future enrollment over the next "several years" is only expected to increase to 518 students. However, according to the School District, enrollment is expected to increase to 595 students within five years. The traffic study does not include any recommendations for further improving the current traffic flow issues.

Parents often ignore the school's drop-off procedures and create unsafe motoring and pedestrian environments within the public ROW. The traffic study should offer specific recommendations to address this item, as well as recommendations for addressing the current traffic flow issues.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Staff Development Committee reviewed the proposed amendment to Special Use Ordinance 90-082, a Variation from Section 5.1-3.6 of Chapter 28 to decrease the required exterior side yard setback from 40' to 12.9' for the existing building, a Variation from Section 5.1-3.8 of Chapter 28 to increase the maximum allowed impervious surface coverage from 50% to 50.1%, and a Variation from 11.4-4 to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 218 spaces to 90 spaces, and acknowledges that several items remain unresolved relative to the following:

- Proposed illumination levels
- Parking space depth and parking lot circulation
- Parking study – specifically a lack of analysis of future parking demand and capacity of overflow parking
- Traffic study – specifically a lack of recommendations to address frequent issues with drop-off/pick-up operation

Staff recommends approval subject to the following:

- 1) Prior to Village Board consideration, the petitioner shall address the following:
  - a) The petitioner shall provide a parking study addendum that analyzes the auxiliary parking area between Windsor School and Miner School to determine if adequate overflow parking exists within this area.
  - b) The petitioner shall revise the northernmost parking row to provide for the code required 20' row depth or request a Variation to allow the proposed 18.5' parking space depth and provide the necessary justification for Variation approval.
  - c) The petitioner shall revise the northernmost drive aisle to permit westbound traffic, for review and approval by the Engineering Department.
  - d) The petitioner shall revise the traffic study to include specific recommendations that address unsafe motoring and pedestrian environments within the public ROW during morning arrival, as well as recommendations for addressing the current traffic flow issues.
  - e) The petitioner shall develop a plan that provides a landbanked parking option, for review and approval by the Village.
- 2) The School District shall convert the additional on-site landbanked parking into paved parking spaces at a future date upon the request of the Village.

- 3) The School District shall continue to work with the Village and neighbors on addressing any future pick-up and drop-off concerns.
- 4) Compliance with all Design Commission conditions of approval
- 5) The School District shall enter into a maintenance agreement that assigns future maintenance of the Restrictor Structure to the School District, or the School District shall propose an alternate screening system on this restrictor which is acceptable to the Public Works Department.
- 6) An Onsite Utility and Maintenance Agreement shall be executed prior to Final Engineering approval.
- 7) The School District shall provide additional side shielding on the parking lot fixtures should it be determined that light spillover has created a nuisance to neighboring residential properties.
- 8) The applicant shall comply with all applicable Federal, State, and Village Codes, Regulations, and Policies.

\_\_\_\_\_, January 20, 2017

Charles Witherington-Perkins, Director of Planning and Community Development

Cc: Randy Recklaus, Village Manager  
All Department Heads