

2015 Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Leslie Shankman School
Corporation, Orthogenic and
Hyde Park Day Schools

Category: New Construction

Chicago, IL

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Two front doors

The Leslie Shankman School Corporation (LSSC) and its parent organization, the University of Chicago Foundation for Emotionally Disturbed Children, are committed to providing educational programs for Chicago-area children with special learning and emotional needs.

LSSC has sponsored two schools on the University of Chicago campus: the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School (O-School), founded in 1915, for bright students with emotional challenges, and the Hyde Park Day School (HPDS), founded in 2000, for bright students with moderate to severe learning disabilities. These schools have guided many young people to productive and satisfying lives.



Two front doors

In 2014, LSSC realized a long-considered vision to relocate both schools to a combined, LSSC-owned facility.

The new three-story, 75,000 sf building, occupying a 3.2-acre site a few blocks southwest, houses both schools and provides living spaces for 32 O-School residential students and 10 O-School transitional students.

The two schools share a gymnasium, an exercise room, multipurpose rooms, and an art studio. The building incorporates an array of sustainable features, including a green roof, a rain garden, plentiful daylighting, and low-emitting and recycled-content materials.



Community Environment:

The Orthogenic School and Hyde Park Day School meet the needs of the greater Chicago community with a best-in-class facility for behaviorally and emotionally challenged students. Every design component supports the learning and development of this specialized population — from the flexible, multipurpose work and play spaces.

Its location in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood helps both schools maintain their important connection with the surrounding community, where resources for special education tend to be scarce.

Site Considerations

Occupying a C-shaped site, the facility is positioned close to the sidewalk to achieve the Chicago planning department's goal of creating an urban edge along 63rd Street. The L-shaped building is anchored on both ends by the two schools, with shared spaces between.



Learning Environment

Both schools celebrate students' strengths and place a high value on individual uniqueness. Congruent with this philosophy, all spaces in both schools, including learning spaces, residences, dining, and even circulation, are unique in configuration, layout, materials, colors, and furniture. Twenty-eight paint colors were used in the O-School. This variety fills the building with delicious moments of visual discovery, supplies a diversity of environments to suit all moods and temperaments, and provides students with valuable environmental cues to facilitate learning and behavioral development.

Spaces in both schools are positive and upbeat. Colors, patterns, materials, and furniture are carefully selected to focus attention, modulate levels of stimulation and relaxation, and facilitate social bonding and self-esteem. Natural light is maximized. Teachers and students were intimately involved in the design of both schools, making decisions about such features as corners, structure, and color.



Learning Environment

HPDS interiors help students with learning disabilities and disorders focus on schoolwork and learn skills to transition back to their home schools. Spaces are designed around “teachable groups” of five students with one teacher. Since many HPDS students have deficits in auditory or visual processing, all spaces are designed to maximize “signal to noise.” Distinctive colors and other visual cues are provided throughout the building to help students navigate.

O-School interiors foster feelings of belonging, self-esteem, and safety, “calming the waves” and creating an emotionally secure, non-triggering space in which learning and social and emotional growth can occur. Because safety is a central concern in the O-School, interiors were designed with three different security levels according to anticipated occupancy and supervision.



Physical Environment

Students at the Sonia Shankman O-School are sometimes destructive to themselves and others. Keeping these children safe, physically and emotionally, was of paramount importance in the design of the new O-School.

The O-School's residential space provides housing for up to 7 students per room. The design is flexible so residents can arrange their own space and display personal artifacts. Bright colors and soft lighting help make the space feel like home.



Physical Environment

The school was planned in three primary zones representing different levels of security, with appropriate materials and detailing. School staff were intimately involved in the planning.

- The highest level of security was applied in areas where students could be alone, such as dorms and toilet rooms.
- A moderate level of security was applied in areas where students are supervised, such as classrooms, dining, therapy spaces, and hallways.
- A lower level of security was applied in private, non-student areas such as administrators' and teachers' offices and mechanical rooms. Staff offices are located at entry points and hallway turns throughout the plan to facilitate direct supervision of all spaces.



Planning

Spaces provide specialized support for students' special learning needs.

- Help staying on task and avoiding distractions.** In HPDS classrooms, students may use divider screens to block out visual distractions and enhance concentration for test taking or daily work. O-School classrooms provide individual study stations for students who are overstimulated and need to “dial down” to focus on work. Classrooms receive daylight through clerestories to reduce the distractions that outdoor views provide.

- Ability to “talk things out” and work intensively with a teacher one-on-one.** Acoustics are rigorously controlled in the classrooms of both schools, so that extraneous noise is minimized but surfaces are sufficiently live to ensure clear perception of speech.

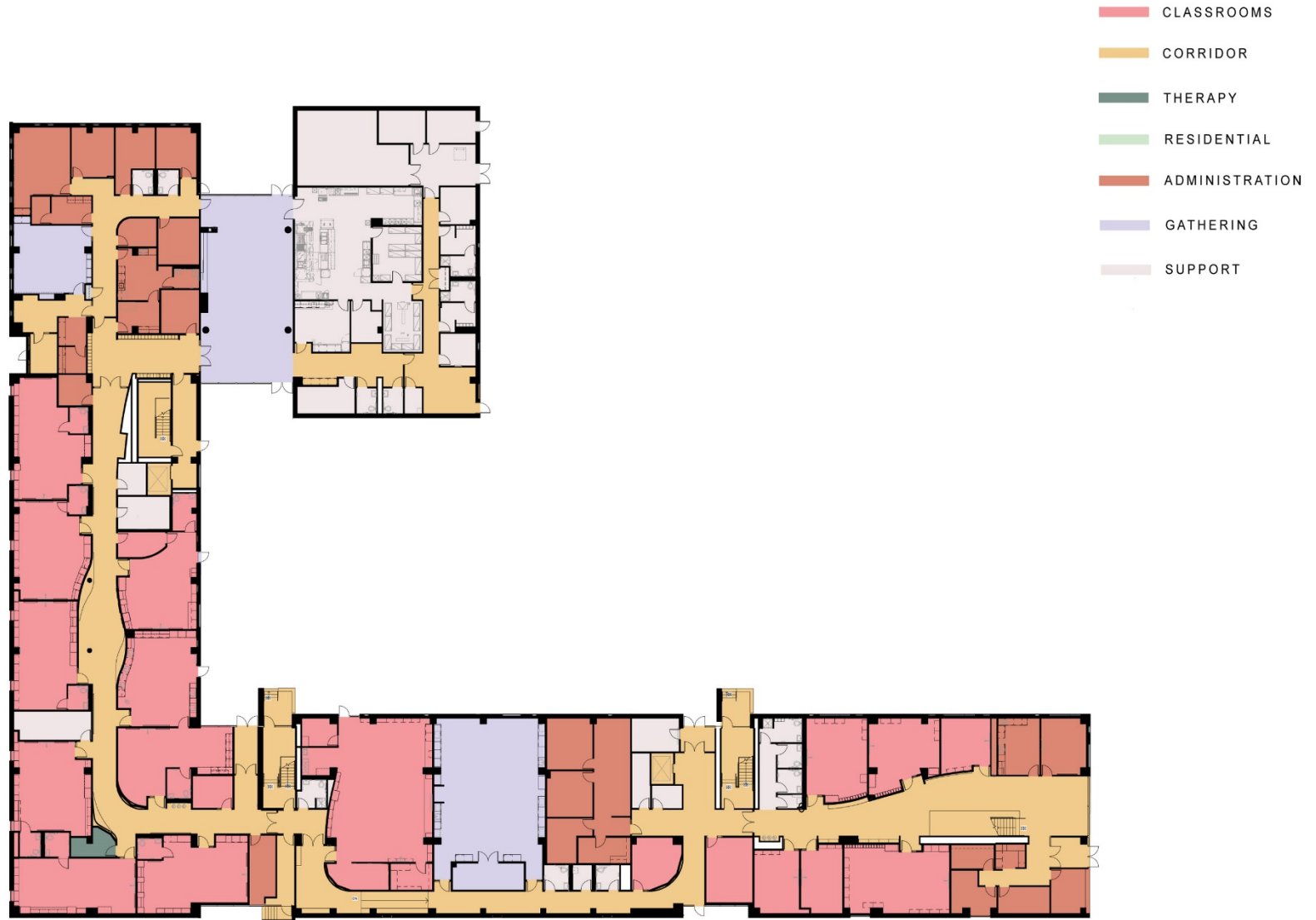


Planning

- **Teacher can see all students.** Classroom sightlines enable uniform supervision. Corridor sightlines allow teachers to see if students are seated at recessed niches. Curved walls open up corners in corridors for better visibility. Staff offices are distributed throughout the building and positioned at hallway termini and intersections.
- **All students can see whole-class presentations.** Open, clear sightlines to writing and projection walls are established in each room.
- **Flexibility for different grouping options, including one-on-one, small-group, whole-class, and peer tutoring.** A diversity of casework types, flexible mobile furniture, and spaces outside of classrooms enable a range of grouping options.



