

Docket Item #3
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2006-0040

Planning Commission Meeting
July 6, 2006

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for a special use permit to operate a private school (academic).

APPLICANT: The Institute for the Psychological Sciences
by Catharine Puskar, attorney

LOCATION: 635 Slaters Lane

ZONE: OCM(50)/Office Commercial Medium

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the recommended permit conditions found in Section III of this report.

SITE GRAPHIC
AVAILABLE IN THE PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICE

I. DISCUSSION

REQUEST

The applicant, The Institute for the Psychological Sciences, requests special use permit approval for the operation of a private school, academic, located at 635 Slaters Lane.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is occupied by one of four buildings that make up the Towngate office condominium complex. The subject building is located at the northeast corner of the development on a parcel of almost 36,000 square feet. Vehicular access to the building is from Slaters Lane. Underground parking for the development is also accessed from Slaters Lane. The subject office building is four stories. The proposed school will occupy 14,700 square feet on the ground and second floors of the building.



The surrounding area is occupied by a mix of office and residential uses, Marina Towers condominiums are located immediately to the east. Immediately to the north is a park. To the south is the Salvation Army office headquarters. To the west is another office building and the George Washington Parkway.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to operate the facility as an accredited school of higher education offering masters and doctoral degrees. The applicant offers a curriculum for the training and continuing education of clinical psychologists. Specific aspects of the school as proposed by the applicant area as follows:

Hours: Class will be offered from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, with four class periods during the day. Administrative staff is on site from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

of Students/

Staff: The applicant proposes up to 50 students at the facility, at any one time. Approximately 15 to 20 staff members will be present throughout the day.

Noise: The applicant does not anticipate noise from the school.

Trash/Litter: Minimal trash associated with a school use will be generated. The applicant does not anticipate any litter to be generated by the school use.

PARKING

According to Section 8-200 (A)(11) of the Zoning Ordinance, a private school use requires one parking space for every two seats. A school with 50 seats will be required to provide 25 off-street parking spaces. Site Plan #82-021 was approved for the subject building, and provided one parking space for every 400 square feet, providing a total of 450 spaces for the four buildings at Towngate. In this case, the subject space is 14,700 square feet, which would have required 37 spaces under the site plan. Therefore, the applicant complies with the parking requirement.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject property is located in the OCM(50)/Office commercial medium zone. Section 4-903 (X) of the Zoning Ordinance allows a private school in the OCM zone only with a special use permit.

The proposed use is consistent with the Old Town North Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designates the property for commercial use.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff does not object to the proposed commercial school in the subject office building. Any impacts associated with the use would be similar to those office uses that already occupy the building. Sufficient parking is provided in the on-site garage.

Staff recommends approval subject to the following conditions.

III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Staff recommends **approval** 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 corporation in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z)
2. The hours of operation shall be limited to between 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily. The applicant shall post the hours of operation at the entrance of the business. (P&Z)
3. A maximum of 50 students are permitted at the school at any one time. (P&Z)

4. The applicant shall encourage its employees and students to use mass transit or to carpool when traveling to and from the facility, by posting information regarding DASH and METRO routes, the location where fare passes for transit are sold, and advertising of carpooling opportunities. (P&Z)
5. The applicant shall conduct employee training sessions on an ongoing basis, including as part of any employee orientation, to discuss all SUP provisions and requirements. (P&Z)
6. Loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building, and no amplified sounds shall be audible at the property line. (T&ES)
7. 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 which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) the director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as the result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation of the permit conditions, (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: Eileen Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;
Richard Josephson, Deputy Director;
Valerie Peterson, Urban Planner.

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.

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Transportation & Environmental Services:

- R-1 Loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building, and no amplified sounds shall be audible at the property line.
- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line.
- F-1 T&ES has no objections to the proposed private academic school.

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-2 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-4 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-5 Required exits, parking, and accessibility for persons with disabilities must be provided to the building.

Health Department:

- F-1 No comment.

Police Department:

- F-1 No comments.

SUP 2006-0040
635 Slaters Lane

**REPORT ATTACHMENTS
AVAILABLE IN THE PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICE**