

SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

RE: GODDARD SCHOOL
CARRBORO, NC

TOWN OF CARRBORO
PLANNING BOARD

301 West Main Street, Carrboro, North Carolina 27510

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N

September 17, 2009

**Review of Minor Modification to Winmore Conditional Use Permit for
“DayCare Facility” (Goddard School) at 515 East Winmore Avenue**

David Clinton moved and James Carnahan seconded that the Planning Board recommends to the Board of Aldermen that although the Planning Board strongly favors the placement of a daycare in the northern area of Carrboro; especially an affordable daycare, the issues the Planning Board has raised previously, which would lead to a building appropriate for this town and this site in keeping with the town's development goals, have not been answered to the Planning Board's satisfaction.

1. The Planning Board does not approve of this project as proposed.
2. The applicant has not responded satisfactorily to the advisory boards' recommendations.
We have considered and accommodated the recommendations of the various advisory boards.
 - **The Planning Board:**
 1. Original comment from Feb. 19, 2009 to add 10 bike parking spaces and a shower and changing area: We added 5 bike parking. There is no internal area within the school that would accommodate a shower/changing room. To do so would reduce the classroom size and the total number of children attending the school to below what is acceptable to the business plan.
 2. Original comment from Feb. 19, 2009 The applicant has not shown attention to appropriate building orientation, building style, location of windows, etc. (see previous Planning Board recommendations to the applicant). We have worked closely with the Winmore Development team and the surrounding property owners to address concerns of noise, traffic flow, and environmental concerns with the stream buffer. The design as shown addresses these concerns. We have tried to keep the parking, dumpster and vehicular traffic away from the adjacent residential properties. We also were mindful of the sensitive nature of the close

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proximity to creek and the need to impact the stream buffer as minimally as possible. The building is oriented to allow the infants and toddlers access to the morning light and the pre-school classrooms the afternoon light. Skylights have been incorporated in the roof to provide additional natural lighting to the classrooms. Each classroom has two to three windows as well as a windowed door to provide natural lighting.

- Original comment from Feb. 19, 2009: Select a more appropriate arch. Design: We designed the Goddard school with traditional architectural details to fit within the architectural plan that was intended for the Winmore Traditional Neighborhood Development. During the Conditional Use Permit approval process an extensive set of Architectural Guidelines was developed for Winmore to provide assurances that traditional architecture would be consistently applied throughout the community. The Architectural Guidelines were reviewed and incorporated in the C.U.P approval as a condition of development. All residential and commercial buildings have to obtain approval from the Winmore Architectural Review Team prior to building. The Goddard School worked closely with the Architectural Review Team and gained approval based on the proposed plan. The Town of Carrboro's Appearance Commission who is charged with evaluating issues of architecture, landscaping and other appearance related issues voted unanimously to approve the Goddard School as proposed.
- Original comment from Feb. 19, 2009: Provide Scholarships: The Goddard School has no set policy for their franchisee to provide scholarships. text. Most schools do provide some hardship assistance on a case by case basis for enrolled students. This is a for-profit business and until the franchisee is up and running, we cannot predict when the facility will become profitable and hence be able to offer scholarships. The franchisee will be a community member and as such will be involved in various local events to provide for the well being of the children in the community.
- Original comment from Feb. 19, 2009: Keep Neighbors informed: A meeting was held on April 11, 2009 for all landowners within 500 feet of the property as required for a Daycare Use. We also met with surrounding owners on a case by case basis to address concerns.
- Original comment from Feb. 19, 2009: Provide Traffic Impact Analysis: Winmore Subdivision was required to have a traffic study at the time of their approval process. This study included a large residential component and retail uses. At this time, Winmore is underdeveloped and the addition of the Goddard School, though not specifically looked at in the original Traffic Study, will not be adding substantial additional traffic within the context of the overall Winmore development. In addition, Homestead and Winmore Ave. is not the only means of entering or leaving the subdivision. Some traffic will likely exit through

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Claremont and eventually through the possible connection at Redfoot Lane in the Hogans Farm community. Homestead Road's traffic issues are complex and will require the coordinated efforts of the Town of Carrboro, the NCDOT, and the Chapel Hill / Carrboro School Board. Such problems need comprehensive solutions that cannot be supported by small projects that provide needed community services like the new Carrboro fire station and the proposed childcare facility.

