



City of Seattle  
Greg Nickels, Mayor

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**Department of Planning and Development**  
Diane Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Application Number:** 3005299  
**Applicant Name:** Snyder Hartung Kane Stauss Architects for Seattle Public Library (SPL)  
**Address of Proposal:** 2801 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue W. (Magnolia Branch)

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to allow a 1,443 sq. ft. addition to an existing library (Magnolia Library).  
Surface parking for 5 vehicles will be provided.

The following approvals are required:

**Administrative Conditional Use Permit-** to allow an expansion of an institution in a single family zone (Seattle Municipal Code 23.44).

**SEPA** – Environmental Determination  
(Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code (SMC))

**SEPA DETERMINATION** [ ] Exempt [X] DNS [ ] MDNS [ ] EIS  
[ ] DNS with conditions  
[ ] DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

**BACKGROUND DATA**

**Property & Area Characteristics**

The subject site is located at the North West corner of 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue West and West Armour Street in the Magnolia neighborhood. The site is zoned Single Family 5000 as well as all the surrounding properties in the near vicinity. The site area is 19,396 square feet and is developed with a Seattle Public Library – Magnolia Branch.

The building and site landscaping is a city of Seattle Historic Landmark.

34<sup>th</sup> Avenue West is designated as a minor arterial street and is fully improved with curb, gutter, sidewalk, street trees, a very wide planting strip and curbside parking. West Armour Street is fully improved with curb, gutter, sidewalk, planting strip with no curbside parking on the north side of the street.

The immediate area is characterized by single family homes. The Magnolia Playfields are located east of the site and Blaine Elementary School is located nearby south of the site. The primary commercial node in Magnolia is located about 4 super blocks south of the site.

Proposal

The project consists of a 1,443 square foot addition to an existing 6,356 square foot library. The addition consists of enlarging the staff work room, improving bathrooms to meet handicap standards, a study room, storage and janitor’s closet and a 55 seat meeting room with kitchen sink. The meeting room will be used during normal library hours to accommodate children’s story time, and other meetings that benefit from a dedicated space outside of the stacks and reading rooms.

The project is required to obtain an Administrative Conditional Use (ACU) permit to allow an institution in a single family zone. The Director may modify setbacks and parking quantity through the ACU review. SPL has requested the following modifications to development standards;

**Table A:**

| Development Standard                        | Required  | Provided                | Modification   | Existing  |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Parking quantity<br>(SMC 23.54.015 Chart A) | 23 spaces | 5 spaces                | 18 spaces      | 15 spaces |
| Rear setback<br>(SMC 23.44.014B)            | 25 ft.    | 6 ft. 11 inches to wall | 18 feet 1 inch | 47+ ft.   |

Public Comment

Two written public comment letters were received during the comment period which ended on December 13, 2006. Both letters requested a concern about the lack of parking proposed.

**ANALYSIS - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE**

The Land Use Code specifies that institutions, such as libraries, in single family zones meet the development standards for uses permitted outright in SMC Sections 23.44.008 through 23.44.016 unless modified by SMC 23.44.022, Administrative Conditional Uses. The applicable sections under SMC 23.44.022 are discussed below.

A. Dispersion

The proposal is not considered an expansion of an institution because the boundaries of the institution are not changing. Therefore this criterion is not applicable.

B. Demolition of Residential Structures/Reuse of Existing Structures

No residential structures are proposed for demolition or reuse.

C. Noise and Odors

Noise impacts to abutting residential uses could be reduced because the area of the addition is replacing surface parking. Noise and odors from vehicles using the surface parking lot will be eliminated. Mechanical equipment associated with the addition will be buffered and compliant with the Seattle Noise Ordinance.

D. Landscaping

Landscaping will be increased on site because surface parking will be eliminated and replaced with landscape.

E. Light and Glare

No light and glare impacts are expected in that all lighting will be fully shielded and directed away from adjacent uses.

F. Bulk and Siting

Remodeling and expanding existing libraries are often preferred versus purchasing new property and constructing a new facility since SPL already owns the site and patrons are accustomed to the location. However, current sites often cannot easily accommodate the additional building program because of their lot size, siting of the existing building or historical stature of the existing buildings. This site was challenging in that the existing library building is a landmark structure and requires that alterations be reviewed and approved by the Landmark Preservation Board (LPB). On December 27, 2006, the Landmarks Preservation Board voted to grant a Certificate of Approval for the proposed renovation and addition, and associated site alterations.

Any addition to this library requires encroachment into the rear yard because a 2<sup>nd</sup> story addition is not a viable option according to SPL because of operational difficulties and impacts to staffing. Additionally, a 2<sup>nd</sup> story addition would not likely be permitted to a City landmark. The only area able to accommodate an addition is the surface parking lot.

