

DATE ISSUED: September 4, 2002 REPORT NO. 02-191

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Docket of September 10, 2002

SUBJECT: Francis Parker Lower School Expansion Project - Project No. 1039, Street and Easement Vacations No. 2061, Parcel Map, Conditional Use Permit No. 2063, Planned Development Permit No. 6051, Site Development Permit No. 6055. Council District 2, Process 5

REFERENCE: Planning Commission Report No. P-02-090

OWNER/
APPLICANT: Francis W. Parker School

SUMMARY

Issues - 1) Should the City Council approve the proposed Street and Easement Vacations on a Parcel Map, a Conditional Use Permit, Planned Development Permit and Site Development Permit for the remodeling and expansion of 36,172 square foot elementary school on a 4.86 acre site, located at 4201 Randolph Street in the RS-1-7 and RS-1-1 zones within the Uptown Community Plan area?

The project would include the vacation of Plumosa Way, east of Randolph Street, and the vacation of three sewer easements. The project would also include a Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) boundary correction.

Demolition on site of approximately 10,225 square feet would include the existing north wing of the school, classrooms, and an existing one-story residence with accessory structures.

Proposed construction activities would consist 22,910 square feet of new building space, 10,908 square feet of interior tenant improvements, and a new 33-space parking lot. The existing school is 36,172 square feet and the completed elementary school project would be 49,112 square feet of floor area.

Staff's Recommendation -

1. Recommend that the City Council **CERTIFY** Environmental Impact Report (EIR) No. 40-1050 and **ADOPT** the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program, **DO NOT** Accept the Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with Attachment No. 19; and
2. Recommend that the City Council **APPROVE** Street and Easement Vacations

No. 2061 on a Parcel Map in accordance with Attachment Nos. 8 and 9; and

3. Recommend that the City Council **APPROVE** Conditional Use Permit No. 2063, Planned Development Permit No. 6051, and Site Development Permit No. 6055, with the implementation of Alternative No. 9.3.5, Off-Site Parking Acquisition/Lease in EIR No. 40-1050, in accordance with Attachment No. 6.

Planning Commission Recommendation - On June 20, 2002, the Planning Commission recommended to the Council of The City of San Diego by a vote of 4-2, approval of the Street and Easement Vacations, Conditional Use Permit, Planned Development Permit and Site Development Permit subject to the following modifications and conditions, which are different from staff recommendations.

1. That there be an access easement that generally follows Plumosa Way, that will be accessible after school hours, and for which the applicant will be responsible, satisfactory to the City Engineer.
2. That the applicant shall provide 70 on-site vehicle parking spaces.
3. That the project shall include a student drop-off area and service and loading area on-site, which must be screened.
4. That there be a condition which states: "There shall be no more than forty (40) Special Events per calendar year on campus, in which fifty (50) or more individuals, not including faculty, staff or students attend, including no more than six (6) non-school related Special Events.

The following protocol shall be implemented during Special Events: Monitors shall walk the neighborhood to make sure visitor parking or stopping does not impact individual residences; all on-site parking shall be utilized; visitors to non-school Special Events shall park on site or be brought to and from the campus by buses or vans; Special Events shall occur no earlier than 7:00 a.m., nor later than 10:00 p.m., with the exception of one (1) fund-raising event that may extend to no later than 11:00 p.m.

5. That there shall be language added to Draft Permit Conditions Nos. 50 and 51 that replaced or new sidewalks shall have the historic stamping, consistent with existing sidewalks.

Additionally, the Planning Commission recommended to the Council of The City of San Diego by a vote of 5-1, approval of the project with Alternative 9.3.3 of EIR No. 40-1050, for a half above and half below ground parking structure with screening in a manner compatible with the neighborhood, with the structure no more than ten feet above ground, and vehicles on top level screened from view (Attachment 18).

The Planning Commission recommendations have not been incorporated into the project

as outlined in the discussion below.

