



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of November 13, 2010**

DATE: October 25, 2010

SUBJECT: U-3269-10-1 USE PERMIT for a freestanding electronic building identification sign for Thomas Jefferson Middle School and Community Center, located at 125 South Old Glebe Road (RPC: 24-011-037, -058).

Applicant:

Arlington Public Schools
2770 S. Taylor Street
Arlington, Virginia 22206

C. M. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Consent to the use of property owned by the Arlington County Board for the placement of the proposed sign.
2. Approve the use permit for a freestanding electronic building identification sign, subject to the conditions of the staff report.

ISSUES: This is a request for a freestanding building identification sign with an electronic message center for Thomas Jefferson Middle School and Community Center. The sign does not conform to the Zoning Ordinance, which generally prohibits electronic signs, and which does not permit signs closer than fifteen feet from the right-of-way..

SUMMARY: This is a request for a freestanding building identification sign with an electronic message area for the Thomas Jefferson Middle School and Community Center. It will replace an existing, larger sign at the site. The sign complies with the zoning ordinance with regard to size, but does not conform to the zoning ordinance as the zoning ordinance prohibits electronic signs. The sign also does not comply with the zoning ordinance with regard to distance from the right-of-way. However, the sign will be placed in the same location as the older, larger sign. With regards to the proposed electronic message area, staff believes that, with appropriate conditions, the use of an electronic message center will be functionally equivalent to a changeable copy sign where each letter must be changed by hand, and will not constitute a detriment to adjacent properties and will not endanger vehicular traffic nor pedestrian safety or create more visual

County Manager:	<i>BMD/GA</i>	
County Attorney:	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
Staff:	Peter Schulz, DCPHD, Planning Division	
PLA-5722		19.

clutter than would any other type of signs. Moreover, such a sign is easier for the applicant to use than the changeable letter signs. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the use permit for a freestanding building identification sign with an electronic message center, subject to the conditions of the staff report.

BACKGROUND: The subject property is a school and community center, jointly used by the County Board and Arlington Public Schools. The sign will be used for both the school and community center, but will be located on property owned by the County Board.

The following provides more information about the site:

Site: The site is approximately 26 acres and occupies almost the entire block between South Old Glebe Road, 2nd Street South, South Irving Street, and Arlington Boulevard. The site consists of a school and community center, constructed in 1972. The sign, however, will be placed on the extreme southwest of the site, on a portion of property owned by the County Board.

- To the north: Single-family homes and duplexes along Arlington Boulevard zoned “R-6”.
- To the south: Across 2nd Street South, a vehicle service establishment zoned “C-2” and a mixed-use apartment tower zoned “C-3”.
- To the east: Across South Irving Street, single-family homes zoned “R-6”.
- To the west: Across South Old Glebe Rd., garden condominiums zoned “RA8-18” and duplexes zoned “R2-7”.

Zoning: The site is zoned “S-3A” Special Districts.

Land Use: The subject site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as “Public”.

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Arlington Heights Civic Association boundary. The Civic Association has submitted a letter of support for the request.

DISCUSSION: The applicant proposes a freestanding monument-style building identification sign with permanent text that will state “Thomas Jefferson Middle School” and have arrows pointing traffic and pedestrians to the “School and Theater” and “Community Center”. In the middle of the sign will be what is known as an “electronic message center”. It is essentially a changeable-copy sign where the copy may be changed remotely by a keyboard, rather than having individual plastic letters that must be changed by hand. The total sign area is 24 square feet, but the area devoted to the electronic message center is only seven (7) square feet. The sign will be placed on a brick base 3.25 feet tall. It will be located at the northeast corner of South Old Glebe Road and 2nd Street South, on a portion of property owned by the County Board, which is why the County Board needs to consent to the location of the sign.

