



Seattle Neighborhoods



West Woodland
Elementary School
Design Departure
Advisory Committee

Members

Roxanne Baechler-Gill
Faith Cooley
Lisa Downey
Miriam Hinden
Marie Sumpter
Paul Wight
Meaghan Williams
Lisa Younglove

Ex-Officio Members

Maureen Sheehan,
Seattle Department of
Neighborhoods

Holly Godard,
Seattle Department of
Construction & Inspections

West Woodland Elementary School

(SDCI Project #3035027)

Development Standards Design Departure Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Meeting #1

January 6, 2020

West Woodland Elementary School
Cafeteria
5601 – 4th Ave NW
Seattle, WA 98107

Members and Alternates Present

Roxanne Baechler-Gill Paul Wight
Lisa Downey Lisa Younglove
Miriam Hinden

Staff and Others Present

Maureen Sheehan Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON)
Holly Godard Seattle Dept of Construction & Inspection (SDCI)
Mitch Kent McGranahan Architects

I. 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 from provisions of the SMC related to land use.

The Committee receives information on the departures being requested from the 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 departure as requested;
- 2) Recommend granting the departure with modifications or specific conditions,
or

3) Recommend denial of the departure.

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 determine to move forward at the end of 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 Description

The School Design Advisory Team (SDAT) was formed last spring based from members of the school community and educators. They were guided through seven departures with their advice extracted on how to accomplish the major program effort.

If you are interested in the progress, go to the [School District's website](#) for "West Woodland Elementary Addition and Improvements." The background information was put together with the SDAT.

At the end of this meeting, the Committee and Ms. Sheehan will put together a recommendation report within 30 days to be given to the Seattle Department of Construction & Inspection for review. The online data list will be used to notify people of any updates and revised information.

The SDAT is an advisory team in the capital project process. Their recommendations are not mandates. The School Board is making sure the environment that is created for children supports education. Seattle Public School feels that this is your place and wants to make sure the building fits in the community as a desired asset to the community, sustainable, operated at a low cost and with a low impact to the environment.

The school resides on 3.2 acres of which there are two parking areas – one on the northside with 15 spots and another in the southeast corner that has 4 dedicated daycare facility spots. Current volume supports 545 students; the building is about 57,000 square feet in two stories. There is a 60-foot utilities easement that runs through the playground that poses a design challenge.

The first step is to remove four portables and then renovate 8,000 square feet of space for one large cafeteria space instead of a shared space of physical activity and food. This will make it possible to have only two lunch periods instead of three. This will allow more time for physical activity. An additional 28,000 square feet will be added for new classrooms.

IV. Departure Requests

Departure #1 – Greater than Allowed Building Height

There are two proposed additions to the façade height and roof slope of the existing building. Each addition is over 35 feet but below the existing cupola. The cupola exceeds the allowable 35-foot maximum building height. The additional height allows for increased day light into educational spaces as well as future ability for SPS to install photovoltaic panels.

Departure #2 – Less than Required Building Setback

The current north façade of the school has no setback from the street located across a residential zone. The project team is requesting a departure for a setback 5<15 feet. The setback will only apply to the two utility poles at the north side at the edge of the field. The cost impacts for relocating utilities are likely to be prohibitive.

Departure #3 – Less than Required Off-street Parking

One space for each 80 square feet of all auditoria or public assembly rooms, or one space for every 8 fixed seats in auditoria or public assembly rooms containing fixed seats, for new public schools on a new or existing public school site. This equates to 78 required stalls. The departure proposes 10 stalls with a remainder of 68 stalls unbuilt.

Departure #4 – Secured Bicycle Parking

Instead of secure locations and arrangements of long-term bicycle parking, with features such as locked rooms or cages and bicycle lockers, this project departure proposes a departure of 36 long-term bicycle parking spots unsecured.

Departure #5 – Access to Bicycle Parking

Provide pedestrian and bicycle access to long-term bicycle parking that is separate from other vehicular entry and egress points. This departure requests shared access to (36) unsecured long-term bicycle parking spots.

Departure #6 – Unprotected Bicycle Parking

Provide full-weather protection for all required long-term bicycle parking. This departure requests 36 long-term bicycle parking spots to unprotected from weather.

Departure #7 – Message Board

No flashing, changing image or message board signs shall be permitted. This departure requests to install a double-sided, electronic, changing image message board.

V. Public Comment

Ms. Sheehan opened the floor for public comments and questions. Comments are to be directed to the committee for their consideration.

(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 Jodi Jamerson: requested traffic bumps be installed to deter neighborhood speeding. She suggested the school start educating people regarding parking. Ms. Jamerson commented that their residence has two parking spaces curbside; and more often than not, somebody pulls in front of their home. She also asked if the school departures would affect property values.

Comments from Jane Sheridan: Ms. Sheridan's family has lived in the neighborhood for 30 years. She is also concerned about parking – especially at the start and the end of the school day. Based on the presentation, she wondered why there would be fewer parking spaces at a time when the school expects more teachers and students.

Ms. Sheridan later commented about construction through the end of the year. She wondered what process will be in place for the construction equipment's safety and security. Ms. Sheridan mentioned a previous incident where students tried to start a forklift parked at the school. She also added her concern regarding roof access.

Comments from Jamee Ashburn: Ms. Ashburn and her husband live across from the school's north side. She noted that it is regular occurrence with the current northeast roof height that children are constantly able to access the roof all the way up to the cupola. Ms. Ashburn asked if any considerations could be made to limit their access. She mentioned noise coming from the school's roof often woke them up at night. Ms. Ashburn's main concern is the huge safety issue and liability to the school district.

Comments from Jason Roselander: Mr. Roselander echoed Ms. Jamerson's suggestion of encouraging school families to practice good parking. He also expressed his frustration when cars are parked and left in his one curbside parking spot.

Comments from Loren Hill: Mr. Hill agreed with the benefit of slowing drivers down. He also talked about children parking their bikes in different ways according to their needs. Mr. Hill asked if the bike park could be more flexible instead of having designated spots.

Comments from Jén Haller: Ms. Haller commented on the proposed reader board. She also voiced concern about children getting on the roof and asked if something could be done to limit access.

Comments from a member of the public added his thoughts that it was clearly illustrated that 78 spots would be a good idea. He wondered how they came up with 10 spots when 15 could fit on-site.

VI. Committee Deliberations and Recommendations

Ms. Sheehan checked in with the committee to check if everyone had enough information and if there were any questions. She said the committee would now go through the departures and decide which ones would recommendations, conditions with recommendations, or a "No."

Ms. Sheehan responded to a question regarding public comments not related to the departures. She explained in those instances, the City would hold conversations with the different departments and the community so the Committee may stay focused on the stated departures.

1. Greater than Allowed Building Height

Some have witnessed students climbing on portable roofs. Could there be a condition that the new roof be designed in a way to deter children access? Ms. Godard said she does not think the City can place code requirements on the roof design.

Mr. Wight stated that the School District is aware of the situation and that there were already steps being taken to modify that condition. He believes the School District Facilities department has plans to help alleviate this situation. Unfortunately, the District is not able to stop everything.

A motion was made and seconded for a vote recommending Departure #1 with no conditions. The vote for Departure #1 was unanimous.

2. Less than Required Building Setback

Building material will be brick with an expected length of 80 feet. Mr. Kent responded that trees would have to be removed in the 3-4 feet work area. The trees are not on school property but in a SDOT right-of-way.

A motion was made and seconded to vote on the departure. Departure #2 was unanimously approved with no conditions.

3. Less than Required Off-street Parking

The School District will be discussing Safe Routes to Schools with the addition of West Woodland on the agenda soon to talk about improvements with SDOT, SPD and the City.

It should be kept in mind that the evaluation of an additional 68 students is considered a small change in the parking demands and traffic. The traffic analysis has two recommendations. One related to school event parking to explore the potential use of the hard surface play area. The Design Team will confirm the feasibility. The second recommendation is regarding a construction management plan in place to manage sidewalk closures, impact in the neighborhood, etc.

Discussion continued regarding the parking lot. The current plan shows a total loss of 68 parking spaces. It was suggested to place a "Staff Only" parking sign onsite. The loading dock should have signage restricting access.

Concern was expressed over one entry for bicycles, pedestrians and cars. Conditions were for increased supervision/signage of the staff-only parking lot during school hours.

A motion was made and seconded to approve Departure #3 with conditions. The departure with conditions was approved unanimously.

4. Secured Bicycle Parking

5. Access to Bicycle Parking

6. Unprotected Bicycle Parking

Departure #4. Long-term parking for 36 bikes is configured on the north side of the school grounds. There was concern that the racks were placed close to the street and may increase vandalism and theft during the school day. The area will be fenced but with no cover. A motion was made and seconded to pass Departure 4 with no conditions. The vote for the departure was unanimous.

Departure #5. There are concerns regarding one entry for bicycles, pedestrians and cars. A motion was made and seconded to vote on Departure #5 with the conditions of updating the traffic management plan, improved communications with the neighborhood regarding parking, recommendation to SDOT to review for speed bumps and school-provided traffic oversight 20 minutes before start and finish of school. The departure with conditions was passed unanimously.

Departure #6. Maximum amount of concrete to be moved and replaced is a major concern. Unable to cantilever more. Engineered rain gardens in place also need to be considered. A motion was seconded to pass Departure #6 with no conditions. The departure passed unanimously.

7. Message Board

The committee was supportive of a message board to communicate using multiple languages and in the event of emergency. They were mostly concerned that the sign have minimal impacts on the homes that face the sign.

The Committee listed the following conditions for a Message Board:

- Monochromatic color scheme
- Minimal animation
- Non-flashing sign
- Time of use 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.
- Encourage school to use the sign only when necessary.
- Encourage the District to find the least-obtrusive sign that matches the character of the building.

The motion was made and seconded to vote on the departure. The committee unanimously approved Departure #7 with conditions.

VII. Adjournment and scheduling of next meeting

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