



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

July 26, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division *JAC*
Sue Edwards, I-270 Corridor Team Leader *Sue*
Community-Based Planning Division

FROM: Nellie Shields Maskal, Planner, I-270 Corridor Team (301/495-4567) *NH*
Community-Based Planning Division

REVIEW TYPE: Mandatory Referral

PROJECT NAME: Rocky Hill Middle School Replacement

APPLICANT: Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

CASE NUMBER: 02303-MCPS-1

REVIEW BASIS: Article 28, Chapter 7-112 of the Regional District Act

LOCATION: Newcut Road Extended and MD 355

MASTER PLAN: Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattstown Special Study Area

ZONE: R-200/TDR

FILING DATE: June 25, 2002

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL with comments:

1. If enrollment is increased above 799 students, MCPS should provide a traffic impact study to demonstrate that the area roadway is adequate to accommodate the additional traffic from the school.
2. Complete construction of Newcut Road Extended (Little Seneca Parkway) from MD 355 to proposed Brickhaven Way and Brickhaven Way from Newcut Road Extended to the northern entrance to the staff/visitor parking lot prior to opening of the school.
3. Provide a private driveway with a hiker/biker path connecting Brickhaven Way to the proposed Clarksburg Area High School, at the time of construction of Brickhaven Way in order to improve connectivity between the proposed Toll Brothers development and the middle and high school sites.

4. Provide a continuous afforestation/tree preservation area along the northwestern property line adjacent to single family homes. This area should have a minimum width of 50 feet to include dense tree and understory planting, which ensures visual screening of all school facilities. School facilities, including paths, must not be located within this forested area.
5. Provide a privacy fence along the northeastern property line adjacent to single family homes.
6. Locate the school building to ensure a minimum setback of 80 feet from the property line to the building.
7. Provide a continuous sidewalk/bikeway along the perimeter of the site, separated from the curb by a continuous row of street trees with direct paths to the school entrance and other facilities.
8. Provide pedestrian/bike access from all sidewalks/bikeways to the school.
9. Maximize preservation of existing trees on the site.
10. Provide a lighting plan to ensure no glare or reflection into abutting or facing residential properties; lighting levels along the perimeter must not exceed a .1-foot candle.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Montgomery County Public Schools intends to construct a new Rocky Hill Middle School on a 23.29-acre site adjacent to the existing Rocky Hill Middle School. Rocky Hill Middle School is located south of MD 355 on Wims Road (see Figure 1 – Vicinity Map). It is adjacent to the Clarksburg Local Park, near Running Brook Drive. This project will allow for the replacement of the existing Rocky Hill Middle School that will be converted to the new Clarksburg Area High School. Rocky Hill Middle School is in the Damascus High School Cluster and opened in 1995. It was designed to allow for expansion to a high school when enrollments warranted.

The proposed building is designed to meet the school's program objectives and will provide flexibility of use in the future. The building will have a steel frame construction and a masonry exterior. The three-story building will be approximately 144,000 square feet in size, with a building capacity for 990 students (see Figure 2 – Site Plan). A future addition to the building is master-planned to accommodate student population increases.

The main entrance is clearly identified and visible. It will be used for non-school hour access to the gymnasium and cafeteria. The academic areas of the building are capable of being closed off. The administrative area oversees the main entrance, lobby, and the bus loop.

The academic areas are clustered on three levels. There will be 48 teaching spaces containing standard classrooms, large group classrooms, and science laboratories. The

stage is located within the cafeteria, with the music rooms nearby. The gymnasium has access to the fields and courts (see Figures 3–6, Floor Plans).

Recreational and instructional site amenities include six (6) tennis courts, three (3) basketball courts, a softball field, and athletic play fields (see Figure 2). These facilities will be available for use by the general public and will be maintained by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). There will be no impact to any public parkland or property owned by the M-NCPPC.

The site will have access from proposed Newcut Road Extended (Little Seneca Parkway), a 4-lane divided roadway with 120 feet of right-of-way. There will be staff and visitor parking for 156 cars and 19 buses in the parking area (see Figure 2 – Site Plan).

Construction is scheduled to start in early October 2002 and will take approximately 18 months. The proposed opening date for the replacement middle school is September 2004. Once students are in the new school, work can begin on converting the old school building into a high school. The new Clarksburg Area High School will relieve overcrowding at Damascus, Seneca Valley, and Watkins Mill High Schools. MCPS will need one year to work on the core of the old Rocky Hill Middle School building before it can reopen as a high school for ninth and tenth grades.

SITE DESCRIPTION

This L-shaped site is bounded by MD 355 to the north, proposed Little Seneca Parkway to the east, proposed Brickhaven Way – a primary street - to the south, the existing Rocky Hill Middle School to the west, and single-family homes to the north and northeast. A preliminary subdivision plan for 325 residential units has been approved for the adjoining Martens property located southeast of the site near West Old Baltimore Road. The owner of the Martens property (Toll Brothers Inc.) plans to build an extension of the Hurley Ridge community on this property.

The site is 23.29 acres and slopes steeply to the southeast and rises to a saddle in the center before dropping off again to the northwest. The site will be graded level and the building and playfields will be at approximately the same elevation with a two (2) percent grade change for drainage. The site is located in a Special Protection Area and will require full and enhanced stormwater management work. Water quantity and quality will be controlled on site. Utility services to the site will be extended from MD 355.

ANALYSIS

Master Plan

The subject parcel is located in the Transit Corridor District of the Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattstown Special Study Area, adopted and approved in 1994. The 1994 Master Plan recommends the R-200/TDR zoning. The Master Plan states the following for the existing Rocky Hill Middle School property.

- The Master Plan recommends that a high school be located on a portion of a 62-acre site owned by the Board of Education situated at the intersection of MD 355 and Shawnee Lane. The Board of Education determined that only 30 acres of the site were buildable and decided to construct a middle school on the site until the building could be converted later when needed for a high school. The ultimate development plan for this site should place special emphasis on an attractive frontage along MD 355 since this is a critical entry into Clarksburg.