The proposed sign does not conform to the Zoning Ordinance as the Ordinance does not permit electronic signs. However, electronic signs have been approved in the past by the County Board. The applicant agrees to limit the frequency of the message changes. It will only be seven (7) square feet, and the applicant agrees that the copy shall not change more than once every 24

hours. The applicant agrees that the sign will not scroll, flash or have video. In addition, as is the practice with rooftop signs, the applicant agrees that if, in the opinion of the County Manager the sign's brightness has an adverse effect on the surrounding area, the brightness will be reduced. In electronic signs, the brightness can be controlled by the same equipment that controls the copy.

The Zoning Ordinance requires any freestanding signs in residential or "S-3A" zoning districts to be a minimum of 15 feet from the public right-of-way. However, the proposed sign will be located only eight feet from the right of way. It will, however, be placed in the same general location as, and will be lower than, the existing brick freestanding sign and will not be an impediment to pedestrian movement and safety, nor will it obstruct views for cars making left turns from Old Glebe Road to 2nd Street South, nor cars making a right turn from Second Street North to Old Glebe Road.

The proposed sign is detailed in the chart below:

Sign Type (Quantity)	Dimensions	Sign Area	Materials and Color	Location
Proposed identification sign (1)	5.25 feet wide X 4.25 feet tall, on a 3.25 foot brick base.	24	Brick base, aluminum box with black text on light blue-green background	Freestanding monument; At the corner of South Old Glebe Rd. and 2 nd St. S., approx 8-10 feet from ROW.
Total sign area proposed		24 s.f.		

CONCLUSION: The proposed freestanding sign complies with the Zoning Ordinance except for the electronic portion of the sign, and the placement of the sign. However, the proposed sign will be placed in the same location as the existing sign. It will also be smaller than the existing sign and will not have a detrimental impact on either traffic or pedestrian safety beyond what a permitted sign would have. The applicant also agrees to conditions such that the portion of the sign that is electronic will not scroll, flash or have video and will not change more than once every 24 hours. Therefore, the electronic sign should have no adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood nor constitute a hazard to vehicular traffic, beyond what a traditional sign would have. Therefore, staff recommends that the County Board consent to the use of County Board-owned property and approve a use permit for the proposed freestanding monument sign with an electronic message center, subject to the following conditions:

Proposed conditions:

1. The applicant agrees that the freestanding monument sign for the Thomas Jefferson Middle School and Community Center shall be consistent with the sign as shown in the chart in the Board report as to size, location, materials and design, and with the exhibits attached to the report entitled "Attachment 1" and dated October 21, 2010 and as approved by the County Board on November 13, 2010. The applicant further agrees that the total sign area shall not exceed 24 square feet.

Minor changes to the approved sign may be approved administratively by the Zoning Administrator. For the purposes of the preceding sentence, minor changes shall include only the following: (i) a minor adjustment in the location of the sign to meet

field conditions (less than 1 foot in any direction); or (ii) either a minor change in the area of the sign (less than 5%).

2. The proposed sign may incorporate an Electronic Message Center (EMC) of not more than seven (7) square feet of the total sign area. The EMC shall not be permitted to flash, scroll, or display video. The content of the EMC shall change not more than once every 24 hours. The applicant further agrees to include a mechanism to dim the brightness of the electronic portion of the sign, so that if the County Manager finds that the intensity of the lighting or the brightness of the EMC has an adverse effect on the surrounding area, the applicant will, within 24 hours notice from the County Manager, reduce the intensity or brightness of the EMC to a level that, in the County Manager's reasonable judgment, will no longer have such an adverse effect.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

There have been no previous County Board land use actions at this site.

