

Docket Item # 15
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2001-0093

Planning Commission Meeting
November 8, 2001

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for a special use permit for a private school.

APPLICANT: Learning Foundations of Metropolitan Washington Inc.,
doing business as Commonwealth Academy,
by Duncan W. Blair, attorney

LOCATION: 1321 Leslie Avenue
Commonwealth Academy

ZONE: CSL/Commercial Service Low

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, NOVEMBER 8, 2001: On a motion by Mr. Dunn, seconded by Mr. Robinson, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the request, subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Mr. Dunn requested that the Director of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services investigate including the 1400 block of Leslie Avenue in the existing Residential Parking Permit District #6.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis.

Representation: Duncan Blair, attorney for the applicant.

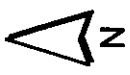
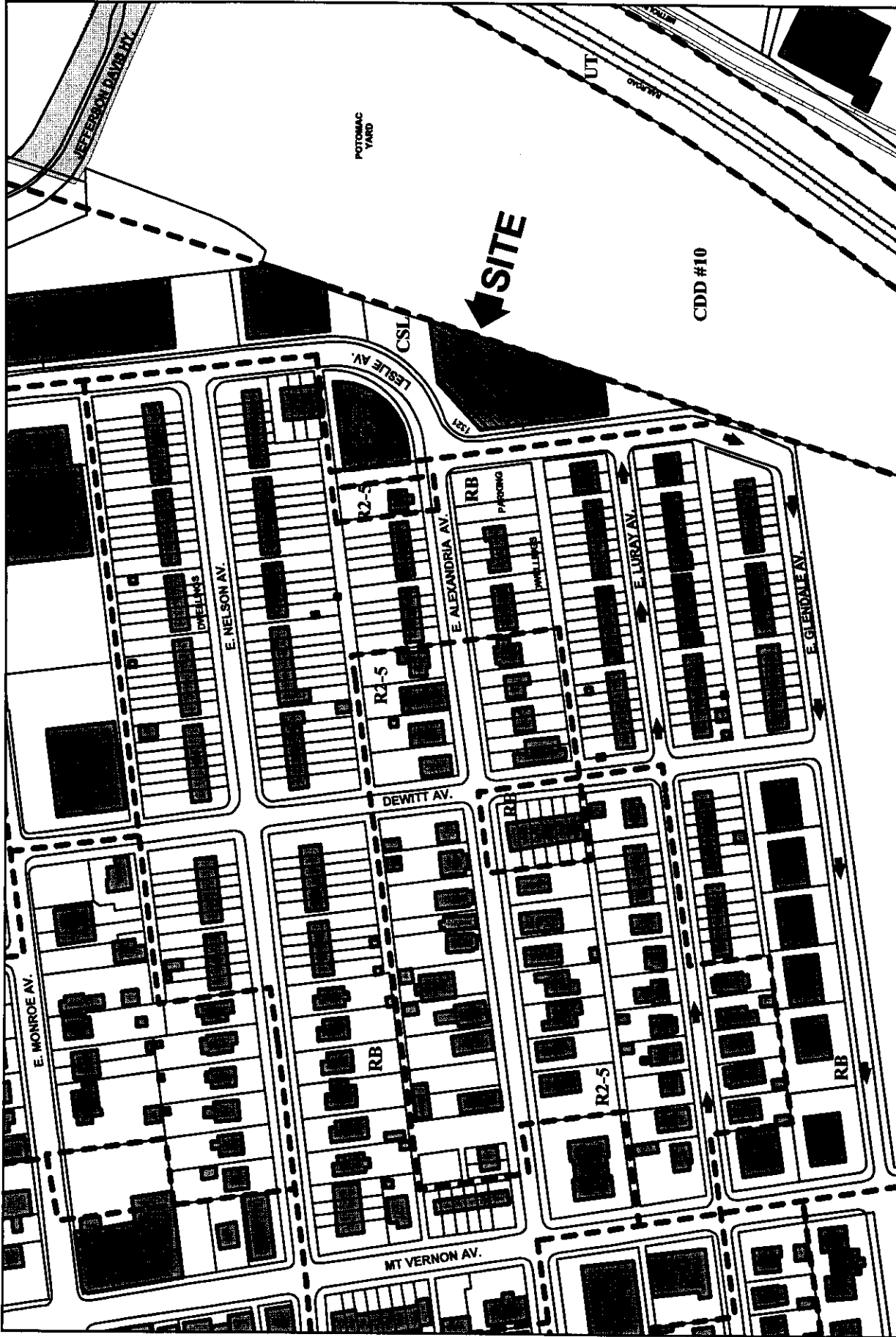
Speakers:

Maria Woswoski, resident of Alexandria, supported the proposal due to the need for such schools in Alexandria.

Amy Slack, representative of the Del Ray Civic Association, supported the proposal. Staff's report and recommended conditions address their concerns regarding bus routes and meeting with the applicant to discuss impacts of the school on the community as they occur over time.

Derrick Hammond, 1414 Leslie Avenue, supported the proposed school but was concerned about parking due to existing competition for parking spaces from businesses and homes in the area.

Stephanie Cochran, 1416 Leslie Avenue, supported the proposed school but was concerned about parking due to existing competition for parking spaces.



11/08/01

SUP #2001-0093



STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends **approval** of the request subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. The special use permit shall be granted to the applicant only or to any business or entity in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z)
2. The maximum student enrollment shall not exceed 100 students. (P&Z)
3. The applicant shall conform its operation generally to the elements of the Traffic Summary and Transportation Management Plan, dated September 28, 2001, filed as part of the application, which includes, without limitation: (a) staggered arrival and departure times for students; (b) the use of a School Transportation Coordinator to assist with traffic management when students are arriving and leaving the premises; (c) no use of buses to transport students to and from school, except those small, public buses bringing students from public school as described in the application; and (d) coordinating and promoting car pooling among parents and students. (P&Z)(T&ES)
4. The applicant shall create a loading/unloading zone for buses and vehicles on Leslie Avenue adjacent to the main entrance to the building for arriving and departing students and shall work with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services and the Traffic and Parking Board to implement the change in parking. (T&ES) (P&Z)
5. In the event the Monroe Avenue bridge is realigned, and alternative routes for school bus and vehicle traffic is available, the applicant shall redirect users to those alternative routes and work with the Departments of Planning and Zoning and Transportation and Environmental Services to establish the new routes. (P&Z)
6. The applicant shall upgrade the building and the site, including landscaping and facade treatment, generally consistent with the conceptual drawings provided as part of the application, to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Zoning. (P&Z)
7. The applicant shall remove the concrete slabs, and repair and stripe the parking lot to the satisfaction of the Director of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. (T&ES)
8. The applicant shall remove the existing chain link fence on the Leslie Avenue frontage which is in disrepair. The fence shall be replaced with a low decorative wall, a screening hedge or other fencing to the satisfaction of Planning and Zoning and Transportation and Environmental Services. (P&Z) (T&ES)

9. The applicant shall remove the southern driveway apron and replace it with city standard curb and gutter and sidewalk. (T&ES)
10. There shall be no outdoor storage on site. (P&Z)
11. The applicant shall provide site lighting in the parking lot to meet minimum city standards. Lighting shall be shielded to prevent excessive spillover and glare onto adjacent residential properties. (T&ES)
12. The use of outside speakers shall be prohibited. (T&ES)
13. The applicant shall control odors and any other air pollution associated with the science lab and photo processing operations, and prevent them from leaving the property or becoming a nuisance to neighboring properties, as determined by the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services. (T&ES)
14. The applicant shall consult with the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department regarding a security survey and alarms for the school. The initial consultation is to be prior to the commencement of renovations to the building. (Police)
15. The applicant shall set up a mechanism by which it meets with affected neighbors to discuss and seek solutions and mutual understanding as to neighborhood issues regarding the operation of the school. (P&Z)
16. The applicant shall install a fire suppression system for this facility. (Code)
17. The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the special use permit after it has been operational for one year and shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions, (b) the director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as a result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation, or (c) the director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed. (P&Z)

Staff Note: In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.

DISCUSSION:

1. The applicant, Learning Foundations of Metropolitan Washington, Inc. (doing business as Commonwealth Academy), requests special use permit approval for the operation of a private academic school located at 1321 Leslie Avenue.
2. The subject property includes one lot of record with approximately 283 feet of frontage on Leslie Avenue and a total lot area of 24,043 square feet. The site is developed with a single-story Art Deco masonry commercial/industrial building. The building shares a wall with a commercial/industrial building of the same design on the adjacent lot to the south. The proposed school space is approximately 15,000 square feet.

Surrounding uses are primarily residential although there are other commercial uses along Leslie Avenue and the railroad tracks to the east.

3. The applicant has filed a special use permit application to operate a school for 100 children in grades six through twelve. The school's students will include children who do and do not have learning difficulties.

The application states that the proposed school will enroll 50 children its first year at 1321 Leslie Avenue. The school expects that enrollment will steadily increase each academic year, and anticipates that the school will expand from 50 to 100 students within approximately ten years.

The application materials also state that the school will initially have 15 employees, including seven full-time teachers, four part-time teachers, one speech clinician, and three administrative staff. The applicant's attorney advises staff that the school does not expect to add faculty members or administrative support, but does expect that part-time teachers will become full-time teachers as the number of students increase.

4. The school is currently located at 3431 Carlin Springs Road in Falls Church, Virginia, has an enrollment of 35 students and has operated for five years. According to the application materials, the existing school is an independent, non-profit, coeducational, academic middle and secondary school licensed by the state. The school is in the process of attaining accreditation. The students of the Commonwealth Academy currently come from the City of Alexandria and surrounding cities and counties and will continue to do so.

5. According to the application materials, the school would like to relocate from its current location in a commercial complex to a more appropriate site for a school and to a site that will allow it to grow. Plans included with the application depict a total of seven classrooms, one computer lab, one dark room, one foreign language lab, one science lab, an auditorium and a lunch room.
6. The applicant provided plans for improvements to the existing building facade, grounds and parking lot (see attached plans).
7. The proposed school will provide class instruction between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, from approximately August to June, and may offer summer programs. The applicant's attorney advised staff that after classes are dismissed for the day, a limited number of students may remain in the school for limited, after-school activities. A letter from the applicant's attorney to staff states that current after-school activities include play rehearsal, after-school care, and extra help sessions, and involve approximately 15% of the students (see attached letter). The school may hold six events for parents and students throughout the year during non-school hours, which include a back-to-school night as well as student conferences and musical productions.

Based on the information provided in the application and subsequently by the applicant's attorney, staff concludes that the school will be in use for either class instruction, club meetings, teacher meetings, or other related school activities Monday through Friday throughout the year, roughly between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., with limited evening and weekend events also taking place.

8. The application materials indicate that trash and recyclable materials will be stored in bins inside the school, and will be collected a minimum of three times per week. Staff and students will monitor and pickup litter on the school grounds daily.
9. The applicant expects that any noise generated by the school or its students will not exceed the noise levels permitted by the Alexandria City Code.
10. Pursuant to Section 8-200(A) of the zoning ordinance, one parking space is required for each ten classroom seats. The proposed school will have 100 classroom seats; therefore a minimum of ten parking spaces is required. The applicant will provide 16 parking spaces on school grounds (see attached plat).

The neighborhood surrounding the proposed use is within Permit Parking District No. 6 and although parking is permitted on the streets within that district, it is restricted for residents and limited to a maximum of two and three hour limits for non-residents.