The Master Plan recommends the need for two middle school sites. The need for new schools is determined by the Board of Education based on the capacity of existing schools and the projected increase in student enrollment. The Master Plan designates a “floating symbol” for the first middle school in the general location of the subject site: north of West Old Baltimore Road between MD 355 and the greenway (see Figure 7 – Existing and Proposed Public Facilities). The 121-acre Martens property (on which the school site is located) is cut diagonally by the Little Seneca Creek stream valley to be preserved as a greenway.

The Rocky Hill Middle School Replacement project is consistent with the Master Plan recommendations and policies.

Proposed Site Plan

The site plan consists of the school structure, several playing fields, parking, and bus area. The building, which measures approximately 420X220 feet, would consist of three stories. It would face the intersection of Little Seneca Parkway and Brickhaven Way, at an approximately 45-degree angle from the northern property line, with the northern corner approximately 60 feet from the northern property line. This location would reduce the visual impact on adjacent residential properties.

Vehicular access and parking would be located immediately west of the building along its long side. Playing fields at the northern area consist of six (6) tennis courts, set at a minimum distance of 25 feet from the property line. Playing fields in the western section are proposed at a minimum distance of 20 feet from the property line. The existing wooded perimeter area will not be retained. Pedestrian access from adjacent streets is not shown.

Staff is concerned about the proximity of the building and fields to the adjacent homes. A detailed discussion of staff concerns and recommendations to address this issue is found in the Community Concerns Section of this report on page 6.

Development Standards for the Zone

The site consists of 23.29 acres and is zoned R-200/TDR. The proposed project meets all setback and development requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Environmental Resources

The site is located in the Special Protection Area (SPA) designated by the Clarksburg

Master Plan. The preliminary and final water quality plans must be approved prior to consideration of the Mandatory Referral. The Montgomery County Planning Board will consider these items concurrently on August 1, 2002.

The Forest Conservation Plan requirement will be met through a combination of on-site and off-site planting.

Transportation

Site Access and Circulation

The site plan includes two access points, one to the school bus loading/unloading lot and the other to the staff/visitor parking lot, from proposed Brickhaven Way. Brickhaven Way connects to future Newcut Road Extended that connects to MD 355. There is no direct access point from MD 355 to the school. The Clarksburg Master Plan designates Newcut Road Extended as an Arterial Highway (A-302) with a 120-foot right-of-way.

As a part of the requirements of the Martens subdivision approval, Newcut Road Extended is to be constructed as a four-lane divided cross-section for 500 feet west of the intersection of MD 355 (adjacent to the school site) and continuing as a two-lane divided arterial to the Martens residential development site further to the west. Transportation Planning staff understands that the MCPS has an agreement with the developer of the Martens subdivision that the developer is responsible for construction of Newcut Road Extended and Street "A" for the MCPS.

During the Planning Board review of the preliminary subdivision plan for the Martens property, there was a lengthy discussion regarding the need to improve connectivity for local circulation. According to MCPS staff, there is no clear title to the land needed for a private road to be built. Consequently, Toll Brothers cannot provide this connection as per condition # 21. Staff recommends that MCPS provide a private driveway between their properties in order to provide this important connectivity. The private driveway should connect to proposed Brickhaven Way in order to improve connectivity between the residential community and the school sites. Connectivity is a major principle of the Clarksburg Master Plan

If the private driveway connection is not achieved, all the Toll Brothers Development and school traffic will exit on Newcut Road Extended and make a left on MD 355. This would add to the congestion at this intersection and would require people to make another left onto to Wims Road.

Staff recommends that Newcut Road Extended from MD 355 to Brickhaven Way and Brickhaven Way to the northern entrance be constructed prior to the school opening to provide needed access points to the school. The proposed temporary construction access road from the existing school site does not provide safe and adequate access to the school. The school bus loading/unloading lot is not accessible from the temporary construction access road. The internal vehicular/pedestrian circulation system as shown on the site plan is adequate.

Local Area Transportation Review

The proposed new school would generate an additional 22 morning and 8 evening peak hour trips, respectively, using the Institute of Transportation Engineer's trip generation rates for the middle school as a result of increasing enrollment from the current 752 students to 799 students. As a requirement of the mandatory referral review and the Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines, the applicant is required to submit a traffic impact study since the proposed school will generate additional traffic volumes. In the absence of a submitted traffic analysis, staff conducted a traffic analysis for the limited study area using the most current traffic analysis reviewed in the area subdivision case, Martens development. The following is a summary of staff's traffic analysis.

The congestion standard for the Clarksburg Policy Area is a critical lane volume (CLV) of 1,500. Based on the traffic analysis conducted at the time of Martens subdivision review, the MD 355 intersections with Newcut Road Extended and Shawnee Lane are projected to operate at an acceptable level within the congestion standard. With the relatively small amount of additional traffic volumes from the new school, the intersection of MD 355 and Newcut Road Extended will approach, but not exceed, the congestion standard.

If the enrollment is increased from the initial 799 students, MCPS should provide a traffic impact study to demonstrate that the area roadway system is adequate to accommodate additional traffic from the Rocky Hill Middle School.

Results of Critical Lane Volume (CLV) Analysis

Location	Existing Condition		Background Condition		Total Future Condition	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
MD 355/Shawnee Lane	1,020	1,159	1,270	1,343	1,276	1,345
MD 355/Newcut Road	946	1,187	1,190	1,490	1,198	1,497

Policy Area Transportation Review

The site is located in the Clarksburg Policy Area, which is in a moratorium under the FY 02 Annual Growth Policy (-1,268 jobs as of June 30, 2002). The relocation of the existing middle school, with a relatively minor increase of student enrollment, is not projected to have a negative impact from the policy area transportation perspective. The estimated number of jobs associated with the middle school will remain at 70, per the Annual Growth Policy.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

As of the writing of this report, one letter of opposition has been received. This letter, dated July 14, 2002, was received from Mr. Kenneth Korenblatt. Mr. Korenblatt, the adjoining property owner, expressed his concern about the impact the proposed school would have on his property value, resale value, and quality of life (see Attachment 1). Mr. Korenblatt also expressed his concerns at a May 23, 2002 public information meeting sponsored by MCPS on this project

According to MCPS staff, "the location of the building on the site was derived through many studies. In the end the restraints of the site restricted the location. The extreme topography of the site will require extensive grading and limits the area available for the building. With this in mind careful consideration was given to locate the lowest point of the building closest to the adjacent residential areas in order to minimize its impact. In addition to this, the building was located on an angle in order to avoid presenting a long flat façade to the residents. As it progresses away from the residential area, the building steps up in height. This allows for the three story section of the building to be farthest away from the residents."

