



Design Review Board
September 10, 2024

STAFF REPORT
(For Courtesy Review)

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Address: 3499 & 3501 Bethany Bend, Milton, GA 30004
District/Land Lot: 2 / 0972
Character Area: Bethany
Existing Zoning: Townhouse Residential (TR)*
Overlay/FBC: State Route 9
Acres: 2.29 acres (3499 Bethany Bend)
2.72 acres (3501 Bethany Bend)
Existing Use: Single-Family*

**Rezoning and Use Permit with Concurrent Variance case in progress*

Request: A courtesy review of building/architecture plan for the proposed Montessori School expansion.

Owner: Sapient Minds, LLC
Address: 1320 Settles Road, Suwanee, GA 30024

Applicant: Biju Eappen / Sapient Minds, LLC
Address: 3505 Bethany Bend, Milton, GA 30004



SITE MAP



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF ANALYSIS

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Background:

The subject site is a two-parcel land of approximately 5 acres in size. This is currently zoned TR (Townhouse Residential) within the State Route 9 Overlay District. The subject site is at the end of Bethany Bend Road, just west of the Forsyth County line. South of the subject site parcel is the current Milton Montessori School which the applicant owns and operates. The applicant has requested a courtesy review of the proposed building and architectural plan for the school expansion. This plan includes developing a private school with 24,000 square feet and associated activity (outdoor) areas.

There is an active Rezoning and Use Permit with a 3-part Concurrent Variance case for 3499 and 3501 Bethany that is currently in the process. The intent is to rezone from TR (Townhouse Residential) to O-I (Office-Institutional) with a "Private School" Use Permit. Here is the summary of the intent:

INTENT
To rezone from TR (Townhouse Residential) with the revocation of a "Senior Living" Use Permit to O-I (Office-Institutional) with a "Private School" Use Permit of 24,000 square feet with a total of 160 students and associated activity (outdoor) areas with three concurrent variances:
1) To delete the 20' side setback along the south property line for 3501 Bethany Bend.
2) To delete the 10' landscape strip along the south property line of 3501 Bethany Bend.
3) To reduce the sidewalk width along Bethany Bend, within the City Right-of-Way from six feet to five feet.

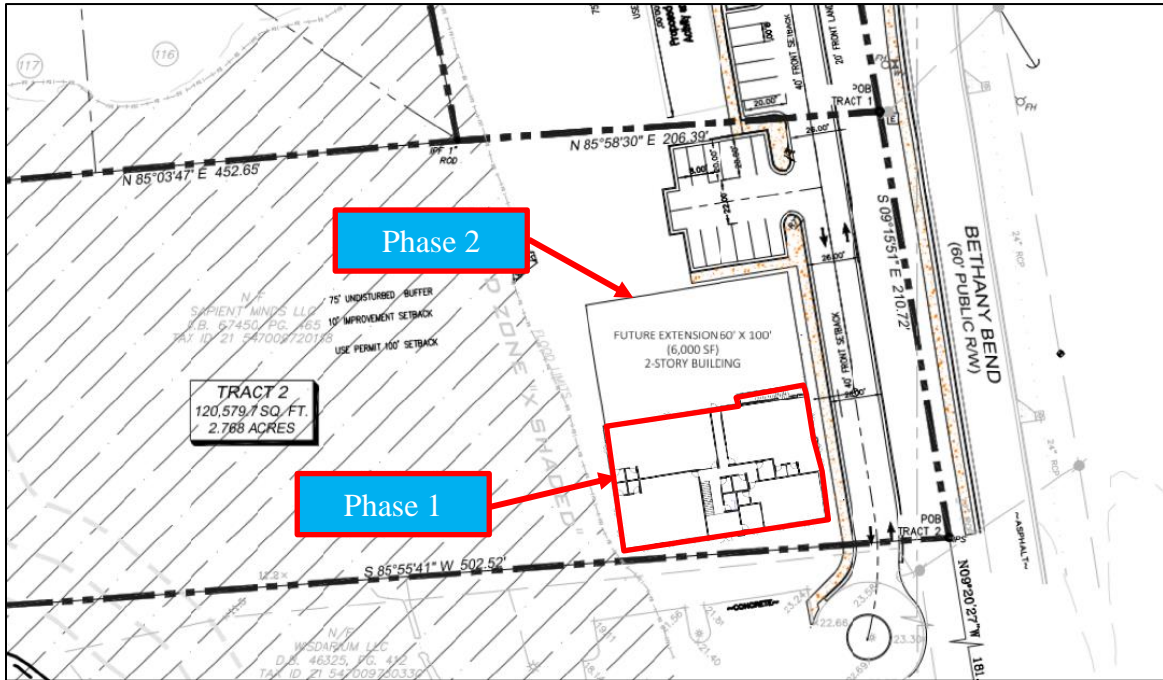
On July 9, 2024, DRB Meeting under Courtesy Review, the Board discussed the proposal and recommended the following:

