



ARCHITECTURE  
ENGINEERING  
SPACE PLANNING  
INTERIOR DESIGN  
IMPLEMENTATION SERVICES

PRINCIPALS  
MARVIN JARMEL, IIDA  
MATTHEW B. JARMEL, AIA, MBA  
IRWIN H. KIZEL, AIA, PP  
RICHARD A. JARMEL, PE

NJ STATE BOARD OF  
ARCHITECTS CERTIFICATE OF  
AUTHORIZATION NUMBER 161

NJ STATE BOARD OF  
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS  
AND LAND SURVEYORS  
CERTIFICATE OF  
AUTHORIZATION NUMBER  
GA278177

42 Okner Parkway  
Livingston, NJ 07039

TEL: (973) 994-9669  
FAX: (973) 994-4069

www.jarmelkizel.com

May 17, 2019

**South Orange Village  
Planning Board**

76 South Orange Avenue  
South Orange, NJ 07079

RECEIVED MAY 21 2019

**RE: Technical Review Response Letter  
Application No. 268  
109 & 115 South Orange Avenue  
Ridgewood Commons  
Jarmel Kizel Project Number: TLENJ-S-17-264**

Dear Chairman and members of the Planning Board:

The following details our responses to the technical review comments provided by Bowman Consulting Group in correspondence dated May 4, 2019 and Topology report dated May 1, 2019. For ease of review, each comment is repeated in *italics* and our responses are in **bold**.

**Bowman Letter dated May 4, 2019**

**Site Plans**

1. *The survey provided is called out as a "Topographic Survey". It is assumed that this survey will also be the source of the boundary information. If this assumption is correct, the survey should be updated per statutory requirements and titled accordingly, including metes and bounds of the internal lot lines;*  
**Response: The survey has been updated and retitled. Three (3) signed and sealed copies are attached hereto.**
2. *The title policy indicates that there is a water main easement and a grant to PSE&G on Parcel 1 (Lot 17). The location of these easements should be identified and any impact on the proposed development plan identified;*  
**Response: The title documents have been reviewed. The easement and grant noted as being on Lot 17 are in fact on Lot 1 which is the corner property at Ridgewood Road (also owned by this applicant). The title report lists these easements being part of what is referred to as "Parcel 1". Parcel 1 metes and bounds description is the boundary for Lot 1, not Lot 17.**
3. *Further the title policy indicates that there is a deed notice related to Parcel 2 (Lot 16). The terms and conditions of this deed notice and any impact on the proposed development should be addressed. Copies of these various documents are to be submitted to the Planning Board;*  
**Response: Applicant attorney will provide any documents related to this comment under separate cover and/or in testimony.**

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4. *The Existing Conditions Plan should be updated to show the top of bank of the watercourse to the east and associated riparian boundary. Should the riparian boundary not extend onto the site, the plan should be updated to indicate same;*  
**Response: Note 2 has been added to the Existing Condition Plan stating the approximate distance from the property line of our site to the top of bank of the east Branch of the Rahway River. The distance is greater than 100 linear feet.**
5. *The Demolition Plan should be updated to show where the connecting pipe to the drainage inlet to be removed is located as well as the discharge locations for the roof;*  
**Response: Note 20 has been added to the Demolition plan stating the information was unable to be obtained during the design and will be confirmed during construction.**
6. *The Demolition Plan indicates several areas where existing pavers will be removed. Testimony should be provided with regard to the reuse of the pavers and/or the ability to match the paver color. We note that the pavers may have faded since installation and our office has concerns with regard to matching the color;*  
**Response: Testimony will be provided. There are currently patches of asphalt fronting the property and tree roots uplifting the pavers. It is the intent to match as best as feasible but the overall finished product will improve the current conditions.**
7. *The proposed realignment of the crosswalk will be subject to approval from Essex County;*  
**Response: We met with the County on May 17, 2019. The crosswalk will be re-aligned as opposed to relocated. The Site Plan has been amended to show the re-alignment. We need to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County that the re-alignment can occur without encroaching into the existing driveway to the west.**
8. *The Site Layout & Utility Plan proposes to "Face Form" Belgian Block Curbing. The applicant's engineer should clarify how this can be accomplished as the footing for Belgian Block Curb extends beyond the face of the cobbles;*  
**Response: The Site Plan has been amended to eliminate the call out for face formed curb. Curb will require sawcut of existing pavement to construct.**
9. *The Site Layout and Utility Plan shows the head in parking to the first floor area will have bollards at the head of the stall as well as wheel stops. Testimony should be provided as to why full height curb cannot be installed and the wheel stops and bollards removed;*  
**Response: Due to the nature of the design and the need for a level elevation around the building due to the number of required exit doors, this was the preferred design. Bollards are a safety measure requested by The Learning Experience.**

