TOWN OF WELLESLEY MASSACHUSETTS

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
TOWN HALL WELLESLEY, MA 02181

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ZBA 93-85
Petition of Town of Wellesley/Permanent Building Committee/School Committee
Schofield School - 27 Cedar Street

Pursuant to due notice, the Special Permit Granting Authority held a Public Hearing on Thursday, November 18, 1993 at 8 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room (Conference Room B) at the Town Hall, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, on the petition of TOWN OF WELLESLEY/PERMANENT BUILDING COMMITTEE/SCHOOL COMMITTEE requesting Site Plan Approval pursuant to the provisions of Section XVIA, Section IIA-3 and Section XXV of the Zoning Bylaw to allow construction of a one-story addition with an 8,433 square foot footprint and associated landscaping at the SCHOFIELD SCHOOL, 27 CEDAR STREET, in a Single Residence District and a Water Supply Protection District.

A Special Permit is also requested pursuant to the provisions of Section XIVE and Section XXV of the Zoning Bylaw to construct a Major Construction Project in a Water Supply Protection District, and to render more than 5,000 square feet impervious by paving an additional 4,850 square feet of play area and an additional 1,500 square feet of parking area.

On October 20, 1993, the petitioners requested a hearing before this Authority, and thereafter, due notice of the hearing was given by mailing and publication.

Presenting the case at the hearing were Randy Becker, Permanent Building Committee Chairman; Alice Peisch, School Committee Member; and Ken DiNisco, project architect.

Using a model, Mr. DiNisco explained that three classrooms had been added in 1987, and the new addition of five classrooms and a kindergarten would also be one-story. The addition will be built on the back of the existing school, will be on the same level, and will be positioned at a slight angle due to the topography. The play equipment, presently located at the rear, will be relocated to the right side of the building facing the playing fields. The new play area will be 25% larger than the old one. There will be paved access for fire vehicles to a point slightly beyond the rear corners of the new addition on both sides. There will be no impact on the existing playing fields. The three foot drop between the new play area and the existing playing fields will be bermed.

The Board expressed concern about the potential danger to small children playing in the new area when older children were using the playing fields.

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Mr. DiNisco said that a new drop-off area with short-term parking has been created in response to a recommendation from the Design Review Board. There will be 86 additional students of which 63 will be bussed. The School Committee predicts an increase of 10 to 12 cars.

The Board noted that the expansion of Temple Beth Elohim had also created additional traffic on Cedar Street. Mrs. Peisch explained that there is a Crossing Guard at the crosswalk, which has alleviated the back-up problem. A number of children are dropped off at the top of Hunting Street.

The Board said that concern had been expressed regarding children climbing on the roof of the one-story building.

Mrs. Peisch explained that she had checked with the police, and that no complaints had been filed regarding vandalism or inappropriate behavior in the last year. The School Committee is aware that the new enclosed courtyard could become an attractive nuisance, and if problems do occur, appropriate security measures will be taken.

As the Board had serious concerns regarding the present and potential traffic situation at Schofield School, they decided to delay the decision until the petitioners had an opportunity to develop viable solutions to the problem.

On December 10, 1993 at 8 a.m., the Board of Appeals held a Public Meeting, which was duly noticed, in the Great Hall of the Town Hall to discuss solutions proposed by the petitioners to ameliorate the potential impact of additional traffic created by the addition of four classrooms.

Present at the meeting were Randy Becker, Permanent Building Committee Chairman; Frances Cramb, School Committee Chairman; Alice Peisch, School Committee Member; Ken DiNisco, project architect; and George Bezkorovainy, Traffic Consultant, of Bruce Campbell & Associates.

Mr. DiNisco stated that the analysis of the traffic problem has delineated four areas for which solutions are proposed: 1) Cedar Street traffic; 2) the intersection of Cedar Street and the Schofield School driveway; 3) the drop-off/turn-around area; 4) on-site parking. Mr. DiNisco outlined each problem and the proposed solution as follows:

Cedar Street

Problem - Peak morning traffic hours on Cedar Street are between 7-9 a.m. Northbound

traffic is about double that of southbound. The Crossing Guard intermittently stops northbound traffic to allow vehicles exiting the driveway to make left turns. The maximum queue for exiting traffic is between 4-5 cars.

