

**Town of Cary, North Carolina
Site Plan Staff Report
Green Level High School (13-SP-065)
Town Council Quasi-Judicial Hearing
November 13, 2014**

REQUEST

The applicant is requesting approval of a site plan for a high school at the intersection of Green Level Church and Roberts Roads. The applicant's request includes modifications to the Town's development standards regarding the location of parking, connectivity to adjacent parcels, removal/replacement of champion trees, and architectural standards.

SUBJECT PARCELS

Property Owner	Wake County Parcel Identification Number (PIN) (10-digit)	Real Estate ID Number	Deeded Acreage
Wake County Board of Education Attn: Services Director 1551 Rock Quarry Road Raleigh, NC 27610	0733150700	0114161	11.11
Wake County Board of Education Attn: Services Director 1551 Rock Quarry Road Raleigh, NC 27610	0733060430	0374147	30.51
Wake County Board of Education Attn: Services Director 1551 Rock Quarry Road Raleigh, NC 27610	0733066539	0369694	24.22
Wake County Board of Education Attn: Services Director 1551 Rock Quarry Road Raleigh, NC 27610	0723964723	0374148	22.01
Total Area			87.85

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant's Agent	Zak Pierce CLH Design, PA 400 Regency Forest Drive, Suite 120 Cary, NC 27518 (919) 319-6716 zpierce@clhdesignpa.com
General Location	Northeastern quadrant of Roberts Road and Green Level Church Road intersection
Land Use Plan Designation	Low-Density Residential (LDR) and Parks/Open Space (PKS/OS)
Zoning Districts	Residential 40 (R-40)

	Conservation Residential Overlay (CROD) – Low Density Conservation (LCR) Watershed Protection Overlay – Jordan Lake
Within Town Limits	Yes
Staff Contact	Kevin A. Hales, Senior Planner Town of Cary Planning Department P.O. Box 8005 Cary, NC 27512-8005 (919) 462-3944 kevin.hales@townofcary.org

LIST OF EXHIBITS

The following documents incorporated into this staff report are to be entered into the record for this hearing:

- [Exhibit A](#): Plan Review Application (5 pages)
- [Exhibit B](#): Site Plan (149 pages) (*FTP site – Planning/Quasi-Judicial Cases/*)
- [Exhibit C](#): TIA Executive Summary (15 pages)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The Wake County Board of Education, through their agent, CLH Design, P.A., is requesting approval of a 320,987-square-foot high school located on approximately 88 acres at the intersection of Roberts Road and Green Level Church Road. The plan also includes supporting uses such as a stadium, tennis courts, and other athletic fields. The site is bounded on the north and northwest by Town of Cary property that is part of the White Oak Greenway corridor and slated for development as a future park. The southeastern corner of the site abuts a large (11 acre) residential property, and the adjacent rights-of-way form the southern and western boundaries of the site. Two clusters of farm buildings are situated on knolls along Roberts Road, with the site elevation falling approximately 85 feet across the site towards a stream buffer to the north.

Bus access to the site will be from Green Level Church Road, while staff, parent, and student access will be provided from Roberts Road. The majority of parking is located internal to the site, with a limited amount of staff parking located near the intersection. Stormwater management is being accomplished through the installation of four stormwater best management practices (BMPs) on the northern half of the site. A new private street is proposed along the western property line to serve as access to the school as well as access to the future Town of Cary Park to the northwest as well as provide connectivity to the under-developed residential parcel adjacent to the site.

The proposed site plan includes the buffers and streetscapes required by the Town’s Land Development Ordinance (LDO). The streetscape along both Roberts Road and Green Level Church Road will be 30-foot in width. A 40-foot Type A (Opaque) buffer will be provided along the property line shared with the adjacent residential parcel. No perimeter buffers are required along the northern and northeastern property lines due to the extensive conservation easements precluding development of the property and due to the Town’s plan to use that property as future open space.

The project includes limited encroachments into the Conservation Easements that cover the stream corridor and surrounding property on the northern end of the site. The development proposed 16,857 square feet of disturbance in the State of North Carolina’s conservation easement. Encroachments into the Town’s conservation easement total 22, 043 square feet. These encroachments are for required road widening and sewer connections for the site. Separate approval shall be secured from the relevant agencies prior to beginning work on the project.

MODIFICATIONS TO LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (LDO) REQUIREMENTS

Parking Located Between Building and Adjacent Rights-of-Way

In August of 2012, the Town adopted a new set of site design standards to improve the quality of the built environment within its jurisdiction. One component of these standards was to increase the “presence” of

buildings at the intersections of thoroughfares and/or collector streets so these important intersections are visually anchored by structures. This is design standard partially articulated through Section 7.8.2(G)(6) of the LDO, which reads as follows:

The visibility of parking areas shall be reduced by placing at least thirty (30) percent of the parking to the rear or side of buildings for all non-residential developments greater than five (5) acres. An alternative to this requirement is to screen the parking from the public roadway with a Type A streetscape and/or berm. No parking is allowed between non-residential buildings and the right-of-way for individual buildings located on sites at the intersection of thoroughfares and/or collectors designated on the Cary Comprehensive Transportation Plan unless the building floor elevation is ten (10) feet or more below the grade of the adjacent roadway.