11. The applicant states in the application that the school will receive deliveries of supplies approximately three to five times per week during regular school hours.
12. The application materials include a Traffic Summary for the proposed school at 1321 Leslie Avenue. The summary was prepared by Gorove/Slade Associates, Inc. and provides information about the number of trips generated by the proposed school, loading and unloading operations, and bus routing in addition to a Transportation Management Plan.
13. Zoning: The subject property is located in the CSL/Commercial Service Low zone. Section 4-303(V) of the zoning ordinance allows a private academic school in the CSL zone only with a special use permit.
14. Master Plan: The proposed use is consistent with the Potomac West chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for CSL/Commercial Service Low use.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

Staff supports the proposed operation of a private school located at 1321 Leslie Avenue. The school use is compatible with the adjacent commercial uses along Leslie Avenue, and will result in significant physical upgrades to the subject building and surrounding site. Additionally, both the staff and the applicant have proposed measures to ensure that the school operations are not detrimental or a nuisance to nearby residential properties.

Planning staff did have initial concerns about the impact of the proposed school on parking and traffic in the neighborhood, notified the applicant of its concerns, and the applicant and staff worked to address these concerns so that staff may support the applicant's special use permit request. These concerns and the applicant's and staff's proposed mitigation measures are described in more detail below.

CONCERNS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Traffic Congestion: The applicant intends to use Leslie Avenue as a drop-off and pick-up point for students. The applicant's consultants estimate that out of 100 students, 20% will travel to and from school by public school buses or public transportation (Metro) and the remaining 80% will travel to and from school via private vehicles either individually or in groups as part of a car pool. The applicant expects no more than six students out of a 100 to drive themselves to school on a daily basis. Lastly, the applicant's consultants project that 44 vehicles will drive to the school in the mornings to deliver students and 23 will drive to the school in the afternoon to pick students up. Approximately eight of the 44 vehicles arriving in the morning are expected to be buses.

Staff was concerned that this activity would create significant traffic congestion along Leslie Avenue during the times that students arrive and depart. Staff was especially concerned that traffic congestion from the proposed school would significantly impact the morning commute of nearby residents and workers. The applicant responded to these concerns by revising their traffic summary and providing a traffic management plan (see attached).

The summary and plan identify methods to alleviate potential traffic congestion on Leslie Avenue, including: (1) staggered arrival and departure times with the upper grades arriving and departing half an hour earlier than the lower grades, (2) restricting on-street parking in front of the school to create a loading and unloading zone for buses and cars for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon, (3) coordinating and promoting car pooling among parents and students, and (4) designating a transportation coordinator to oversee transportation and traffic management for the school and to serve as a contact for the community.

Staff believes these techniques will reduce the likelihood of congestion for the neighborhood during the morning and afternoon drop off/pick up hours. In order to assure that these and other management elements are maintained in the future, staff has included a condition requiring the applicant to conform its operations to those represented in the Traffic Summary and Transportation Management Plan submitted. Should the intensity of the school and its traffic change significantly in the future, the applicant would require an amendment to the special use permit.

Proposed Bus Route: The applicant proposes two bus routes (see attached traffic summary). The routes utilize residential streets within the neighborhood, including Luray, Alexandria and Dewitt Avenues. The applicant estimates that a maximum of eight buses will be used to transport students. This maximum is based on a maximum enrollment of 100 students. These buses will be 12-passenger buses, buses much smaller than the regular size school bus.

Staff and the Del Ray Citizens Association were concerned that buses traveling to and from the school along residential streets would create noise and safety problems for residents.

The applicant has advised staff that it does not anticipate that the bus traffic will have a negative impact upon the safety of travel for residents for several reasons. First, the buses are small 12-passenger buses and do not cause more noise or safety hazards than private vans. Secondly, the school expects to use a small number of buses, a maximum of eight buses upon full enrollment. Third, these buses will arrive at varied times and so mitigate their impact on the neighborhood. Lastly, the buses are public school buses and driven by public employees who are participants of driver safety programs (see attached letter).

Staff, however, does support a request made by the Del Ray Citizens Association to the applicant to investigate a different bus route once the Monroe Avenue bridge is removed or repositioned. Staff has included a condition to this effect.

Parking: The parking needs identified in the application total 21 parking spaces (15 for faculty and staff and six for students), yet the applicant proposes to provide only 16 parking spaces. Although the applicant is providing six more spaces than is required by the zoning ordinance, the applicant may need more parking spaces than can be provided on-site. In addition, overtime or additional staff may be required and additional students than what is currently forecast may drive. On the other hand, the surrounding residential neighborhood is protected by being in a Permit Parking District, where parking for nonresidents is limited to two and three hours time periods. Therefore, staff believes that any parking shortage experienced by the school will not cause harm to surrounding properties and school users will not compete with residential parkers.

Site Improvements: This prior industrial site is in need of repair and rehabilitation and the applicant proposes to make several renovations that will improve both the building and the site. In order to assure that that work is undertaken, staff has included a series of conditions requiring the general facade and landscaping work depicted in the application, repair of the parking lot, a new parking lot wall or fence, and the removal of the southern loading dock and sidewalk replacement indicated by the applicant in its plans.

CONCLUSION

Staff would like to commend the applicant for working with staff to a satisfactory conclusion and for discussing the proposed school with the Del Ray Neighborhood Association early in the application review process. Because staff supports the school use but remains concerned about the impacts it may have on adjacent neighbors, staff recommends that the applicant be required to meet with the neighborhood to discuss any impacts that the school may have on the community as the school grows. Staff has included a condition to this effect.

On balance, staff finds that the proposed school is an appropriate use for the neighborhood. In addition, the applicant has worked with staff to address traffic congestion, noise, safety, and parking concerns, and both the private consultant hired by the applicant to analyze traffic impacts and the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services staff have stated that the public street system is adequate to serve this proposed facility.

Lastly, staff has recommended a condition requiring a review of the school after it has been operational for one year, so that if there are any problems with the operation of the school, additional conditions may be imposed at that time. Staff has also indicated its assumption that the school operation will conform generally to the traffic and intensity assumptions indicated in the application, especially with regard to buses, so that if the use changes significantly over time, an amendment of the special use permit would be required. Staff recommends approval of the special use permit.

STAFF: Eileen P. Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;
Barbara Ross, Deputy Director;
Mary Hashemi, Urban Planner.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Transportation & Environmental Services:

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Chapter 11, Section 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line.
- R-1 Applicant shall remove the concrete slabs, repair and stripe the parking lot to the satisfaction of the director of T&ES.
- R-2 The chain link fence on the Leslie Avenue frontage shall be removed.
- R-3 Provide site lighting in the parking lot to meet minimum city standards. Lighting shall be shielded to prevent excessive spillover and glare onto adjacent residential properties.
- R-4 Install loading/unloading zone for buses on Leslie Avenue adjacent to the proposed main entrance to building.
- R-5 Remove the southern driveway apron and replace with city standard curb/gutter and sidewalk.
- R-6 Provide information on proposed bus service. Application indicates "public" school buses. If this is not the case then indicate source of busing, hours of operation, bus storage during non-operational hours and other information as may be required by concerned agencies.
- R-7 The use of outside speakers shall be prohibited.
- R-8 The applicant shall control odors and any other air pollution associated with the science lab and photo processing operations, and prevent them from leaving the property or becoming a nuisance to neighboring properties, as determined by the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services.
- F-1 From an engineering and traffic control standpoint, the Grorove/Slade Associates Revised Traffic Control Summary provides sufficient information to establish that the existing public street system is adequate to serve this facility. However, the concerns of the neighboring residents have not been addressed.

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 A fire prevention code permit is required for the proposed operation. An egress plan showing fixture location, aisles and exit doors shall be submitted for review with the permit application.
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Four sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.
- C-4 When a change of use requires a greater degree of structural strength, fire protection, exit facilities or sanitary provisions, a construction permit is required.
- C-5 This structure contains mixed use groups and is subject to the mixed use and occupancy requirements of USBC 313.0.
- C-6 Required exits, parking, facilities shall meet accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities.
- C-7 A fire alarm is required for this building.
- C-8 All corridors shall be constructed to a 1 hour fire resistance rating.
- C-9 The ventilation system shall meet the fresh air requirements of the International Mechanical Code.
- C-10 A new certificate of occupancy is required for this facility.
- R-1 It is recommended that a fire suppression system be installed for this facility.

Health Department:

- C-1 An Alexandria Health Department Permit is required for all regulated facilities. Permits are not transferable.
- C-2 A Certified Food Manager must be on duty during all hours of operation.
- C-3 Permits must be obtained prior to operation.
- C-4 Five sets of plans must be submitted to and approved by this department prior to construction.
- C-5 This facility must meet state and city Social Services requirements for air and floor space, toilet facilities, separate isolation room for sick children, lighting, temperature, storage for cots, clothing. Other items may be required by state or city codes.
- C-6 If food preparation or food handling is done on the premises, five sets of plans of the food handling areas are to be submitted to the Health Department for approval.
- C-7 This facility must meet commercial standards (13 or more). Plans must comply with Alexandria City Code, Title 11, Chapter 2, Food and Food Establishments. A \$135.00 fee is required for review of plans for food facilities.

Police Department:

- R-1 The applicant is to consult with the Crime Prevention Unit of the Alexandria Police Department regarding a security survey and alarms for the school. The initial consultation is to be prior to the commencement of renovations to the building.

APPLICATION for SPECIAL USE PERMIT # 2001-0093

PROPERTY LOCATION: ¹³²¹ ~~1305~~ Leslie Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 44.03 04 01 ZONE: CSL/Commercial Service Low

APPLICANT Name: Learning Foundations of Metropolitan Washington, Inc.
doing business as Commonwealth Academy

Address: 3431 Carlin Springs Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22041

PROPERTY OWNER Name: 1321 Leslie Avenue Associates

Address: 120 South Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

PROPOSED USE: Special Use Permit to establish and operate an academic Private School
{§4-303(V)}. *Private school*

THE UNDERSIGNED hereby applies for a Special Use Permit in accordance with the provisions of Article XI, Section 11-500 of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-301(B) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

THE UNDERSIGNED hereby attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required to be furnished by the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. The applicant is hereby notified that any written materials, drawings or illustrations submitted in support of this application and any specific oral representations made to the Planning Commission or City Council in the course of public hearings on this application will be binding on the applicant unless those materials or representations are clearly stated to be non-binding or illustrative of general plans and intentions, subject to substantial revision, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-207(A)(10), of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Land, Clark, Carroll, Mendelson & Blair, P.C.

Duncan W. Blair, Esquire

Print Name of Applicant or Agent



Signature

112 South Alfred Street, Suite 300

Mailing/Street Address

(703) 836-1000

Telephone #

(703) 549-3335

Fax #

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

City and State

Zip Code

Email: dblair@landclark.com

July 24, 2001

Date

=====**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - OFFICE USE ONLY**=====

Application Received: _____ Date & Fee Paid: _____ \$ _____

ACTION - PLANNING COMMISSION: _____

ACTION - CITY COUNCIL: _____

All applicants must complete this form. Supplemental forms are required for child care facilities, restaurants, automobile oriented uses and freestanding signs requiring special use permit approval.

1. The applicant is (check one) the Owner Contract Purchaser
 Lessee or Other: _____ of the subject property.

State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent.