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Solution - Continue use of Crossing Guard.

Cedar Street Intersection

Problem - There is a tight turning radius on the left side of the driveway, which is only 26 feet wide.

Solution - Increase the turning radius on both sides of the driveway, and widen the driveway to provide for two exiting lanes and one entrance lane.

Drop-off/Turn-around Area

Problem - There are usually between 1-3 cars queuing in the driveway for drop-off and about 5 cars queuing to exit the premises. Between 8:15 and 8:25 a.m., a maximum of 18-20 cars are involved in this process. At present, the drop-off circle has no striping; the walkway does not extend across the circle; and there is no definitive traffic circulation pattern. The problem intensifies between 2:35 and 2:45 p.m., when the children are picked up, because while the drop-off is continuously moving traffic, the pick-up is not staggered and results in back-up of all of the waiting cars.

Solution -

1. The right side of the driveway could be widened to provide space for 6 cars for live parking. This solution is not recommended due to the danger than these spaces will be used for short-term parking, thus creating additional back-up for vehicles attempting to use the drop-off area closer to the school.

2. A walkway will transect the circle fronted by a total of 11 new parking spaces, which will be used for live parking before school begins.

3. A new parking area for 12 cars will be provided opposite the walkway. This area will be separated from the driveway by a landscaped island.

4. Drop-off vehicles will proceed down the driveway between the permanent parking spaces and the live parking spaces to the closest live parking spaces, turn right and re-enter the driveway to exit the site.

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Parking

Problem - Insufficient on-site parking. There are 27 storage parking spaces existing on site. Permanent staff numbers about 15 and special educators with varied schedules number about 12.

Solution -

1. Creation of 37 additional parking spaces, of which 20 would be for storage and 17 for live parking during peak hours.

   a. Permanent storage area for 8 cars at the rear of the school.
   b. Permanent storage for 12 cars as noted in #3 above.
   c. Live parking for 20 cars along perimeter of widened driveway and continuing in front of new walkway.

2. Arrangement with Temple Beth Elohim to use its parking lot for special evening events at the Schofied School.

Mr. DiNisco presented, as a further solution to the Cedar Street problem, the prohibiting of left hand turns from the driveway during peak a.m. hours. This is not a recommended solution as traffic would be forced to enter Route 9 to retrace to the Mass Pike or to homes in any area behind the school.

The Board was of the opinion that the widening of the driveway to include the additional 6 live parking spaces should be implemented, and suggested that signage be erected stating the use and hours of use of the spaces. These 6 spaces could be used for additional parking for evening activities.

The Board also noted that the clearance of snow from the entrance from Cedar Street would be critical during the winter months. There will be more drop-off traffic during snowy weather, and if the entrance is not completely clear, traffic problems would escalate.

Mr. Becker summed up the solutions as being either physical or administrative. The physical solutions included changing the curb radii, widening the driveway, and adding the parking spaces. The administrative controls include the prohibition of left hand turns and monitoring the use of the additional 6 parking spaces to ensure they were used for "live" parking only during the designated hours. Mr. Becker proposed that all of the physical solutions be incorporated into the plan, but that the administrative controls be implemented only if it was determined that the physical solutions were insufficient to resolve the traffic problems.

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The Board unanimously voted to grant Site Plan Approval for the Schofield School project which will include the proposed solutions.

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Statement of Facts

The Schofield School is located at 27 Cedar Street on a 614,196 square foot lot, in a Single Residence District and a Water Supply Protection District.

The petitioners are requesting Site Plan Approval to allow the construction of a one-story addition containing 5 classrooms and one kindergarten room, with a footprint of 8,433 square feet with associated landscaping. Expansion of the existing parking spaces is also proposed. Storage parking will be expanded by 20 spaces for a total of 47 storage spaces; and live/short term parking will be expanded from 3 spaces to 20 spaces.