As mentioned previously, a limited amount of staff parking has been proposed between the rear of the building and the intersection of Roberts Road and Green Level Church Road. This parking lot contains 86 spaces, representing approximately 10% of the 849 spaces proposed on the site. An additional 27 parking spaces are located along the Roberts Road right-of-way; however, the finished floor elevation (FFE) of the building (328) is located approximately 12 feet below the elevation of Roberts Road (340) at a point approximately in-line with the southwestern corner of the building. The LDO contains a provision that permits parking spaces to be situated in this location on the site as proposed due to the FFE of the building being at least ten feet below the adjoining roadway. The elevation of Green Level Church Road, on the other hand, is located below the proposed FFE of the building (varies between 9 and 20 feet lower). Therefore, the applicant is requesting a modification to Section 7.8.2(G)(6) of the LDO to allow the 86 parking spaces to remain between the building and the Green Level Church Road right-of-way, as proposed.

One of the goals of the Town's Southwest Area Plan (SWAP) is the preservation of the rural character present in southwestern Cary. The dispersal of smaller parking lots around the site, instead of concentrating the large amount of required parking into a larger centralized lot, would lessen the aesthetic impacts of the parking on the site. Additionally, the travel aisles provided to and through the dispersed parking lots would serve as access and staging areas for emergencies or Fire response, should the need arise.

The restriction on locating parking between a proposed building and the adjacent rights-of-way does accomplish a few goals of the site design standards project. This restriction reinforces the "presence" of buildings at intersections by pushing parking into the interior of a site, thereby requiring the buildings to shift closer to the road. The result naturally screens more of the parking from the right-of-way, reducing the aesthetic impacts of parking for the travelling public. In addition, shifting buildings closer to the roadway often provides increased opportunity for pedestrian interaction and activates the pedestrian realms along the roadway.

In summary, Council may find that, given the SWAP goal of preserving the rural character of the area and the large scale of the proposed building, the allowance of parking between the building and the adjacent right-of-way serves to diminish the visual scale of the building by allowing it to be shifted farther from the roadway. In addition, the nature of the use demands that access into the site (whether it is pedestrian or vehicular) be restricted to the extent practical, preventing unauthorized ingress or egress.

Connectivity to Adjacent Parcels

The Town of Cary strives to provide its citizens with a highly connected transportation system, providing choices for drivers, cyclists, public transit passengers, and pedestrians. The provision of such a network connects neighbors to one another and to common destinations, reducing the time and distance of such trips, improving air quality, increasing efficiency in service delivery, and freeing up arterial capacity to better serve regional, long-distance travel needs.

Section 7.10.3(B) of the LDO facilitates this goal by requiring connectivity with adjacent parcels:

The proposed public or private street system shall be designed to provide vehicular and pedestrian interconnections to facilitate internal and external traffic movements in the area. In addition to the specific connectivity requirements described above, roadway interconnections shall be provided during the initial phase of any development plan between the development site and its adjacent properties with one (1) roadway interconnection every one thousand two hundred fifty (1,250) to one thousand five hundred (1,500) linear feet for each direction (north, south, east,

west) in which the subject property abuts. If the common property boundary in any direction is less than one thousand two hundred fifty (1,250) linear feet, the subject property will be required to provide an interconnection if it is determined by the Planning Director that the interconnection in that direction can best be accomplished through the subject property due to physical site constraints, such as topography, presence of stream buffers or other natural features, or lot dimensions; or due to presence of existing development or infrastructure, on the subject property or other properties in the area. When the Planning Director deems a vehicular connection not practicable due to topographical and/or environmental constraints, he/she may increase the length requirement and/or require pedestrian connections. The Planning Director may delay the interconnection if such interconnection requires state approval. The intent of this standard is to improve access/egress for Town neighborhoods, provide faster response time for emergency vehicles, and improve the vehicular and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods.

The applicant has proposed to provide a private street along the eastern property line to serve the proposed high school, the adjacent park site, and any future redevelopment of the residential property to the east. However, there is an existing pond on the Town's future park site that is currently subject to the riparian buffer regulations of the state and Town. The Town has not developed an official master plan for the park site; however, feasibility studies indicate that an access to the park from Roberts Road should be through the proposed school site. Given the environmental constraint of the pond, the location proposed by the school is a logical choice. There is unpredictability in the final alignment of the connection since the road may shift slightly north or south depending on final programming of the park site. Due to this uncertainty, the applicant is requesting that Town Council accept a 10-foot-wide, gravel driveway in-lieu of a standard, paved street section.