Learning Foundations of Metropolitan Washington, Inc. is a Virginia nonstock corporation doing business as Commonwealth Academy and governed by a seven (7) person Board of Trustees. A list of the current Board of Trustees is as follows:

**Donald C. Klawiter, Chairman
Richard Carroll, Vice Chairman
Walter R. Howell, III, Treasurer
Julie Goodale, Secretary
Diana Horvat, Member
Melanie Kerber, Member
Jane Kerschner, Member**

If property owner or applicant is being represented by an authorized agent such as an attorney, realtor, or other person for which there is some form of compensation, does this agent or the business in which the agent is employed have a business license to operate in the City of Alexandria, Virginia?

- Yes. Provide proof of current City business license
 No. The agent shall obtain a business license prior to filing application, if required by the City Code.

2. Submit a floor plan and a plot plan with parking layout of the proposed use. One copy of the plan is required for plans that are 8½" x 14" or smaller. Twenty-four copies are required for larger plans or if the plans cannot be easily reproduced. The planning director may waive requirements for plan submission upon receipt of a written request which adequately justifies a waiver. This requirement does not apply if a Site Plan Package is required.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

3. The applicant shall describe below the nature of the request in detail so that the Planning Commission and City Council can understand the nature of the operation and the use, including such items as the nature of the activity, the number and type of patrons, the number of employees, the hours, how parking is to be provided for employees and patrons, and whether the use will generate any noise. (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

Commonwealth Academy (the "School") is an independent, non-profit, co-educational, academic middle and secondary school grades six (6) through twelve (12) in its fifth (5th) year of operation for students of average to bright intelligence who thrive in an educational environment tailored to their individual learning styles and special interests. The School emphasizes very small classes, interactive learning that involves the students in their own education, outstanding faculty, teaching approaches designed both to build on students' strengths and to teach them how to learn.

The School is requesting a Special Use Permit to establish its campus and operate its program at 1305 Leslie Avenue in an existing, fifteen thousand (15,000 sq. ft.) square foot building (the "Property"). Attached are floor plan and parking plans for the School. The relocation of the School from its current location on Carlin Spring Road will allow it to move out of a commercial complex into a setting more appropriate for a school, permit its growth and provide a better learning environment for its students.

Students are transported to the School by private vehicle and school buses. Approximately six (6) to eight (8) public school buses will transport students to and from the School. It is anticipated that no more than six (6) students will drive to the School on a daily basis. The School commissioned the firm of Gorove/Slade Associates to prepare a traffic analysis on the use of the Property as a school and to recommend arrival and departure routes for the buses. Copies of the report are attached with this application.

The School's approach is particularly appropriate for three different types of students: those who have no particular learning problem, but will benefit from small classes, tailored instruction and a structured learning environment; those with mild to moderate learning differences who benefit from tailored teaching that helps them build on their strengths and overcome barriers to learning, and those with mild to moderate attention deficit disorder.

The School does not enroll students whose learning problems either result or have evolved into a primary behavior problem that would interfere with the learning of other students. Both public schools and special education private schools offer programs designed for these students as well as for those with serious learning disabilities.

The School provides a varied and stimulating teaching environment that allows students to progress at their own pace in a standard college preparatory curriculum. The School works with educational and psychological consulting professionals as well as with the schools of education in local universities to develop learning strategies, teaching materials, and evaluation methods. The School stresses achievement in core learning areas as well as the development of special skills and talent and stresses the use of computers and computer technology. The result of this effort is that students can overcome educational obstacles and lay the foundation need to become successful, productive adults.

The School opened in its current location in the Fall of 1997, and plans to enroll approximately fifty (50) students in the Fall of 2002, its first year at the Leslie Avenue campus. Enrollment will steadily increase each academic year and the School expects to expand to one hundred (100) students, in grades six (6) through twelve (12) within ten (10) years.

USE CHARACTERISTICS

4. The proposed special use permit request is for: *(check one)*

- a new use requiring a special use permit,
- a development special use permit,
- an expansion or change to an existing use without a special use permit,
- expansion or change to an existing use with a special use permit,
- other. Please describe:

5. Please describe the capacity of the proposed use:

A. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect? Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

The maximum number of students enrolled in the School will be limited to one hundred (100) students.

B. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect? Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

The School will hire on a full or part-time basis approximately fifteen (15) people. Initially, the School will employ seven (7) full-time teachers, four (4) part-time teachers, one (1) speech clinician and an administrative staff of three (3).

6. Please describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:

Day:

Hours:

Monday - Friday*

7:45 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

***Note: Limited summer programs may be offered.**

7. Please describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use:

A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.

It is not anticipated that any activities of the School either by students arriving and departing or mechanical equipment will generate noise levels in excess of the noise levels permitted by the Alexandria City Code.

B. How will the noise from patrons be controlled?

Student outdoor activities, if any, will be supervised by the School's staff.

8. Describe any potential odors emanating from the proposed use and plans to control them:

It is not anticipated that any odors will emanate from or be generated by the use of the Property as a school. The School does not have kitchen facilities for the preparation of student and staff meals.

9. Please provide information regarding trash and litter generated by the use:

A. What type of trash and garbage will be generated by the use?

The School will mainly generate trash composed of paper products, limited refuse discarded lunches and recyclable bottles and cans.

B. How much trash and garbage will be generated by the use?

Trash, garbage and recyclables will be stored in rolling bins inside the School.

C. How often will trash be collected?

Trash, garbage and recyclables will be collected at a minimum of three (3) times per week by a commercial collector.

D. How will you prevent littering on the property, streets and nearby properties?

It is not anticipated that littering will occur; however, the exterior of the School will be checked at the end of each school day by the School's staff and students.

10. Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

Yes. No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

Small quantities of cleaning solvents and substances generally recognized to be appropriate for use in a school either for cleaning or part of its academic program in accordance with all applicable regulations.

11. Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

Yes. No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

Small quantities of organic compounds and substances generally recognized to be appropriate for use in a school either for cleaning or part of its academic program in accordance with all applicable regulations.

12. What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of residents, employees and patrons?

Daily student activities will be supervised by the School's professional staff. Access to the School during school hours will be restricted and monitored by the School's professional staff.

ALCOHOL SALES

13. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?

Yes. No.

If yes, describe alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales. Existing uses must describe their existing alcohol sales and/or service and identify any proposed changes in that aspect of the operation.

PARKING AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

14. Please provide information regarding the availability of off-street parking:

- A. How many parking spaces are required for the proposed use pursuant to section 8-200 (A) of the zoning ordinance?

Pursuant to §8-200 (A) of the Ordinance, one parking space is required for each ten (10) classroom seats, and the School will have one hundred (100) classroom seats. Based on this requirement, approximately ten (10) parking spaces are required.

- B. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:

8 Standard spaces

7 Compact spaces

1 Handicapped accessible spaces

Other.

16 Total Spaces

- C. Where is required parking located? on-site off-site *(check one)*

If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located:

Not applicable.

Pursuant to section 8-200 (C) of the zoning ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.

- D. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the zoning ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

15. Please provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

A. How many loading spaces are required for the use, per section 8-200 (B) of the zoning ordinance?

None.

B. How many loading spaces are available for the use?

None

C. Where are off-street loading facilities located?

Not applicable.

D. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?

During school hours, 7:45 A.M. through 3:00 P.M.

E. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?

It is anticipated that the School will on average receive deliveries of supplies and materials three (3) to five (5) times per week.

16. Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?

Street access is adequate and no street improvements are required.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

17. Will the proposed uses be located in an existing building? Yes No

Do you propose to construct an addition to the building? Yes No

How large will the addition be?

Not applicable.

18. What will the total area occupied by the proposed use be?

15,000 sq. ft. (existing) + 0 sq. ft. (addition if any) = 15,000 sq. ft. (total)

19. The proposed use is located in: (*check one*)

a stand alone building a house located in a residential zone a warehouse

a shopping center. Please provide name of the center: _____

an office building. Please provide name of the building: _____

other, please describe:

A commercial structure.



City of Alexandria, Virginia



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

301 King Street, Room 2100
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 838-4666
FAX (703) 838-6393

September 17, 2001

Mr. Duncan Blair
112 South Alfred Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, V.A. 22314

Sent via fax and mail.

**Re: 1321 Leslie Avenue, Application for Special Use Permit to allow private school
SUP #2001-0093**

Dear Mr. Blair:

This letter will confirm staff's request for additional information during our meeting with you and a school representative, Mr. Tripp Howell, on September 14, 2001. Staff has requested additional information to completely address and understand the impacts of the proposed school on traffic congestion along Leslie Avenue and throughout the adjoining residential neighborhood. Please submit the requested information as soon as possible or by October 1, 2001 at the latest. We have deferred the case until the November docket.

The traffic summary submitted with the subject application does identify the number of inbound and outbound trips that cars and buses would take at the peak morning and afternoon delivery and pick-up times, the two potential bus routes, and states that students will be dropped off and picked up in front of the school along Leslie Avenue. It does not, however, comment on whether or not the number of trips – 70 in the morning around 7:45 and 52 in the afternoon around 3:00 – will have a negative impact on traffic congestion on Leslie Avenue or within the adjoining residential neighborhood.

Staff has visited the site and studied the plans provided in the application and is concerned that the proposed morning school traffic could back up along Leslie Avenue and, when combined with the morning rush hour of residents and nearby businesses, could create a traffic problem. Additionally, the proposed bus route discussion merely comments that the bus route was designed to minimize the traffic impact. While this is important, there is no comment about how much of an impact routing the buses through the residential neighborhood adjacent to Leslie Avenue will have on traffic congestion or on noise or safety for residents living along the route. We are specifically concerned about streets such as Luray, Dewitt, Glendale and Leslie Avenues, with regard to both buses and overall traffic. Finally, we are concerned about what specific

Mr. Blair
September 17, 2001
Page 2

arrangements will be made in front of the school for loading, drop-off and waiting buses and cars, how they will operate and where they will be located.

Your application also states that approximately six of the 100 students will drive themselves to school, that there will be 15 employees, and that there will be 16 parking spaces. Assuming that all the employees drive to school, where will all these 21 drivers park? Also, how can we be sure that in the future more students will not choose to drive?

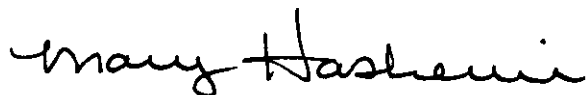
Please provide the following information:

- Gorove/Slade Associates comment on impact of estimated number of trips on traffic congestion in the neighborhood and on individual streets
- Gorove/Slade Associates comment on impact of proposed bus routes on noise and street safety in neighborhood and on individual streets
- Proposed methods to reduce potential back-ups/congestion along Leslie Avenue during the morning drop-off or afternoon pick-up periods
- Proposed location for overflow parking

Lastly, staff has a few additional questions regarding the overall subject application. What is the total number of staff expected with a full enrollment of 100 students? What are the full scope of hours that the school will be open? You have advised staff verbally that classes will occur between 7:45 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., that students will arrive as early as 7:15 a.m., that after school and weekend events will likely occur, and that summer programs will also likely occur. If the full scope of operation is roughly 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily and year around, or something similar, please state this in writing. You are welcome to also provide a breakdown of the hours of operation.

Thank you for your time. Please contact me at 703-838-3866 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mary Hashemi
Planner

SUP 2001-0093
1321 Leslie Av.

LAND, CLARK, CARROLL, MENDELSON & BLAIR, P.C.