Community Planning Group Recommendation - The Uptown Planners voted to recommend denial of the project on April 2, 2002, by a vote of 10-5 (Attachment 14).

Historic Resources Board Recommendation - On June 27, 2002, the Historic Resources Board voted 11-0-1, to find the proposed project consistent with the U. S. Secretary of Interior's Standards, and recommended to the City Council the certification of the Environmental Impact Report and approval of the related permit actions.

Environmental Impact - An Environmental Impact report has been prepared for this project and a Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program would be implemented to reduce the effects of Land Use and Planning (MHPA Boundary Correction), Biological Resources, Historical Resources, Hydrology/Water Quality, Transportation/Circulation, and Hazards and Hazardous Materials to a level below significance. The project would have a significant, unmitigated impact to Transportation/Circulation (Parking), with respect to on-site parking requirements, and a statement of overriding considerations has been prepared and forwarded with this project. Staff recommends not accepting the statement of overriding considerations (Attachment No. 19).

Fiscal Impact - None with this action. A deposit has been collected from the applicant to cover all costs associated the processing the proposed project.

Code Enforcement Impact - None with this action.

Housing Impact - The Francis Parker Lower School Expansion project, located on 4.86 acres, proposes to expand and remodel an existing 36,172 square foot elementary school. The site is primarily designated for school use with a small portion of the property designated for low-density residential development at 5-10 dwelling units per acre. The project would incorporate one existing single-family residence, which is within the residentially-designated area, into the expansion proposal. The expansion plans propose to demolish the residence to accommodate expansion of the school.

Traffic Impact Statement - The project is not expected to generate new daily trips on the surrounding streets since the number of student attendance will remain at the current enrollment. A traffic matrix has not been provided due to the enrollment remaining at the current level.

Water Quality Impact - Drainage from the northern portion of the site would be collected and conveyed through a series of 12" X 12" inlets and underground storm drain pipes which would be filtered through a stormceptor filtration devise before connecting to the existing 24 inch reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) line.

Drainage from the southern portion of the site would be collected through two new catch basins equipped with Flo-Gard inserts to filter the storm water run off before outletting through the existing 8 inch private PVC line.

Maintenance costs of the stormceptor and Flo-gard fossil filter would be the responsibility of Francis Parker Lower School. Maintenance of the stormceptor would be done once the stored volume reaches 15% of the stormceptor capacity or immediately in the event of a spill. The Fossil Filter would be periodically inspected and all foreign objects removed. The filter may be changed three times a year depending on the filter's exposure to sediments, debris and hydrocarbon contaminants.

BACKGROUND

The Francis W. Parker Lower School was founded at its current location at 4201 Randolph Street in 1913 (Attachment 1). There have been Conditional Use Permits (CUP) issued over the years for various additions (Attachment No. 10); however, the proposed project would serve as a master plan CUP for the future use of the site and would supercede all other CUP's which would be repealed if this CUP is approved. The site is located within the Uptown Community Plan area and is designated for Institutional Use as a school with a small portion designated as low-density residential use (Attachment 2). The proposed project is consistent with the designations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Francis Parker Lower School Expansion project is comprised of three major elements: remodeling and expansion of the existing 36,172-square-foot school; a street vacation of Plumosa Way and sewer easement vacations on a Parcel Map; and a Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) boundary correction. The projected building characteristics are divided into phases including; the construction of portable classrooms, the demolition of existing structures and the vacation of Plumosa Way and sewer easements, the construction of buildings A and B, the removal of temporary facilities and the conversion of a tennis court into a 33-space parking lot, and the construction of a cafeteria. The completed project would have 22,910 square feet of new building space, 10,908 square feet of interior tenant improvements, and a new 33-space on-site parking lot. The completed project would be 49,112 square feet of floor area.