- Create a site plan which shows both properties including the current Milton Montessori School.
- Recommended that Part 3 of the Concurrent Variance not be approved in favor of the Public Works Department's request for a 10-foot-wide multi-use path. The Board believed this would be better for continuity between parcels.

The Rezoning and Use Permit with Concurrent Variance case will go to the Council on September 4th for review and consideration. Staff will update the presentation for the September 10th DRB Meeting to include the Council's decision.

Analysis of Building and Architectural Plan

The proposed 24,000 square feet will be constructed in two phases. The building with the red border below represents Phase 1. This is a two-story building with a total of 12,000 square feet. Each floor will have a size of 6,000 square feet. Due to budget reasons, Phase 2 will be constructed at a later time.

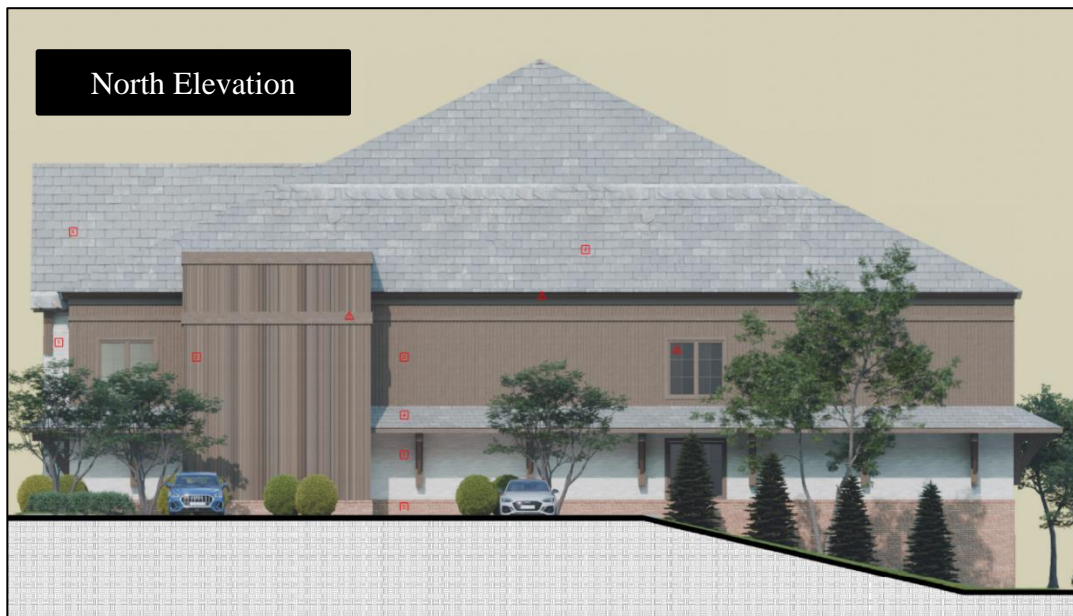


Building Renderings and its Orientation

The image below shows the south and east elevations of the building. The south (front) elevation faces the existing Milton Montessori School while the east (right) elevation faces Bethany Bend Road. The south elevation will serve as the main entrance to the building.



