



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

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

Application Number: 3010739
Applicant Name: Permits NW for the University of Washington
Address of Proposal: 4273 East Stevens Way NE

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to demolish a 75,500 sq. ft. building and to allow construction of a 5-story, 63,000 sq. ft. building (Balmer Hall) with a pedestrian bridge to be connected to an existing building (Mackenzie Hall). Project also includes 9,020 cubic yards of grading. The new structure will house classrooms, offices and meetings spaces for students and staff.

The following approval is required:

SEPA – to condition pursuant to 25.05.660

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

*The University of Washington Capital Projects Office prepared a Draft and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. The Draft SEIS was issued on September 9, 2007. The comment period ended on October 22, 2007. The Final SEIS was issued on February 27, 2008.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Site and Area Description

The project is located in the University of Washington (University) Central Campus, “historic core”. The development site is identified as 6C according to the 2003 Campus Master Plan – Seattle. The project site is located at 4273 E Stevens Way NE. This is the site of the existing Balmer Hall, which will be replaced with a new structure. The site is bounded by Paccar Hall to the west, Stevens Way to the north, Denny Hall to the south, and Mackenzie Hall to the east.

The character of the immediate area around the proposal is well stated in the University’s Campus Master Plan (pg 91):

“The Central Campus consists of the original core and the surrounding central perimeter. Preservation and character enhancement are the primary concepts for the historic buildings and important open spaces found in the original core of the campus. These spaces include the Liberal Arts Quadrangle, Denny Yard, Memorial Way, Rainier Vista, Hub Yard, Parrington Lawn, and Central Plaza, Archery Range, Sylvan Theater, Hansee Hall Courtyards, Denny Field, and the Medicinal Herb Garden.”

Project Description

The project consists of demolition of a 75,500 sq. ft. existing Balmer Hall and to allow construction of a 63,000 sq. ft. new Balmer Hall with a pedestrian bridge to be connected to an existing building (Mackenzie Hall). The new structure will include: classrooms, additional office space for staff, and meeting areas for students and staff.

Project will also involve 9,020 cubic yards of grading. This will include both cut and fill for the entire site.

No existing parking will be impacted by the project. Existing parking resources in the University’s parking inventory will be used to meet the demand of this project.

There will be no “exceptional trees” removed from the site. Following construction, the site would be landscaped. A variety of shrubs and groundcover would be planted around the perimeter of the building.

The University anticipates that work on the project will last about two years.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Notice of Application for the project was published by DPD on November 2, 2009. The required public comment period ended on November 15, 2009. No comments were made to DPD. The University of Washington published the Draft Supplemental EIS September 9, 2007. The public comment period ended on October 22, 2007. The Final SEIS was issued on February 27, 2008. Three comment letters were received. Most comments focused on the construction of the new business school rather than the demolition of Balmer Hall. The letter from the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation noted the potential significance of Balmer Hall. The City of Seattle Historic Preservation Office has determined that Balmer Hall is not an historically significant structure.

CUCAC, the City University Community Advisory Committee was briefed on the project and had no major comments on the demolition and construction of Balmer Hall.

ANALYSIS-SEPA

The University of Washington is the SEPA Lead Agency. The University prepared a Draft and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. The information in the environmental documents, the supplemental information submitted by the University, the experience of the lead agency and the Department of Planning and Development with the review of similar projects from the basis for this analysis and conditioning decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665D) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans, and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The Overview Policy states, in part, “Where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation,” subject to some limitations. Under such limited circumstances (see SMC 25.05.665.D.1-7), mitigation may be considered by the Department.

Short-term Impacts

The project is likely to have short-term adverse, construction-related environmental impacts with respect to earth, noise, air, water quality, traffic and pedestrian circulation. No other elements of the environment appear likely to be adversely affected, and no other elements were identified in the Environmental Impact Statement.

Air, Earth, and Water. The project is likely to cause some minor soil erosion from grading and other site work while the earth is exposed. These include decreased air quality due to dust and other particulates produced by construction equipment and operations, and tracking of mud and dirt onto adjacent streets by construction vehicles. These air and earth impacts are expected to be minor in scope and would be limited to the period of demolition which is estimated to be about four months. Several adopted City codes and ordinances provide adequate mitigation. The Street Use Ordinance provides for watering the streets to suppress dust; the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code provides for mitigation of earth impacts related to grading and excavation, such as soil erosion and runoff and the Seattle Building Code provides for appropriate construction measures in general.

According to the SEPA documents, approximately 9,020 cubic yards of cut and fill will be associated with the project. Soil stabilization will be assured by compliance with the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code and the Building Code. Further, Director’s Rule 200-16 was developed to apply Best Management Practices (BMP’s) to prevent erosion and sedimentation from leaving construction sites or where construction will impact receiving waters. The implementation of BMP’s, as contained in the DR 200-16, is a standard requirement for permit approval. The SEPA Checklist also states that Temporary Erosion and Sedimentation Control (TESC) Measures would be implemented to reduce risk of construction related erosion and no significant erosion impacts are anticipated.

Construction activities including worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions.