- **The Environmental Board**

1. Original comment from April 2, 2009 to add a clerestory: the Goddard School has worked closely with the architectural review board for Winmore to meet their requirements in regard to the building architecture. While no clerestory is proposed, skylights have been added. This was addressed in previous submittals to the Town.

2. Original comment from April 2, 2009 use native plants and substitute some species: Planting Plan has been revised to change out some of the plant material for more native and deer resistant plants. This was addressed in previous submittals to the Town.

3. New Comment from Sept. 3, 2009: The playground area will be planted with sod. The area under the play structures shall be surfaced with a porous impact surface. This has been clarified on the plans.

4. New Comment from Sept 3, 2009: We have met and discussed the bicycle needs for the school with the Transportation Advisory Board and it was agreed that the plan would show a covered bike rack near the rear corner of the building, near the back door for 5 bikes and an uncovered bike rack for 5 bikes and trailers near the main entrance to the school.

5. New Comment from Sept 3, 2009: A mixture of 40-80% Piedmont native wildflower mix has been added to the slope with the weeping love grass that is adjacent to the stream buffer.

- **The Transportation Board:**

1. Original Comment from Feb. 5, 2009 to include 10 bicycle parking spaces: In previous submittals we showed a bike rack for 5 bicycles near the rear corner of the building near the back door. Since meeting on Sept. 3, 2009, we agreed to cover that bike rack and provide an additional bike rack for 5 bicycles near the front door. This bike rack will also accommodate bike trailers.

2. Original Comment from Feb. 5, 2009 to add a crosswalk in parking lot between the front sidewalk and the sidewalk to the public ROW: A crosswalk

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was added to the plans as requested. This was addressed in previous submittal to the Town.

3. The proposed building is not designed for the site. The Planning Board would like to see the applicant use a design that responds to the particular characteristics of the site and the property surrounding the site. The Planning Board also asks that the applicant respond satisfactorily to comments 2 through 4 of its February 19, 2009, recommendations.
We have worked extensively with the group at Winmore and have their received their approval based on our proposed design. The Winmore design standards and criteria are exhaustive and detailed and were previously approved by the Planning Board. Therefore our design should meet those criteria applied to Winmore. Furthermore, we received a unanimous approval from the Appearance Commission on Sept. 3rd. As a result of this evidence we believe we have met the requirements of the PB.
4. The proposed building is not of an appropriate scale. The walls amount to one third of the height of the building, and the roof amounts to two thirds of the height of building. This is out of scale in any context. See response to #3.
5. The applicant has not shown attention to appropriate building orientation, building style, location of windows, etc. (see previous Planning Board recommendations to the applicant).
We have worked closely with the Winmore Development team and the surrounding property owners to address concerns of noise, traffic flow, and environmental concerns with the stream buffer. The design as shown addresses these concerns. We have tried to keep the parking, dumpster and vehicular traffic away from the adjacent residential properties. We also were mindful of the sensitive nature of the close proximity to creek and the need to impact the stream buffer as minimally as possible. The building is oriented to allow the infants and toddlers access to the morning light and the pre-school classrooms the afternoon light. Skylights have been incorporated in the roof to provide additional natural lighting to the classrooms. Each classroom has two to three windows as well as a windowed door to provide natural lighting.
6. More generally, the applicant seems to be intent on placing a pre-designed building on the site that is not appropriate for that location (or for Carrboro). *****In addition to our response for item #3 we base the financial viability of each project on using Goddard's prototype building to reduce from scratch design costs. Designing an entirely new building would strain the financial model we apply to our franchisees.*****

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7. The Planning Board recommends that the applicant provide covered bicycle parking spaces near the front entrance of the building, instead of or in addition to the uncovered spaces provided near the dumpster at the rear of the property. The town's Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan recommends that employers encourage bicycling by providing bicycle parking. Bicycle parking should be "clearly visible from the entrance it serves" and "should be sheltered when possible."