The image below shows the north (back) elevation of the building. This elevation faces the parking spaces and activity area. When phase 2 construction happens, the façade will completely change and will mimic the façade of the south (front) elevation.



The image below shows the west (left) elevation of the building. This elevation faces the undisturbed buffer area. When phase 2 construction happens, the façade will completely change.



Standards:

The applicant standards applied for this review is State Route 9 Overlay District. The below table outlines the standards for Building Materials and Design (UDC Sec. 6.2.8) and the proposed development.

Standards	Proposed Development
Applicability (Sec. 6.2.8 (A))	The building materials and design standards contained in Sec 6.2.8 apply to the proposed development.
Developments must include architectural elements (Sec. 6.2.8 (B))	There is a combination of architectural elements present in the proposed drawings, such as façade offsets, windows, covered entry walkways, brackets, canopy, and beams.
The principal entry area of the building must be articulated and express greater architectural detail than the other portions of the building. (Sec. 6.2.8 (C))	The main entrance to the building consists of a glass double door with side lites and a transom window under a flat roof canopy. Above the canopy is a quadruple windows with transoms. The whole entrance wall is projected to articulate the entry area of the building.
Architectural treatment must continue on all sides. (Sec. 6.2.8 (D))	All sides of the building show architectural elements. However, the back elevation (north elevation) of the building shows fewer architectural elements because this side of the building will be extended during Phase 2 of the construction.
Nonresidential and multifamily building facades must have at least 25% fenestration or as may be approved by the Director. (Sec. 6.2.8 (E))	The drawings show at least 25% fenestration which refers to openings in a building such as windows and doors. These design features are prominent in the south, east, and west elevations of the building. However, the north elevation has only two windows and a door which likely did not meet the 25% fenestration.
Opaque fences are only permitted in side and rear not adjoining any roadways. (Sec. 6.2.8 (F))	No proposed fencing.
Sec. 6.2.8 (G)	Not applicable. This code applies to townhouses and duplex developments.

Sec. 6.2.8 (H)	Not applicable. This code applies to townhouses and duplex developments.
Sec. 6.2.8 (I)	Not applicable. This code applies to townhouses and duplex developments.
Exterior buildings must demonstrate a variety of appearances which are all compatible with one selected architectural theme. (Sec. 6.2.8 (J))	Each façade of the building projects a consistent architectural theme throughout. The theme of the building is to complement the existing school and not to exactly match or replicate it. See Exhibit 1 for photos of the existing school.
Building must not end abruptly at a corner. Corner buildings shall demonstrate focal points which anchor the corner. Corner buildings must have functional extensions around any corner. (Sec. 6.2.8 (K))	Not applicable. The proposed development is not a corner building.
The maximum building height, except along Morris Road, is two stories with a maximum height of 30 feet from average finished grade to bottom of the roof eave. (Sec. 6.2.8 (L))	This is a two-story building with a height of 21 feet from the average finished grade to the bottom of the roof eave as indicated in the drawings. Basement height and roof height are not included in calculating the building height.
Building entrances and front exteriors must be articulated and designed to create additional visual interest by varying architectural details, building materials, and by varying the roof line and building offsets. (Sec. 6.2.8 (M))	The proposed front elevation of the building shows a combination of brick, vertical wood siding, and wooden brackets for accents. The window sizes and placements are proportional. The addition of a flat roof canopy for the entryway and brackets and a vent on the gable creates some visual interest.
Exterior wall materials of nonresidential buildings...must be at least 75% brick or natural stone (measured as percent of wall area, per vertical wall plane). (Sec. 6.2.8 (N))	<p>The south (front) elevation and east elevation (the right side that faces Bethany Bend) show at least 75% brick. The water table, the projected wall at the center of the building and the gables are made of bricks.</p> <p>The west (left side) elevation shows at least 75% brick. The unfinished basement and first level are made of bricks while the second level shows vertical siding.</p> <p>The brick material on the north elevation (back of the building) appears to be less than 75%.</p>