ATTACHMENT 1
OCTOBER 21, 2010

Existing Site

Existing Conditions



NO. 001	0001
NO. 002	0002
NO. 003	0003
NO. 004	0004
NO. 005	0005
NO. 006	0006
NO. 007	0007
NO. 008	0008
NO. 009	0009
NO. 010	0010
NO. 011	0011
NO. 012	0012
NO. 013	0013
NO. 014	0014
NO. 015	0015
NO. 016	0016
NO. 017	0017
NO. 018	0018
NO. 019	0019
NO. 020	0020
NO. 021	0021
NO. 022	0022
NO. 023	0023
NO. 024	0024
NO. 025	0025
NO. 026	0026
NO. 027	0027
NO. 028	0028
NO. 029	0029
NO. 030	0030
NO. 031	0031
NO. 032	0032
NO. 033	0033
NO. 034	0034
NO. 035	0035
NO. 036	0036
NO. 037	0037
NO. 038	0038
NO. 039	0039
NO. 040	0040
NO. 041	0041
NO. 042	0042
NO. 043	0043
NO. 044	0044
NO. 045	0045
NO. 046	0046
NO. 047	0047
NO. 048	0048
NO. 049	0049
NO. 050	0050
NO. 051	0051
NO. 052	0052
NO. 053	0053
NO. 054	0054
NO. 055	0055
NO. 056	0056
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NO. 058	0058
NO. 059	0059
NO. 060	0060
NO. 061	0061
NO. 062	0062
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NO. 064	0064
NO. 065	0065
NO. 066	0066
NO. 067	0067
NO. 068	0068
NO. 069	0069
NO. 070	0070
NO. 071	0071
NO. 072	0072
NO. 073	0073
NO. 074	0074
NO. 075	0075
NO. 076	0076
NO. 077	0077
NO. 078	0078
NO. 079	0079
NO. 080	0080
NO. 081	0081
NO. 082	0082
NO. 083	0083
NO. 084	0084
NO. 085	0085
NO. 086	0086
NO. 087	0087
NO. 088	0088
NO. 089	0089
NO. 090	0090
NO. 091	0091
NO. 092	0092
NO. 093	0093
NO. 094	0094
NO. 095	0095
NO. 096	0096
NO. 097	0097
NO. 098	0098
NO. 099	0099
NO. 100	0100

WEEKS MARSHALL
 ARCHITECTS
 1000 N. GLEBE ROAD
 SUITE 100
 ARLINGTON, VA 22201
 TEL: 703.241.1000
 FAX: 703.241.1001
 WWW.WMARCHITECTS.COM

THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL
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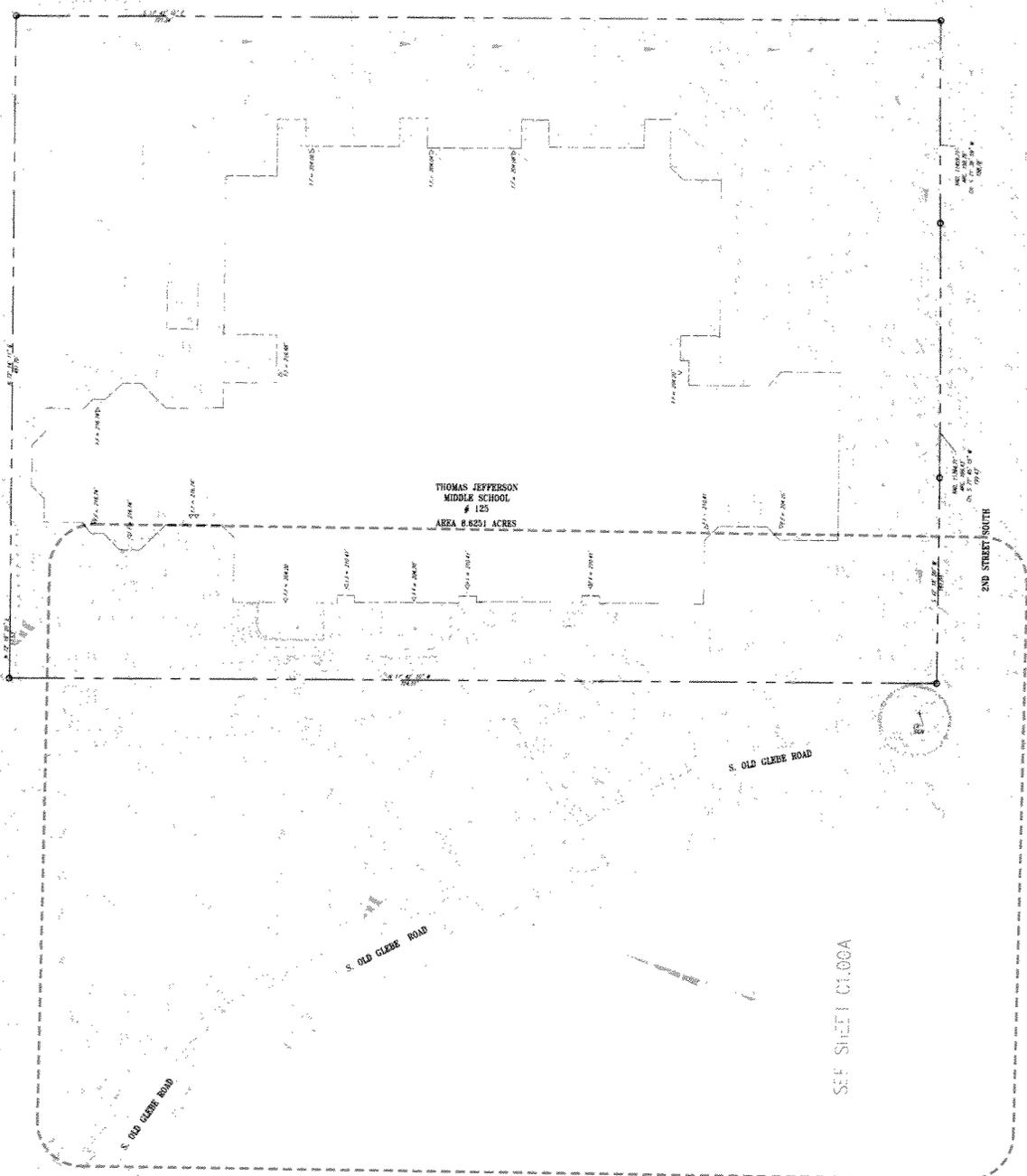
WEEKS MARSHALL ARCHITECTS, INC.
 1000 N. GLEBE ROAD
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 ARLINGTON, VA 22201
 TEL: 703.241.1000
 FAX: 703.241.1001
 WWW.WMARCHITECTS.COM

THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

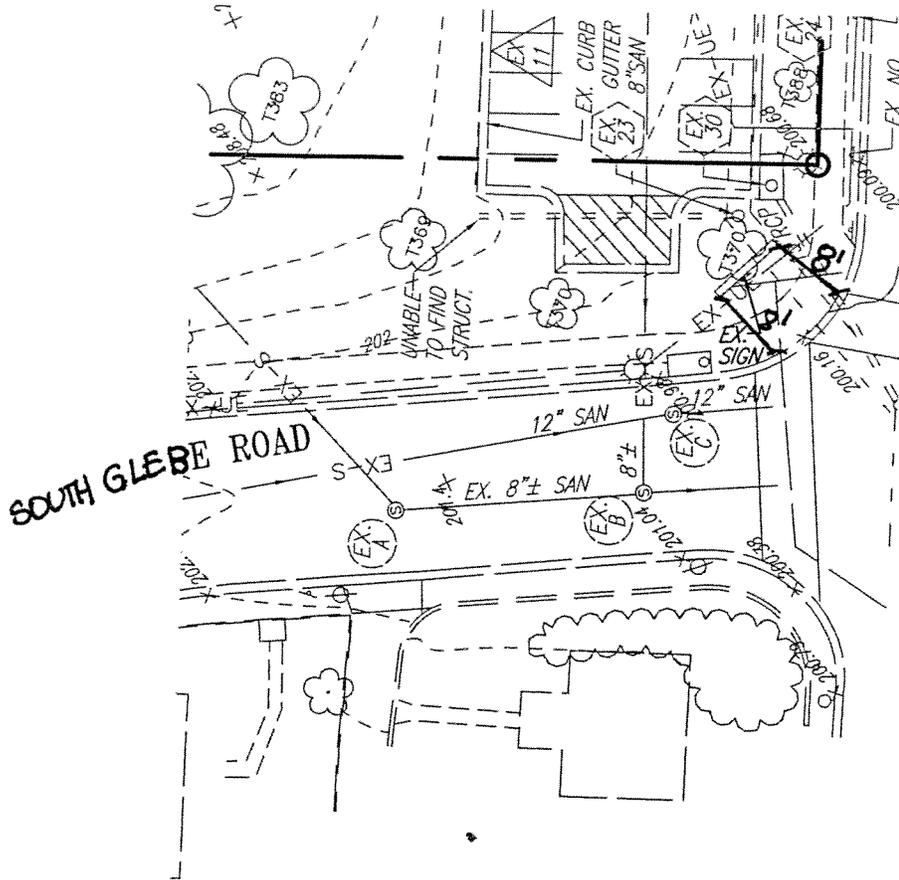
OVERALL EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN

C1.00

DATE: 08.2.2019



SEE SHEET C1.00A

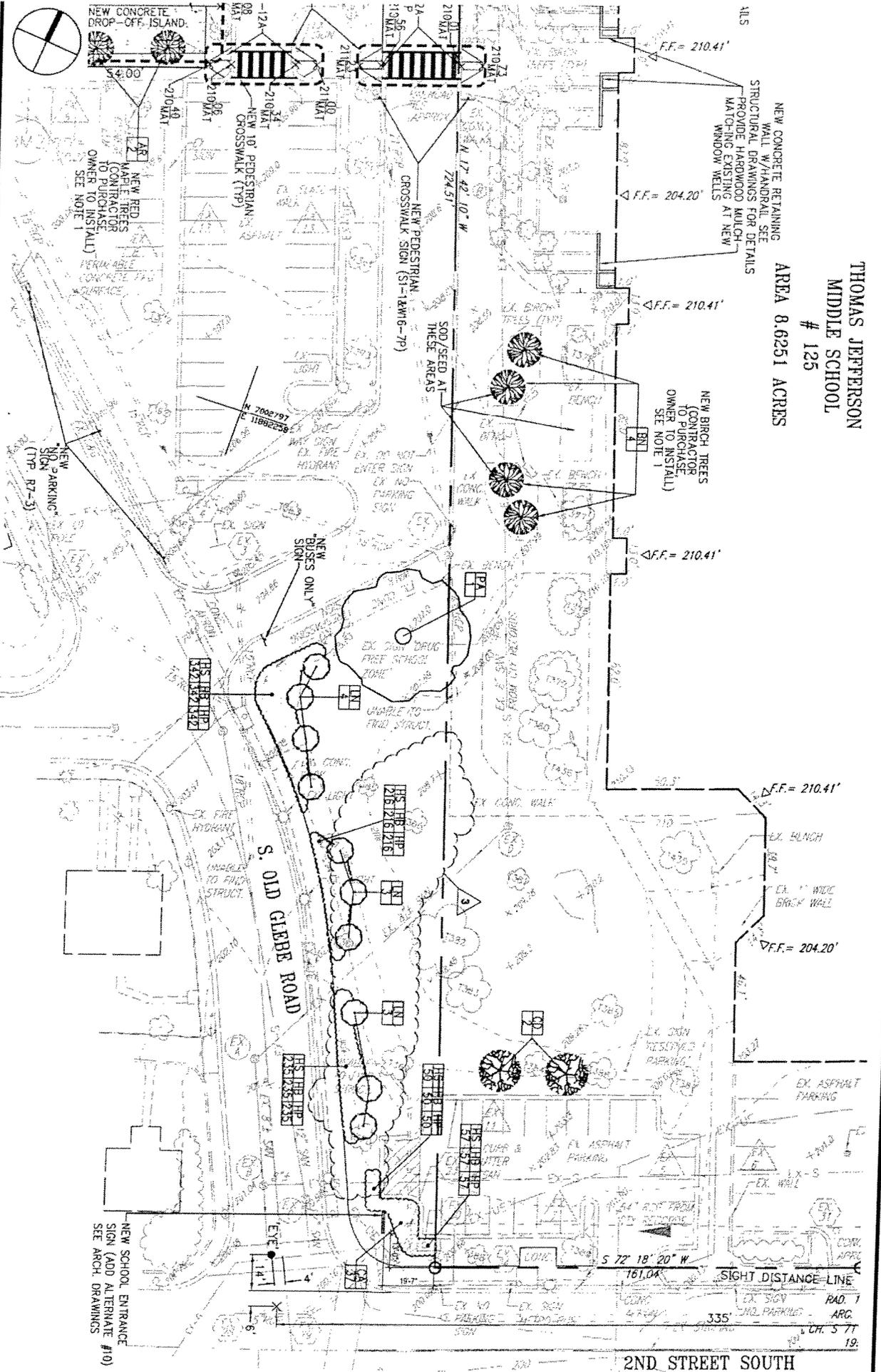


2ND STREET SOUTH

EXISTING SIGN LOCATION
 1" = 20'

THOMAS JEFFERSON
MIDDLE SCHOOL
125

AREA 8.6251 ACRES



Perkins Eastman

4245 NORTH FAIRFAX DRIVE
ARLINGTON, VA 22203
T. 703.842.0600
F. 703.842.0601

PROJECT: THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

DRAWING TITLE:

DATE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

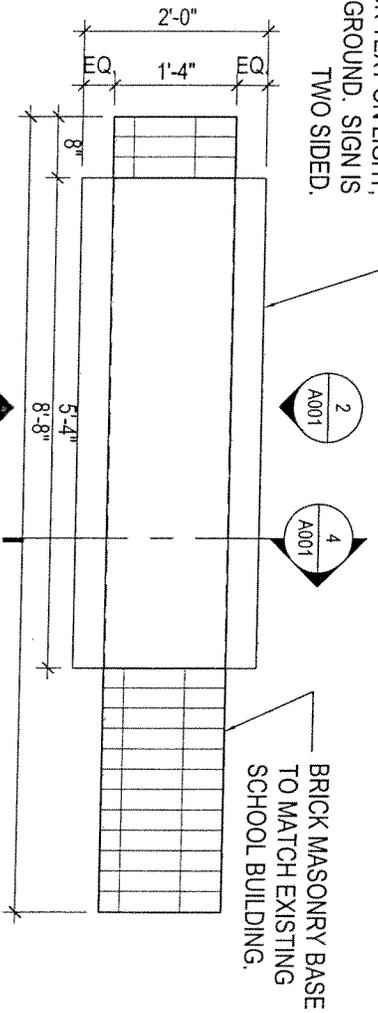
PEAPC NO: 28770.03

SCALE: 1" = 50'-0"

SITE SIGN LOCATION

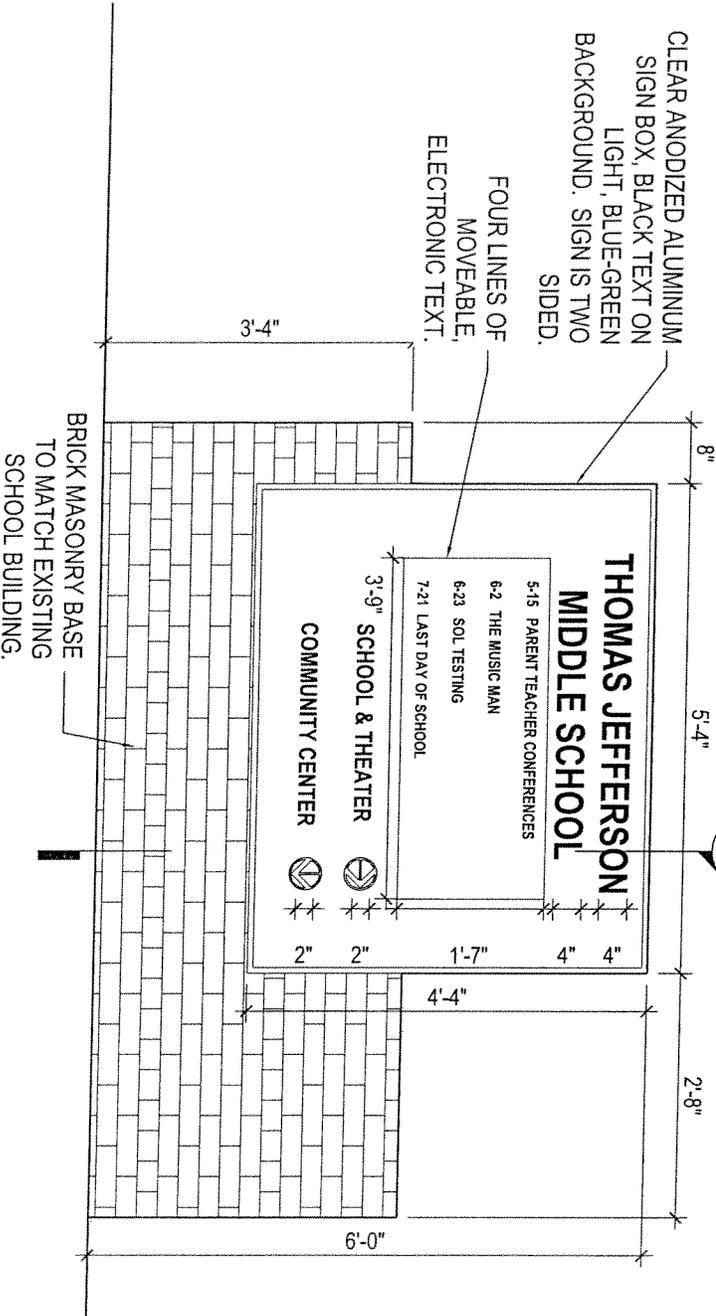
2ND STREET SOUTH

CLEAR ANODIZED ALUMINUM SIGN BOX, BLACK TEXT ON LIGHT, BLUE-GREEN BACKGROUND. SIGN IS TWO SIDED.



CLEAR ANODIZED ALUMINUM SIGN BOX, BLACK TEXT ON LIGHT, BLUE-GREEN BACKGROUND. SIGN IS TWO SIDED.

FOUR LINES OF MOVEABLE ELECTRONIC TEXT.



Perkins Eastman

4245 NORTH FAIRFAX DRIVE
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PROJECT: THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

DRAWING TITLE:

DATE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

PEAPC NO: 28770.03

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

SITE SIGN ELEVATION

From: Stacey Whyte <kandswhyte@gmail.com>
To: Monika Szczepaniec <MSzczepa@arlington.k12.va.us>
Date: 9/15/2010 9:52 AM
Subject: Re: Sign Permit Application for Thomas Jefferson Middle School

September 15, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

I write on behalf of the Arlington Heights Civic Association in support of the sign permit application submitted by the Arlington Public Schools for a "free standing electronic sign on a corner of South Old Glebe Road and South Second Street."