Attorneys & Counsellors at Law

112 SOUTH ALFRED STREET
SUITE 300
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

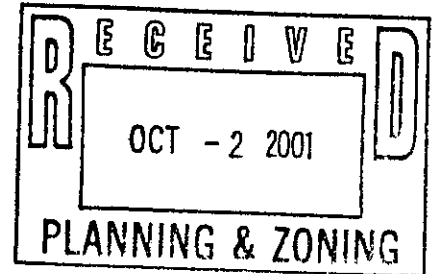
H. CARTER LAND, III
JAMES C. CLARK
F. ANDREW CARROLL, III
RICHARD S. MENDELSON
DUNCAN W. BLAIR

.....
(703) 836-1000

FACSIMILE
(703) 549-3335

MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. BOX 19888
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22320-0888

October 1, 2001



Ms. Mary Hashemi, Planner
Dept. of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street, City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

**In re: Commonwealth Academy
1221 Leslie Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia**

Dear Mary:

Pursuant to our conversations and your letter dated September 17, 2001, I am enclosing a revised traffic study prepared by Gorove/Slade Associates, Inc.

Once you have had an opportunity to review the enclosed, please call with any questions or comments.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Duncan W. Blair".

Duncan W. Blair

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Walter R. Howell, III, Grubb & Ellis
Ms. Melanie A. Kerber, Commonwealth Academy
Mr. Erwin N. Andres, Gorove/Slade Associates, Inc.
Donald Klawiter, Esquire

DWB:ejf\Hashemi-Commonwealth.100101

**GOROVE/SLADE ASSOCIATES, INC.**

1140 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Melanie Kerber
Walter Howell III
Duncan Blair

Commonwealth Academy
Grubb & Ellis
Land, Clark, Carroll, Mendelson & Blair

FROM: Erwin N. Andres
Louis J. Slade, P.E.

DATE: September 28, 2001

SUBJECT: Commonwealth Academy Revised Traffic Summary

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum presents a summary of the traffic implications associated with the Commonwealth Academy and a transportation management plan that will be geared to addressing the impacts of this school project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Commonwealth Academy is proposing to relocate to Leslie Avenue in the Del Ray section of Alexandria. The maximum proposed student population that will be served at the proposed site consists of 100 students, with an initial population of 50 students projected when the school relocates in 2002, as planned. As part of the school's operations plan, the start and end times will be staggered for the upper and lower schools by half an hour. The upper school will start and end school at 7:45 AM and 3:00 PM, respectively. The lower school will start and end school at 8:15 AM and 3:30 PM, respectively. As a result, there will be two distinct time periods for morning arrivals and afternoon departures.

Based on the school population of 100 students, the vehicular trips that will be generated by the Commonwealth Academy were determined using the *6th Edition* of the Institute of Transportation Engineers' Trip Generation manual for private schools. This manual is a compilation of empirical studies of vehicle traffic generation for a comprehensive list of categories of land uses. This private school utilizes significant busing, carpooling, and public transportation and the trips presented in Table 1 reflect 20% busing and transit usage.

Table 1
Future Commonwealth Academy Trip Generation
For 100 students (with 20% busing)

	Inbound Trips	Outbound Trips	Total Trips
AM Peak Hour	44	26	70
PM Peak Hour	23	29	52

Because the school is proposing to implement a staggered arrival and dismissal program, the effective impact of the number of trips during the school peak hour is significantly reduced. The staggered arrival program will have a positive effect of basically reducing the peak arrival rate of 44 trips in one half-hour period to a rate of 22 trips each in two half-hour periods. Consequently, the impact associated with the morning carpool operations is the addition of an average of less than one vehicle per minute added to Leslie Avenue during the morning carpool operations. This increase in traffic is minimal and can be accommodated by the existing capacity of intersections and roadways along Leslie Avenue.

The afternoon carpool operations will have a similar effect due to the staggering of dismissals with the upper school dismissed at 3:00 PM and the lower school dismissed at 3:30.

VEHICLE STACKING CAPACITY

It is recommended that drop-off and pick-up operations occur curbside along the Leslie Avenue frontage of the school for school buses and private vehicles. Morning carpool operations operate very efficiently, with most unloading operations taking place, on average, 15 seconds or less. As a result, as parents begin to arrive at random patterns during the AM carpool periods, their vehicles will not occupy curbside space in front of the school for a long period of time. Consequently, there will not be a significant build-up of vehicles in front of the school because vehicles arriving to drop off students process very efficiently.

The entire frontage of the school property on Leslie Avenue consists of approximately 280 feet. This distance, if fully utilized, can accommodate up to 14 vehicles in front of the school at one time. Based on our experience with private schools, all of this frontage for either the morning or afternoon carpool operations will not be necessary. Based on our experience with other private schools, the maximum stacking needed for the front of this school is 8 vehicles, which can easily be accommodated.

However, to ensure that all of the loading and unloading operations occur safely and out of the Leslie Avenue travel lanes, it is recommended that the school request there be restricted parking in front of the school from 7:30 AM to 8:30 AM and from 2:45 PM to 3:45 PM, which corresponds to the peak AM and PM carpool operations periods.

BUS ROUTING PLAN

An important element of the transportation management of the school operations is the utilization of school buses to transport students to and from the Commonwealth Academy. Currently, 20 % of the school population is transported to and from the school via school buses.

The number of school buses projected to serve the Commonwealth Academy is at most, approximately eight buses during the AM peak hour. These buses will not arrive all at one time because these vehicles are traveling from neighboring jurisdictions. It is also important to note that these buses are small 12 passenger buses transporting one to three students, and not the large 50 person school buses.

In order to minimize the traffic impact of these buses on the surrounding community, the school proposes to implement a bus routing plan. This plan will be geared to route buses to the site directly. This plan will require buses to approach and depart the proposed school site on Leslie Avenue via the following prescribed routing plan as presented in Figure 1:

From Mount Vernon Avenue:

- Buses will turn left or right onto Luray Avenue, then turn left onto Leslie Avenue and proceed to the front of the school. Buses departing and headed to Mount Vernon Avenue will be required to proceed to Monroe Avenue and turn left onto Monroe to either turn right or left onto Mount Vernon Avenue.

From Route 1:

- Buses will be required to turn left or right onto Monroe Avenue and proceed to Dewitt Avenue. The buses will turn left onto Dewitt Avenue, turn left onto Luray Avenue and turn left onto Leslie Avenue to proceed to the front of the school. Buses departing and headed to Route 1 will be required to proceed to Monroe Avenue and turn right to access Route 1.

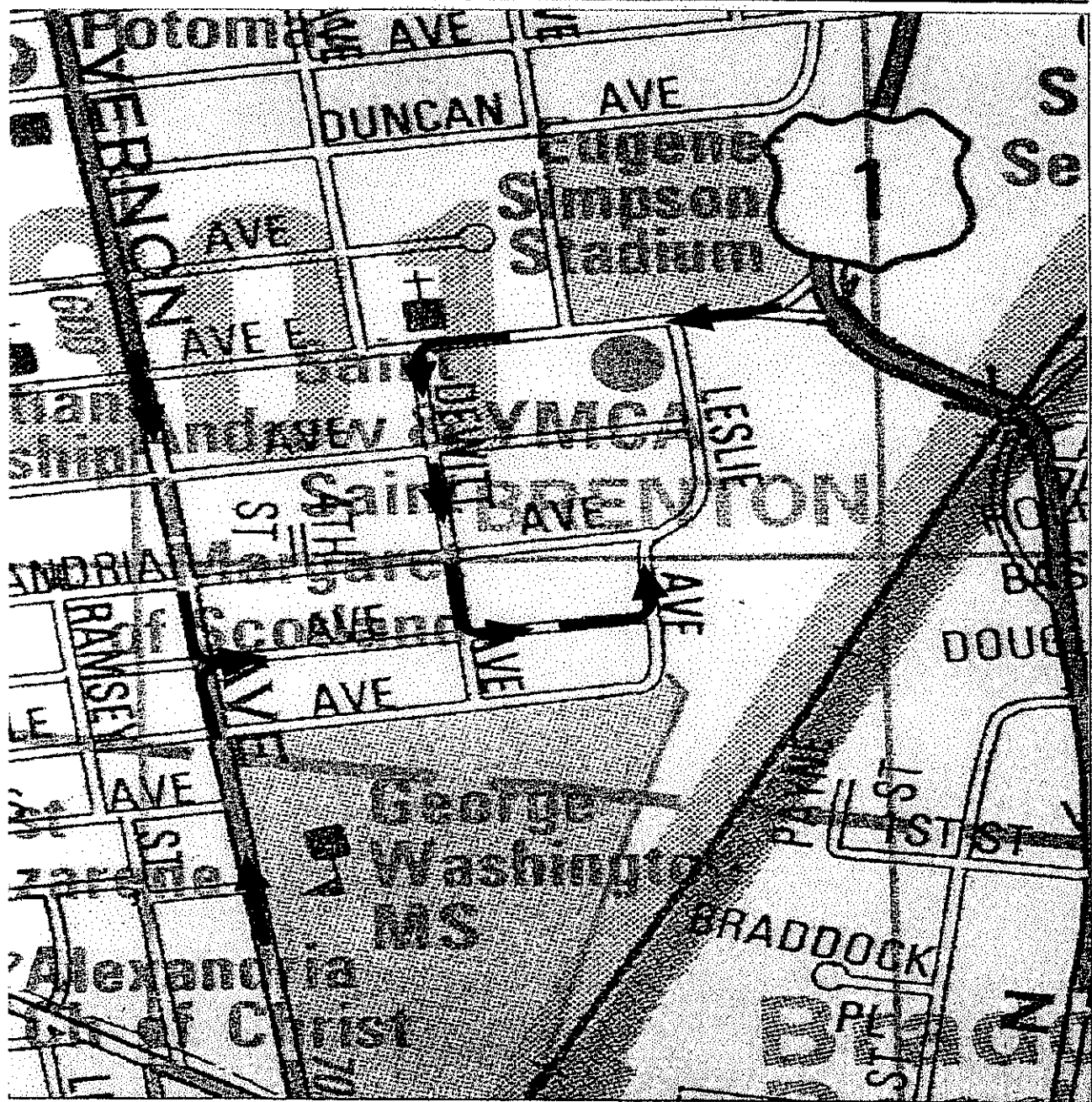


Figure 1
Bus Routing Plan

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for the Commonwealth Academy provides strict guidelines and policies for managing the following elements of the school transportation system:

- Access and Circulation
- Carpool Operations
- Parking Policies
- Delivery and Service Vehicles
- Overall Safety Considerations
- Enforcement and Community Coordination

The following sections present the specific guidelines for each component of the TMP.

Access and Circulation

- Access to the site will be provided via Leslie Avenue with drop-off and pick-up operations to occur curbside in front of the school.
- Drop-off and pick-up is allowed curbside to facilitate safe loading and unloading of student passengers on the right-hand side of the roadway. This practice will ensure safe carpool operations and limit the number of pedestrian crossings in front of the school.

Carpool Operations

- The Commonwealth Academy will provide a minimum of two staff members, whose primary responsibility is to manage the carpool operations in front of the school.
- A School Transportation Coordinator (STC) will be designated and responsible for implementing the school ridesharing promotions program to encourage more carpooling, for managing and monitoring the school carpool operations, and for overall transportation management at the school.
- The STC will promote carpooling by using address information to identify clusters of families that are close enough to each other to form a carpooling group. Once these groups are identified, the STC will contact the families to actively encourage these formations. The STC will stress the convenience factor and the traffic reduction impacts as benefits to carpooling.
- The STC will distribute school directories for parents to peruse to form their own carpooling groups. This process will be initiated prior to the school year and will be continued throughout the school year.

