



Note: Staff reports can be accessed at www.mncppc.org/pgco/planning/plan.htm.

Special Exception

SE-4644

Application		General Data	
Project Name: Ardmore Enterprises	Date Accepted:	10/9/08	
	Planning Board Action Limit:	N/A	
	Plan Acreage:	5.00	
Location: Northwest quadrant of the intersection of Lottsford Vista Road and Yellowwood Lane.	Zone:	O-S	
	Dwelling Units:	N/A	
	Gross Floor Area:	26,859	
Applicant/Address: Ardmore Enterprises 3010 Lottsford Vista Road Mitchellville, MD 20721	Planning Area:	73	
	Tier:	Developing	
	Council District:	05	
	Municipality:	N/A	
Owner/Address	200-Scale Base Map:	204NE09	
Purpose of Application		Notice Dates	
Special Exception for a private school in the O-S Zone.	Informational Mailing:	07/22/08	
	Acceptance Mailing:	10/02/08	
	Sign Posting Deadline:	N/A	

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Tom Lockard	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

January 27, 2009

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board
The Prince George's County District Council

VIA: Jimi Jones, Zoning Supervisor

FROM: Tom Lockard, Planning Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Special Exception Application No. SE-4644**

REQUEST: **Private School in the O-S Zone**

RECOMMENDATION: **Approval with conditions**

NOTE:

This application is on the agenda for the Planning Board to decide whether or not to schedule a public hearing. If the Planning Board decides to hear the application, it will be placed on a future agenda.

Any person may request the Planning Board to schedule a public hearing. The request may be made in writing prior to the agenda date or in person on the agenda date. All requests must specify the reasons for the public hearing. All parties will be notified of the Planning Board's decision.

You are encouraged to become a person of record in this application. The request must be made in writing and sent to the Office of the Zoning Hearing Examiner at the address indicated above. Questions about becoming a person of record should be directed to the Hearing Examiner at 301-952-3644. All other questions should be directed to the Development Review Division at 301-952-3530.

FINDINGS:

- A. Location and Field Inspection:** The subject property is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Lottsford Vista Road and Yellowwood Lane. The property is developed with a 19,950-square-foot school for developmentally challenged adults. There is a separate 2,484-square-foot double-wide trailer on-site which is used for administrative offices. The school is served by an asphalt parking compound in the eastern portion of the property with two points of access along Lottsford Vista Road. The school is also served by an existing paved loading space, interior to the site. Existing landscaping at the school includes mature deciduous and evergreen trees located along Lottsford Vista Road, bordering the parking lots and along the northern periphery.

B. Development Data Summary:

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	O-S Zone	O-S Zone
Use(s)	Private School	Private School
Acreage	5 acres	5 acres
Lots	0	0
Parcels	1	1
Square Footage/GFA	22,434	26,859
Dwelling Units:	N/A	N/A

- C. History:** The subject property was retained in the O-S Zone during the July 1990 *Approved Master Plan and Adopted Sectional Map Amendment for Largo-Lottsford, Planning Area 73*. The school has operated as the Ardmore Developmental Center for almost 30 years, providing training to developmentally challenged young adults from Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. The school was first established in 1978 via Special Permit SP-78001 and was reappraised in 1983 via Special Permit SP-83055. In 1992, an addition was added via Special Permit SP-83055/01 along with approval of Alternative Compliance (AC-92002) for some of the required landscaping. It has since been determined that this type of institution should be approved via a special exception application rather than a detailed site plan since it does not offer a complete program of elementary, junior high or high school education. Rather, this is a transitional sheltered workshop for developmentally challenged individuals.
- D. Master Plan Recommendation:** The 1990 Master Plan for Largo-Lottsford recommends public/quasi-public use for the property.
- E. Request:** The applicant seeks approval of a special exception application to allow the expansion of a private school which has operated on this site for more than 30 years. The expansion will allow for office space and other administrative areas to be physically attached to the main building; currently these are housed in a separate trailer on the site. This special exception application does not propose to alter the school's current hours of operation, maximum number of students, or curriculum. There will be no expansion of the associated parking necessitated by the expansion of the private school.
- F. Neighborhood and Surrounding Uses:** The neighborhood is defined as follows:

North: Realigned Ardwick-Ardmore Road and the northern boundary of the Enterprise Farm (M-NCPPC).