Staff is concerned about the proximity of the buildings and fields to adjacent residential lots. Staff agrees with the orientation of the building, which minimizes its impact but recommends that the building be moved further south to maintain a minimum setback of 80 feet from the property line. Similarly, playing fields should be moved further away from the property line. In addition, a dense buffer with a minimum width of 50 feet should be maintained along adjacent residential lots. This buffer would allow for the preservation of existing trees on site and should be supplemented by additional planting of trees and shrubs to provide adequate screening. The perimeter buffer area may provide for a portion of the required afforestation area. Special attention should be provided to lighting – through both lighting design and screening to ensure that there is no impact on adjacent residential properties.

CONCLUSION

Staff finds that with the recommended conditions, the mandatory referral meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and policies of the Clarksburg Master Plan. Staff recommends approval of the new Rocky Hill Middle School project with the conditions stated on pages 1 and 2 of this report.

NSM:ha: a:\maskal2\020303RHMS.doc

Attachments:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Figure 1: | Vicinity Map |
| Figure 2: | Site Plan |
| Figure 3: | Elevations |
| Figure 4: | First Floor Plan |
| Figure 5: | Second Floor Plan |
| Figure 6: | Third Floor Plan |
| Figure 7: | Existing and Proposed Public Facilities |
| Attachment 1: | Letter from Kenneth Korenblatt |