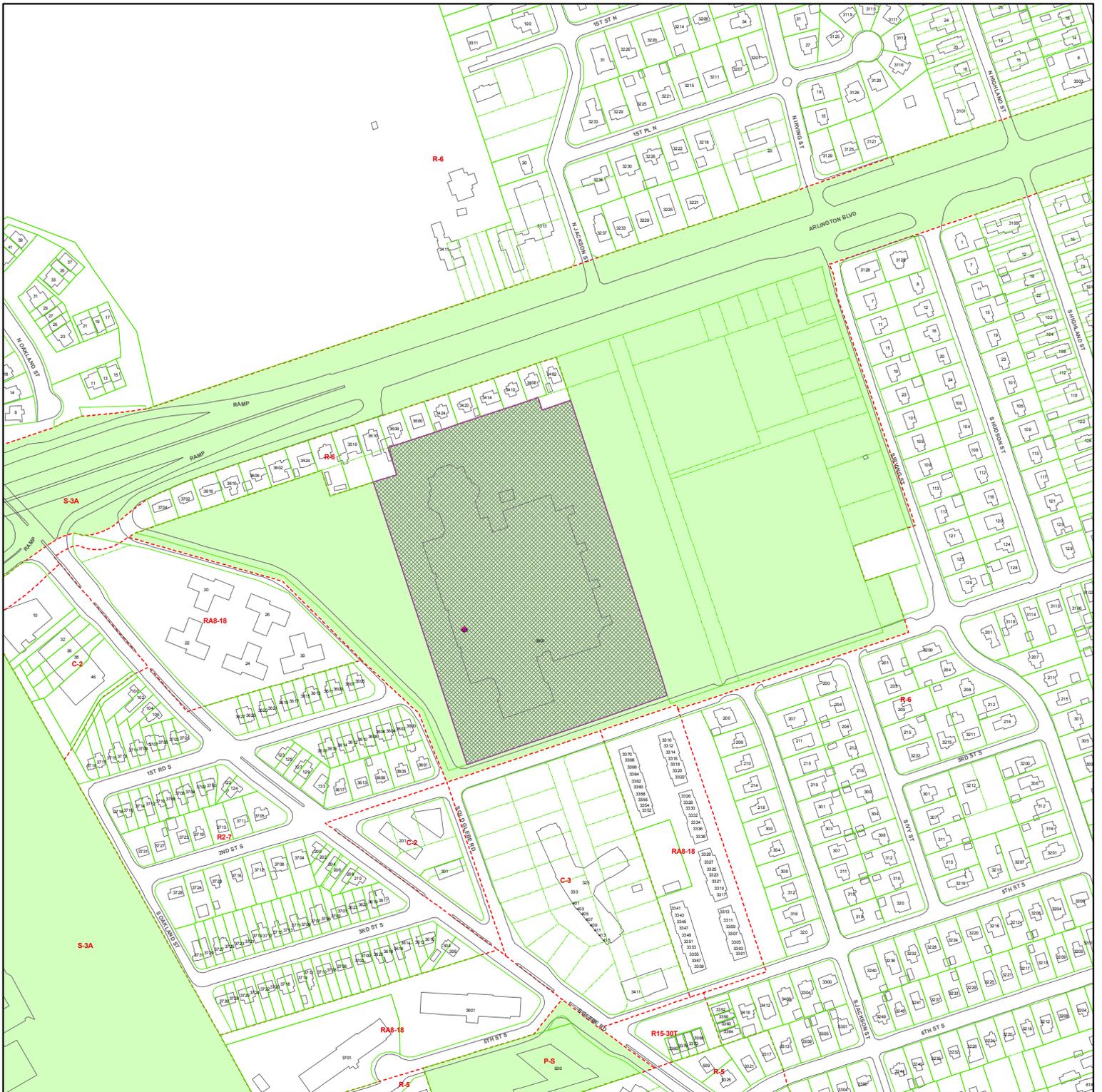
A representative of the Arlington Heights Civic Association has worked carefully with the Jefferson PTA, county and school staff, and project engineers on the desired function and design for the sign.

The sign is an important improvement for the community in several respects. The sign will improve visibility for Jefferson Middle School, which is difficult to see from Second Street South. The sign will inform the community of events at the Middle School, Theater, Community Center, and Gymnasium. The sign will encourage coordination between the public school and county facilities that are located on site. The civic association expects the new sign to improve awareness of the location of and events at the school and community center.

The civic association supports this permit, and requests that the permit be reviewed as soon as possible so the sign can be installed forthwith.

Sincerely yours,

Stacey Whyte
President
Arlington Heights Civic Association
713 South Ivy Street
Arlington, VA 22204



U-3269-10-1

125 South Old Glebe Road

RPC: 24-011-058



 Case Location(s)
Scale: 1:4,000

Note: These maps are for property location assistance only. They may not represent the latest survey and other information.