



**Webster School Design
Departure Advisory
Committee**

Members

Dan Allison
Jocelyn Bauer
Thomas Haff
Mike Helmick
Alison Kartiganer
Connie Myers
Dan Vos
Tad Anderson
Darcy Fulcher (Alternate)
Kevin Philbin (Alternate)

Ex-Officio Members

Maureen Sheehan,
Department of Neighborhoods
Holly Godard,
Seattle Department of Construction &
Inspections

Webster School

**Development Standards Design Departure Advisory
Committee**

Meeting Minutes

Meeting #1

March 19, 2018

Ballard High School
1418 NW 65th St
Seattle, WA 98117

Members and Alternates Present

Jocelyn Bauer	Alison Kartiganer	Dan Vos
Thomas Haff	Connie Myers	Darcy Fulcher (Voting Alternate)
Mike Helmick	Tad Anderson	Kevin Philbin (Alternate)

Staff and Others Present

Eric Becker	SPS
Holly Godard	SDCI
Brian Ho	TCF Architecture
Rachel Huck	SDOT
Tod McBryan	Heffron Transportation
Maureen Sheehan	DON

I. Opening and Introductions

The meeting was opened by Ms. Maureen Sheehan from the City of Seattle, Major Institutions, and Schools Program. Ms. Sheehan welcomed all in attendance and briefly summarized the agenda. Brief introductions followed.

II. Overview of the Process

Ms. Sheehan stated that this process is governed by the Land Use Code Sections of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC Title 23), which specifies how the process works. Ms. Sheehan noted that the City of Seattle does not have a school zone, subject to the development standards of the underlying zone. Since most schools are in residential neighborhoods zoned "single family," schools do not normally meet the underlying zoning requirements. Thus, the Land Use Code contains provisions that allow the Seattle School District to request departures from various development standards.

The Committee is meeting tonight to develop recommendations concerning the School District's requested departures .

The Committee receives a presentation of the requested departures by Seattle Public Schools and its consultants, public testimony, and then the Committee discusses the requested departures.

The Committee may do one of the following:

- 1) Recommend granting the departures as requested;
- 2) Recommend granting the departures with modifications or specific conditions, or
- 3) Recommend denial of the departures.

Conditions or modifications identified should be clearly related to the requested departure and enforceable on the District.

The Committee may develop recommendations at this meeting, or if time does not allow, additional public testimony is desired, or additional information is needed, the Committee may hold up to two additional meetings. If the Committee concludes they have enough information and there is no further benefit from additional public testimony, the Committee can move forward at this meeting in establishing their recommendations; in that case, this would be the only public meeting.

Ms. Sheehan emphasized that the Committee will make recommendations that will be put into a report that will be reviewed by the Committee and forwarded to Ms. Holly Godard of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), who will take it into consideration when drafting the Director's decision.

III. Presentation

Project Overview:

Mr. Brian Ho of TCF Architecture presented the proposed design to convert the Nordic Heritage Museum that has occupied the building since 1980 and reopen as a school for approximately 450 students.

The extent of the project includes an addition of a gymnasium, exterior window treatment and replacement, modernizing the building to meet current codes and ADA improvements, reconfiguration of the building spaces to comply with Seattle Public School's Education specifications and demolition of the north play court of the 1930's addition.

Summary of the Requested Departures:

1. Setback (Covered Play and Play equipment noise)

The Municipal Code for setbacks for public schools in a single-family zone requires that any play equipment or other related items are to be located at least 30 ft. from any single-family zone residential lot.

The proposed covered play area is similar and is adjacent to Webster Park, a single-family zoned lot. The free-standing playground equipment will also be located directly adjacent to the park.

The Design Team considered the location of the covered play because it is adjacent to Webster Park and will have a joint-use agreement with Seattle Parks and Recreation, it is furthest from neighborhood houses for minimal noise disruption and it is also furthest from the historic façade of the original landmarked building.

The departure request is for 0 ft. setback.

2. Building Height

The existing building already exceeds the allowable height limit of 35 ft. The Municipal Code allows up to 45 ft.

The Design Team is proposing to add mechanical equipment on the top of the existing structure and a rooftop elevator penthouse. The existing chimney will be demolished which is already at 56 ft. The rooftop equipment and elevator will be located at the center of the building to minimize the visual impact.

The departure request is for 23 ft. above the 35 ft. height limit.