- The STC will also be responsible for reviewing the school's transit and busing policies on an annual basis to determine if additional measures can be implemented to promote either mode of transportation.
- The School property has approximately 280 feet of frontage along Leslie Avenue that can be utilized for pick-up and drop-off operations. This frontage could, if required to, accommodate up to approximately 14 vehicles in the front of the school at any one time.
- It is recommended that parking in front of the school be restricted from 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM and from 2:45 PM – 3:45 PM, which corresponds to the peak morning and afternoon carpool periods, in order to fully maximize the available frontage on Leslie Avenue. This parking restriction is recommended in conjunction with the use of traffic cones, which would be put in place by the STC prior to the identified time periods, to designate the area that will be managed as the student loading and unloading area for the school. Parents would be notified of the restricted parking area by the STC at the beginning of and throughout the school year.
- As the afternoon queue begins to develop, parents will have the option of waiting in their vehicles or to utilize a designated visitor parking area in the school's parking lot to park and walk in to pick up their children.

Parking Policies

- Adequate parking in the parking lot adjacent to the main school is provided to meet the projected daily parking demands of faculty/staff, parents and visitors driving to Commonwealth Academy. In addition, curbside parking in front of the school is available during non-carpool operations periods.
- As an option for additional parking capacity, it is recommended that the school try to maintain parking in the lot across the street.

Overall Safety Considerations

- Commonwealth Academy will coordinate with the City of Alexandria to install appropriate school zone signs and additional speed limit signs along Leslie Avenue.
- Commonwealth Academy will provide staff on-site in front of the school to manage the AM and PM carpool operations.

- A crosswalk on Leslie Avenue from the school property to the parking lot across the street is recommended to promote clear pedestrian paths across the main school building to the designated parking area.
- All pick-up and drop-off operations will occur on-site curbside along the building and on the passenger side of the vehicles.

Enforcement and Community Coordination

- The STC will be the primary point of contact for all traffic and parking related community issues. The STC will maintain a log of calls and correspondence regarding all traffic and parking related community issues. This information will be provided to Commonwealth Academy on a regular basis, and the Board of Directors shall take appropriate action to address any outstanding traffic and parking issues.

CONCLUSION

Commonwealth Academy will displace existing office uses on the subject site and will generate 44 inbound vehicles in the AM peak hour and 29 outbound vehicles in the PM peak hour staggered over two half-hour periods in the morning and afternoon. These vehicles can be sufficiently accommodated within the existing roadway network and with the access and circulation plan proposed for this project. The implementation of the transportation management plan will help to facilitate safe and efficient carpool operations, provide policies for parking, promote ridesharing and alternative transportation modes, and integrate the operations of the school with the surrounding community.

SUP 2001-0093

LAND, CLARK, CARROLL, MENDELSON & BLAIR, P.C.

Attorneys & Counsellors at Law

112 SOUTH ALFRED STREET
SUITE 300
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

H. CARTER LAND, III
JAMES C. CLARK
F. ANDREW CARROLL, III
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DUNCAN W. BLAIR

.....
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(703) 549-3335

MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. BOX 19888
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22320-0888

October 4, 2001

Ms. Mary Hashemi, Planner
Department of Planning and Zoning
City of Alexandria
301 King Street, City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

**In re: Commonwealth Academy
1221 Leslie Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia**

Dear Mary:

I am writing on behalf of our client, Commonwealth Academy, to provide you with the additional information you requested during our telephone conversation on Monday, October 1, 2001.

For your convenience, I have formatted the letter as Question and Response. Hopefully, I have accurately framed the questions that you raised. If not, please advise, and we will supplement any responses as necessary.

Question #1: What are the general operating characteristics of the school during non-school hours prior to 7:45 A.M. and 3:00 P.M.?

Response: Faculty and Staff begin arriving at the school at approximately 7:00 A.M. and depart at approximately 4:00 P.M. Throughout the day a maximum of two (2), part-time faculty will arrive and depart depending upon their schedules. After classes are dismissed, a limited number of students may remain in the school for limited, after-school activities. During the current year, such activities include play rehearsal, aftercare and extra help sessions and involves approximately fifteen percent (15%) of students. Throughout the year, the school may hold six (6) events for parents and students during non-school hours. These include a back-to-school night as well as student conferences and musical productions.

Ms. Mary Hashemi
Planner, City of Alexandria
October 4, 2001
Page -2-

Question #2: How much impact will the routing of buses through residential neighborhoods adjacent to Leslie Avenue have on traffic congestion or on noise and safety for residents with regards to buses and overall traffic.

Response: As stated in the conclusion of the Gorove/Slade Associates, Inc. Technical Memorandum dated September 28, 2001, the inbound and outbound AM/PM vehicular traffic can be sufficiently accommodated within the existing roadway network and within the access and circulation plans proposed by the project. Further, the report provides that the implementation of the Traffic Management Plan will also facilitate safe and efficient car pool operations and provide policies for parking, promote ride-sharing and alternative transportation modes which will mitigate the impacts, if any, of the operation of the school on the surrounding community. As such, it would appear that traffic congestion is not an issue.

The drivers of the public school buses are all hired by the respective counties from which the buses depart and would be required to participate and satisfy any driver safety programs which those counties require of all school bus drivers.

It is not anticipated the limited amount of bus traffic will have any negative impact upon the safety of travel for residents of the community. The small buses are essentially no different from individually owned automobiles. Nor is it anticipated that excessive noise will be generated by the use of the small, student buses.

Question #3: The reference on Page 6, Parking Policies of the Gorove/Slade Report regarding the adequacy of the parking in the parking lot adjacent to the school and curbside parking in front of the school states that parking is sufficient to meet the daily parking needs of the faculty/staff, parents and visitors; it does not address student parking.

Response: As indicated in the original application as well as during several meetings between representatives of Commonwealth Academy and the Department of Planning and Zoning, it is anticipated that at maximum enrollment, a limited number of students will drive to school. For the purpose of the application, that number was set at six(6). During the current academic school year, there are no student drivers. Given the limited number of student drivers, the statement regarding the adequacy of the parking in the parking lot adjacent to the school is not effected by student drivers and that sentence should be read to include faculty/staff, parents, students and visitors.

SUP 2001-0093

Ms. Mary Hashemi
Planner, City of Alexandria
October 4, 2001
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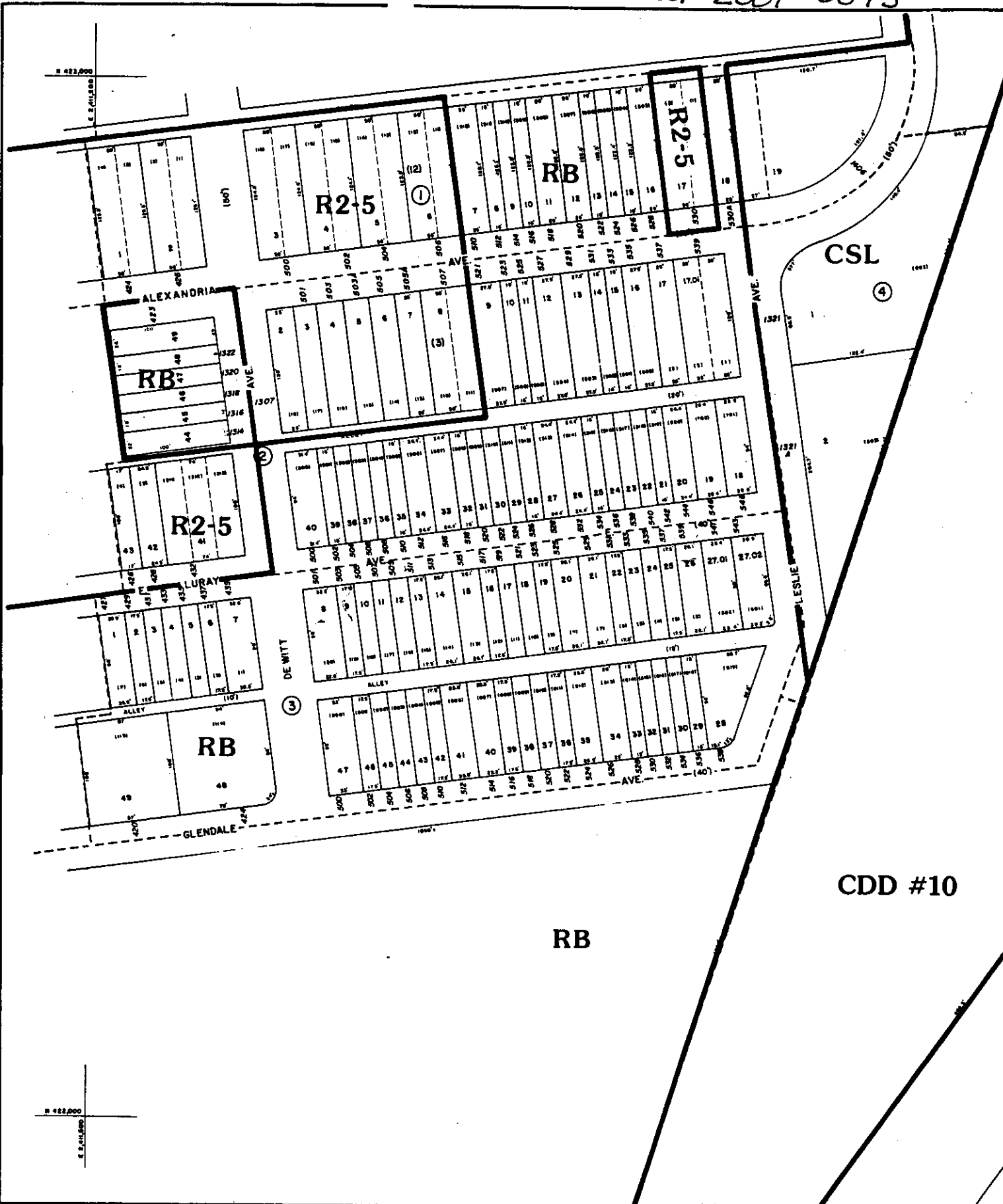
Hopefully, this addresses all of your concerns. If not, please do not hesitate to call.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Duncan W. Blair". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Duncan W. Blair

SUP 2001-0093



ZONE MAP
6-24-1992

CDD #10 See Potomac Yard / Potomac Greens Small Area Plan

37

Zoning Revisions

Special Notations

Property Line ———
 Sub. Lot Line - - - -
 City Boundary - - - -
 Block Line - - - -