South: Lottsford Road

East: Lottsford Vista Road

West: Bald Hill Branch Stream

While this neighborhood is narrow in width, it correctly reflects the “insulated” nature of this use. The neighborhood is made up of various portions of the M-NCPPC Enterprise Farm Park, which completely surrounds the subject property and insulates it from the residential neighborhoods beyond. This includes a county-designated historic property to the north, the “Cottage at Warrington.” Beyond the park boundaries are single-family residences.

The property is surrounded by various portions of M-NCPPC parkland in the R-O-S Zone including:

North: The “Cottage at Warrington”, an un-restored historic property

South: Across Yellowwood lane is undeveloped parkland

East: Across Lottsford Vista Road is the Enterprise Golf Course

West: The Art Farm Cultural Arts Center

G. Specific Special Exception Requirements: Section 27-396(a) of the Zoning Ordinance provides the following specific requirements for a private school which offers instruction at levels above the sixth grade:

1. There is a demonstrated need for the proposed use in the area;

This use has operated at this location successfully for more than 30 years. This suggests a strong presumption that there continues to be a demonstrated need for this type of institution in the community.

2. The proposed site is of sufficient size to properly accommodate a school of the type proposed without adversely affecting abutting land uses;

The area of this site is five acres, of which the undeveloped portion will be approximately 75 percent. The expanded building is to be set back a minimum of 70 feet from the nearest property line (further back than the existing trailer), and will be buffered with heavy landscaping to the adjoining historic site to the north. The Historic Preservation Section has found this proposal to have no impact on the historic site. There has been no adverse impact on the surrounding parkland in the 30 years this school has existed on this site.

3. No private school shall be located in a multifamily dwelling or in any building of a multifamily project;

The private school is not located within a multifamily building.

4. **The Council may specify the maximum number of students to be enrolled, which may not be increased by State or local health, education, or fire regulations; and**

The existing approved enrollment at the center is 202 students. The applicant is not proposing an increase in that number.

5. **If the school offers general academic instruction below college level, an outdoor play area (or other outdoor activity area) shall be provided, which shall have a usable space of at least one hundred (100) square feet per student. This area shall be located at least twenty-five (25) feet from any dwelling on an adjoining lot, and shall be enclosed by a substantial wall or fence at least five (5) feet high.**

The students at the center are special need young adults most of whom are above the age of 21. The school does not have an outdoor play area as the students stay inside in workshops learning a combination of sensory stimulation activities, activities of daily living, work and community. A play area would not address the special needs of these young adults.

- H. **Parking Regulations:** The parking schedule provided on the site plan correctly indicates that a total of 68 spaces are required for the use on the property. The site plan indicates that 80 parking spaces are provided. However, two of the compact spaces shown on the site plan are shown to be seven feet in width. This does not meet the minimum width requirement of eight feet. These two spaces should be removed from the calculation and the parking schedule revised accordingly.
- I. **Prince George's County Landscape Manual Requirements:** The use appears to be in compliance with the landscaping, buffering and screening of the Landscape Manual. That section of the northern property line where a full D Bufferyard cannot be provided was the subject of the approved Alternative Compliance Application AC-92002.
- J. **Zone Standards:** The proposed use meets the general requirements of the O-S Zone. No variances are required.
- K. **Sign Regulations:** The site plan indicates an existing sign along Lottsford Road. The sign is set back over ten feet from the street line as required by the Sign Regulations.
- L. **Required Findings:**

Section 27-317(a) of the Zoning Ordinance provides that a special exception may be approved if:

- (1) **The proposed use and site plan are in harmony with the purposes of this Subtitle.**

With the recommended conditions, the proposed use and site plan are in harmony with the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance. The purposes of the Zoning Ordinance (Section 27-102(a)) seek generally to protect and promote the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the county. The subject private school will address the educational needs of this special population of students in the county. This use is consistent with the institutional use of the property, which has served the community for over 30 years.

