



Proposed Site Development Plan (Title – Richard A. Shields Elementary School – Addition and Renovation)

<b>Application Title</b>	Richard A. Shields Elementary School – Addition and Renovation
<b>Application Type</b>	Site Development Plan
<b>Owner</b>	Cape Henlopen School District
<b>Tax Map and Parcel</b>	SC Tax Map# 335-8.11-34.00
<b>Size and Location</b>	18.463 acres and located off Savannah Road at Sussex Drive intersection
<b>Comprehensive Plan Designation</b>	Institutional
<b>Zoning District</b>	CF (E) – Community Facilities (Education)
<b>Present Use</b>	Institutional (School)
<b>Proposed Use</b>	Institutional (School)
<b>Online application material</b>	<a href="https://lewescommissions.wordpress.com/shields-elementary-school/">https://lewescommissions.wordpress.com/shields-elementary-school/</a>

Proposal: This application is for the renovation of a 93,172 square foot, two-story school located along Savannah Road in the City of Lewes.

The application was submitted for consideration on April 30, 2019 by Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc. on behalf of their client the Cape Henlopen School District. As part of the submission the following information was provided by the applicant:

- A set of plans including: a Preliminary Title Sheet, Preliminary Site Plan, Preliminary Grading Plan, Preliminary Landscape Plan, Preliminary Site Lighting and Preliminary Building Elevations.
- A letter from W. Zachary Crouch, P.E. of Davis Bowen & Friedel, Inc. on behalf of their client, Cape Henlopen School District requesting site plan review;
- A completed application for site development plan review;
- A letter from the Board of Public Works (BPW) verifying that utilities are existing and available;
- A conceptual rendering of the proposal; and
- Documentation of Public Notification.



Renovation: The proposal involves the renovation of a District building that would become the Shields Elementary School, with the renovations capacity would accommodate 720 students. The front part of the structure will remain intact but undergo extensive renovations. The existing north and south wings would be removed, a new addition will be added to the rear side of the structure. There will be a new area on the south side of the building, accessed from Sussex Drive that would be used for school bus loading and unloading. The area on the north



1 Image from Cape Henlopen School District website.

side of the building, behind the Bethel Methodist Cemetery, would contain 132 off-street parking spaces, with access to Savannah Rd. via a 30-foot wide driveway. A play area is shown on the plan immediately behind the new addition. There is a large open area behind the building and parking areas, material available on the School District website shows future athletic fields but the current site plan only shows these as open areas. Two new storm water basins exist along the northern side of the property, one is at the front of the facility adjacent to Savannah Rd., and the second is at the rear corner of the property.

Zoning District Compliance:

<b>Zoning District CF (E)</b>		<b>Required</b>	<b>Provided</b>
<b>Lot Standards (feet)</b>			
Minimum Lot Area (square feet)		20,000	804,248
Minimum Lot Width (feet)		100	500
Minimum Lot Depth (feet)		100	1200
<b>Setbacks (feet)</b>			
	Front Yard	40 or EBL	110
	Side Yard	10	104
	Rear Yard	20	723
<b>Maximum Building Height</b>			
	Height of structure (feet)	40	40

Maximum Lot Coverage	50%	26%
Off-street parking	129	170
Off-street loading	2	2

Based upon the plan submitted, the application meets the requirements outlined for the CF (E) District defined above.

### State Review

A PLUS Review of the proposed renovation and addition project was conducted on December 23, 2015 (see PLUS review 2015-11-08). In addition a PLUS review for the overall campus development proposal including the construction of a new middle school, renovations to accommodate the elementary school and installation of athletic fields was conducted on August 23, 2017 (PLUS Review #2017-07-05). Those reviews identify requirements that must be satisfied as part of the current site plan review, as follows:

- A minimum of 40 feet of right-of-way from the centerline of Savannah Rd. should be provided (current plans show an overall 60 foot ROW);
- The designation of a 15-foot permanent easement across the property frontage on Savannah Rd. outside of the limits for the dedicated ROW;

Verification of the following requirements should be provided with final site plan submissions:

- A copy of a DelDOT "Letter of No Objection";
- A copy of an approved Entrance Plan Permit;
- Verification that underground and aboveground storage tanks are maintained or have been installed in accordance with State requirements; and
- Approval from the State Fire Marshall's Office that the site plan has met all requirements.