L

W
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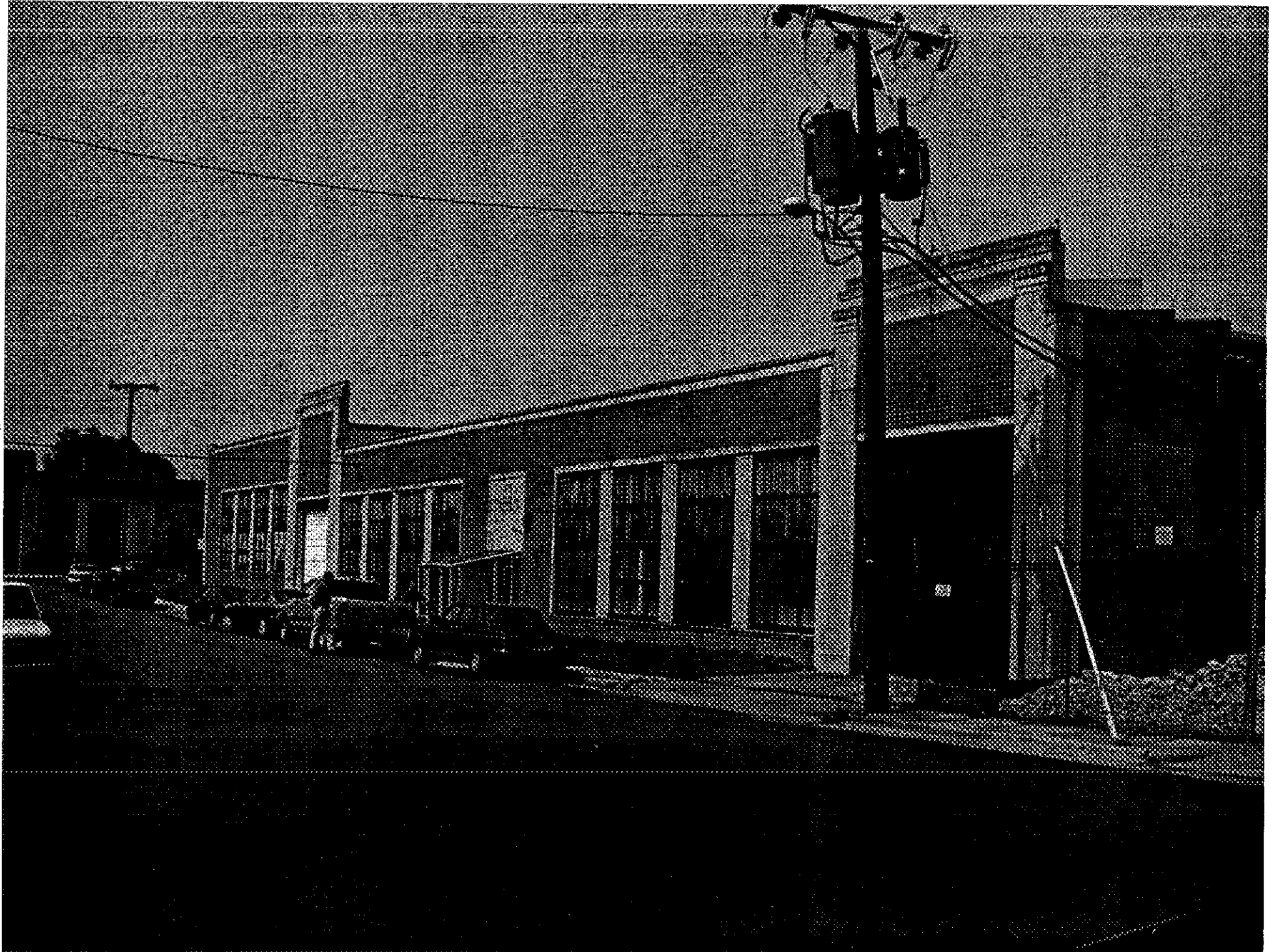
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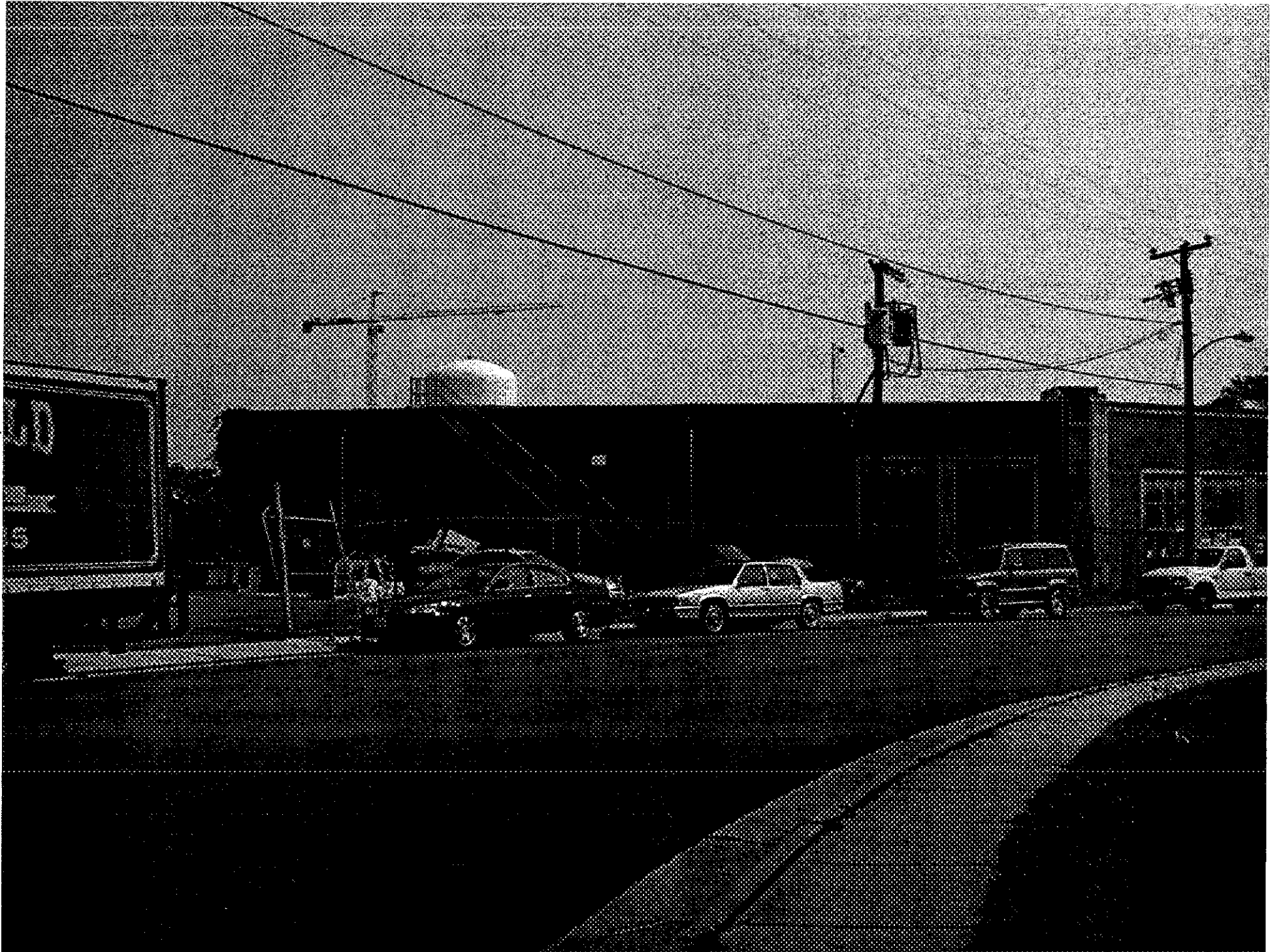
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SUP 2001-0093

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SUP 2001-0093

THE DEL RAY CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 2233

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22301

ESTABLISHED 1954

To: Members of Alexandria Planning Commission
Eileen Fogarty, Director, Office of Planning and Zoning

From: Amy Slack, Land Use Committee Co-chair
Sarah Haut, Land Use Committee Co-chair
Bill Hendrickson, President

Date: November 1, 2001

Subject: SUP# 2001-0093; **Commonwealth Academy**, request for a special use permit for a private school at 1321 Leslie Avenue.

At our Land Use committee meeting on September 12, 2001, we addressed the subject request. Representatives for the applicant met with us on September 10, 2001 to explain the proposal. Announcement of this meeting attracted attendance from interested residents who live near the site.

The Academy wishes to relocate, to the Leslie Avenue site, a non-profit school for grades 6-12 which offers small classroom settings (8:1) that meet the needs of the targeted student population. The Academy would lease the site. The investor group who owns 1321 and 1321A Leslie Avenue would restore both building façades, renovate the interiors, repave the parking lot and landscape the open space.

The Land Use committee believes that the prospect of extensive improvements to the building and overall site are welcome. The building is of architectural value worthy of restoration as proposed by the applicant and might outweigh minor parking inconveniences though not safety concerns that might arise.

We have reservations about the proposed bus route using Dewitt and Luray particularly in conjunction with George Washington Middle School traffic and to the increased traffic on Leslie and along Luray and Glendale which are narrow. Also, parking for those who arrive earlier and stay later, and parents/visitors could become a burden on the neighborhood particularly as the school grows.

We suggest approving the Academy for a smaller number of students, say 60 to 65, to assess and establish solutions to perceived problems. The second traffic study done by Gorove/Slade Associates and submitted to Staff, offers several suggestions that should lessen the impact of school oriented traffic. We believe it is reasonable to observe these suggestions in action, particularly in conjunction with renovations at the George Washington Middle School, before the Academy be allowed to expand to it's requested level of enrollment.

In addition to conditions recommended by staff, Land Use voted to support the SUP request as proposed with the following conditions:

- The Academy will investigate a different access route in conjunction with the proposed straightening of Route US 1 and/or the construction of a proposed commuter bus route in the Potomac Yard development to avoid existing residential streets.
- The applicant will work with DRCA and the neighbors to develop an acceptable traffic plan.
- Enrollment be capped initially at 65 students.

We request your support for this position and welcome your questions and comments. Please feel free to contact Amy Slack at 703-549-3412 or Sarah Haut at 703-838-9080 and Bill Hendrickson at 703-549-7365 (days), 703-519-9410 (evenings).

A Message to Parents

We are pleased to introduce you to Commonwealth Academy. We understand that you have an important purpose in mind as you find the best educational facility available for your son or daughter. That is our mission at Commonwealth Academy... and that challenge is to guide you toward offering the best educational setting for academic achievement, social development, and emotional growth during these important years of adolescence.

Commonwealth Academy provides an individualized and student-centered approach to learning. We offer a college preparatory curriculum that incorporates multiple teaching strategies, experiential activities, and interactive learning opportunities. Our students successfully complete high school and master college-level classes.

We welcome your interest in Commonwealth Academy, and encourage you to visit our school and learn more about our rich and diverse program.

Student Profile

Students with average to strong ability in grades 5-12 who work well in smaller (15-20) class settings with accommodations made to maximize learning and educational achievement of students.

Admission Criteria and Features

Interview and a day visit - current program educational listing

School Hours

7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Tuition Schedule

\$1,100	application fee
\$1,000	tuition
\$1,000	due July 1
\$1,000	due August 1
\$1,000	due December 1

Commonwealth Academy


3431 Darin Springs Road • Falls Church, VA 22041
 703.931.8018 • 703.931.8093 (fax)
www.commonwealthacad.org • ca.pvt.k12.va.us (e-mail)

Dr. Melanie Kerber, Director • Veronica Royer, Administrative Assistant

SUP #2001-0093 ¹⁵
 1321 Leslie Av ¹¹⁻¹⁷⁻⁰¹
 (Commonwealth Academy)

Commonwealth Academy





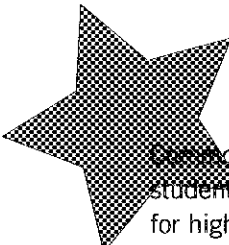
Our Mission and Philosophy

Commonwealth Academy has a singular focus in terms of its educational mission: to offer a college preparatory curriculum with alternative instructional methods and accommodations suited to the average to bright student with learning differences. We enroll students in grades 6 through 12. The faculty and staff of Commonwealth Academy are highly skilled and experienced in offering assistance to students by teaching learning strategies that will compensate for weaknesses and enable students to master individual learning styles.