- (2) **The proposed use is in conformance with all the applicable requirements and regulations of this Subtitle.**

With the recommended conditions, the proposed use will be in conformance with all the applicable requirements and regulations of the Zoning Ordinance.

- (3) **The proposed use will not substantially impair the integrity of any validly approved Master Plan or Functional Master Plan, or in the absence of a Master Plan or Functional Map Plan, the General Plan.**

The proposed use will not substantially impair the integrity of the 1990 Master Plan for Largo-Lottsford. The plan recommends public/quasi-public use for the property. The school is consistent with this recommendation.

- (4) **The proposed use will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of residents or workers in the area.**

The proposed use will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of residents or workers in the area. After 30 years of existence on this site, no such adverse affects have been noted. With respect to traffic, the Transportation Planning Section (memo dated November 4, 2008) submits that:

“The applicant proposes the operation of a private school for 202 students. Using statistics in the *Trip Generation Manual* (Institute of Transportation Engineers) for the use "Junior/Community College", the proposed use would generate a total of 24 AM and 24 PM peak-hour vehicle trips. The use is actually a job training center, so neither of the private school uses in the *Trip Generation Manual* nor the “Junior/Community College” use are fully adequate estimators. In all likelihood, the “Junior/Community College” use probably underestimates the trip impact of the use.

“The transportation staff has no traffic counts available at the intersection of Lottsford Vista Road and Yellowwood Lane. This is the intersection that would primarily be used by users of the private school. It is noted, however, that the school has long been in operation, and any traffic counts would include the impact of this use in any regard. The application would allow the construction of a 7,000-square-foot addition to the existing school, and this addition would allow the relocation of the administrative functions from existing portable trailers into a permanent building. The number of students served would not increase with the additional space. The Justification Statement does not make apparent the means by which the private school came to be operating within this O-S site.

“Access to the site and circulation within the site is acceptable. The site is adjacent to Lottsford Vista Road, which is a master plan collector facility. The existing right-of-way (ROW) is 30 feet, and the master plan recommends a future 80-foot right-of-way. It appears that future right-of-way needs as shown on PGAtlas indicate ten feet on the east side of Lottsford Vista Road and 40 feet on the west side—directly affecting this proposal. At such time that the additional 40 feet would be acquired from the subject site, there would be a significant impact on this site’s parking. However, all improvements proposed under the current application would be well outside of the master plan right-of-way. Lottsford Vista Road is not programmed for improvement within the next six years in either the current Maryland Department of Transportation “Consolidated

Transportation Program” or the Prince George's County “Capital Improvement Program;” therefore, it appears that any property acquisition or construction is not imminent. Nonetheless, it is requested that the plan be revised to indicate the master plan right-of-way line.”

(5) The proposed use will not be detrimental to the use or development of adjacent properties or the general neighborhood.

The proposed use will not be detrimental to the use or development of adjacent properties or the general neighborhood. The subject school is currently in operation on the property. No information has been submitted that suggests the use will have a detrimental impact on the neighborhood.

(6) The proposed site plan is in conformance with an approved Tree Conservation Plan.

The site is exempt from the Prince George’s County’s Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance because no trees are proposed to be removed as part of the proposed expansion. A letter of exemption was issued on April 10, 2008, and is valid for a period of two years from the date of issuance.

CONCLUSION:

The applicant has met their burden of proof in this instance. Therefore, staff recommends APPROVAL of Special Exception SE-4644 subject to the following condition:

1. The site plan shall be revised as follows:
 - a. The two substandard compact parking spaces shall be removed from the plan and the parking schedule revised accordingly.
 - b. The ultimate 40-foot master plan right-of-way along Lottsford Vista Road shall be shown.
 - c. The centerlines of Lottsford Vista Road and Yellowwood Lane shall be shown.