Accent building materials for nonresidential buildings...must not exceed 25% of any combination of architectural concrete, brick, fiber cement siding, natural stone, non-reflective glass, cement plaster and lath system, textured traditional cement stucco, and tile. (Sec. 6.2.8 (O))	Proposed accent building materials are very minimal. Accents include a wood canopy, brackets, wood beams, and a gable vent. Brick is not used here as an accent material but rather a major building material.
Vinyl or aluminum siding, exposed standard concrete masonry unit (CMU) block, corrugated steel, prefabricated metal, exposed plywood, and exposed pressboard are prohibited as wall finished. (Sec. 6.2.8 (P))	Not applicable. None of those materials are incorporated into the building architecture.
No more than three different materials, texture, colors, or combinations thereof may be used on a single building, unless a greater number is approved by the Director after consultation with the City Architect. (Sec. 6.2.8 (Q))	Only two major materials are being proposed—brick and vertical siding. As for the colors, there are three combinations—red brick for water table, off-white brick for the first level façade, and brown for vertical siding.
Materials may be combined only horizontally, with the visually heavier below the lighter. (Sec. 6.2.8 (R))	Brick material is below the wooden vertical siding.
Accessory structure must be consistent with the principal building in material, texture, and color. (Sec. 6.2.8 (S))	The proposed pavilion that will serve as an activity area per the site plan is consistent with the material, texture, and color of the principal building.
Street-facing story windows and door glass must be clear or tinted. Tinted glass must have a transmittance factor of 50% or more and must have a visible light reflectance factor of 10 or less. (Sec. 6.2.8 (T))	All windows are tinted glass with less than 50% transmittance and have a visible reflectance factor of 10 or less according to the project architect.
Exterior finishes for accessory structures must be consistent with the principal structure. (Sec. 6.2.8 (U))	The exterior finishes for the proposed pavilion are consistent with the principal structure.
Permitted colors for exterior walls, building components, accents, and decorative elements as specified by the table. (Sec. 6.2.8 (V))	All proposed color matches the permitted colors outlined in the Pantone Matching System table.

Permitted sloped roof materials are asphalt shingles, composition shingles, wood shingles, tin, standing seam metal, and wood shake. Slope roofs are encouraged wherever feasible. (Sec. 6.2.8 (W))	The proposed roof material is made of asphalt shingles.
Burglar bars, steel gates, metal awnings, and steel roll-down curtains are prohibited if visible from a public street. (Sec. 6.2.8 (Y))	None of these materials are used.
Exposed neon lighting or LED equivalent outlining and detailing building features is prohibited. (Sec. 6.2.8 (Z))	No exterior lighting is proposed per the project architect.

Staff Recommendations:

Staff reviewed the proposed building/architectural plan submitted to the Community Development on August 29, 2024, and determined that the proposed plan adequately meets all the standards outlined in the *State Route 9 Overlay District – Unified Development Code Sec. 6.2.8 (A) to (Z): Building Materials and Design*. The above table demonstrates how the proposed development satisfies each standard.

Staff recommends that the applicant provide the following information for the final review of the building and architectural plan:

1. Add an exterior door to the enclosed staircase area that faces Bethany Bend.
2. Confirm the roof pitch.
3. Improve landscaping in the north elevation (back of the building). The plan shows plants above concrete.
4. Provide a separate drawing for the pavilion and show building details.

In addition, staff requests that the applicant submit a Signage Plan during the permit application. Signs are permitted separately and are not included in the building permit and LDP permit processes.

Note: This review is only for the proposed building and architectural plan. The site and landscape plan (LDP) will be reviewed separately once the LDP plan is ready for DRB's review. This includes setbacks, parking, landscaping, lighting, screening/fencing, and other provisions.