Founded in 1997, Commonwealth Academy was created by a group of parents and teachers who believe a student with learning differences can succeed in an academic high school and college setting if proper accommodations are offered. We work in close partnership with parents, and encourage students to become educated about their own optimal learning styles. Our students also learn to advocate for themselves in a manner that promotes tolerance for individual differences while using strategies to compensate for weaknesses in processing.




Our Students




Commonwealth Academy accepts middle- and high-school-aged students with average to bright abilities who are strong candidates for high school graduation and college. We do not accept students with difficulties in managing aggressive or "acting-out" behavior. Commonwealth's admissions committee recognizes the emotional and social implications that frequently accompany learning differences. Our students must exhibit satisfactory standards of character and conduct, and wish to realize significant achievement in an academic setting. All of our students must agree to abide by the expectations outlined in our student handbook.

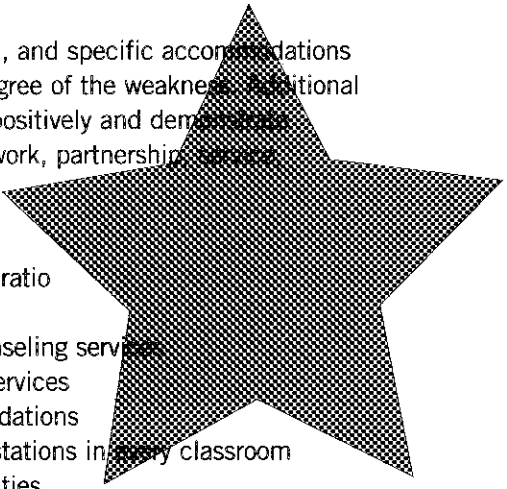
Our academy embraces diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, and learning style. Commonwealth students are recognized for high academic and behavioral standards while consistently practicing honesty and responsibility for one's actions. We believe that once a student enters Commonwealth Academy, a partnership is formed between the home and the school to develop and nurture a student's educational, social, and emotional growth. Just as parents are keenly attuned to the strengths, weaknesses, talents, and special needs of their own child, our faculty and staff strive to develop strong bonds with each student, enabling them to build confidence and become proficient in the most appropriate learning styles.



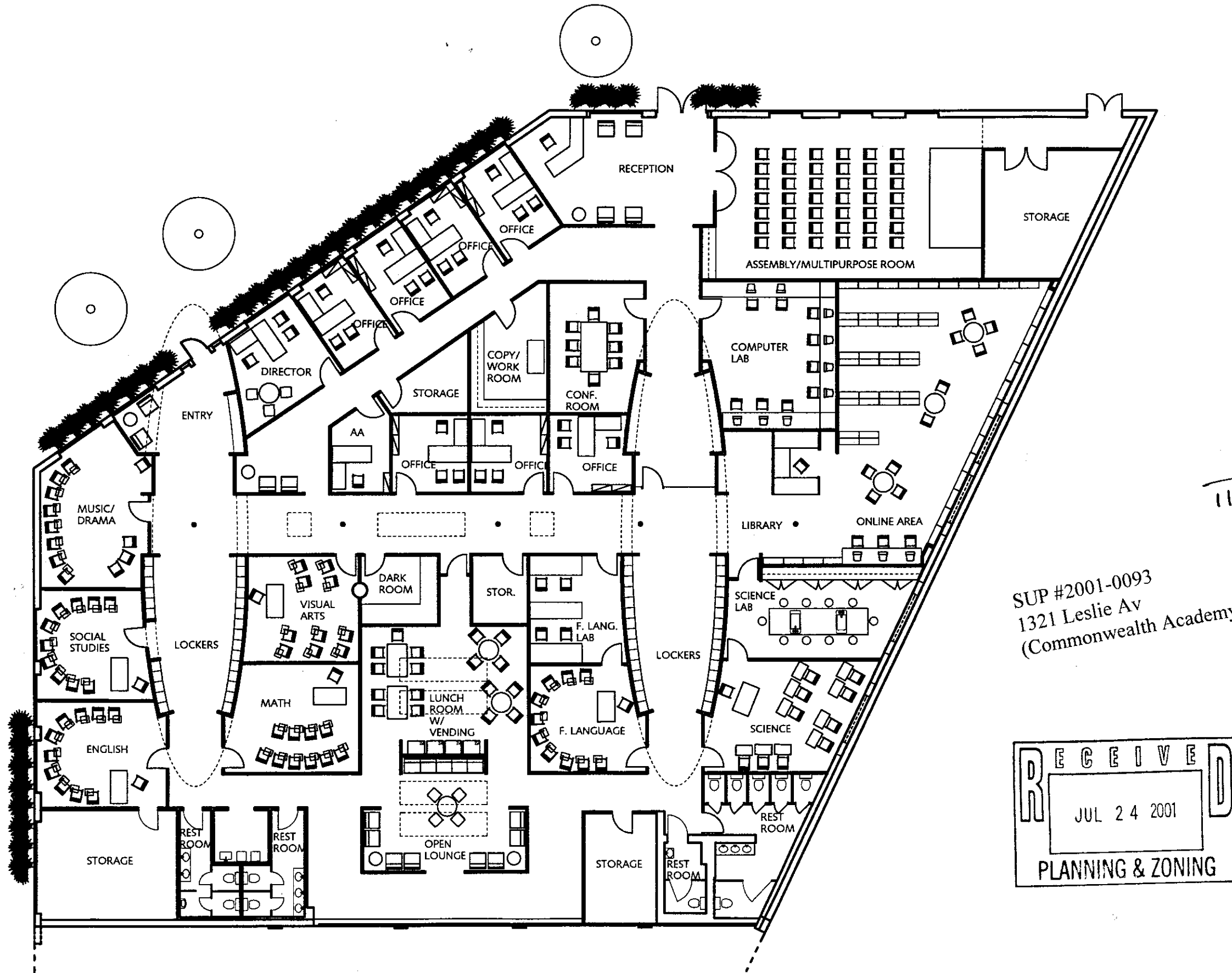
Services & Accommodations

- 
- ### Program
- A Writers Workshop that provides strategies for remediation of written language difficulties; helps students develop a more elaborate style; and strengthens skills in grammar usage, mechanics, and semantics
 - A state-of-the-art computer lab offering internet access, online homework, skill-strengthening exercises, organizational strategies, and e-mail accounts to facilitate homework completion
 - Performing and fine arts classes, including drama, music, and art, allowing students an opportunity to cultivate their own creativity through productions, presentations, and special projects
 - Field trips and social activities, offering avenues to establish friendships and strengthen social skills

Our students receive personalized attention, and specific accommodations are offered to students according to the degree of the weakness. Additional help is available to students who respond positively and demonstrate commitment and effort. We promote teamwork, partnership, respect, tolerance, and self-discipline.

- 
- Small classes with low teacher/student ratio
 - Bi-weekly communication with parents
 - Speech and language therapy and counseling services
 - Occupational therapy and counseling services
 - College-prep curriculum with accommodations
 - Fully equipped computer lab and workstations in every classroom
 - Interactive and hands-on learning activities
 - Full activities calendar including ROPES and field studies
 - Group work to promote teamwork, cohesion, leadership, and social skills
 - Foreign languages, including Spanish, German, and French
 - Writers Workshop, including writing as a process
 - PSAT/SAT preparation and on-site administration
 - Monthly meeting with consulting psychiatrist
 - Daily writing across the curriculum, with frequent teacher feedback
 - Multiple means of assessment including projects, presentations, reports, videos, and web pages
 - Integrated study skills and character education
 - Quarterly service projects and field trips
 - Emphasis on organization and time management skills
 - Homework on line and teacher web pages to provide current news and assignments
 - Caring and experienced faculty





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11-17-01

SUP #2001-0093
1321 Leslie Av
(Commonwealth Academy)

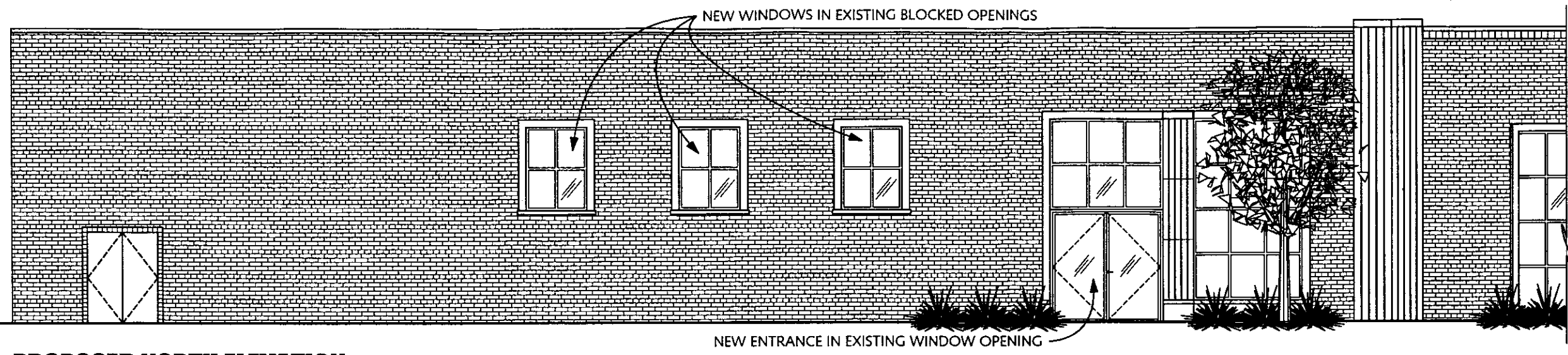
RECEIVED
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PLANNING & ZONING

PROPOSED SCHEMATIC FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'

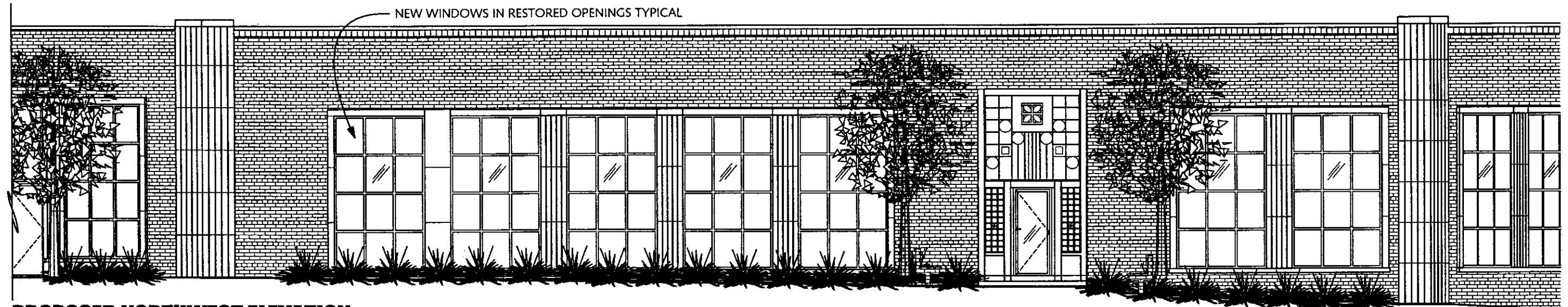
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Date: 07.24.01
By: KP