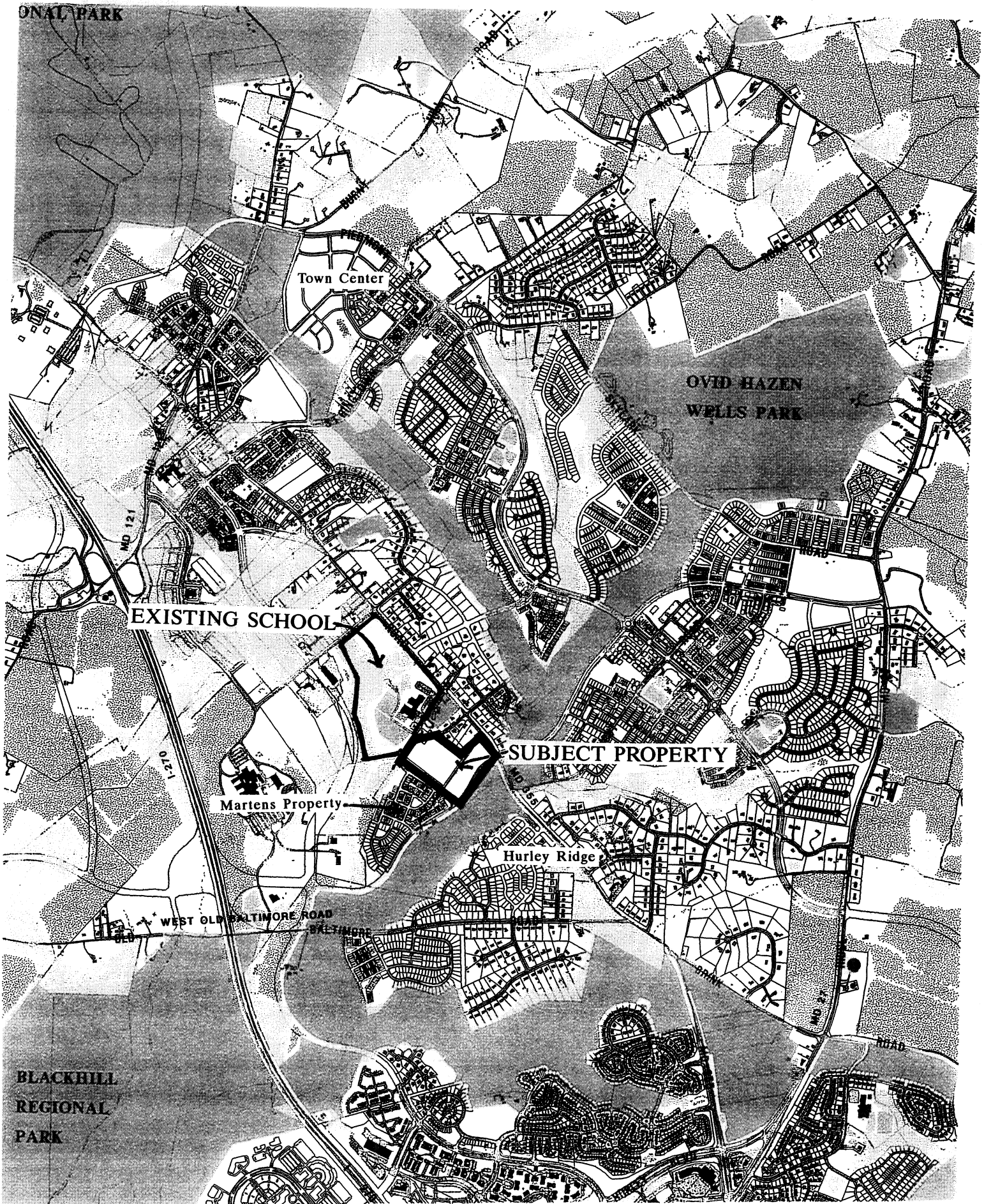


Figure 2

Proposed Site Plan

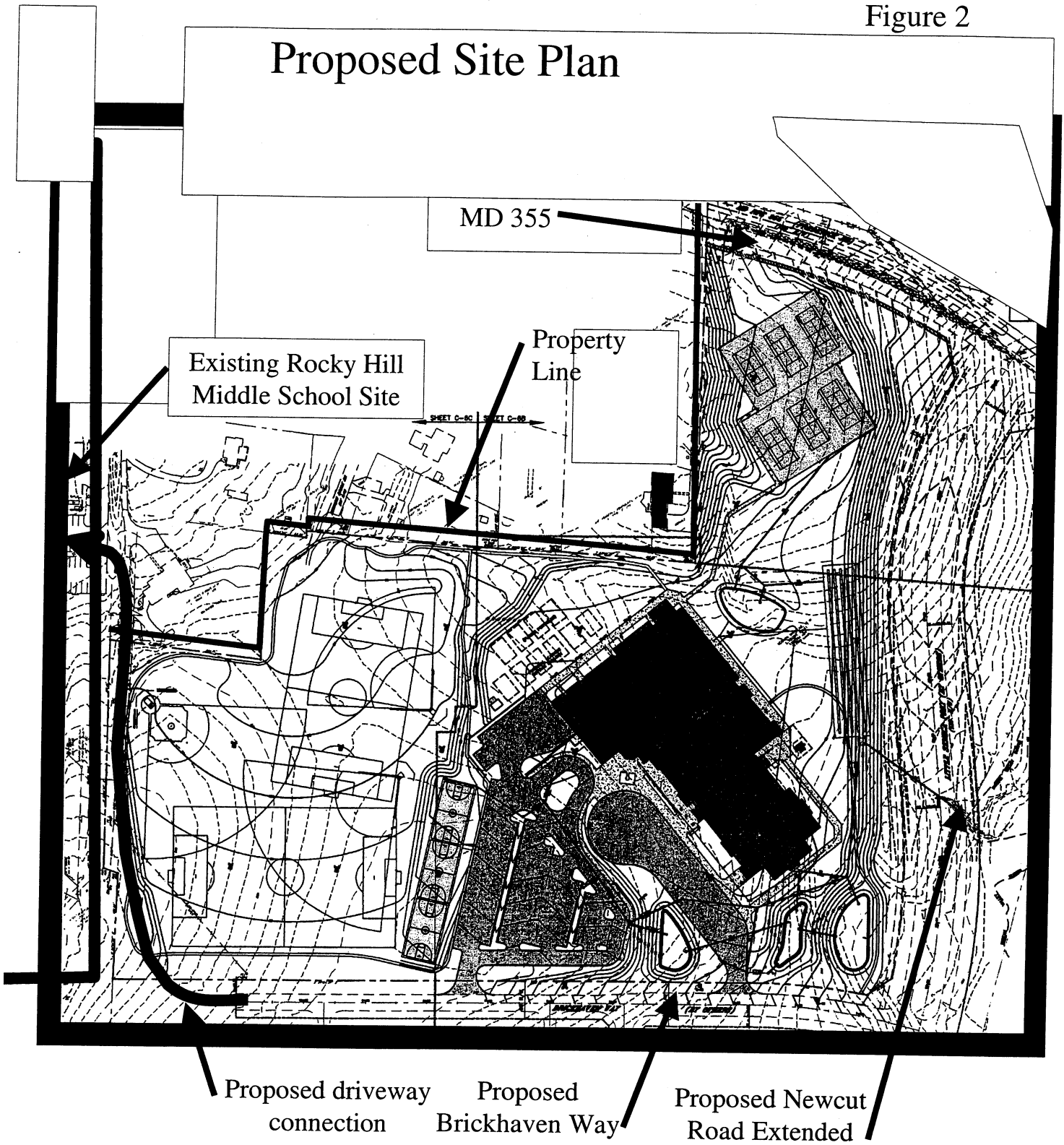
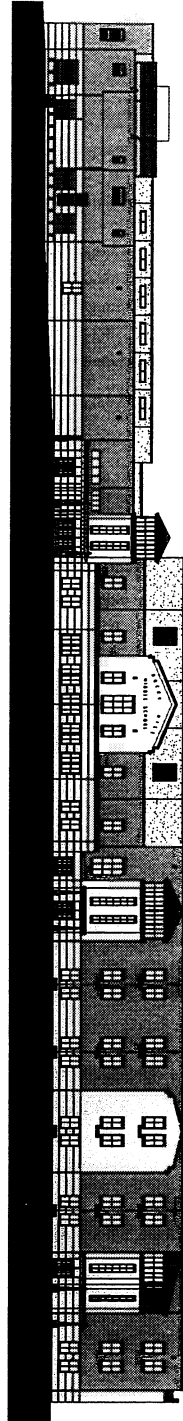
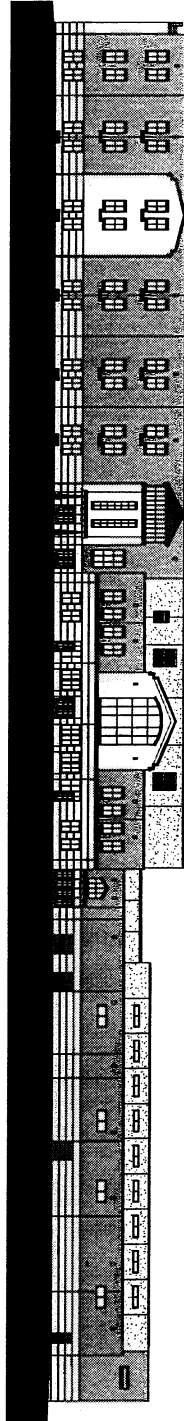


Figure 3

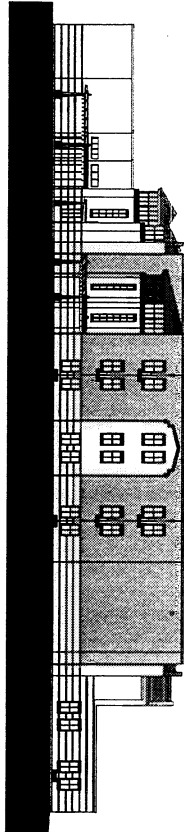
ELEVATIONS



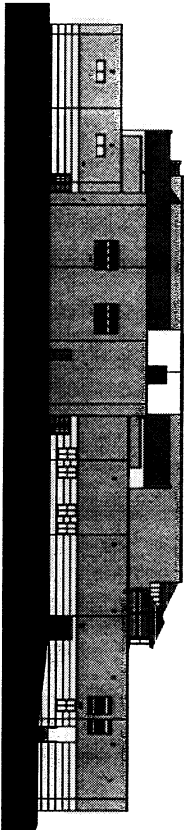
WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