The existing play area at the rear of the school will be relocated to the right side of the school abutting the playing fields.

A Special Permit for construction of a Major Construction Project in a Water Supply Protection District, and to render more than 5,000 square feet impervious in said District is also requested. Said project must comply with the Design and Operation Standards pursuant to Section XIVE of the Zoning Bylaw.

The original plan called for additional paving of 4,850 square feet for the new play area, and an additional 1,500 square feet for the basketball court/parking area, totalling 6,350 square feet of new paved area. Following the agreement of the Board of Appeals and the petitioners as to the amelioration of the parking/traffic problems, the proposed solutions resulted in additional paving of 2,985 square feet for the widening of the driveway and the increased radii of the entrance curves. The combined total of 9,335 square feet represents all of the additional paving to be done in conjunction with this project.

The following plans were submitted: Existing Site Survey (L-7), dated 10/19/93, revised 11/15/93, drawn by Stephen E. Stapinski, Registered Professional Land Surveyor; Existing Site Survey (L-8) dated 10/19/93, drawn by Stephen E. Stapinski, Registered Professional Land Surveyor; Landscape Plan (L-9), dated 10/19/93, revised 11/15/93, drawn by Gary L. Larson, Registered Landscape Architect; Site Utility Plan/Electrical (SU-3), dated 10/19/93, revised 10/28/93, drawn by Francis Tommisicki, Professional Engineer; Fire Protection Plan (SU-4), dated 8/25/93, unsigned, revised 11/15/93, signed by Charles T. Olivier, Professional Engineer; and Grading Plan (L-1), dated 10/28/93, drawn by Kenneth DiNisco, Registered Architect.

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The following architectural plans were submitted: Floor Plan (A-8) dated 10/19/93, drawn by Martin A. Kretsch, Regisered Architect; and Exterior Elevations (A-9), dated 10/19/93, drawn by Martin A. Kretsch, Registered Architect. An undated, unnumbered Exterior Elevations, drawn by Kenneth DiNisco, Registered Architect, was also submitted.

Subsequent to the Public Hearing, Proposed Parking/Traffic Improvements (LT-1), unsigned, dated 12/7/93, revised 12/10/93, revised 12/30/93, revised 1/11/94, drawn by Kenneth DiNisco, Registered Architect, has been submitted.

An Official Development Prospectus, Electric Load Calculations prepared by Griffith & Vary, Inc., Boring Logs and Pre and Post Development Drainage Calucations prepared by Larson Associates, Inc. were also submitted.

The Design Review Board held a Preliminary Review of the project on October 14, 1993, and a Final Review on October 28, 1993. At the Final Review, a revised site circulation plan was presented and a new floor plan showed the elimination of one classroom. The Board voted to approve the revised plans as presented.

Copies of all submission materials were also sent to the Planning Board, Wetlands Protection Committee, Town Engineer, Board of Health and the Fire Chief as required by Section XVIA of the Zoning Bylaw. Written responses from each of the above were received and are on file in the ZBA office.

The Fire Chief requested provision of an area to be used for the safe storage of flammable liquids and maintenance tools which use them as the present storage is not adequate. In response to this request, the revised plans submitted on November 15, 1993 showed a storage shed, which was approved by the Fire Chief.

The Wetlands Protection Committee reviewed the construction plans in regard to wetlands and drainage issues relating to Site Plan Approval, and the issues of Grade Reduction and On-site Recharge in regard to meeting the Design and Operation Standards for a Special Permit to construct a Major Construction Project and to render more than 5,000 square feet impervious in a Water Supply Protection District.

In regard to Grade Reduction, the only decrease in exterior grades will be around the two new drywells directly west of the new addition. Grades will be lowered 4 feet around the southern drywell and about 2 feet around the northern one. As no groundwater was encountered at a depth of 15 feet in either soil boring near each of the new drywells, the Committee is of the opinion that the plans comply with the Grade Reduction design standard.