Other recommendations outlined in the PLUS reviews should be considered in the development review process, as follows:

- Included in the recommendations are provisions intended to mitigate environmental impacts from development. The renovation/reuse of the school at its current location with access to multi-modal transportation options already helps to address many objectives. Recommendations such as using native vegetation and shade trees as part of the landscape plan, limiting impervious surfaces and following guidelines to help reduce surface water runoff contamination should be considered.
- Coordination with representatives of the State's Safe Routes to School Coordinator to maximize opportunities for pedestrian safety and access.

Additional Considerations:

Transportation: Proposed developments along Savannah Road require special consideration of a number of transportation issues, including *Accessibility, Public Transportation, Connectivity and the Historic Byway System*.

- **Accessibility:** Much of the vehicular traffic arriving and departing from the school would be via Savannah Rd. (a State Rd.) As noted in the PLUS reviews, renovations and the new addition for the elementary school is not expected to warrant evaluations such as a traffic study (TIS). The reviews did however, mention consideration of improvements for Savannah Rd. and related intersections which would be considered as part of a DelDOT Pre-Submittal Meeting. A Pre-Submittal Meeting was held on March 26, 2018 between DelDOT and the Applicants to discuss required evaluations and possible improvements based on the Preliminary Site Plan. The report from that meeting noted that the evaluations should continue to refine the concepts in the preliminary site plan under the following assumptions after which engineering plans required for Entrance Plan approval would be submitted to DelDOT for final approval:
  - Once renovations are complete, all Shields Elementary School students will be moved to renovated building. Teacher/Parent Drop-off access along Savannah Road. Bus drop off along Sussex Drive (City of Lewes roadway).
  - Frontage Improvements: 40' ROW dedication, 15' Permanent Easement.
  - Site Access Improvements: No auxiliary lanes required due to school environment and the presence of crossing guards
  - Bike/Ped Improvements: Once accesses finalized, will have a site visit to determine amount of sidewalk that will need to be replaced. If significant amount of sidewalk will need to be replaced, buffered sidewalk is preferred.
  - Transit Improvements: DART may want a stop along frontage, if stop is required will only be a bus pad with sign
  - Off-site Improvements: None
  - TIS/TOA: Not required
  - Trip Generation: 10th Edition, 720 student capacity
  - Path Forward: Once concept is finalized and number of entrances and locations set, a site visit can occur to determine if any additional sections of sidewalk will need to be replaced
  
- As noted on the Preliminary Title Sheet Savannah Rd. is a major collector. The number of average annual daily trips (AADT) for this section of Savannah Rd., from the most recent count (2015), was 10,300 AADT. Trips associated with the current school equate to 774 ADT. As a result of the proposed renovations the amount of trips/day would increase by 155 trips/day or 929 ADT overall. According to the plan information the majority (63%) of the trip entering or departing the site would use the northern entrance. It is worth noting

that bus arrivals/departures would be using the southern entrance (Sussex Drive) as well as other traffic that uses that road.

- Because the elementary school is an existing facility the District and the City already have services such as traffic control and providing safety crossing support during school opening and closing periods. The proposed renovation includes more space to accommodate the drop-off and pick-up activities (buses and cars) that should help alleviate some peak volume issues, although the need to manage turning movements and pedestrian crossings will likely remain. The District and City should coordinate changes to these services before final plan approval to address impacts during construction and the address any changes in services as a result of the new renovations.
- Public Transportation: Public transit services are in operation along Savannah Rd. As noted in the DeIDOT evaluations DART may deem it useful to have a stop along the site frontage. That determination should be made during the preliminary review and the location of a stop should be noted on the Final Plans
- Connectivity: The site location offers a wide variety for multimodal transit connections. Although the application only covers the proposed renovation project to accommodate the elementary school, this portion of the site provides access for a variety of vehicles including cars and buses (school and public). The site, and the overall campus, contains a network of pedestrian and bicycle sidewalks, trails and bike lanes (Savannah Rd.) which provides many opportunities for students, employees and visitors to access the property and to access surrounding areas such as the George H.P. Smith Park. To further promote the pedestrian and bicycle connections it may be worth incorporating additional facilities into the plan such as bicycle racks and additional connections to the internal trail network from adjacent residential neighborhoods (may be more appropriate when plans are submitted for the overall campus).
- Historic Byway: As part of Lewes' Historic Byway System, Context Sensitive Solutions should be utilized in development proposals along the corridor, for entrances to the facility, as well as in landscaping and screening. The Historic Lewes Byway Commission works with developers and commercial and private property owners to encourage landscape design solutions that reflect the historic, natural, scenic, recreational, and archeological character of each of the six state-designated roads comprising Lewes' Byway network; among them is Savannah Road. It is recommended that the applicant meet with representatives from the Commission to discuss opportunities to incorporate context sensitive design solutions into the site design.

Environmental Protection: The site, in terms of flood hazard or drainage concerns, is at a higher elevation relative to other areas in The City. As noted in the panels on the Preliminary Title Sheet the site does not contain wetlands nor areas currently in the 100 year flood plain as designated on the FEMA Map. In terms of concerns over sea level rise (SLR), a growing concern in many coastal communities, the site is also beyond areas that are listed as concerns in the State's SLR projection maps. Although the site is on higher ground there are still concerns that should be considered as part of the development review, as follows:

- Since weather extremes are not uncommon in coastal areas, public buildings or structures deemed critical facilities should be constructed to withstand a type 3 hurricane;
- As noted in the State review, drainage from the site affects the Broadkill River watershed which has identified specific Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) pollutant reduction targets for nitrogen, phosphorus, and bacteria to protect sensitive natural resource areas. Although the renovation project itself does not meet the criteria to prepare a management plan the site does contain storm water management facilities that would capture drainage from future athletic fields possibly requiring nutrient loading evaluations. In addition the proposed storm water management system is designed to ultimately drain into the adjacent Blockhouse Pond during extreme or prolonged storm events. For these reasons it is recommended that best management practices to manage storm water runoff quantity and quality be considered either 1) as part of this plan or 2) when and if the improvements are made to construct the athletic fields.

Utilities: *(An addendum will be added by City Engineer for review at the 6/19 meeting.)*

The site will continue to be served by water and sewer services provided by the City Board of Public Works (BPW). In addition BPW will review plans for stormwater management, electrical service and lighting.

Open Space, Landscaping and Recreation: The elementary school site, as part of the overall campus design, will contain or have access to a playground, athletic fields and a network of internal trails. Although the campus is separate from the adjacent George H.P. Smith Park the campus and the park form a large open area in the midst of residential neighborhoods that lies in close proximity to the City urban core. The collective large open area, along with recreation facilities provides many benefits to the area, as such it is recommended that the School District and the City continue to collaborate on initiatives that can mutually benefit the long term management and use of the valuable community facilities. A portion of the property adjacent to the Park, is leased to the City of Lewes as shown on the Preliminary Site Plan, that area will not be affected by the proposed development.

The application contains a Preliminary Landscape Plan prepared by DESIGNSetc. The plan proposes new street and parking canopy trees and shrubbery along with the retention of

existing trees and vegetation that will be retained. As noted earlier it would be useful to obtain input from the Byways Commission on context sensitive designs along the Savannah Rd. corridor portion of the site. In addition input on landscaping and lighting from the Parks and Recreation Commission would be useful given the proximity of the site to the Park as the applicant refines its conceptual plans.

Notes on Plan Sheet Revisions: The following should be incorporated into the final plans that are submitted for approval:

- All applicable plan sheets should contain a certified engineers seal; and
- The spelling of Savannah Rd. on the maps on the Preliminary Title Sheet should be corrected.

Summary: This review was conducted to ensure compliance with City of Lewes' City Code Site Development Plan procedures outlines in §170-35. As noted in the staff review the development application, as depicted on the site survey, complies with requirements. Recommendations in this review will be considered by the Planning Commission as they prepare recommendations for City Council review. City Council will consider the comments from this and other reports in conjunction with the recommendations provided by the Planning Commission and the public as they consider final action on the submitted application in accordance with Section 170-38 of the City Code.