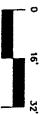
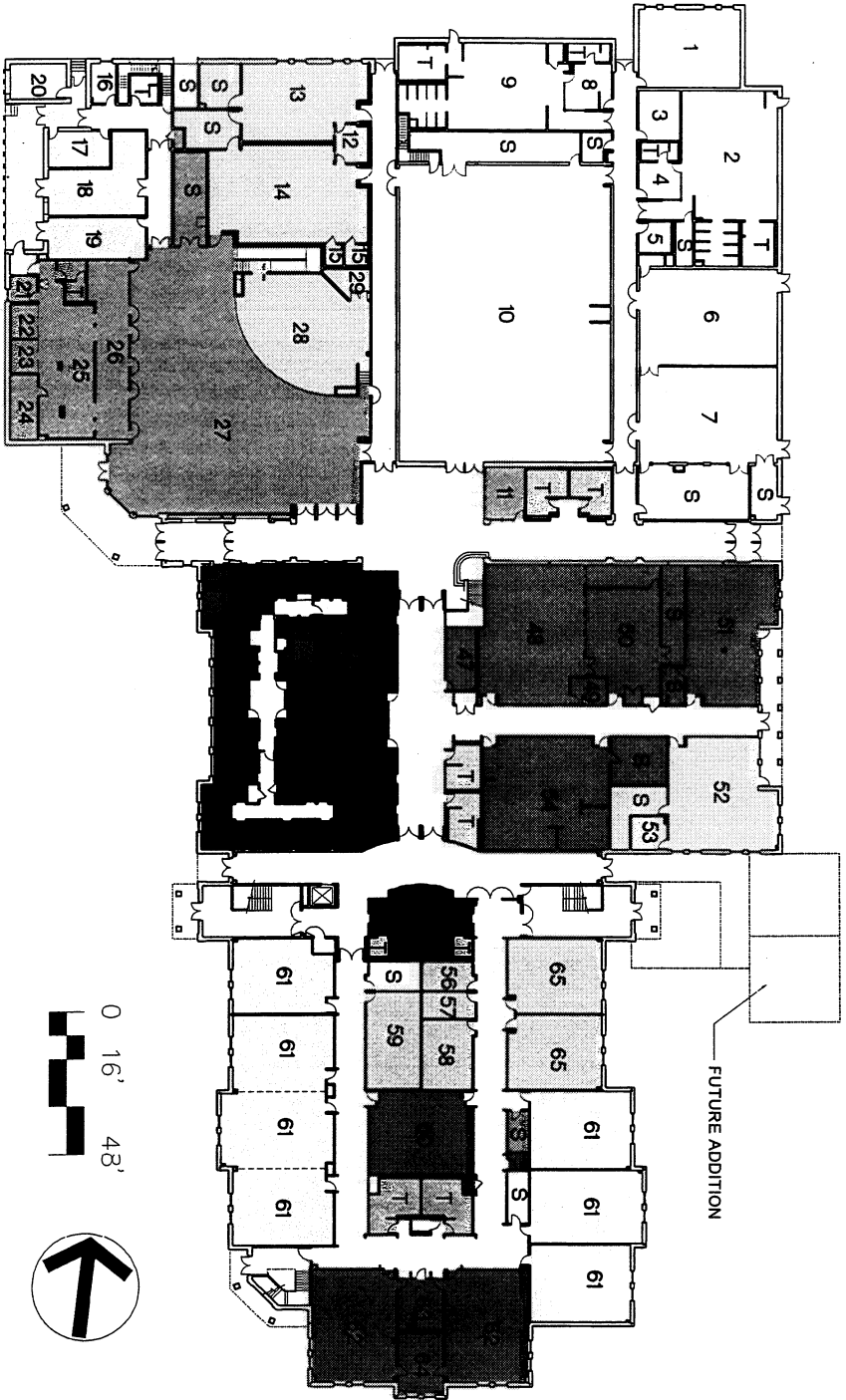