Removal and Replacement of Champion Trees

The LDO, in Section 7.2.5, promotes the protection of existing vegetation during development to enhance the visual character of the community, preserve wildlife habitat, control surface water run-off, and moderate temperatures. Section 7.2.5(C) specifically protects large, healthy trees on developing sites, known as "champion trees."

The tree survey identified 18 potential champion trees (larger than 32 inches in diameter) on the property. The applicant had an arborist evaluate these trees and the attached arborist report indicates that four of them exhibit signs of decay and/or disease with signs of advanced decline in vigor, resulting in their disqualification as champion trees. The applicant requests to remove seven of the remaining fourteen champion trees from the site. These trees, discussed individually in detail below, are numbered 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 32 in the arborist's report and in the site plan (see sheet C6.10 – Champion Tree Plan).

Tree number 10 is a 34-inch sweetgum adjacent to one of the existing buildings on the site. The tree is located within the proposed building footprint and would not be an eligible candidate for retention on the site. The LDO requires the building to address the adjacent roadways, resulting in limited options for the applicant to redesign the site to accommodate the retention of this tree. In addition, the large footprint of the building combined with the topography of the site results in a significant amount of required earthwork to make the site work. The proposed finished grade at this tree's location is approximately 15 feet lower than the tree's existing elevation.

The trees numbered 12 through 15 are willow oaks ranging in size from 35 inches to 39 inches in diameter. These trees are loosely grouped around a home adjacent to Roberts Road. Trees 12 and 13 lie directly in the path of the sidewalk along the entrance into the site, while trees 14 and 15 lie between the sidewalk and the back of curb along the right-turn lane being required into the site on Roberts Road. These are required improvements which have limited opportunity for relocation in the case of the driveway, and there is no practical opportunity for the relocation Roberts Road.

Tree number 17 is a 41-inch sweetgum, which the arborist listed in Fair to Good condition. The tree is adjacent to the existing gravel access road for the future Town of Cary park site. Underground utilities have been trenched through its critical root zone in the past. The tree's location would place it in the middle of the proposed running track surface within the stadium for the high school. Again, the large footprint of the stadium and the need for it to be level requires significant grading. The proposed finished grade is proposed to be approximately eight feet lower than the existing tree.

Tree number 32 is a 39-inch willow oak located at the southeastern corner of the site. There is a cluster of six champion trees in this corner of the site, of which only this one is proposed for removal. The arborist indicates the condition of the tree to be Fair to Good, with a number of large, dead limbs in the canopy. This tree is also the closest of the cluster to the proposed private street providing access to the school and adjacent future park site. The road elevation is proposed to be approximately eight feet below the knoll on which this tree is situated and the grading associated with the road will disturb more than 50% of the tree's critical root zone.

In summary, Council may find that trees 10, 12-15, 17, and 32 are not viable candidates for retention on the site given the amount of proposed earthwork and the proximity of the proposed improvements to these trees.

Modification to Percentage of Masonry on Building Façades

The Architectural component of the Community Appearance Manual includes a requirement for building façades of non-residential buildings to consist of at least 75% high-quality, masonry materials. The use of masonry material not only provides an impression of longevity and quality, the scale of modular masonry units is one to which humans can easily relate, which improves the experience of the façade at a pedestrian scale. It is important to note that the Architectural Standards do allow some flexibility in the design of civic and institutional buildings as follows:

Civic and Institutional buildings (e.g. Schools, Churches, Libraries) are signature elements within the community. As such, they may intentionally be made exceptions to the more regulated patterns of private development. Appropriate designs for these buildings become even more important in representing and anchoring the community's image. While Civic and Institutional buildings shall meet the facade principles that follow, exceptions may be provided when the specific design circumstance justifies the exception.

The applicant has proposed a building façade design consisting of two primary materials. The first is a dark rose colored brick and the second is horizontal metal panels in two colors of grey. However, only the southern façade, facing Roberts Road, meets or exceeds the 75% masonry material requirement. The western façade, which faces Green Level Church Road, is 70% masonry material. The two "internally oriented" façades, the northern and eastern, are proposed at 56% and 57% respectively.

The addition of masonry material higher on the structure does increase the loading on the structure, increasing the structural strength required to carry the increased load. The use of lighter-weight materials, such as the proposed metal panels, allows the school to design larger openings in the façade, increasing the amount of natural light in the classrooms, particularly on the northern façade of the classroom wing.

Council may further find that, given the minimal nature of the reductions on the façades facing the roadways and the design benefits gained by the reduction in masonry on the upper levels of the school, the flexibility in the Architectural standards for civic and institutional buildings is justifiable in this instance.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS AND ACTIONS TO DATE

Pre-application Meeting

The applicant attended a pre-application meeting for the site plan on June 26, 2013.

Plan Submittal and Review

The site plan was submitted for its initial review on December 12, 2013, and has been reviewed by the Development Review Committee (DRC) through four review cycles.

Notification and Property Posting

The Planning Department provided notification of the public hearing and posted the property in accordance with local and state regulations.

**SITE PLAN WORKSHEET
AND
SUGGESTED MOTIONS**

A subdivision and/or site plan may be approved by the Town Council only if it satisfies the six approval criteria listed in Section 3.9.2(l) of the LDO. As part of determining whether the first criterion is satisfied, Council must determine whether to grant the requested modification(s) to the Town's development standards. A roadmap of the decisions Council must make is provided below:

WORKSHEET 1

- 1. Does the plan comply with all applicable requirements of the LDO, including the development and design standards of Chapters 7 and 8 as well as the dedication and improvements provisions of Chapter 8 as well as all applicable Town specifications?**

As indicated in the staff report, the applicant has requested that council grant several modifications to the Town's development standards. These are detailed further in the attached Worksheet 1.

Once the council has made a decision on the modification requests, it may then turn to the remaining site plan approval criteria.

WORKSHEET 2

- 2. Does the plan adequately protect other property, or residential uses located on the same property, from the potential adverse effects of the proposed development?**
- 3. Does the plan provide harmony and unity with the development of nearby properties?**
- 4. Does the plan provide safe conditions for pedestrians or motorists and prevent a dangerous arrangement of pedestrian and vehicular ways?**
- 5. Does the plan provide safe ingress and egress for emergency services to the site?**
- 6. Does the plan provide mitigation for traffic congestion impacts reasonably expected to be generated by the project?**

WORKSHEET 1

- 1. Does the plan comply with all applicable requirements of the LDO, including the development and design standards of Chapters 7 and 8 as well as the dedication and improvements provisions of Chapter 8 as well as all applicable Town specifications?

Applicant’s Statement: The plan complies with the applicable requirements of this ordinance with the exception of the eight minor modifications noted on the cover sheet of the plan set.

Staff Observations:

- The Development Review Committee has reviewed the proposed sketch plan for compliance with the LDO and all other applicable regulations through four review cycles.
- There are 34 remaining review comments out of 202 total comments made throughout the review process, meaning that 83% of the comments have been adequately addressed by the applicant.
- All DRC staff members have indicated that they do not object to the plan proceeding to Council for review.

TEST SATISFIED? __ YES __ NO

- 1. The applicant requests that 86 parking spaces be allowed to remain located between the building and the right-of-way for Green Level Church Road.

Town Council should consider this modification request pursuant to Section 3.19 of the LDO.

Section 3.19.1(C)(2) of the LDO reads as follows:

“The Town Council may initiate or approve a minor modification allowed under this section at any time before it takes action on a development application. The Town Council may approve the minor modification only if it finds, after conducting a quasi-judicial hearing, that the modification advances the goals and purposes of this Ordinance and either results in less visual impact or more effective environmental or open space preservation, or relieves practical difficulties in developing a site. In determining if "practical difficulty" exists, the factors set forth in Section 3.20.5, "Approval Criteria" (for Variances) shall be considered. In granting a minor modification allowed under this section, the Town Council may require conditions that will secure substantially the objectives of the standard that is modified and that will substantially mitigate any potential adverse impact on the environment or on adjacent properties, including but not limited to additional landscaping or buffering.”

Applicant’s Statement: High Schools require a large amount of parking spaces to adequately support the teachers, staff, visitors, and students. Of the 849 proposed parking spaces for the project, only 108 spaces (12.7%) are proposed between the school building and the public right-of-way. The drive aisles for these parking spaces also serve as access routes for the Fire Department. The parking lot and drive aisle are buffered by existing mature vegetation and new evergreen shrubs in accordance of Section 7.2 of the LDO.

Staff Observations:

- The applicant’s statement identifies 108 spaces between the building and the adjacent right-s-of-way. The FFE of the proposed building is more than ten feet below the grade of Roberts Road; therefore, 22 of the spaces are permitted as proposed and do not represent a modification to the Town’s standards.
- Allowing parking adjacent to the right-of-way increases its visibility to users of the roadway. The applicant has proposed standard vehicular use screening for the travel aisle with larger evergreens along the parking bays themselves. Further, the dispersal of parking in smaller lots reduces the concentration of parking between the building and the right-of-way.

- The remaining 86 parking spaces, located between the building and Green Level Church Road, represent approximately 10% of the total 849 parking spaces proposed on the site.
- The project is located in the Southwest Area Plan, one of the goals of which is to preserve the rural character of the community. In general, a four to five story institutional building is not consistent with the rural and residential character of the community. Allowing the parking between the building and the road would shift the building farther from the road, reducing the visual mass of the structure as seen from the roadway.
- Provision of a limited amount of parking between the building and the right-of-way provides additional options for emergency services staging in the event of an emergency.