In regard to On-site Recharge, the roof run-off from the new addition will be directed via downspouts and grading to one of four new drywells - one located to the north of the addition, one to the south, and the two aforementioned to the west. The drywells will be designed to contain post-construction increase in run-off from a 10-year storm event. Run-off from the new paved play area located on the northern side of the school will sheet-flow off to the surrounding grass. The Committee is of the opinion that the On-site Recharge design standards have been met.

Decision

This Authority has made a careful study of the materials submitted and the information presented at the hearing and the public meeting. The petitioners' proposed one-story addition containing 5 classrooms and one kindergarten, with an 8,433 square foot footprint and an equal amount of floor area, constitutes a Major Construction Project pursuant to Section XVIA of the Zoning Bylaw because the proposal includes construction of 2,500 or more square feet of gross floor area, and is also pursuant to Section XIVE of the Zoning Bylaw because the proposed construction lies in a Water Supply Protection District.

It is the opinion of this Authority that the proposed plans for the addition to the Schofield School, as shown on the submitted plans noted in the foregoing Statement of Facts, comply with the Zoning Bylaw of the Town, protect the safety, convenience and welfare of the public, minimize additional congestion in public and private ways, and insure adequate protection for water, sewerage and drainage. Furthermore, the plans insure compliance with Section XVI, Section II-A-3, Section XXI and Section XXII of the Zoning Bylaw.

Site Plan Approval is hereby granted by this Authority pursuant to Section XVIA and Section XIVE of the Zoning Bylaw, subject to conditions attached hereto as Addendum A.

It is the further opinion of this Authority that the applicable Design and Operation Standards of Section XIVE of the Zoning Bylaw have been met in regard to on-site recharge with the installation of 4 new drywells; and grade reduction for the construction of a Major Construction Project, and the rendering of 9,335 square feet impervious in a Water Supply Protection District.

Therefore, a Special Permit is hereby granted for said project subject to construction in compliance with the submitted plan (LT-1).

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APPEALS FROM THIS DECISION, IF ANY, SHALL BE MADE PURSUANT TO GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 40A, SECTION 17, AND SHALL BE FILED WITHIN 20 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF FILING OF THIS DECISION IN THE OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK.

John A. Donovan, Jr., Chairman

Kendall P. Bates

Robert R. Cunningham

cc: Randy Becker, Chairman, Permanent Building Committee
Frances Cramb, Chairman, Wellesley School Committee
Kenneth DiNisco, DiNisco, Kretsch & Associates
Planning Board
Wetlands Protection Committee
Inspector of Buildings

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Addendum A

1. All work shall be performed in accordance with the plans submitted and on file with this Authority.

2. All design and construction must comply with all applicable state and local codes.

3. All requirements of the Town of Wellesley Fire Department shall be complied with.

4. All requirements of the Department of Public Works shall be met, including but not limited to the requirement that water, sewer and electric connections, together with drainage connections, be made in accordance with DPW standards.

5. A gas trap shall be installed on the catchbasin to be relocated in the entrance driveway.

6. Certification of inspection, cleaning and maintenance of the gas trap shall be filed with the Wetlands Protection Committee by July first of every year.

7. If, after a reasonable trial period, the School Committee finds that the use of the Crossing Guard is not sufficient to maintain an orderly traffic flow on Cedar Street, in the northbound direction, a sign stating "No Left Turn" with the hours in which this restriction shall be in force, shall be installed at the intersection of the exit lanes of the school driveway and Cedar Street.

8. A sign stating "Live Parking Only" with designated hours shall be installed which will delineate the additional 6 spaces on the right side of the entrance drive from other storage parking on the site.

9. Upon completion of the project, a complete set of utility plans shall be submitted to the Department of Public Works.

10. A copy of the Occupancy Permit issued by the Inspector of Buildings shall be submitted to this Authority at the time of issuance.

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