Figure 4

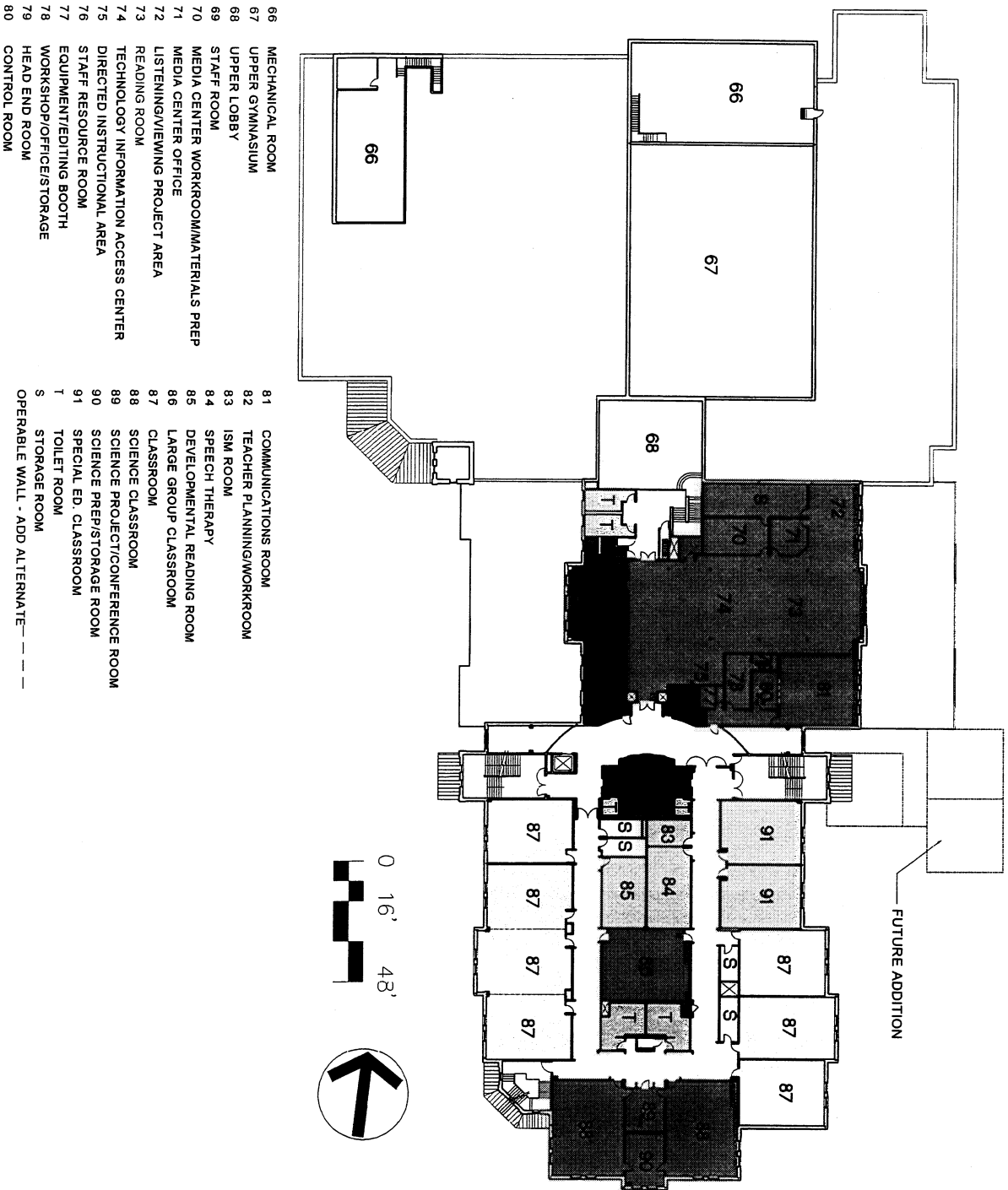
FLOOR PLANS



- | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 1 | HEALTH CLASSROOM | 18 | MECHANICAL ROOM | 35 | HEALTH REST AREA |
| 2 | GIRLS LOCKER ROOM | 19 | RECEIVING ROOM | 36 | ADMIN. CONFERENCE ROOM |
| 3 | GYM TEACHER PLANNING | 20 | TRASH ROOM | 37 | ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE |
| 4 | GIRLS LOCKER ROOM OFFICE | 21 | FOOD SERVICE OFFICE | 38 | PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE |
| 5 | LAUNDRY | 22 | FROZEN FOOD STORAGE | 39 | GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE |
| 6 | AUXILIARY GYM #1 | 23 | REFRIGERATED FOOD STORAGE | 40 | GUIDANCE RECORDS ROOM |
| 7 | AUXILIARY GYM #2 | 24 | DRY FOOD STORAGE | 41 | GUIDANCE WAITING ROOM |
| 8 | BOYS LOCKER ROOM OFFICE | 25 | FOOD PREPARATION | 42 | GUIDANCE CONFERENCE ROOM |
| 9 | BOYS LOCKER ROOM | 26 | SERVING AREA | 43 | IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION ROOM |
| 10 | MAIN GYMNASIUM | 27 | STUDENT DINING | 44 | ADMIN. COPIER WORKROOM |
| 11 | SCHOOL STORE | 28 | STAGE | 45 | ADMIN. WORKROOM AREA |
| 12 | MUSIC OFFICE | 29 | SCENERY STORAGE | 46 | SECURITY OFFICE |
| 13 | CHORAL MUSIC CLASSROOM | 30 | GENERAL ADMIN. OFFICE | 47 | HOME ECONOMICS OFFICE |
| 14 | INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CLASSROOM | 31 | FINANCIAL SECRETARY OFFICE | 48 | APPLIED TECH. CENTER |
| 15 | MUSIC PRACTICE ROOM | 32 | NURSE'S OFFICE | 49 | APPLIED TECH. OFFICE |
| 16 | BUILDING SERVICES OFFICE | 33 | HEALTH WAITING ROOM | 50 | APPLIED TECH. PROCESSING |
| 17 | ELECTRICAL ROOM | 34 | HEALTH EXAMINATION/TREATMENT ROOM | 51 | MULTI PURPOSE LAB |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | 52 | ART CLASSROOM |
| | | | | 53 | KILN ROOM |
| | | | | 54 | HOME ECONOMICS CLASSROOM |
| | | | | 55 | TEACHER PLANNING/WORKROOM |
| | | | | 56 | E.D. SPECIAL ED. OFFICE |
| | | | | 57 | ISOLATION ROOM |
| | | | | 58 | ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE CLASSROOM |
| | | | | 59 | SPECIAL ED. CLASSROOM |
| | | | | 60 | LARGE GROUP CLASSROOM |
| | | | | 61 | CLASSROOM |
| | | | | 62 | SCIENCE CLASSROOM |
| | | | | 63 | SCIENCE PROJECT/CONFERENCE ROOM |
| | | | | 64 | SCIENCE PREP/STORAGE ROOM |
| | | | | 65 | E.D. SPECIAL ED. CLASSROOM |
| | | | | T | TOILET ROOM |
| | | | | S | STORAGE ROOM |
| | | | | --- | OPERABLE WALL - ADD ALTERNATE |

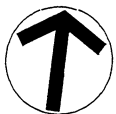
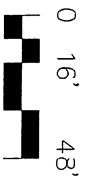
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Figure 5