2. The applicant requests that the Town accept a 10-foot gravel access road in-lieu of their continuing the private street to the property line for the future park.

Town Council should consider this modification request pursuant to Sections 3.19 and 7.10.3(B) of the LDO.

Section 3.19.1(C)(2) of the LDO reads as follows:

“The Town Council may initiate or approve a minor modification allowed under this section at any time before it takes action on a development application. The Town Council may approve the minor modification only if it finds, after conducting a quasi-judicial hearing, that the modification advances the goals and purposes of this Ordinance and either results in less visual impact or more effective environmental or open space preservation, or relieves practical difficulties in developing a site. In determining if "practical difficulty" exists, the factors set forth in Section 3.20.5, "Approval Criteria" (for Variances) shall be considered. In granting a minor modification allowed under this section, the Town Council may require conditions that will secure substantially the objectives of the standard that is modified and that will substantially mitigate any potential adverse impact on the environment or on adjacent properties, including but not limited to additional landscaping or buffering.”

Section 7.10.3(B) of the LDO reads as follows:

“The proposed public or private street system shall be designed to provide vehicular and pedestrian interconnections to facilitate internal and external traffic movements in the area. In addition to the specific connectivity requirements described above, roadway interconnections shall be provided during the initial phase of any development plan between the development site and its adjacent properties with one (1) roadway interconnection every one thousand two hundred fifty (1,250) to one thousand five hundred (1,500) linear feet for each direction (north, south, east, west) in which the subject property abuts. If the common property boundary in any direction is less than one thousand two hundred fifty (1,250) linear feet, the subject property will be required to provide an interconnection if it is determined by the Planning Director that the interconnection in that direction can best be accomplished through the subject property due to physical site constraints, such as topography, presence of stream buffers or other natural features, or lot dimensions; or due to presence of existing development or infrastructure, on the subject property or other properties in the area. When the Planning Director deems a vehicular connection not practicable due to topographical and/or environmental constraints, he/she may increase the length requirement and/or require pedestrian connections. The Planning Director may delay the interconnection if such interconnection requires state approval. The intent of this standard is to improve access/egress for Town neighborhoods, provide faster response time for emergency vehicles, and improve the vehicular and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods.”

Applicant’s Statement: Applicant is unable to construct the full width road to the Town of Cary park property line at this time due to the presence of existing wetlands, stream buffers, impacts to a neighboring private property and the uncertainty of the design and scope of the park. The road has been stubbed far enough back from the property line to allow flexibility in the design of the future road extension once the park design has been refined and a proposed alignment has been selected. A 10-ft wide gravel drive is proposed to connect the road stub and the existing gravel

drive to maintain the existing access easement to the park property (MB 1980 PG 464 & DB 12689 PG 2419).

Staff Observations:

- There is no approved master plan for the park property. Preliminary feasibility studies indicate that the primary access is most likely to be provided in the location of the current gravel access drive.
- There is an existing pond on the park site that is subject to state and local riparian buffer regulations. These buffers will impact the decision-making process regarding the final alignment of the access road into the park site.
- Shifting the access road to remain completely outside of the riparian buffers may require impacts to the adjacent residential property in the form of easement acquisition or purchase of a portion of the property.
- The ten-foot gravel access road proposed by the applicant maintains the same level of access to the site as currently available.
- A 200-foot, dead-end stub would provide easier access to a large, wooded tract that is not easily monitored. This raises security concerns from the school system and the Town's emergency services.

3. The applicant requests to remove seven champion trees from the site:
a. Tree 10: 34-inch sweetgum within building footprint
b. Tree 12: 37-inch oak impacted by school RI/RO entrance
c. Tree 13: 39-inch oak impacted by school RI/RO entrance
d. Tree 14: 37-inch oak impacted by widening of Roberts Road
e. Tree 15: 35-inch oak impacted by widening of Roberts Road
f. Tree 17: 41.5-inch sweetgum impacted by development of stadium
g. Tree 32: 39-inch oak impacted by private street access

Town Council should consider these modification requests pursuant to Section 3.19.1(C) of the LDO.

Section 3.19.1(C)(2) of the LDO reads as follows:

“The Town Council may initiate or approve a minor modification allowed under this section at any time before it takes action on a development application. The Town Council may approve the minor modification only if it finds, after conducting a quasi-judicial hearing, that the modification advances the goals and purposes of this Ordinance and either results in less visual impact or more effective environmental or open space preservation, or relieves practical difficulties in developing a site. In determining if "practical difficulty" exists, the factors set forth in Section 3.20.5, "Approval Criteria" (for Variances) shall be considered. In granting a minor modification allowed under this section, the Town Council may require conditions that will secure substantially the objectives of the standard that is modified and that will substantially mitigate any potential adverse impact on the environment or on adjacent properties, including but not limited to additional landscaping or buffering.”