Noise. Short-term noise from construction would be generated during working hours. Noise levels during construction would be expected to comply with University standards and the City of Seattle Noise Ordinance. There are no residence halls within relative proximity to the site for which there would be adverse affects from the noise.

Circulation and Traffic. Pedestrian and bicycle routes would be temporarily affected by construction. Temporary bicycle and pedestrian routes would be in effect during construction activities.

The University and the contractor for the project will prepare a construction traffic plan for workers and construction vehicles. This plan shall be submitted to DPD prior to issuance to a construction permit. The plan shall outline delivery routes for truck trips to minimize disruption to traffic flow on 45th Ave, Stevens Way and Memorial Way and roadways, including appropriate signage, flaggers, route definitions, flow of vehicles and pedestrians during construction. The plan shall identify truck and construction circulation routes between the site and regional routes such as I-5 or SR 520. The plan shall require delivery trucks and material transportation trucks to avoid P.M. peak traffic periods on City streets.

Parking. There is both structured parking and surface parking located on campus within several blocks for the project site. These facilities would serve as construction-worker parking.

Greenhouse Gases. Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project.

Long-term Impacts

The SEPA Environmental Impact Statement and supporting documents disclosed impacts associated with all the elements of the environment. The long term impacts associated with plants, historic and cultural preservation, light and glare, land use and aesthetics warrant discussion. Elements of the environment not discussed below are not adversely affected and/or are adequately mitigated by existing codes and ordinances and/or mitigating components of the proposal itself.

Plants. There are no exceptional trees on site. A total of 11 trees will be removed. Following construction, the site will be landscaped. New trees will be planted and a variety of shrubs and groundcover would be planted around the perimeter of the building.

Historic and Cultural Preservation. The University of Washington contracted with BOLA architecture and planning to prepare a Historic Resources Addendum, incorporated as Appendix C in the Supplemental EIS. It identifies nearby historic resources and open spaces, including the

Observatory, Denny Hall, Hutchison Hall, Balmer Hall and Denny Yard, and provides a background synopsis for each resource. The City of Seattle Historic Preservation Officer has determined that the existing Balmer Hall is unlikely to meet the criteria for City of Seattle Landmark Designation.

While the SEIS determined that the project is not likely to cause the identified resources to experience significant impacts, it outlines a range of mitigation measures intended to minimize adverse impacts. DPD staff has reviewed the proposed mitigations and determines that no further conditioning is warranted in this regard.

Aesthetics. The Supplemental EIS identifies several points from which the project will be visible on the campus and it's near vicinity. The new Balmer Hall will be in the same location at the existing structure. It will be approximately 12,500 square feet smaller than the existing building. Shadows to nearby sites and adjacent open spaces are not likely to result in significant impacts. With the use of open space and materials, the new facility will accomplish goals set forth by the master plan for an aesthetically pleasing structure that is functional and maintains the character of the central campus.

Light and Glare. The building would generate light and glare that would be typical of University buildings, including street lights, interior and exterior building lighting. There would be light spillage would occur immediately around the building from transparent surfaces/windows. This would be typical and similar to other University structures and will be no different from conditions today.

Land Use. The CMP-Seattle 2003 identifies potential development sites and includes guidelines and policies for the development of three million square feet of building area on campus. Balmer Hall is identified as Site 6C and has the capacity to support 207,200 square feet of future building space.

Consistent with the CMP-Seattle 2003, the University proposes to demolish the existing Balmer Hall and develop a new five-story structure. The Plan also indicates the amount of new development allowed in each sector during the planning period covered in the document. The CMP-Seattle 2003 indicates that approximately 1,590,000 gsf of new development is allowed in the Central Sector. It further indicated that up to 20 percent additional gsf of development is allowed in each sector without an amendment to the Plan. A total of 1,908,000 gsf of new development is permitted in the Central Sector. This project and other projects within the Central Sector do not exceed the 1,908,000 gsf amount.

CUCAC Review

CUCAC (city University Community Advisory Committee) has reviewed the project and had no major comments on the demolition and reconstruction of Balmer Hall.

DECISION – SEPA

DPD has analyzed the proposal as described in plans provided by the University, has reviewed the SEPA checklist issued by the University and exercises substantive SEPA authority to condition the issuance of construction permits for the proposed development.

DPD approves the project subject to the conditions listed below.

CODE REQUIREMENTS

A Notice of Intent must be filed with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency prior to demolition of the existing structure.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Construction Permit Issuance (including grading, demolition and construction)

1. The University of Washington will prepare a construction traffic plan for workers, for review and approval by DPD. The plan shall outline delivery routes for truck trips to minimize disruption to traffic flow on adjacent streets and roadways, including appropriate signage, flaggers, route definitions, flow of vehicles and pedestrians during construction. The plan shall identify truck and construction equipment circulation routes between the site and regional routes such as I-5 or SR 520. Truck traffic related to the construction activity should avoid peak periods of 7:00 -9:00 AM and 3:00 – 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Before and During Construction

2. The University of Washington and/or other responsible parties shall implement the approved construction traffic plan.

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: April 15, 2010

Scott Kemp, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development
Land Use Services

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