We had previously shown 5 bicycle parking spaces near the rear door of the building. After meeting with the TAB both parties agreed to cover that bike rack and add an additional bike rack for 5 bikes with trailers at the front of the building. This rack is placed at the crosswalk connection to the sidewalk that goes to the ROW.

8. This development was presented as a response to the need for affordable daycare in Carrboro. However, the applicant has not presented information to show that this project would be an affordable option for daycare. The applicant has not responded satisfactorily to the Planning Board's suggestion to provide scholarships or other financial assistance for students, except to note that this decision would be up to the franchisee. However, the franchisee has not provided comments.

The Goddard School was proposed for this location to address the existing and expanding gap in top quality (5 Star) child care in Carrboro. While Goddard wishes to promote excellence in childcare for all children, this is a for-profit school and in order to meet the State of North Carolina's 5 Star requirements; be able to attract and retain quality teachers and staff and provide the nurturing and creative environment that the Goddard name has come to be known for, the school must charge a monthly tuition. The Goddard School has no set policy for their franchisee to provide scholarship assistance to needy children. Most schools do provide hardship assistance on a case by case basis for current students. This is a for-profit business and until the franchisee is up and running, we cannot predict the level of scholarship availability. The franchisee will be a community member and as such will be involved in local events and with local organizations to provide for the well being of the children in the community.

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Additional comments:

1. The Planning Board recommends that the applicant show on the written plans that the north fence will be placed 40 feet from the property line, as described during the September 3, 2009 meeting. **The fence has been relocated to be placed 40 feet in from the rear property line.**
2. The Planning Board recommends that the applicant pursue strategies to minimize the environmental impact of the project, including but not limited to the strategies described in the June 27, 2009 memo from the town's environmental planner entitled "Environmental Review Comments." **The Client is working with the architect to incorporate and increase the energy efficiency of the building and renewable energy features as well as green design principles. These items will be detailed and reviewed at the time of building plan submittal. Site specific strategies that have been used include; low impact design with the BMP design and the use of educational signage to inform the users of the site of the benefits to best management of storm water runoff and rainwater harvesting.**
3. The Planning Board appreciates the intent of providing the underground rainwater cistern; however, the Planning Board encourages the applicant to increase the size of the cistern for irrigation to have a meaningful impact on water conservation. Carrboro Town Code, Chapter 5, Article III, encourages the use of "harvested rainwater and/or reclaimed water for indoor and outdoor purposes where allowable and practical." ******After further research we found that an enlarged cistern will be required to effectively assist in irrigating the sod lawn area. Furthermore, after estimating the usage of the toilets within the building with the intention of using reclaimed water, we discovered that the tank size needed would be financially prohibitive. Therefore, we will perform further calculations in order to determine an appropriate size for assisting in irrigation.*******
4. The Planning Board recommends that the applicant use pervious paving for some portion of the parking lot. **We have looked into the use of permeable pavement on this project and we have determined that it would not be feasible to install permeable pavement. Although the NCDENR Stormwater BMP Manual allows up to 60% of permeable pavement to be considered managed grass, the site would still exceed the 2.2 lbs/ac/year nitrogen loading limit. This would mean that the first inch of runoff that infiltrates the permeable pavement would need to be captured and treated using the same BMPs that are currently installed. This would also create an issue in regards to controlling stormwater runoff as we are proposing an underground detention system below the pavement. The manual also limits the use of the permeable pavement to Sand Hills and Coastal Plains unless the soils within a 1-mile radius of the site are coarser than Loamy Very Fine Sand. The soils on site are mostly silt loam soils which are finer**

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than Loamy Very Fine Sand. Therefore permeable pavement would not be permitted on this site based on the NCDENR Stormwater Manual.

5. The Planning Board is concerned that the retaining wall on the eastern property line will cause extensive damage to neighbors' trees. We will relocate the retaining wall to offset 10' from the side property line to minimize the impact on adjacent property trees.

Sincerely,

Kathryn McPherson, R.L.A., ASLA