The existing library building is sited on the property which makes the yards most conforming to development standards by designating the east (34<sup>th</sup> Avenue W.) property line as the front yard and the west property line as the rear yard. The other yards are considered side yards. SMC 23.44.022K2 permits the director to reduce yards to 5 feet after finding, *“the reduced setback will not significantly increase impacts, including but not limited to noise, odor and comparative scale, to adjacent lots zoned residential and there will be a demonstrable public benefit”*.

In this case, the addition meets the front and side setbacks but not the rear setback. The wall of the addition is located 6 feet 11 inches from the west property line and the code requires 25 feet. The addition has a width of about 30 feet (parallel to the west property line) and a height of 19 feet. The scale of the addition is comparable to single family homes and accessory structures- perhaps smaller in scale as compared to single family homes which can attain a height of 35 feet.

Noise and odor could conceivably be reduced with this project because the area of the addition eliminates parking and replaces it with building.

The public benefit for the neighborhood and city is a new meeting room and new bathrooms which can be enjoyed and utilized by the public. Early public meetings conducted by SPL elicited positive neighborhood reaction to the loss of parking in favor an expanded library.

G. Parking & Transportation Plan

SPL is seeking to reduce the off-street parking quantity by 18 spaces. The Code required amount of off-street parking is 23 spaces, and the project will provide 5 spaces. SMC 23.44.022L1c permits DPD to modify parking quantity if the project provides a *demonstrable public benefit and does not cause undue traffic through residential streets nor create a safety hazard*.

SPL has provided a Traffic and Parking Impact Analysis prepared by Heffron Transportation, Inc. dated August 8, 2006 to support the modification request. The analysis provides information related to trip generation, traffic operations, safety and a parking utilization study.

As described in the parking study, SPL undertook a parking utilization study on Tuesday, June 13, 2006 and Thursday, June 15, 2006. The study measured parking during two time periods, between 3:00 and 4:00 PM (afternoon) and between 7:00 and 8:00 PM (nighttime) to determine existing on-street parking utilization. The study area is defined to be about 600 feet walking distance from the subject property. The study found that the worst time period was between 7:00 and 8:00 PM, and the average existing utilization was 21 percent. This means 21 percent of the available legal on-street parking spaces were occupied. Table B summarizes the utilization;

| Table B   |  |  |  |                                    |                     |
|---|--|--|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Parking Utilization Survey – June 13 & 15, 2006   |  |  |  |                                    |                     |
| Peak Demand<br>Weekday, 7:00 to<br>8:00 PM  | Average<br>Number of<br>Vehicles<br>Parked | On-Street<br>Parking Supply  | Average Utilization Rate                 |                                    |                     |
|   |  | 40   | 188                                      | 21%                                |                     |
| Estimated Parking Utilization   |  |  |  |                                    |                     |
| 1,443 S.F.<br>expansion & 60-<br>person meeting<br>room <b>not</b> in use   | Number of<br>Vehicles<br>Parked            | Parking<br>Demand<br>(accounts<br>for loss of<br>10 on-site<br>spaces) | No. of<br>Vehicles<br>Parked +<br>Demand | On-<br>Street<br>Parking<br>Supply | Utilization<br>Rate |
|   | 40   | 13 <sup>1</sup>  | 53                                       | 188                                | 28%                 |
| 55-person<br>meeting room in<br>use   | 40   | 31 <sup>2</sup>  | 71                                       | 188                                | 38%                 |
| <sup>1</sup> 1,443 S.F. x 2.08 vehicles per 1,000 S.F. = 3 + 10 to account for loss of 10 on-site spaces<br><sup>2</sup> using a rate of 3.0 persons per vehicle (55/3) = 18.33. 18 + 13=31 |  |  |  |                                    |                     |

The City considers a utilization rate of 85% to be at capacity; therefore spillover parking from a project would not easily be accommodated on the streets. In this case, the utilization rate even for the worst case estimate would be 38% well below capacity. This rate accounts for the loss of 10 parking spaces on-site and adds the quantity to the estimated demand.

Transit service to the site is limited in that there are 2 METRO bus routes that stop near the library. This includes route numbers 24 and 31. Route 24 operates along 34th Avenue W. at the project location, travels from Magnolia to Downtown, and has headways of about 30 minutes at noon during the week. Route 31 has its closest stop at 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue West and West McGraw Street which is

located about 4 super blocks south of the library. Route 31 travels from Magnolia to the University district and has headways of about 30 minutes at noon during the week.

The addition is not expected to change how employees commute or park their vehicles. Employees are part of the City's Commute Trip Reduction program which includes subsidized transit passes, vanpooling and other travel management demand measures to reduce single occupancy vehicles.

In summary, the quantity of parking provided, 5 spaces, clearly does not meet the parking demand from the proposed project; however, there is ample street parking and availability that will absorb the demand.