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10. The plans propose to install the handicap parking stall placard on a bollard at the head of the parking stall. The applicant may wish to consider relocating the sign and placing same on the face of the building;  
**Response: The Learning Experience prefers not to have signage of this nature mounted to the building. The proposed is the preferred design.**
11. The two (2) southerly parking stalls on the east side of the entry drive will conflict with incoming traffic. Additionally, these spaces will have no visibility as there is a building wall on the south side of the stalls which will impact sight distance. Our office recommends at a minimum removing one of the stalls and providing an opening in the wall which will provide additional visibility for traffic entering the site while the parking stall is accessed;  
**Response: The solid building wall adjacent to these spaces has been replaced with a glass storefront which will provide visibility to/from these spaces.**
12. The plans propose a dead end parking alignment with an eight (8') foot wide striped area between the building wall and a building column at the end of the striped area. From a circulation standpoint, this is an undesirable condition. Vehicles will have to execute turning movements against a building wall with no buffer;  
**Response: The proposed striped island is 9' in width. The intent for a vehicle parked in the northeastern most space to back straight out into the striped 9' wide area to execute the turn to exit the parking lot.**
13. The plans propose four (4) parallel parking stalls on the west side of the entry drive. Parallel stalls are very inefficient for turn over parking and will impact a vehicle's ability to enter the site. Furthermore, for these parking stalls to be accessed, vehicles will need to drive to the end of the dead end row and utilize the striped area noted above. The applicant should consider an alternative to this arrangement;  
**Response: It is understood that these spaces are not ideal but they will be signed for employee parking only to minimize turnover in the spaces. The spaces have been designed with a length of 25 feet which is above industry standards in order to facilitate maneuvering into and out of the space.**
14. Dimensions should be provided for the parking stall in the northeast corner of the parking lot. Same scales approximately eight (8') feet wide. In addition, this parking stall provides no area to the east to facilitate a k turn when exiting the parking stall;  
**Response: The Site Plan has been amended to include the requested dimension. See response above to comment 12 regarding access to and from the space.**

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15. A curb is proposed along the easterly property line which is adjacent to the existing parking area on Lot 15. The grades on the adjacent parking lot should be determined to clearly illustrate grading in this area;

**Response: The survey has been updated to include additional spot grades along the eastern property line and this information is included on the amended Grading and Drainage Plan.**

16. Testimony should be provided as to how trash collection will occur. We note that the entry driveway clearance to the parking area under the building is limited to approximately nine (9') per the architectural elevations (which should be dimensioned). Additionally, if a trash collection vehicle is able to access the enclosure under the building, it will need to back out onto South Orange Avenue;

**Response: Testimony will be provided regarding the handling of trash.**

17. Testimony should be provided as to the need to sprinkler the trash enclosure as it is beneath the second floor. The Fire Official should provide commentary with regards to this design;

**Response: Testimony will be provided with regard to the proposed sprinkler system.**

18. The location of the nearest fire hydrant should be identified and the need for an additional hydrant proximate to this building be discussed. The Fire Official should provide commentary with regards to this issue;