3. Lot Coverage

The site currently exceeds the allowable lot coverage of 35% at 37%. The Municipal Code allows departures from lot coverage limit up to 45%.

The Design Team is proposing adding a gymnasium and covered play area which will result in 42% lot coverage. This will only add 7% coverage of the allowable 35%.

The departure request is for additional 7% lot coverage.

4. On-street Bus Loading & Unloading

The Design Team is proposing bus loading and unloading on NW 68th St. because it is nearest to the only accessible entrance to the site. It also separates bus rider/pedestrian circulation from the parking lot and from the proposed vehicular drop off at the south.

The departure request is for bus loading and unloading on NW 68th St.

5. Off-street Parking

The site currently has 67 parking stalls that is utilizing the existing play area of the school. The total required parking stalls is about 100 stalls based on the calculation of assembly spaces in the building, and the two primary spaces are the existing dining room and the addition of the gymnasium.

The Design Team is proposing five parking stalls on-site that will be for ADA and visitor parking.

The request is for a departure of 95 parking spaces.

IV. Committee Clarifying Questions

Ms. Sheehan opened the floor for Committee clarifying questions.

Mr. Tad Anderson asked about the boundary between the park and the school, the status of an agreement between the school and the neighborhood, and if the public will have access to the playground equipment. He also asked if the neighborhood will be involved in the design process of the playground and park area.

Ms. Connie Myers answered that there is no agreement in place until the school staff is filled including the principal. Once the principal is in place, he or she will determine how much of the park will be used as part of the education program. She added that for security, she would like to have a fence around the school to make sure that the kids do not wander on the park without supervision. The Design Team set aside an area for the playground, but the design process has not begun. A playground committee that is composed of the school and the neighborhood will be formed to discuss about the playground design and use.

Mr. Kevin Philbin asked how the buses will exit the area, or will it be dispersed in different locations.

Mr. Tod McBryan of Heffron Transportation commented that the bus routes will be determined once buses are assigned on the site. He added that bus drivers will likely take the path of least resistance to maneuver around this site.

Mr. Dav Vos asked about Departure 5 and why 450 students instead of 200-300 students which is an appropriate size for the number of parking spaces available for this school.

Mr. Ho noted that the 450-student capacity is 100 less than a typical Seattle Public School educational specification. It was reduced from 660 students due to the -capacity of the site and the number of classrooms available. Mr. Eric Becker of the Seattle Public Schools added that the student size capacity is based on the building capacity for an elementary school that meets the district's educational specification.

Ms. Alison Kartiganer asked if there was an opportunity to work with Parks to change the boundary to get more space.

Mr. Ho commented that a decision was made to surplus the property to Parks. There is no consideration to make a change to the boundary as the Parks Department would like to keep the property as is.

Mr. Mike Helmick asked about bus loading parking restrictions marked along NW 68th and if there were any traffic calming measures at the intersection along NW 30th and 68th.

Mr. Bryan mentioned that when it designates a school bus load zones, they will look at options to limit their time when they are needed, and they will be available for regular unrestricted parking. As part of the traffic report recommendation, the school will work with the traffic safety committee to examine the site and identify specific measures to address pedestrian improvements, walk routes and other traffic calming measures with SDOT approval.

Mr. Thomas Haff asked if the existing 1930's building is on the National Register of Historic Places and has there been consideration to demolish the east 1930's building for more parking.

Mr. Ho answered that the building is a City of Seattle Landmark and that they must go through a landmark process if there are any design changes to the designated landmarks. They have not taken into consideration demolishing the east portion of the 1930's building because it has significant interior materials.

Ms. Jocelyn Bauer asked if the departure process will start all over again if the Landmarks Preservation Board requires a revision to the design.

Ms. Sheehan noted that SDCI is looking at the overall project and they are not looking at where the buildings are located. She added that the departure and the landmark process are two different scenarios, and if there are any changes to the landmark process, there will be a separate discussion on how to sync the two processes together.

Ms. Bauer asked about the height departure and if it was necessary to install an elevator or is it a code requirement. She also added if there were any design consideration or schemes that were looked at to provide parking for teachers and staff.

A question was asked if the elevator is for the maintenance for the rooftop equipment that is essential for the long-term life cycle of the facility. The district decided that it would be beneficial having an elevator so that maintenance personnel do not have to climb the stairs to fix and maintain the heating and cooling equipment. It is not a code requirement, but it is the School District's requirement for maintenance.