Applicant's Statement:

- Tree 10 - The proposed high school building requires the removal of this 34" sweet gum. The building is optimally located on the site to allow for the safe vehicular and pedestrian circulation while also providing the areas needed for the site athletic fields. Per table 7.2-3 'Replacement of Champion Trees', twelve (12) 2-1/2" – 4" caliper replacement deciduous trees will be planted to offset the removal of this champion tree.
- Tree 12 – The proposed parent, staff and visitor entrance and exit drive requires the removal of this 37" willow oak. The location of the drive is set based on meeting the vertical and horizontal sight distance standards set forth by the Town of Cary and NCDOT. Per table 7.2-

- 3 'Replacement of Champion Trees', twelve (12) 2-1/2" – 4" caliper replacement deciduous trees will be planted to offset the removal of this champion tree.
- Tree 13 - The proposed parent, staff and visitor entrance and exit drive requires the removal of this 39" willow oak. The location of the drive is set based on meeting the vertical and horizontal sight distance standards set forth by the Town of Cary and NCDOT. Per table 7.2-3 'Replacement of Champion Trees', twelve (12) 2-1/2" – 4" caliper replacement deciduous trees will be planted to offset the removal of this champion tree.
 - Tree 14 – The proposed right turn lane on Roberts Road for the parent, staff and visitor entrance and exit drive requires the removal of this 37" willow oak. This turn lane is required based on the findings and recommendations outlined in the traffic impact analysis which was approved by the Town of Cary and NCDOT. Per table 7.2-3 'Replacement of Champion Trees', twelve (12) 2-1/2" – 4" caliper replacement deciduous trees will be planted to offset the removal of this champion tree.
 - Tree 15 - The proposed right turn lane on Roberts Road for the parent, staff and visitor entrance and exit drive requires the removal of this 35" willow oak. This turn lane is required based on the findings and recommendations outlined in the traffic impact analysis which was approved by the Town of Cary and NCDOT. Per table 7.2-3 'Replacement of Champion Trees', twelve (12) 2-1/2" – 4" caliper replacement deciduous trees will be planted to offset the removal of this champion tree.
 - Tree 17 – The proposed track and field stadium requires the removal of this 41.5" sweet gum. The track and field stadium is optimally located on the site to allow for the safe vehicular and pedestrian circulation while also providing a visual buffer between the public road and the large student parking lot. Per table 7.2-3 'Replacement of Champion Trees', twelve (12) 2-1/2" – 4" caliper replacement deciduous trees will be planted to offset the removal of this champion tree.
 - Tree 32 – The grading for the student parking lot and Town park access drive impacted over 50 percent of the critical root zone of this 39" willow oak and thus required its removal. This drive is optimally located to provide a connection from Roberts Road and serve as a perimeter circulation route. The drive's Roberts Road connection and alignment allows for six other champion trees to be protected. The width of this drive has been reduced to the greatest extent allowed by the Town of Cary LDO and NCDOT standards. Per table 7.2-3 'Replacement of Champion Trees', twelve (12) 2-1/2" – 4" caliper replacement deciduous trees will be planted to offset the removal of this champion tree.

Staff Observations:

- Tree 10 is a 34-inch sweetgum in good condition. It is categorized as a Tier 2(iii) priority for retention on the site. It is located within the proposed building footprint. The Town's regulations push the building towards the adjacent roadways, limiting opportunities to relocate the building, within the current regulatory framework, to save this tree. The grading for the building will lower the finished grade by approximately 15 feet in the tree's location.
- Trees 12 and 13 are a 37-inch and a 39-inch willow oak, both in good condition. They are categorized as Tier 1(i) priority for retention on the site as a grouping of champion trees adjacent to a roadway.
- Trees 14 and 15 are a 37-inch and a 35-inch willow oak, both in good condition. They are categorized as Tier 1(i) priority for retention on the site as a grouping of champion trees adjacent to a roadway.
- Trees 12-15 are located in such close proximity to required infrastructure that almost the entire critical root zone of all four trees would be disturbed. Robert's Road is an existing thoroughfare and it is not practical for the applicant to relocate the road corridor. The location of the staff/visitor entrance is influenced by design criteria established by the Town and the State. The applicant has proposed a right-turn lane into the staff/visitor entrance as a partial mitigation to traffic impacts generated by the site. Relocation or elimination of either the

entrance or the right-turn lane is impractical given the amount of vehicular traffic expected and the design criteria impacting the layout of the circulation system.

- Tree 17 is a 41.5-inch sweetgum in fair to good condition. It is categorized as a Tier 2(iii) priority for retention on the site. It is located within the track footprint proposed within the stadium. The proposed finished grade for the track is approximately eight feet lower than the existing grade at this tree's location.
- Tree 32 is a 39-inch willow oak in fair to good condition. It is categorized as a Tier 1(i) priority for retention on the site. It is located in close proximity to the proposed private street access to the site. Installation of the private street access will require disturbance to more than 50% of the tree's critical root zone.