**Response: The Site Plan has been amended to include the location of the nearest hydrant which is directly across the street from the driveway to the subject property.**

19. Testimony should be provided as to how emergency services will access the site;

**Response: The proposed height of the opening at the driveway will allow an ambulance will be able to access the parking area. Fire would use the adjacent municipal lot or South Orange Avenue.**

20. The proposed landscaping should be further reviewed. The current design selects one type of evergreen tree and two types of shrubs. Additional consideration should be taken to provide a more aesthetic design in lieu of the monoculture element proposed;

**Response: The proposed landscaping has been amended on the Site Plan. We have incorporated additional plantings in both number and species to address this comment.**

21. It is difficult to determine which direction grade is sloping at the rear of the structure. A section should be provided in this area

**Response: The survey has been updated to include additional spot grades along the rear of the property and this information is included on the amended Grading and Drainage Plan. . A section through this area has been provided on the amended Grading and Drainage Plan.**

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22. *Inlet #1 should be relocated from the corner of the parking lot as it is not possible to construct a curb inlet in this manner. Further, the current design indicates that this inlet encroaches onto Lot 15. Additional spot grades should be provided;*  
**Response: The Grading Plan has been amended with Inlet #1 shifted to eliminate encroachment into the neighboring lot.**
23. *Roof leader discharge locations should be provided;*  
**Response: We request the detail of the roof drainage be made a condition of the final approval. The design of this system will occur with the MEP effort on construction plans. This effort will commence subsequent to obtaining a conditional approval from the Planning Board.**
24. *A drainage narrative should be provided. While the site is reducing runoff, it appears that a majority of the site will have the site stormwater directed toward South Orange Avenue where in the existing condition a significant portion of the site may not have flowed in this direction;*  
**Response: Because of the unknown direction of the on-site trench drain and internal roof drain system, it is not feasible at this time to provide a narrative with any definitive response to the comment posed. Based on the site grades behind the existing building along the Board of Education property being significantly above our site, it seems reasonable that runoff from the existing site goes to the South Orange Avenue system. We respectfully request further discussion with regard to this comment and how to satisfactorily address.**
25. *The Grading and Drainage Plan shows what appears to be curb crossing the sidewalk at the site driveway. Same should be clarified;*  
**Response: The Grading and Drainage Plan has been amended to clarify the drawing.**
26. *Testimony should be provided with regard to site lighting and its compliance to the code;*  
**Response: The Site Lighting indicated on the Lighting Plan is for the parking area and indicates the light levels from the proposed lighting mounted in the parking level ceiling. The only additional lighting proposed will be the building code required security fixtures at each door and decorative sconce fixtures on the front building façade. These fixtures have not been modelled.**
27. *The plans should be updated to show where the various pavement treatments such as road and sidewalk pavers are proposed. We note that the road paver should be used in the site driveway;*  
**Response: The Site Plan has been revised to help clarify the various surface treatments and to indicate the use of the road pavers at the driveway.**

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28. As the project will have a zero front yard and a driveway discharging across a public sidewalk, the applicant should consider additional safety measures at the driveway such as change in pavement material, signage, signals, etc.;
- Response: The plans have been amended to propose a "Pedestrian Alert Safety Sign" (PASS System). The Site plan calls out the system and detail/specifications have been added to newly created Detail Sheet C-904.**
29. A 6 foot high aluminum ornamental fence has been added around the perimeter of the site connecting with the previously proposed 4 foot high fence on the east side of the parcel. The need for a 6 foot fence as compared to a 4 foot fence should be discussed in testimony, also the ability to install this along the northern portion of the eastern boundary as the proposed curb is very close to the property line.
- Response: The plans have been amended to reduce the 6-foot proposed ornamental fence to a 4-foot fence height. The plans indicate sufficient space to install the fence within the boundary of the subject development.**
30. The site plans also note that the utility room (floor plans indicate this as "Mech.") has a different floor elevation. This should be affirmed as access to this space is now internal instead of from the sidewalk.
- Response: The plans have been amended to eliminate the differing elevations. The architectural review board requested the door on South Orange be eliminated; thus, we were able to eliminate the differing floor elevations. The prior civil plans did not have this revision.**
31. The building mounted sign details have been eliminated from the site plans. Sign details are to be provided.
- Response: The Detail Sheets have been revised to include the sign details as requested.**