With regards to the parking departure, the site has been problematic due to its small size and even it can get more sq. footage for parking, it would remain challenging and problematic due to the new addition to the site.

Mr. Haff asked if underground parking was considered since it is already common in the area.

Mr. Ho mentioned that underground parking is not financially feasible.

A question was asked if the ground well for water run off a code requirement and if there are any trees will be added to the site.

Mr. Ho noted that for new construction, it is a requirement for water quality treatment and water retainment. With regards to the trees, the street trees will be maintained along 67th and there will be trees added along 68th per city requirement. Most of the trees along the south side will be maintained and there will be additional trees along the perimeter of the site.

Ms. Darcy Fulcher asked if there was consideration for angled parking that may alleviate parking for teachers.

Mr. Ho mentioned that they did not look at angled parking and to provide that type of parking, it would require a certain amount of width. The net benefit of angled parking is not significant.

Mr. Philbin commented about any offsite options were considered for parking in addition to angled parking and where is this data so the Committee can review them to grant the off-street parking departure.

Mr. Ho noted that there are few options on the site to put the gymnasium without meeting the setback requirements and the overall volume will not work on the north side of the school. Mr. McBryan commented that there were less specific design opportunities regarding off-site parking. Other departure committees mitigated these problems by implementing a traffic management plan with input from the school and the neighborhood intended to encourage on-street staff parking at locations a block or more from the site.

Ms. Fulcher commented that there should be a transition of the materials for façade for the penthouse equipment.

Mr. Ho noted that the design team have had conversation to make the color of into a medium tone, so it will blend with the sky and make it less intrusive.

Mr. Vos asked about the capacity level for the school since area schools have been expanded.

Mr. Becker mentioned that the School District talks about capacity and a significant amount of space is needed. There is data available showing a rise in the resident and enrollment projection, which is why the school is designed to accommodate this projection.

Mr. Vos asked about the rooftop elevation and questioned if the height is too excessive and whether a stairwell entry is adequate instead of having an elevator.

Mr. Ho mentioned that they would prefer it to be less, but the elevator manufacturers require certain height requirements for safety. Mr. Becker added that the elevator will be used throughout the building and it is ADA. The elevator will allow mechanics to safely and quickly repair and replace the mechanical penthouse equipment.

Mr. Vos asked if the storm water retention space be eliminated or taken in ground to provide parking spaces. Mr. Becker noted that the retention is a small context of the project and it provides water quality treatment and cleaning the contaminants of the runoff. He also added that they are also following the City's requirements.

Ms. Kartiganer shared her concerns about the elevator. She also commented about parking count and she was worried about the impact around the neighborhood.

Mr. Ho mentioned that there are six levels that are currently inside the building and it current elevator only connects to three. There is a need to have ramps that would allow to connect more levels. With relation to parking around the neighborhood, Mr. McBryan noted that the parking utilization in the area is lower compared to other neighborhoods. It is about 30-37% utilization and would remain under 50% with or without the school. The parking utilization study was conducted within 800 ft. walking distance from the site boundary as required by the City for development (including school/institutional) projects.

Mr. Haff asked about the yellow cabs for students at pick up and drop off and if there was any consideration to mitigate congestion.

An answer was provided that Seattle Public Schools provides cab transportation as an alternative mode for students who qualify. They have identified that the loading area on the north side of 67th will be strictly used for passenger cars. The actual process needs to be worked out with SDOT.

Ms. Bauer asked if other options were considered for additional stairwells and having the rooftop not too close to the building façade. She also added that the bioswale be extended further to provide additional onsite parking and have bus loading on 38th Avenue since it is the main arterial.

Mr. Ho noted that the design team were looking at the accessible entry off 68th since this entry goes directly to the building. Mr. Becker noted that having additional and enclosed stairwells would directly impact the historic and interior façade of the building since it was landmarked.

A comment was made if the height departure would block the view of Mt. Rainier for the residents that may result it a potential lawsuit. Ms. Godard responded that by policy, the City of Seattle does not regulate to protect views. If the elevator overrun at its current location blocks the view for some residents, it is important that criteria is added in the departure process discussion.

A comment was made if the bioswale be in an open green space along 30th avenue to provide more parking spaces. Mr. Ho noted that having it located in the southside or east side of the property is problematic due to its grade and it only allows less water retention.