First floor plan



Second floor plan

- CLASSROOMS
- CORRIDOR
- THERAPY
- RESIDENTIAL
- ADMINISTRATION
- GATHERING
- SUPPORT



Third floor plan

- CLASSROOMS
- CORRIDOR
- THERAPY
- RESIDENTIAL
- ADMINISTRATION
- GATHERING
- SUPPORT



Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Project Data

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Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Project Details

Project Name	Leslie Shankman School Corporation, Orthogenic and Hyde Park Day Schools, New Facility
City	Chicago
State	IL
District Name	n/a
Supt/President	Walter Crnich
Occupancy Date	March 2014
Grades Housed	Orthogenic School — K-12 + beyond; Hyde Park Day School — 2-8
Capacity(Students)	Orthogenic School — 72; Hyde Park Day School — 60
Site Size (acres)	3.2 acres
Gross Area (sq. ft.)	75,000 sf
Per Occupant(pupil)	568 sf
gross/net please indicate	
Design and Build?	yes
If yes, Total Cost:	\$22 million
Includes:	Construction cost
If no,	
Site Development:	
Building Construction:	
Fixed Equipment:	
Other:	
Total:	

Supporting/supplemental files



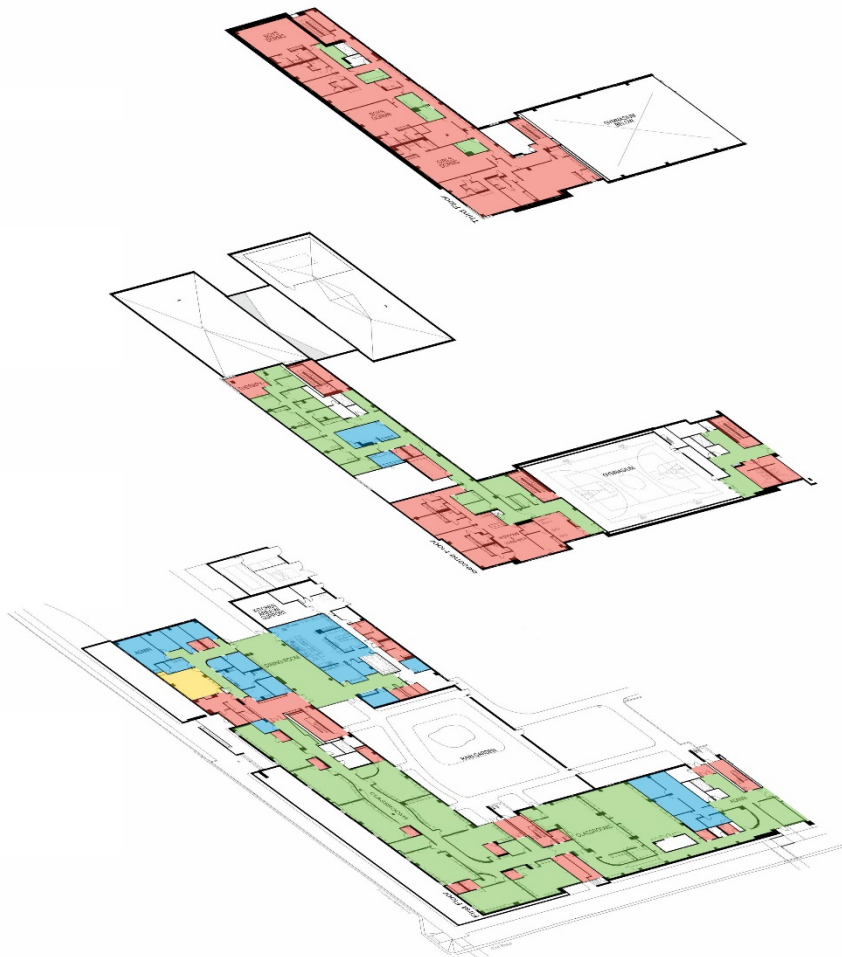
A common space in the O-School serves multiple purposes, including group therapy, meeting with guests, visitors and potential students, and a morning gathering site for non-residential students. It is designed to feel like a residential living room to maximize comfort and familiarity.

Supporting/supplemental files








Administrators emphasized the importance of transplanting icons from the previous O-School to the new building, including the yellow front door and a Bruno Bettelheim mural symbolizing the journey through rehabilitation. Re-incorporating familiar elements helped ease the transition for students whom are often highly sensitive to change.

Supporting/supplemental files



Orthogenic School – Safety

	Zone 1	Greatest safety concerns (student alone in space) dorm rooms, bedrooms, bathrooms (high risk)
	Zone 2	Safety concern and durable because kids maintaining space, transitional space (high risk)
	Zone 3	Student access but accompanied, therapy spaces, classrooms, dining space (medium risk)
	Zone 4	Not continuous / daily student access, office, administration (low risk)
	Zone 5	No student access: support spaces such as mechanical rooms and electrical closets (low risk)

The O-School features five “safety zones” based on anticipated occupancy and supervision. The zone designations influence materials, finishings and other design decisions.