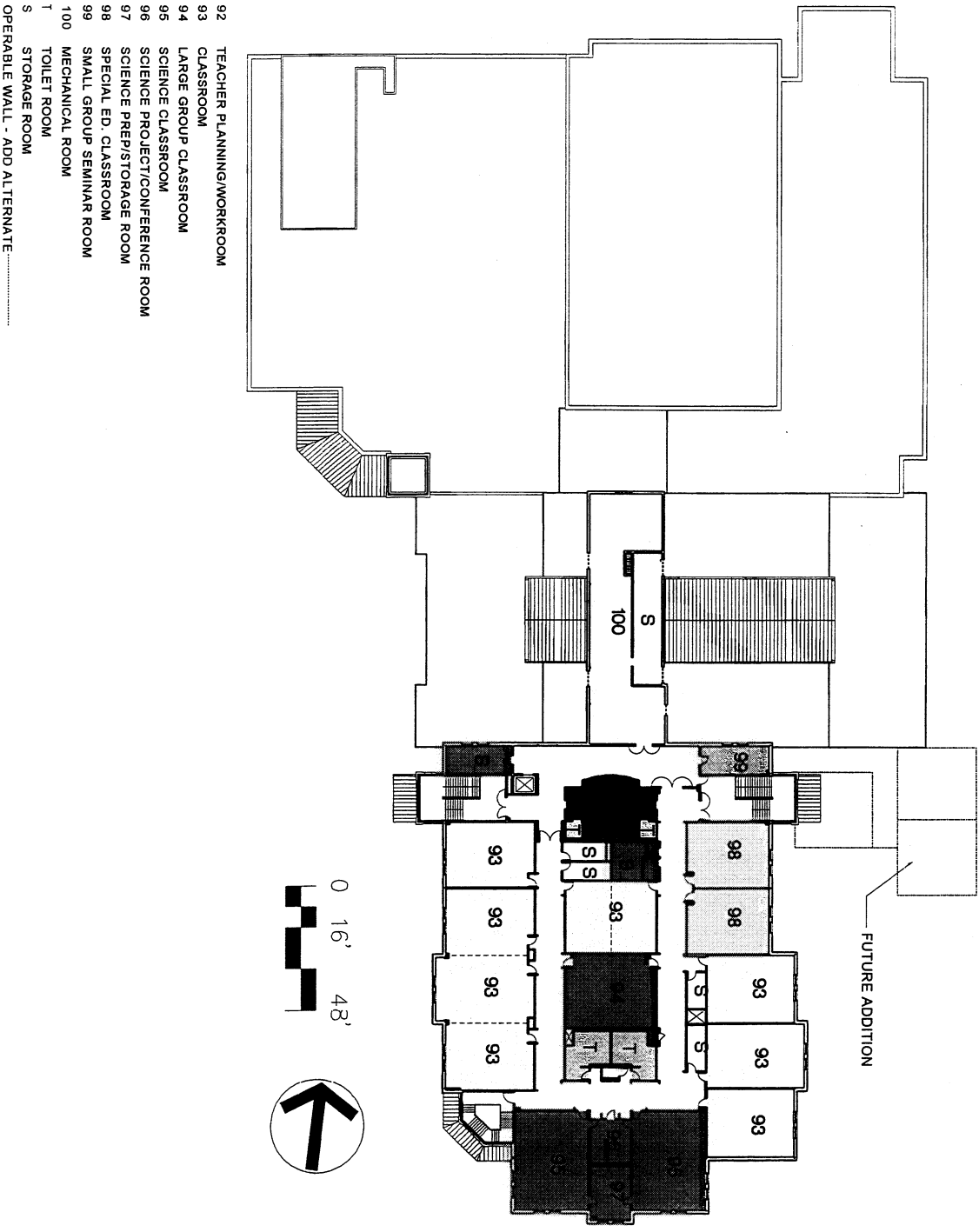
- 66 MECHANICAL ROOM
- 67 UPPER GYMNASIUM
- 68 UPPER LOBBY
- 69 STAFF ROOM
- 70 MEDIA CENTER WORKROOM/MATERIALS PREP
- 71 MEDIA CENTER OFFICE
- 72 LISTENING/VIEWING PROJECT AREA
- 73 READING ROOM
- 74 TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION ACCESS CENTER
- 75 DIRECTED INSTRUCTIONAL AREA
- 76 STAFF RESOURCE ROOM
- 77 EQUIPMENT/EDITING BOOTH
- 78 WORKSHOP/OFFICE/STORAGE
- 79 HEAD END ROOM
- 80 CONTROL ROOM

- 81 COMMUNICATIONS ROOM
 - 82 TEACHER PLANNING/WORKROOM
 - 83 ISM ROOM
 - 84 SPEECH THERAPY
 - 85 DEVELOPMENTAL READING ROOM
 - 86 LARGE GROUP CLASSROOM
 - 87 CLASSROOM
 - 88 SCIENCE CLASSROOM
 - 89 SCIENCE PROJECT/CONFERENCE ROOM
 - 90 SCIENCE PREP/STORAGE ROOM
 - 91 SPECIAL ED. CLASSROOM
 - T TOILET ROOM
 - S STORAGE ROOM
- OPERABLE WALL - ADD ALTERNATE-----