4. The applicant requests that Council permit reductions in the amount of masonry required on the building façades.

Town Council should consider this modification request pursuant to the applicability section of the Architectural component of the Community Appearance Manual, specifically the following language:

"Civic and Institutional buildings (e.g. Schools, Churches, Libraries) are signature elements within the community. As such, they may intentionally be made exceptions to the more regulated patterns of private development. Appropriate designs for these buildings become even more important in representing and anchoring the community's image. While Civic and Institutional buildings shall meet the facade principles that follow, exceptions may be provided when the specific design circumstance justifies the exception"

Applicant's Statement: The upper stories of the four story classroom wing façade at the north of the building is primarily comprised of metal panels and glass in an effort to reduce the cost of the building to fit within the tight project budget constraints and to not take funds away from teaching spaces within the school. Adding masonry materials to the upper stories would require significant increases to the structural design of the classroom wing. The façade of the classroom wing that is comprised mostly of metal panels and glass faces the White Oak Creek where future development is prohibited. The building façades that face the public right-of-way and other internal public spaces are primarily comprised of masonry materials.

Staff Observations:

- The Architectural standards recognize the need for flexibility in the design of civic and institutional buildings, such as the proposed high school.
- The façade facing Roberts Road meets the required 75% masonry material. The applicant has requested a reduction of 5% (approximately 1,024 square feet) in the amount of masonry material on the façade facing Green Level Church Road.
- The use of lighter-weight materials on the upper stories of the structure allows the designers to program larger openings into the façade, allows larger windows in the proposed classroom wing.
- The two façades on which the largest increases are requested face the parking lot and the adjacent stream corridor, not adjacent roadways.

SUGGESTED MOTIONS FOR MODIFICATION REQUESTS

MOTION TO APPROVE ALL MODIFICATION REQUESTS

For the reasons discussed, I move that we **APPROVE** the modification requests made by the applicant, as the requests meet all of the approval criteria of the applicable sections of the LDO.

This approval is conditioned upon the following:

1. *[insert any additional conditions necessary to bring the project into compliance with the LDO or other standards]*

OR

MOTION TO APPROVE INDIVIDUAL MODIFICATION REQUESTS:

For the reasons discussed, I move that we APPROVE modification request(s) number(s) _____ made by the applicant as the request(s) meet all the approval criteria of the applicable sections of the LDO.

This approval is conditioned upon the following:

1. *[insert any conditions necessary to bring the project into compliance with the LDO or other standards]*

OR

MOTION TO DENY ALL MODIFICATION REQUESTS

For the reasons discussed, I move that we DENY the modification requests made by the applicant, as they do not meet all of the approval criteria of the applicable sections of the LDO.

2. Does the plan adequately protect other property, or residential uses located on the same property, from the potential adverse effects of the proposed development?

Applicant’s Statement: The plan proposes a high school which is an allowable use in the Town of Cary R40 zoning district. The adjacent properties are also zoned residential. The proposed school will benefit the neighbors and community because it will serve the rapid growth this part of Town and alleviate overcrowding in other area high schools.

Staff Observations:

- There will be no residential uses located on the property being developed.
- The proposed plan complies with all of the buffers and streetscape requirements of the Town.
- The building is located close to the intersection, resulting in more separation from the adjacent residential use to the east.

TEST SATISFIED? __ YES __ NO

3. Does the plan provide harmony and unity with the development of nearby properties?

Applicant’s Statement: Stream buffers and a conservation easement protect approximately 22.40 of the site’s 87.85 acres. Protecting this significant amount of land illustrates the compatibility with the site’s ‘Low-Density Residential (LDR)’ designation per the Town of Cary Southwest Area Plan. Additional streetscape and buffer plantings have been proposed to enhance the existing protected vegetation and reduce the visual impact from the road and adjacent properties.

Staff Observations:

- The proposed use is considered a supporting use to the surrounding residential community.
- The proposed building is four stories in height and over 300,000 square feet in floor area, far exceeding the scale and bulk of the surrounding residential community.
- The taller portions of the building are located farther from the roadways, reducing the visual massing of the structure as viewed off-site.
- The majority of the parking on the site is centrally located on the property, shifting it away from adjacent residential uses and/or road rights-of-way.

TEST SATISFIED? __ YES __ NO

4. Does the plan provide safe conditions for pedestrians or motorists and prevent a dangerous arrangement of pedestrian and vehicular ways?

Applicant’s Statement: NCDOT – Municipal School Transportation Assistance (MSTA) has reviewed and approved the proposed on-site circulation as shown. This division of NCDOT is responsible for reviewing and approving the pedestrian and vehicular circulations on school sites across the state. A significant amount of sidewalks along with several raised crosswalks and pedestrian plazas have been proposed for the safety of pedestrians.