Over the past several years, SPL has conducted several neighborhood meetings to elicit comments on the expansion of the library. Any addition to this library would require some loss of parking in that the parking lot is the only viable space to accommodate an expansion. Because of the landmark status of the library and the surrounding landscape, the potential location for an addition was very limited. Based on neighborhood comments received at the public meetings, SPL concluded that the benefit of a meeting room addition as compared to retention of the surface parking was favored by the community.

SPL has proposed to create short term parking on the north side of West Armour Street abutting the library building. Currently there is no street parking allowed on the north side of West Armour so the proposal could result in a greater supply of on-street parking. Additionally, SPL is exploring options with SDOT to create on-street parking west of the library driveway on the north side of West Armour Street where it is currently prohibited. Posting time limits on parking along 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue West could contribute towards creating more parking opportunities because there would be more turnover.

SPL has determined that the public benefit derived from a meeting room outweighs the need for off-street parking, and DPD concurs in this specific case because the spillover will easily be absorbed by the on-street parking supply in the area.

#### H. Public Welfare and Injury to Property in Vicinity

General provisions for conditional uses in single family zones (SMC 23.44.018) provide that a use may be approved, conditioned or denied based upon whether it meets the specific criteria set forth for the use and also "whether the use will be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property in the zone or vicinity in which the property is located."

The existing use has been operating at this site for 43 years. As proposed, the addition will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property in the zone or vicinity.

### **DECISION - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE**

Based on the information provided and analysis performed, and the Departments experience with similar cases, the ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE is **GRANTED**.

### **CONDITIONS**

#### **Short-term Impacts**

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulate from building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by construction activities; potential soil erosion and potential disturbance to subsurface soils during grading, excavation, and general site work; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified construction related impacts. Specifically these are: Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (grading, site excavation and soil erosion); Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, removal of debris, and obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way). Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most short-term impacts, but impacts such as air quality and noise require further discussion and may require SEPA mitigation.

#### Noise

The project is expected to generate loud noise during demolition and construction. These impacts would be especially adverse in the early morning, in the evening, and on weekends. The Seattle Noise Ordinance permits increases in permissible sound levels associated with construction and equipment between the hours of 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekends. The surrounding properties are developed with single family housing and will be impacted by construction noise. The limitations stipulated in the Noise Ordinance are not sufficient to mitigate noise impacts; therefore, pursuant to SEPA authority, the applicant shall be required to limit periods of construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) to non-holiday weekdays from 7am to 6pm.

#### Air Quality

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality and will require permits for removal of asbestos (if any) during demolition. The owner and/or responsible party (ies) are required to comply with the PSCAA rules pertaining to demolition of projects with or without asbestos. This will ensure proper handling and disposal of asbestos, as well as demolition of structures without asbestos. No further SEPA conditioning is necessary.

#### Construction Worker Parking

There is limited space on the site for construction worker parking; therefore, they will likely utilize the surrounding streets for parking their vehicles and equipment. Based on the parking utilization studies summarized in this document, it has been determined that there is capacity on the street to accommodate demand from construction workers. However, use of on-street parking by construction workers could be adverse to the immediate neighbors if workers only utilize the available spaces on West Armour Street abutting the library. The project will be conditioned pursuant to SEPA authority to prepare a construction mitigation plan addressing, parking and staging of equipment and material in an effort to decrease impacts on the immediate residential neighbors. The construction mitigation plan must be approved by DPD prior to the start of construction.

#### Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased bulk and scale on the site; increased traffic in the area and increased demand for parking; increased demand for public services and utilities; and increased light and glare; increased energy demand; impact to a historic building and site; increased ambient noise associated with increased human activity and vehicular movement.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires stormwater to be released to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; the Seattle Building Code which provides prescriptive construction techniques and standards; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use, and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long term long term impacts, although some impacts warrant further discussion and possible mitigation.

#### Historic Preservation

The library site includes a historic building and site, and is protected by the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance which is administered by the Landmark Preservation Board. SEPA policy (SMC 25.05.675H) states that, “*For projects involving structures or sites which have been designated as historic landmarks, compliance with the Landmark Preservation Ordinance shall constitute compliance with the policy in subsection H2a above*”. Subsection H2a is the SEPA policy for Historic Preservation. The Board has reviewed the addition to the building through the certificate of approval process pursuant to the Landmark Preservation Ordinance and received a Certificate of Approval on December 27, 2006. No SEPA conditioning is necessary.

#### Parking

Parking demand would be increased by the project, but sufficient on-street parking capacity is available in the site vicinity to accommodate the parking demand. Parking is discussed in more detail earlier in this document. No SEPA mitigation is proposed for parking impacts.

#### Other Impacts

The other impacts such as, but not limited to, increased height, bulk and scale, increased traffic, increased ambient noise, and increased demand on public services and utilities are mitigated by codes and/or are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by condition.

### **DECISION - SEPA**

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