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

The proposed project would demolish several buildings on-site and construct new buildings as replacements and additions. The highest elevation for the new construction would be 31'-6" from the finished grade. The school is surrounded by one- and two-story residential development and Lark Canyon to the northeast. All materials proposed for use on the project would be compatible with those of the existing school structures. The bulk and aesthetics of the project would be compatible with the existing school.

The Uptown Community Plan designates a public view to Mission Valley from the end of Palmetto Way, one block to the west of the proposed project. The proposed project does not interfere with this designated view. The vacation and development of Plumosa Way would eliminate a view from the public right-of-way into Lark Street Canyon and the MHPA. Additional views into Lark Street Canyon do exist from Randolph Way, Montecito Way, Hunter Street, Ingalls Street, Arbor Drive, and Acadia Drive. The proposed project does not interfere with these viewing areas.

The proposed project would include deviations through a Planned Development Permit. The maximum height limit is 30'-0" in the RS-1-7 and RS-1-1 zones. The proposed project has a stair/elevator tower element, between two of the proposed new structures which would be 31'-6" in height. An additional deviation, as discussed below, is requested to provide only 33 of the 70 off-street parking spaces required for the school use.

The school currently provides no on-site parking for staff or visitors. According to the City of San Diego Municipal Code Section 142.0530, educational facilities for kindergarten through ninth grade require two parking spaces per classroom, if there is no assembly area, or 30 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of assembly area. The school has an existing 2,330-square-foot auditorium, which would require 70 on-site parking spaces. The project proposes to convert an existing tennis court into a new 33-space on-site parking lot. The project would remain deficient by 37 on-site parking spaces. Staff recommends the alternative identified in EIR No. 40-1050, of providing the additional parking spaces through the acquisition or leasing of Caltrans right-of-way area located west of Interstate 5, north of Washington Street and east of Pacific Highway. The requirement for this additional parking has been included in the draft permit as Condition No. 14, and the deviation of providing off-site parking at a distance greater than 600 linear feet is supported by staff with shuttle service being provided by the school to and from the off-site location.

The existing structures that would remain for the school use are previously conforming to required setbacks. All new construction would observe the required setbacks.

The easterly portion of the site (i.e., Lark canyon) is located within the MHPA. The proposed school development is located outside of, but adjacent to the MHPA. No development is proposed within the MHPA. Only Brush Management Zone 2 is proposed within the MHPA, consistent with the City's MSCP. The project proposes a correction to the MHPA boundary to remove existing pre-MSCP developed areas (circa 1964) from the MHPA. No native vegetation would be corrected out of the MHPA, and a small amount of additional coastal sage scrub would be included in the corrected boundary. In total, 0.03 acres of coastal sage scrub and 0.05 acres of disturbed habitat would be included in the corrected MHPA, and 0.24 acres of eucalyptus woodland and 0.16 acres of developed land would be removed from the corrected MHPA (Attachment 5).

Currently, the southern and central portions of the school site drain through surface flows into two eight-inch PVC pipes to the southeastern edge of the site, with runoff directed into Lark Street Canyon and the MHPA. The northern portion of the site drains through surface flows toward the end of Plumosa Way and draining into a 24-inch reinforced concrete pipe into Lark Street Canyon and the MHPA. The current drainage system does not contain a filtration system to prevent pollutants from entering the MHPA and Lark Street Canyon located east of the school. The project proposes new hardscape along Plumosa Way and the conversion of existing hardscape into a 33-space on-site parking lot. The new hardscape along Plumosa Way and the new parking lot would feature a catch basin filtration system to filter out silt, debris, and petroleum hydrocarbons from storm water runoff. No new drainage outlet points would be created into the MHPA or Lark Street Canyon.