**Architectural Plans**

32. There are minor changes within the Licensing Calculations as compared to the prior review memorandum, however, none of these changes the number of children or teachers.
- Response: Statement of fact. No further response required.**
33. The area of the play area has been reduced from 5,038 square feet to 4,017 square feet. It appears this is a result of shifting the fence in a southerly direction away from the parapet wall. Testimony should be provided as to the sufficiency of this outdoor play area for the number of children
- Response: Testimony will be provided with regard to the sizing of the play area and its appropriateness.**

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34. *There are minor changes to the floor plans, including a reconfiguration of the Pre- K/K space, various door locations, the addition of an electrical room and a change to Stair A. It does not appear that the floor area has changed however testimony should be provided affirming this.*  
**Response: Testimony will be provided relative to the floor area proposed.**
35. *The facade elevations have been modified, with the building mounted sign moved lower on the building to a more pedestrian scale. It appears storefront windows extend across the mechanical space, testimony should be provided as to how these windows will be treated so as not to view this space.*  
**Response: Testimony will be provided with regard to the architecture and façade appearance.**
36. *The parking layout now shown on Sheet SA-1.1 does not match to the site plan (Sheet C-300). These discrepancies should be reconciled.*  
**Response: The Architectural Schematic Plan has been amended to match the civil site plan.**

**Traffic Impact Study**

37. *The traffic counts were conducted on an appropriate date and at appropriate times of the day for the proposed use. Also, the study area including Church Street and the site driveway is appropriate.*  
**Response: Statement of fact. No further response required.**
38. *The applicant's traffic engineer should provide testimony as to the appropriateness of relocating the crosswalk from the easterly approach of South Orange Avenue to the westerly side. Curb bump outs are provided at the current location to minimize the distance that pedestrians are in the roadway. Moving this crosswalk to the westerly approach will create a much longer crossing distance as South Orange Avenue widens out. Testimony should also be provided as to the need to reconstruct the median island to accommodate pedestrian traffic as it appears the median is within the desired crosswalk alignment.*  
**Response: We met with the County on May 17, 2019. The crosswalk will be re-aligned as opposed to relocated. The Site Plan has been amended to show the re-alignment. We need to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County that the re-alignment can occur without encroaching into the existing driveway to the west.**
39. *The background growth rate used is consistent with the NJDOT Annual Growth Rate Table. While there are other approved developments proximate to this site, the level of traffic from these projects is reasonably contained within the annualized growth rates.*  
**Response: Statement of fact. No further response required.**

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40. We believe the site generated traffic volumes are overstated by approximately 50 percent as the square footage used includes the outdoor play area. Therefore, the capacity analysis results are conservative, and continue to provide acceptable levels of service.  
**Response: Statement of fact. No further response required.**
41. Testimony should be provided as to the appropriateness of a driveway serving a more intense traffic use than what exists being located within the full width of a left turn lane. Observations as to the typical and maximum queue in the westbound left turn lane should be provided in testimony; and the ability of site traffic to make lefts into and out of the site driveway.  
**Response: Testimony will be provided as requested.**
42. The report indicates that 21 spaces are required whereas the site plans indicate 14 spaces are required. The basis for this discrepancy is the building area used to calculate the demand, where this report again included the outdoor play area. Testimony should be provided as to the appropriate calculation procedure and required parking.  
**Response: Testimony will be provided as requested.**
43. Testimony should be provided on the utility of and how the parallel parking spaces will be accessed/used. Turning templates may be necessary to illustrate the required maneuvers.  
**Response: Testimony will be provided as requested.**

**Topology Letter dated May 1, 2019**

**A. Planning Comments**

- A.1 The Applicant shall provide testimony regarding the use and operation of the proposed child care facility, as well as compliance with state licensing. Particular attention should be given to:
- i. Hours of operation.
  - ii. Capacity of students on-site.
  - iii. Number of required staffing.
  - iv. Building configuration and any child-care facility requirements.
  - v. Site design relative to parking configuration, traffic circulation, and drop-off/pickup procedure.
- Response: Testimony will be provided as to the nature of the operations.**
- A.2 The Applicant proposes improvements that may encroach/impact adjacent lots and existing easements. Applicant shall provide testimony to all easements on the property and revise site plan indicating same.  
**Response: Testimony will be provided as to the existence of any easements.**
- A.3 The applicant should discuss all proposed utilities and show all on the site plan and roof plan, with screening.

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**Response: Testimony will be provided as to the HVAC equipment location and method of screening.**

- A.4 Testimony should be provided regarding the trash enclosure, relative to setbacks, screening, and visibility from the right-of-way. We recommend that the gates be constructed of a visually solid, board-on-board vinyl fence to reduce maintenance compared to the proposed wood, and to better visually screen the contents.

**Response: Testimony will be provided regarding the trash enclosure. The gate material has been revised as requested to a solid vinyl material.**

- A.5 We defer to the Board Engineer regarding drainage, soil erosion and sediment control plan.

**Response: General statement. No further response required.**

**B. Architecture**

- B.1 The Applicant shall provide testimony to all building façade materials, colors, and overall details of design, relative to the site and surrounding character. Specifically, Applicant shall discuss changes incorporated to the project as a result of their Design Review Committee meeting.

**Response: Testimony will be provided with regard to the architecture.**

- B.2 The entire ground level building façade, approximately 110' wide, is flat, without much articulation. We recommend horizontal and/or vertical building setbacks, even as minimal as a foot or two, at prominent locations, such as a front door, to give the building some depth and character. Where further articulations or building setbacks are not possible, the Applicant could consider art walls or landscape elements in a narrow planting bed or on a vertical garden to break up the façade.

**Response: Testimony will be provided with regard to the architecture.**

- B.3 A door to a mechanical room is located on the front façade. We recommend this be relocated.

**Response: This door has been eliminated.**

- B.4 The Applicant shall revise the architecture plans to show rooftop plan depicting specifications to any mounted mechanical equipment and utilities. Applicant shall specify how rooftop equipment will be screened via parapets or other mechanisms.

**Response: Testimony will be provided as to the HVAC equipment location and method of screening. It is requested that any additional detail requested be a condition of final approval should the Board vote in favor of this application.**

**C. Parking & Circulation Comments**

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- C.1 The Applicant should provide testimony regarding the overall parking and circulation plan. All of the variances and waivers associated with this application relate to the parking location and screening, and lack of a loading space. The design, site traffic, and circulation of the dead-end drive should be discussed.

**Response: Testimony will be provided.**

- C.2 We offer concern regarding access to the parallel spaces. The engineer should demonstrate this movement, especially during high-traffic times. If the Board approves this application and these spaces, we recommend that they be designated as "employee only" to reduce turnover and access issues.

**Response: Testimony will be provided. The plans have been amended to designate these spaces as employee only spaces to minimize the amount of turnover.**

- C.3 We offer concern regarding the back-out of the space at the furthest northeast corner, which is adjacent to the property line, where 5' backout area is typical.

**Response: The proposed striped island opposite the space is 9' in width. The intent for a vehicle parked in the northeastern most space to back straight out into the striped 9' wide area, in lieu of the typical 5' back out area, to execute the turn to exit the parking lot.**

- C.4 The Applicant shall provide testimony to timing and mechanism in coordination to loading access and deliveries. In particular, the Applicant shall provide testimony to loading/bus/waste management truck circulation, specifically focusing on turnaround radii and proposed "back up area" on site plan.

