

COMPROMISES END DEADLOCK ON SHIPLEY PLANS \ AN EXPANSION PROPOSAL AT THE BRYN MAWR SCHOOL HAD PRESERVATIONISTS AND NEIGHBORS IN AN UPROAR.

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Eleanor Winsor had asked the group that gathered around the oval table for several negotiation sessions last month **to** do one thing: Listen.

Listen **to** what the others were saying. Hear their needs and concerns.

Winsor, a professional mediator, was not sorting out a divorce entanglement or easing tensions in a labor dispute. She was attempting **to** deal with something just as potentially explosive: the **Shipley** School expansion plans.

She appears **to** have been successful.

After more than six months of pitched battle between **Shipley** and a group of neighbors, alumni and historic preservationists who opposed the school's development plans, all sides now seem **to** be on board and building plans are again moving forward.

The school has addressed concern about overdevelopment by eliminating its plans for an indoor pool and squash courts and by shrinking the building sizes.

Neighbors have dropped their legal challenge **to** the project and have agreed **to** support it before the township. The Planning Commission approved the plans last week.

As for **Shipley** alumni, they have joined with preservationists **to** try **to** raise money **to** renovate a 19th-century campus building, which **Shipley** no longer uses and had planned **to** tear down.

If successful, **Shipley** may be able **to** design its plan around the landmark, rather than over it.

``There's a window of hope," said Heather Hillman, who organized the alumni campaign **to** oppose the demolition of the home, called **Beechwood**. ``It's going **to** require a concerted effort of the entire community."

She said her group, **Shipley** Alumni and **Friends to Save Beechwood**, would need **to** raise at least \$600,000 for the renovation.

But the group does not have long.

Ross Weiss, **Shipley**'s lawyer, said a strict fund-raising deadline would be imposed. He said the entire cost of renovating **Beechwood** must be pledged by Jan. 1, 2001 - six months before the other campus construction begins - or **Shipley** could demolish the home.

``The school needs **to** know whether they are raising the money," Weiss said.

Beechwood's fate is also tied **to** parking issues. At 4,000 square feet, **Beechwood** puts the entire project over its maximum allowable limit for ``impervious cover" - buildings, paved parking lots and the like.

The school has said that it could seek a variance allowing it **to** construct fewer parking spaces but that it would not do so without assurances that funds for **Beechwood**'s renovation were in

hand.

Preservationists and architects say they will know by April whether **Beechwood** can be renovated for school use and how much that will cost. Anyone interested in helping with the **Beechwood** project may call the Lower Merion Conservancy at 610-645-9030.

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