On September 21, 2001, the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB) designated three of the “quadrangle plan buildings” designed by William Templeton Johnson as historically and architecturally significant; however, the North Wing and remaining on-campus buildings were not designated. The project does not propose to demolish any of the historically and architecturally significant quadrangle buildings (South Wing, West Wing, and Auditorium). On June 27, 2002, the HRB voted 11-0-1, to find the proposed project consistent with the U. S. Secretary of Interior’s Standards, with a slight modification to the windows of the proposed North Quadrangle building and recommended to the City Council the certification of the Environmental Impact Report and approval of the related permit actions. Condition No. 22 of the draft permit requires conformance to the Secretary of Interior Standards for all new construction, and review by Staff to the HRB for any alterations to the proposed design (Attachment 6). The Plans reviewed and approved by the HRB are included as Attachment 17.

Community Response

The proposed Francis W. Parker Lower School Expansion project has generated many letters both in support and in opposition to the project. Extensive community meetings and outreach have taken place by both the school, a neighborhood opposition group, Neighbor's Opposed to Parker Expansion (NOPE), and a neighborhood support group, Yes Upgrade Parker (YUP).

Staff has received 42 letters in support of the proposed project from 42 persons at 42 different addresses (Attachment 11).

Staff has received a petition from persons in opposition to the project which includes 164 signatures from 162 different persons with 141 different addresses (Attachment 13).

Staff has also received 80 letters in opposition to the project from 74 different persons at 68 different addresses (Attachment 12). The content of the letters vary, but concentrate on parking and transportation circulation, the vacation of Plumosa Way, and expansion of the school with the proposed new construction.

The applicant has implemented various parking protocols for the staff and parents, including queuing for student pick-up and drop-off times. These protocols are self imposed and are not included as a condition of approval of the discretionary permit. Staff recommends that the alternative of providing off-site parking be implemented as a part of this permit to mitigate for the lack of required parking. Staff recognizes that the project as proposed would result in an increase of 33 parking spaces over the zero now provided. Condition No. 16 of the draft permit caps the enrollment of the school at 438 students which is approximately the current enrollment. This enrollment cap would assure no future increases in student population beyond that number without an approved amendment.

The vacation of Plumosa Way, as discussed prior, is supported by staff. Francis W. Parker School owns all property that has access from the substandard dead end street. Plumosa Way is not a designated view to the Lark Street Canyon and Mission Valley below in the Uptown Community Plan, and the vacation could relieve the City from liability and maintenance responsibilities of this right-of-way.

The proposed construction of new buildings has been designed to be consistent with the U.S. Secretary of Interior Standards for this site with historically designated buildings. The applicant is proposing the construction with a cap on enrollment in order to relieve their stated overcrowding. The majority of the new construction would occur on currently owned private property.

The Uptown Planners held numerous subcommittee and full committee meetings on the proposed project, and on April 2, 2002, voted 10-5 to recommend denial of the proposal. The reasons listed include inability to make street vacation findings, lack of off-street parking, and insufficient control over the size and number of special events with their impact on the surrounding community (Attachment 14).

Staff has prepared draft findings for the street vacation and are included as Attachment 8. The proposed project would include the addition of 33 off-street parking spaces where none currently exist. Staff further recommends the implementation of the off-site parking space acquisition or lease which would provide 37 additional spaces as required by the uses proposed. Although no condition is recommended for the draft permit to regulate the number of special events on campus, Condition No. 15 addresses the hours of events (Attachment 6).

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

On June 20, 2002, the project was heard by the Planning Commission. After approximately four hours of testimony and discussion, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Street and Easement Vacations, Conditional Use Permit, Planned Development Permit and Site Development Permit with the following modifications and conditions.

1. That there be an access easement that generally follows Plumosa Way, that will be accessible after school hours, and for which the applicant will be responsible, satisfactory to the City Engineer.

This condition has not been incorporated into the draft permit, but could be added without the need for further mitigation or review if included by the City Council in a motion. A review of the location of such easement would be incorporated into the Parcel Map prior to recordation.

2. That the project shall include a student drop-off area and service and loading area on-site, which must be screened.

This condition has not been incorporated into the draft permit, but could be added without the need for further mitigation if included by City Council in the motion. A review of the location and path of travel for such a drop-off and loading area would be reviewed with the engineering and building permits.