V. Public Comments and Questions

Ms. Sheehan opened the floor for public comments and questions.

(Editor's Note: The comments shown below are summaries of statements provided. They are not transcriptions and have been shortened and edited to include the major points raised. Full comments are retained in the files in voice recording (.mp3) form)

Comments from Kevin Norman: Mr. Norman lives across from the school and he commented about his concern regarding bus loading and unloading and the traffic circulation that is coming in all direction.

Comments from David Boyd: Mr. Boyd commented about his concerns regarding loss of open space in a neighborhood that already has the lowest open space per capita outside of downtown. He suggested exploring design options to reduce loss of open space. In addition, he urged the committee to look at ways of designing the park/school interface to be as open and inviting as possible and to create mechanisms for community use of school play facilities when school is not in session.

Comments from Jordan K: Mr. Jordan K commented about the flow of traffic his concerns about the statement that was presented regarding the use of discretion by school bus drivers since he does not how it will work. He was concerned about too many cars and buses pulling off 65th. He added that he has not heard any communication from the school about what type of school the building will be.

Comments from Maryann Firpo: Ms. Firpo encouraged the Committee to deny all the departures. She commented that the building is oversize and is not appropriate to the school lot. She mentioned that she lives a block from Loyal Heights Elementary School and she asked each of the Committee members to ask themselves if the community needs these departures and she would like them not to decide too soon.

Comments from Amy Janas: Ms. Jans commented that the joint use of the playground with the school should be addressed as soon as possible as well as the design of the park. She also added about the ongoing parking conflict and traffic enforcements in the area and she would like to see a relationship established by the school and the neighborhood.

Comments from Gail Kieckefa: Ms. Keickefa asked the committee to deny all departures. She noted that the school has not committed to the type of school it will be the type of school will determine the urgency of the departures. She added that an adult-size gymnasium would not be necessary if it is an elementary school, and a smaller gym would allow for more parking. She emphasized identifying the type of school is critical.

Comments from Chris Jackins: Mr. Jackins, coordinator for the Seattle Committee to Save Schools and he provided a list that summarizes why should this Committee should reject the departures being requested.

Comments from John Ross: Mr. Ross is a 3rd generation land owner and he commented about the proposed size of the gymnasium. He added that the height departure may not block the view of Mt. Rainier, but it may block sunlight from the surrounding residents. He encouraged the Committee to put off voting the departures until the what type of school has been decided.

Comments from Rosemary B: Ms. Rosemary B. commented that she lives in the area and would like to see collaboration between the Parks Department and the school with regards to park use. She added that she was confused about the two play areas since the space is already tight and the play structure may not be enough for 450-students. She was also concerned about the safety and security of the outdoor play area.

Comments from an anonymous person: The person commented about the size of the gymnasium and questioned the size and proposed location of the gymnasium. He suggested to consider denying the three departures being requested.

Comments from anonymous person: The person commented that she lived in the neighborhood and she would like to see more consideration on street parking since it has become an issue.

VI. Committee Deliberation

Ms. Sheehan opened the discussions for committee deliberation. She asked the Committee to deliberate on the need for these departures and then discuss on whether to recommend or deny each of the departures with or without any conditions.

Mr. Vos commented that there is an overwhelming consensus about not granting the requested departures until the type of school is declared. He asked if it is possible to introduce a motion to know what type of school Webster will be before any votes are taken.

Ms. Myers commented that these departures are needed regardless what the School Board decide on what type of school Webster will be.

Mr. Vos commented that the size of the gymnasium is an issue and it may have an impact. Ms. Myers noted that the School Board has approved the educational specification for this school and the school's program is designed to accommodate the size of the gymnasium.

Ms. Myers added that design and construction is leaning toward having an elementary school, and there is also an option and flexibility to make it into a middle school. She added when the School District applied for the SEPA permitting, they looked at having the school to be either an elementary or middle school.

A comment was made about the current traffic congestion that is happening regarding private vehicles, school buses and the garbage trucks around the area. Mr. McBryan commented that these types of vehicles will continue to operate on these types of streets and this causes delay. Any workable solutions will be up to the City and SDOT to decided whether any street improvements in the area are necessary .

Mr. Vos made a motion to delay any vote on granting these departures until what type of school has been decided, and it was seconded.