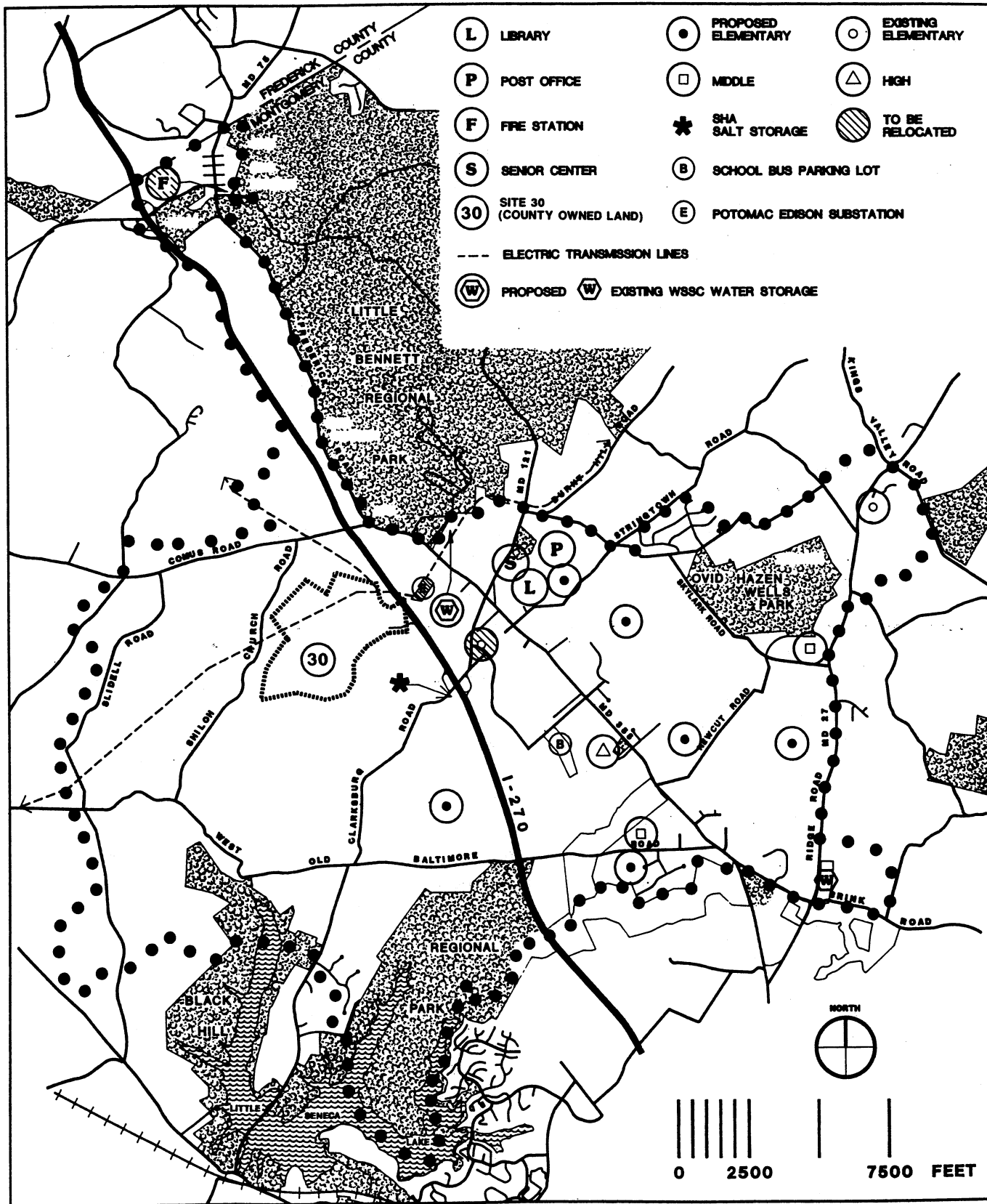
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Figure 6



THIRD FLOOR PLAN

Existing and Proposed Public Facilities



July, 14 2002

Dennis F. Cross, AIA
Project Manager
Division of Construction
Montgomery County Public Schools
283 Muddy Branch Road
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

Re: New Rocky Hill Middle School

Dear Mr. Cross:

Several weeks ago, the MCPS unveiled the proposed site plan for the new Rocky Hill Middle School. As you may have expected, I was dismayed to find that the MCPS had placed six tennis courts and three basketball courts 60 feet from my front door, planned a sidewalk and jogging trail against my property line, sited future temporary classrooms 50 feet from my property line, and placed the main school building 90 feet from my house. At that meeting, the MCPS stated that they could not alter the plan.

Since that meeting, I have secured the re-location of the tennis and basketball courts, although the tennis courts are still 20 feet from my driveway. Additionally, I have secured a verbal agreement to move and buffer the walkway from along my property line. However, the MCPS is only willing to move the school location 25 feet, which places it 115 feet from my house. It has been your position that the building cannot be moved, however, you did move the building 25 feet. You have shown that the building can be moved. I request the building be moved an additional 85 feet, to a distance of 200 feet from my house.

It is my position that a school building 115 feet from any house in Montgomery County is an unreasonable and an unprecedented intrusion on private property. There is 200 feet open on the opposite side of the school in which to move the building. I am concerned about my property value, my ability to sell, and my quality of life. Government is not about destroying quality of life and personal property value. I have visited many Middle Schools in upper Montgomery County and the closest I find a private residence to a school is over 200' away.

For me to support this plan, I request the following:

1. That the school building be moved to a location no closer than 200 feet from my house.

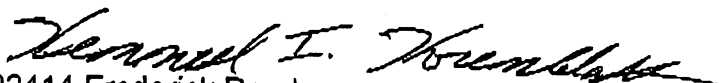
MCPS
Re: New Rocky Hill Middle School
2 of 2

2. That mature Leland Cypress trees and a six-foot cedar privacy fence be planted/installed along the side of my property to buffer the building, and proposed "learning cottages."
3. That the sidewalk from the school to the tennis courts be moved 50 feet away from my property to discourage the school students from "cutting" across my property. Additionally, I request a split rail fence and Leland Cypress trees to be installed/planted between the sidewalk and my property line.
4. That mature Leland Cypress trees be planted as a buffer to the tennis courts and the front of my house. Additionally, where the tennis courts are located 20 feet away from my driveway, I request that Leland Cypress trees be planted along the driveway.
5. That the MCPS deed me 40 feet of property directly in front of my house between my property markers. This will allow a permanent buffer from any future construction or sidewalks.
6. That a written agreement be signed that states that no lights will be placed on the tennis courts for night playing in the future.
7. That a written agreement be signed that states that no lights or school bells will be placed on the side of the school closest to my property either now, or in the future.
8. Finally, that if the MCPS is not willing to address my concerns, the MCPS may purchase my property at appraised value prior to the school being built.

If the school is built 115 feet from my house, my property value will decline. Please contact me so the details of my plan can be discussed.

Thank you.

Kenneth I. Korenblatt


22414 Frederick Road
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871
(301) 972-1820
korenk@co.mo.md.us

cc: Planning Board 



View from property line to proposed school site.



View from garage door to proposed location of school.



View from proposed school location to side of my house.