Staff Observations:

- The proposed plan separates bus, parent/staff, and student traffic streams through the use of multiple driveways identified for specific uses.
- The plan complies with the LDO requirements for pedestrian access into and through the site.

- The plan complies with the Town's standards and specifications for design of parking lots, drive aisles, and other vehicular travelways.
- The plan provides future access to adjacent un-developed and/or under-developed properties in the vicinity.

TEST SATISFIED? __ YES __ NO

5. Does the plan provide safe ingress and egress for emergency services to the site?

Applicant's Statement: The plan provides safe and direct ingress and egress routes for emergency services. The proposed athletic fields all have paved routes for emergency vehicle access. The design team met with the Town Fire Marshal to confirm the proposed parking lot and road layout will accommodate the turning radius of their largest emergency vehicle. A significant amount of fire lane striping is proposed to restrict parking and allow a clear travel lane for emergency vehicles.

Staff Observations:

- The proposed plan is consistent with physical design standards for streets.
- The plan provides circulation around the majority of the building and to the various sports fields on the site.
- Parking is provided in close proximity to the building, providing options for Fire and Police staging in the case of an emergency.
- Access to the future park site would still be via a 10-foot gravel drive until the Town develops the site further. The Town would bear the cost of the additional extension of the road across the school property as proposed.

TEST SATISFIED? __ YES __ NO

6. Does the plan provide mitigation for traffic congestion impacts reasonably expected to be generated by the project?

Applicant's Statement: A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) was developed and approved by the Town of Cary and NCDOT. The TIA evaluated adjacent and remote intersections to determine if the proposed traffic associated with the school will be adversely affected. Eight off-site intersections will receive improvements consisting of the following:

1. NC HWY 55 / High House Road
 - a. 300-ft westbound right turn lane on high house road
 - b. Re-stripe westbound existing lane to be two through lanes
2. NC HWY 55 / Old Jenks Road
 - a. 100-ft westbound right turn lane on Old Jenks Road
 - b. 250-ft each eastbound dual left turn lanes on Jenks Road
 - c. 200-ft eastbound right turn on Jenks Road
3. Jenks Road/ Roberts Road
 - a. 50-ft westbound right turn lane on Jenks Road
 - b. 400-ft eastbound left turn lane on Roberts Road
4. Roberts Road/site driveway #1 (student/park entrance & exit)
 - a. 100-ft westbound right turn lane on Roberts Road
 - b. 150-ft eastbound left turn lane on Roberts Road
5. Roberts Road/site driveway #2 (parent/visitor/staff entrance & exit)
 - a. 100-ft westbound right turn lane on Roberts Road
 - b. 150-ft eastbound left turn lane on Roberts Road
6. Roberts Road / Green Level Church Road
 - a. Traffic signal
 - b. 175-ft westbound right turn lane on Roberts Road
 - c. 150-ft northbound right turn lane on Green Level Church Road

- d. 325-ft southbound left turn lane on Green Level Church Road
- 7. Green Level Church rd./site driveway #3 (bus/staff entrance & exit)
 - a. 100-ft southbound left turn lane on Green Level Church Road
- 8. * Green Level Church Road / Green Level West Road: (*Improvement to be installed with development of the proposed WCPSS E-37 elementary school. If this improvement is not completed as scheduled, the high school contractor will be required to construct the improvements listed below.)
 - a. 100-ft westbound left turn on Green Level West Road
 - b. 100-ft eastbound right turn on Green Level West Road
 - c. Install traffic signal

In addition to the off-site improvements, approximately 2,300 linear feet of vehicle staking is provided on-site to avoid parents queuing on Roberts Road. The on-site traffic management plan has been reviewed and approved by NCDOT MST A and Town of Cary Transportation Department.

Staff Observations:

- NCDOT has reviewed this list of mitigations and indicated that they are acceptable. The final design of the improvements is still underway.

TEST SATISFIED? __ YES __ NO

SUGGESTED MOTIONS FOR SITE PLAN

MOTION TO APPROVE THE SITE PLAN

For the reasons discussed, I move that we **APPROVE** the proposed site plan without condition **(ALT: with conditions as stated below)**, as it meets all of the approval criteria set forth in Section 3.9.2(I) of the LDO.

(ALT: This approval is conditioned upon the following:)

- 1. The applicant must satisfactorily address any remaining Development Review Committee comments on the master plan set submitted for signature.
- 2. *[insert any conditions necessary to bring the project into compliance with the LDO or other standards]*

OR

MOTION TO DENY THE SITE PLAN

For the reasons discussed, I move that we **DENY** the proposed site plan, as it does not meet all of the approval criteria set forth in Section 3.9.2(I) of the LDO.