A comment was made that the School Board will make the decision during summer, and will be based on the need, capacity and the programs that is designed for the school. The board will vote to move forward with the project in its current configuration.

A suggestion was made to move forward and consider each departure individually and have a vote for each of the requested departure and to consider having a second public meeting to have further discussion.

Ms. Godard commented that she does not see any difference if the school will be an elementary or middle school since it will have the same departure requests. She added that the greatest influence this Committee can bring to this project is its conditioning authority. She encourages the Committee to ask and request more information from the Design Team to make an informed decision.

Ms. Myers reiterated that the school is designed and built to provide flexibility for both elementary and middle school type.

A motion was made to delay the vote on the departures until the type of school is determined, and it was seconded. The Committee voted, and the motion did not pass.

The Committee proceeded to discuss the requested departures.

1. Setback (Covered Play and Play equipment noise):

Ms. Bauer commented that it is difficult for her to grant the departure without knowing what type of school it will be. She added that the size of the space should be further evaluated and additional analysis about the size of the gymnasium is needed.

A suggestion was made to have the Committee identify which departures they are leaning towards approving and prioritize and have further discussion on the departures that the Committee may want to put conditions before granting them.

Ms. Sheehan asked the Committee with a show of hands if they would deny, approve with conditions that is to be determined or approve without any conditions for each of the requested departures. She noted that this is not a final vote, but she wants to gauge what the Committee is leaning towards to.

A preliminary poll showed 0 would deny, 7 approve w/conditions, 1 approve.

2. Building Height:

A preliminary poll showed 2 would deny, 2 approve w/conditions, 4 approve.

3. Lot Coverage:

Ms. Godard mentioned that it would be helpful for SDCI and the School District to provide a preference for this departure if the Committee decided to attach any conditions.

A preliminary poll showed 1 would deny, 1 approve w/conditions, 6 approve.

4. On-street Bus Loading & Unloading:

Ms. Kartiganer commented if there is a way to carve out more space from the north of the bioswale to provide more space off the street. Mr. McBryan noted that from his experience on the departure process and request, SDOT generally will deny such request. SDOT would like to maintain the street width and landscape between the sidewalk and the curb because it provides a traffic calming effect around the schools, and vehicles would slow down.

He suggested that having a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) designed to mitigate school traffic around the street area. He noted that as part of the SEPA, a TMP is included as part of the condition. The Committee can amplify and provide specifics to the TMP to address the street traffic issue.

A preliminary poll showed 1 would deny, 5 approve w/conditions, 2 approve.

5. Off-street Parking

The Committee had a back and forth discussion and a committee member asked to see additional design studies to show the amount of parking spaces that can realistically accommodate extraordinary events.

Another suggestion was working with Metro Transit in improving bus transit along the area as an option.

A preliminary poll showed 0 would deny, 4 approve w/conditions, 4 approve.

VI. Committee Recommendations

Ms. Sheehan opened the discussion for Committee recommendations and noted that the Committee had deliberated on one of the four departures, and they will need to hold a second meeting to continue the discussion.

A motion was made to recommend approving the departure for the Lot Coverage without any conditions; and it was seconded. The Committee voted, and the motion passed.

The Committee requested the Design Team to provide additional information on the following:

Departure 1 (Setback) (i) Provide information (legal constraints and precedents at other schools) on community access to school play facilities when the school is not in session. (ii) Provide information (legal constraints and precedents at other schools) regarding shared use of park facilities when school is in session. (iii) Provide plans and renderings for a minimally obtrusive interface between park and school.

Departure 2 (Building Height), gather information about the elevator configuration, provide studies or justification on why a decision was made to install an elevator instead of a stairwell;

Departure 4 (On-street Bus Loading & Unloading) : (i) Provide case studies and examples about other area schools dealt with similar set-up. (ii) Present other bus-loading location options. (iii) Provide maps that show routing options for how buses and cars will enter and leave the neighborhood.

Departure 5 (Off-street Parking), present a diagram or visualization on how parking would look within a 600' of the school property and an analysis if 5 or 10 additional parking spaces can be added on site for daily use.

She noted that at the second meeting, there will be public comments, presentations from the Design Team, and additional clarifying questions and deliberations by the Committee.

VII. Adjournment and scheduling of next meeting

Ms. Sheehan mentioned that she will send out a poll survey to determine the for the next meeting.

No further business being before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

DRAFT