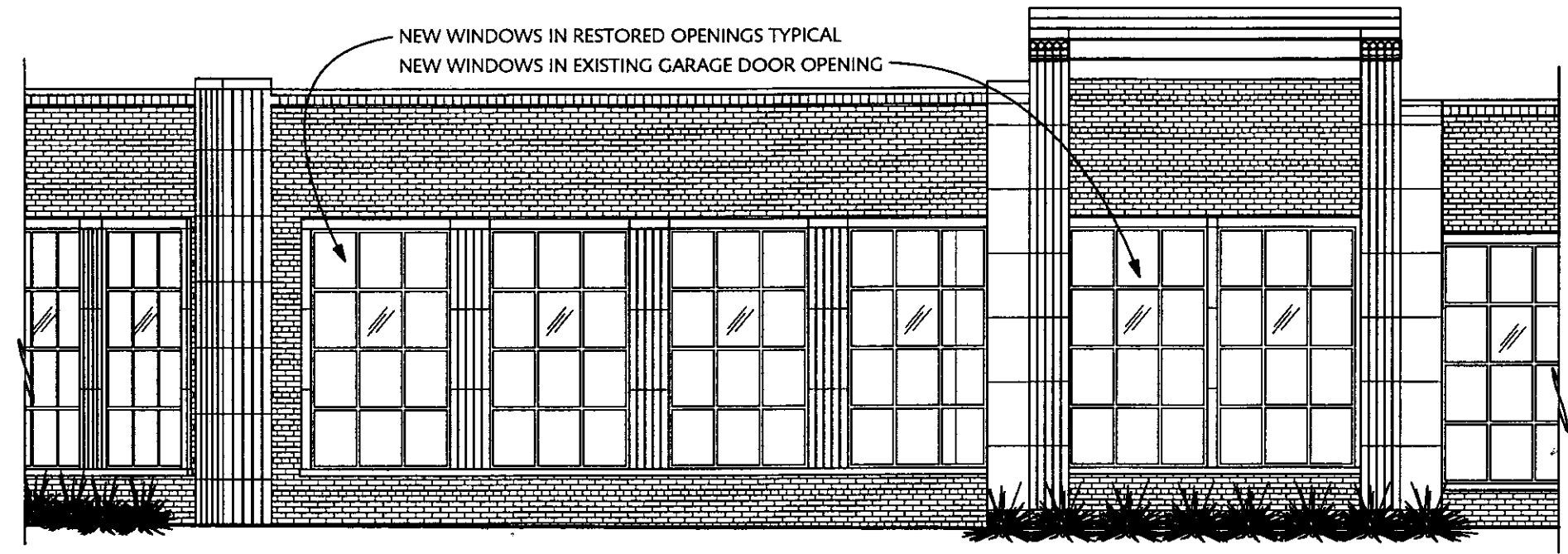
PROPOSED BUILDING FLOOR PLAN
1321 LESLIE AVENUE ALEXANDRIA, VA



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8"=1'



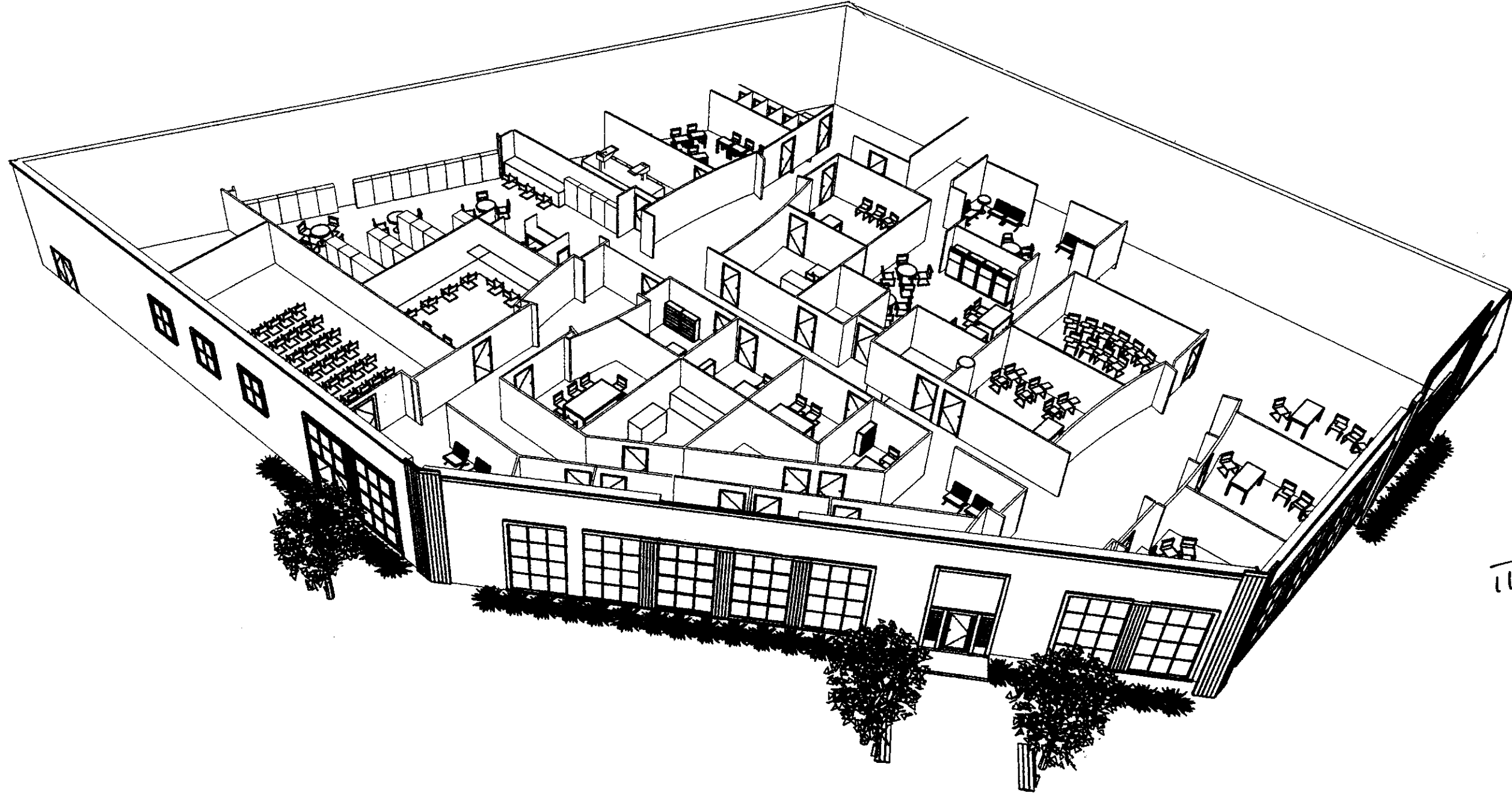
PROPOSED NORTHWEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8"=1'



PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8"=1'

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11-17-01

PRELIMINARY PERSPECTIVE STUDY



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11-17-01

**BUILDING PERSPECTIVE
1321 LESLIE AVENUE ALEXANDRIA, VA**



Proj: 01021.01
Date: 07.24.01
By: KP

ENVISION design PLLC

1211 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite 250 Washington, DC 20036
tel 202.588.5996 fax 202.588.5774 www.envisionpllc.com

APPLICATION for SPECIAL USE PERMIT # 2001-0093

PROPERTY LOCATION: ¹³²¹~~1305~~ Leslie Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 44.03 04 01 ZONE: CSL/Commercial Service Low

APPLICANT Name: Learning Foundations of Metropolitan Washington, Inc.
doing business as Commonwealth Academy

Address: 3431 Carlin Springs Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22041

PROPERTY OWNER Name: 1321 Leslie Avenue Associates

Address: 120 South Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

PROPOSED USE: Special Use Permit to establish and operate an academic Private School
{§4-303(V)}.

THE UNDERSIGNED hereby applies for a Special Use Permit in accordance with the provisions of Article XI, Section 11-500 of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

THE UNDERSIGNED, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-301(B) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

THE UNDERSIGNED hereby attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required to be furnished by the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. The applicant is hereby notified that any written materials, drawings or illustrations submitted in support of this application and any specific oral representations made to the Planning Commission or City Council in the course of public hearings on this application will be binding on the applicant unless those materials or representations are clearly stated to be non-binding or illustrative of general plans and intentions, subject to substantial revision, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-207(A)(10), of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Land, Clark, Carroll, Mendelson & Blair, P.C.
Duncan W. Blair, Esquire
Print Name of Applicant or Agent


Signature

112 South Alfred Street, Suite 300
Mailing/Street Address

(703) 836-1000 (703) 549-3335
Telephone # *Fax #*

Alexandria, Virginia 22314
City and State *Zip Code*

Email: dblair@landclark.com
July 24, 2001
Date

===== **DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - OFFICE USE ONLY** =====

Application Received: _____ Date & Fee Paid: _____ \$ _____

ACTION - PLANNING COMMISSION: 11/08/01 RECOMMEND APPROVAL 7-0

ACTION - CITY COUNCIL: 11/17/01PH--CC approved the Planning Commission recommendation.

SPEAKER'S FORM

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND GIVE IT TO THE CITY CLERK
BEFORE YOU SPEAK ON A DOCKET ITEM.**

15
11-17-01

DOCKET ITEM NO. 15

PLEASE ANNOUNCE THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED BELOW PRIOR TO SPEAKING.

1. NAME: DUNCAN W BLAIR
2. ADDRESS: 112 S Alfred St, Alex
3. WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT, IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF? Applicant
4. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE ITEM?
FOR: AGAINST: _____ OTHER: _____
5. NATURE OF YOUR INTEREST IN ITEM (PROPERTY OWNER, ATTORNEY, LOBBYIST, CIVIC INTEREST, ETC.):
Attorney
6. ARE YOU RECEIVING COMPENSATION FOR THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE COUNCIL? YES NO

This form shall be kept as a part of the Permanent Record in those instances where financial interest or compensation is indicated by the speaker.

A maximum of 5 minutes will be allowed for your presentation. If you have a prepared statement, please leave a copy with the City Clerk.

Additional time, not to exceed 15 minutes, may be obtained with the consent of the majority of the Council present, provided that notice requesting additional time with reasons stated is filed with the City Clerk in writing before 5:00 p.m. of the day preceding the meeting.

The public normally may speak on docket items only at Public Hearing Meetings, and not at Regular Meetings. Public Hearing Meetings are usually held on the Saturday following the second Tuesday in each month; Regular Meetings are regularly held on the Second and Fourth Tuesdays in each month. The rule with respect to when a person may speak to a docket item can be waived by a majority vote of Council members present, but such a waiver is not normal practice. When a speaker is recognized, the rules of procedures for speakers at public hearing meetings shall apply.

In addition, the public may speak on matters which are not on the docket during the Public Discussion Period at Public Hearing Meetings. The Mayor may grant permission to a person, who is unable to participate in public discussion at a Public Hearing Meeting for medical, religious, family emergency or other similarly substantial reasons, to speak at a regular meeting. When such permission is granted, the rules of procedures for public discussion at public hearing meetings shall apply.

Guidelines for the Public Discussion Period

- All speaker request forms for the public discussion period must be submitted by the time the item is called by the City Clerk.
- No speaker will be allowed more than 5 minutes, and that time may be reduced by the Mayor or presiding member.
- If more than 6 speakers are signed up or if more speakers are signed up than would be allotted for in 30 minutes, the Mayor will organize speaker requests by subject or position, and allocate appropriate times, trying to ensure that speakers on unrelated subjects will also be allowed to speak during the 30-minute public discussion period.
- If speakers seeking to address Council on the same subject cannot agree on a particular order or method that they would like the speakers to be called, the speakers shall be called in the chronological order of their request forms' submission.
- Any speakers not called during the public discussion period will have the option to speak at the conclusion of the meeting, after all docketed items have been heard.