**Response: Testimony will be provided. The daycare operation does not require the need for a loading space. Small van type deliveries are utilized aside from the typical mail deliveries.**

- C.5 The Applicant shall provide testimony regarding waste management and removal, the frequency of waste removal, and the method of waste removal (i.e. truck type).

**Response: Testimony will be provided.**

- C.6 The engineer's site plan portrays 23 regular parking spots and 1 ADA-van accessible parking spot (24 parking spots total), while the architect site plan portrays 25 regular parking spots. We believe this was an error on the architect plan due to not properly labeling striping and ADA parking. Applicant shall confirm and correct the following inconsistencies between the engineer and architect site plan:

- i. ADA van accessible space with proper striping labeled.
- ii. Striping area east of the proposed trash enclosure.

**Response: The architectural Schematic Design plan has been amended to correctly reflect the parking shown on the civil site plan drawings.**

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- C.7 *The Applicant proposes off-site improvements along South Orange Avenue West, which includes removing the existing brick paver crosswalk immediately in front of Lot 17 and relocating the crosswalk closer to the Church Street intersection. Applicant shall provide testimony to the construction sequence and pedestrian/vehicular safety during time of construction. Applicant should consult same with the County Engineer.*

**Response: The logistics of construction and how to direct pedestrians during construction will be worked out with the township and county prior to construction. We request this comment be made a condition of final approval.**

**D. Lighting & Landscaping**

- D.1 *The Applicant shall testify to the level of illumination generated by all site and building lighting, particularly focusing on compliance with Section 185-116 of the Village Ordinance.*

**Response: Testimony will be provided. The Site Lighting indicated on the Lighting Plan is for the parking area and indicates the light levels from the proposed lighting mounted in the parking level ceiling. The only additional lighting proposed will be the building code required security fixtures at each door and decorative sconce fixtures on the front building façade. These fixtures have not been modelled.**

- D.2 *The lighting plan does not show any building mounted fixtures on the front or side facades. Details should be provided, including fixture information and footcandle levels.*

**Response: See response to D.1 above. Security lighting required by building code is typically not modelled as they are typically 10W bulbs. If it is the Board's desire to have these fixtures included with a light plan it is requested this be provided as a condition of final approval.**

- D.3 *We recommend a color temperature at or less than 4000°K, and that all lights be turned off within 1 hour of business closing to reduce off-site impacts. We recommend that any lights that are required for security purposes overnight use a motion-sensor.*

**Response: The plans can specify 4000K as a condition of approval. Testimony will be provided with regard to the lighting. Since this is a covered parking area discussion should be held with regard to having this area go dark after hours. The applicant will comply with the Board's ultimate decision.**

- D.4 *The Applicant shall testify to the landscape screening along the perimeter of the property and maintenance. Additionally, Applicant should testify to the consideration of planting shade tree(s).*

**Response: Testimony will be provided as to the landscaping proposed. The site plan has been amended to include a larger number and variety of plantings as suggested by both the engineering review and the planning review.**

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D.5 The plan has expansive areas of mulch. These should be filled in with additional shrubs and a low maintenance groundcover.

**Response: Testimony will be provided as to the landscaping proposed. The site plan has been amended to include groundcover and planting in lieu of many of the mulch areas previously proposed.**

D.6 The spacing of the boxwood should be reduced to 2.5' on center to create a hedge screen.

**Response: The landscaping has been revised to comply with the requested spacing of the hedgerow plantings.**

D.7 Minimum planting height of the evergreens along the rear edge should be 5 to 6'; 4' is proposed.

**Response: The landscaping has been revised to comply with the requested height of evergreens at planting.**

D.8 Particular attention should be given to the landscaping at the side frontage. Additional plants and varieties should be considered.

**Response: The landscaping has been revised to include additional plantings along the side frontage.**

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Very truly yours,

**Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers, Inc.**



Gerard P. Gesario, PE  
Director of Civil Engineering