3. That there shall be language added to Draft Permit Conditions Nos. 50 and 51 that replaced or new sidewalks shall have the historic stamping, consistent with existing sidewalks.

This modification has not been incorporated into the draft permit, but could be added without the need for further mitigation or review if included by City Council in the motion. Land Development Code Section No. 142.0670 (b)(2) requires the historic scoring as approved by the City Engineer.

4. That there be a condition which states: "There shall be no more than forty (40) Special Events per calendar year on campus, in which fifty (50) or more individuals, not including faculty, staff or students attend, including no more than six (6) non-school related Special Events.

The following protocol shall be implemented during Special Events: Monitors shall walk the neighborhood to make sure visitor parking or stopping does not impact individual residences; all on-site parking shall be utilized; visitors to non-school Special Events shall park on site or be brought to and from the campus by buses or vans; Special Events shall occur no earlier than 7:00 a.m., nor later than 10:00 p.m., with the exception of one (1) fund-raising event that may extend to no later than 11:00 p.m.

This modification has not been incorporated into the draft permit, but could be added without the need for further mitigation or review if included by City Council in the motion. Condition No. 15 of the draft permit (Attachment No. 6), regulates the hours of operation for Special Events. Planning Commission's recommended modification would increase the hours for Special Events by two hours, Monday through Thursday and Saturdays, by one hour on Fridays and would add Sundays.

Further, staff recommendation did not define a Special Event. Planning Commission's suggested protocol is that a Special Event is defined in which fifty (50) or more individuals, not including faculty, staff or students attend. This definition would not restrict or limit single class events on campus which could have a similar impact to the community as a defined Special Event.

5. That the applicant shall provide 70 on-site vehicle parking spaces.

This Planning Commission recommendation may require additional mitigation, depending on the Alternative implemented, which would require recirculation of EIR No. 40-1050.

Additionally, the Planning Commission recommended to the Council of The City of San Diego approval of the project with Alternative 9.3.3 of EIR No. 40-1050, for a half above and half below ground parking structure with screening in a matter compatible with the neighborhood, with the structure no more than ten feet above ground, and vehicles on top level screened from view (Attachment 18). This Alternative may require additional mitigation, depending on the Alternative implemented, which would require recirculation of EIR No. 40-1050.

CONCLUSION

The proposed project was initially submitted to the City in December, 2000. Staff has attended numerous meetings regarding this project with the applicant, the opponents, and the community planning group, with the project remaining at impasse. Staff has reviewed the proposal based on

regulations that apply, with a recommendation of approval as presented, which differs from Planning Commission, the applicant and the community planning group. The applicant has not submitted plans for review of the Planning Commission's recommendation as they are not in agreement. Therefore, staff has not reviewed the final impacts of the recommendation. If the City Council approves the proposed project with the implementation of a parking on-site alternative, additional mitigation may be necessary which would require recirculation of the EIR.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina P. Christiansen, A.I.A.
Development Services Director

Approved: P. Lamont Ewell
Assistant City Manager

CHRISTIANSEN:JCT

Note: The attachments are not available in electronic format. A copy is available for review in the Office of the City Clerk.

- Attachments:
1. Project Location Map
 2. Community Plan Map
 3. Project Data
 4. Project Site Plans
 5. MHPA Boundary Correction Map
 6. Draft Permit
 7. Draft Permit Resolution
 8. Draft Street Vacation Resolution
 9. Draft Street Vacation Findings
 10. Copy of Recorded (existing) Permits that are Available
 11. Listing of Community Response Letters in Support
 12. Listing of Community Response Letters in Opposition
 13. Petition of Opposition
 14. Uptown Planners Recommendation with Staff Response
 15. Ownership Disclosure
 16. Project Chronology
 17. Plans Approved by Historic Resources Board
 18. Planning Commission Resolution
 19. Memo to the City Council, Not Accepting Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations