



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

Application Number: 3010854
Applicant Name: Permits NW for the University of Washington
Address of Proposal: 4001 East Stevens Way NE

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to remove five exceptional trees and allow interior alterations and a 12,854 sq. ft. addition to the existing structure (HUB). The project will result in approximately 1,150 cubic yards of cut and 3,800 cubic yards of fill.

The following approval is required:

SEPA – to approve, condition pursuant to 25.05.660.

Administrative Design Review, SMC 23.41.004

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 Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance published on February 9, 2010.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Site and Area Description

This project is located in the University of Washington (University) Central Campus as a site addressed as 4001 East Stevens Way NE. This is the current location of the existing HUB. The site is generally bounded by East Stevens Way NE to the south and east, King Lane to the north and Yakima Lane to the west.

This area of campus contains major academic buildings, open space and libraries.

Project Description

The HUB was originally constructed in 1949 as a three-story, approximately 72,500-square foot building and was designed to function as the student union building on campus. Subsequent additions to the building in 1952, 1959, 1963 and 1975 resulted in the current configuration of the HUB which contains approximately 259,938 square feet and includes six levels (three above grade, one partially below grade and two below grade levels). This project is student funded.

The building serves a multitude of uses including providing dining facilities, student activity and student organization offices, university ballrooms, auditoriums, meeting areas, recreational areas, and student services. Due to the numerous additions and renovations over the years, the HUB currently has several significant shortcomings, including poor circulation and way-finding, lack of daylight and natural ventilation, asbestos-containing materials, energy inefficiency, outdated HVAC systems, and lack of seismic strengthening/retrofits. The project includes demolition of most of the interior and the existing southwest, southeast, northeast, and east facades and the restoration of the west façade. Renovation would increase the usable space within the structure by 10,000 gsf.

Grading for the project is minimal and constitutes approximately 1,150 cubic yards of cut and 3,800 cubic yards of fill.

New landscaping would be provided for the building, and would include a rain garden area to filter a portion of the stormwater runoff generated on the building site, as well as adaptive and native plants to minimize the demand for irrigation. Existing vegetation in the HUB Yard (to the west and the existing sidewalk) would be preserved. Trees and vegetation immediately adjacent to the existing building (not considered part of the HUB Yard but rather the project site). The University has participated in the City's Early Design Guidance process and has reviewed alternatives to removing any "exceptional trees." The University has committed to replacing any exceptional trees that cannot be preserved. The southeastern lawn area of the HUB Yard would be replaced with new soil and lawn to provide an improved, free draining turf area.

Parking is not impacted by the project and adequate supply exists in the University's parking inventory to meet the demands of this project.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Notice of Application for the project was published by DPD on February 12, 2010. The required public comment period ended on March 10, 2010. Two written comments were made to DPD; both expressing concern about removing exceptional trees.

The University of Washington published the Threshold Determination Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance on January 26, 2010. The public comment period ended on February 9, 2010.

CUCAC, the City University Community Advisory Committee was briefed on the project and had no major comments.

ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW

Design Review Requirement

Five trees around the perimeter of the existing HUB building designated as exceptional pursuant to the Tree Protection Ordinance (Chapter 25.11 SMC) are proposed for removal to allow for project development. These trees are each in close proximity to exterior walls of the existing HUB building. Before these trees can be removed the Seattle Tree Protection Ordinance requires that the project go through administrative design review and the Ordinance states at SMC 25.11.080:

“The Director may permit an exceptional tree to be removed only if the applicant demonstrates that protecting the tree by avoiding development in the tree protection area could not be achieved through the development standard departures permitted in Section 23.41.012.”

DPD has reviewed the development standards applicable to this project to determine if there is any departure that could be granted that would allow the applicant to avoid development in the tree protection area. However, there is no such development standard departure. The exceptional trees in question are placed close to exterior walls of the existing building to be expanded. Preservation of these trees would prohibit a fully functional expansion of the HUB building. Therefore, protecting the tree through a development standard departure is not possible in this instance. Nevertheless, DPD has conducted an administrative design review of the proposal and concluded it meets applicable design guidelines.

ANALYSIS-SEPA

The University of Washington is the SEPA Lead Agency. The University prepared a SEPA checklist and issued a Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance. The information in the checklist, 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 form 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 have been identified in the SEPA Checklist.

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 site preparation, 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 Checklist on approximately 1,150 cubic yards of cut and 3,800 cubic yards of 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 16-2009, 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. No further mitigation of potential short term noise impacts is warranted.

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 adjacent streets 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. There is no on-site parking therefore there will be no dislocated parking permit holders.

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 checklist 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. The project will result in the removal of approximately 70 trees along the perimeter of the existing building, including seven trees which meet the City of Seattle's designation as Exceptional Trees. The Exceptional Trees to be removed on the site include one Douglas fir, two Back locust, one Coast redwood, two Shore pine, and one Vine maple. Approximately 29 trees bordering the building would be retained. Following construction, the perimeter of the HUB would be landscaped in accordance with the applicable University standards. Approximately 31 new trees, as well as shrubs and groundcover, would be planted along the perimeter of the building. New trees bordering the HUB would be planted with a greater distance from one another to allow for better access to sunlight, air and water.

The existing HUB is bordered by a variety of deciduous and evergreen trees, including approximately 23 different species of trees, as well as various types of landscaping including shrubs and groundcover. The existing trees on the site were originally planted in close proximity to each other and to the building which hinders healthy growing conditions and obstructs maintenance access to the building.

To mitigate for the removal of trees, the project would provide an allowance that would be used to replant approximately 40 trees in other areas of campus, in accordance with the University's Tree Management Program; on an overall basis, project tree replacements would be anticipated to meet or exceed the City of Seattle tree replacement requirements.

New landscaping would reflect plants that are used in classes on campus and would provide educational value through the use of interpretive signage. Adaptive and native plants would also be used to minimize demand on irrigation and to filter stormwater on the site.

The HUB Yard is a significant open space within the Central Campus area and is located immediately to the west of the HUB. The HUB Yard is divided into two areas; the northern lawn and the southern lawn. The northern lawn is comprised of mature trees and a lawn area. The southern lawn is primarily comprised of an open lawn area and is often used for event space, activities and student displays. Except for the trees immediately adjacent to existing building that must be removed to permit construction (see above), existing trees within the HUB Yard would be protected and no trees within the HUB Yard would be removed during construction. As part of the project, a portion of the southern lawn of the HUB Yard would also be replaced with new soil and new lawn to provide an improved, free draining turf area.

Historic and Cultural Preservation. The site does not include any structures/objects listed or proposed for national, state, or local preservation registers. The existing HUB was developed in several phases, the first of which was constructed in 1949. The first wing of the HUB was designed by Bebb and Jones and contained approximately 72,500 square feet. The second wing was constructed in 1952 and provided an additional 86,154 square feet immediately south of the first wing. In 1959, the area to the west of the ballroom on the third floor was enclosed to create additional meeting room space. In 1975 the HUB was expanded to nearly its present day size with the addition of and the Husky Den dining area, lounge areas and an east ballroom.

The CMP-Seattle 2003 does not identify the HUB as a significant building. As a whole, the building is not an architecturally significant structure on the campus. However, it has a social significance for its continuous function as a student center and as a gathering place. The Norling mural, located on the second floor, was painted specifically for the student union building and depicts people and events between 1861 and 1925 that were important in the University's history. This work will be preserved and reinstalled when the project is complete.

An Historic Resource Addendum (HRA) was prepared. The project design incorporated several important building elements identified in the HRA including retention of the layered architectural elements that indicate the changing building needs over time; strengthening of the building's north-south axis which is complementary of the original design of the HUB; retention of the west façade, including the original 1949 entrance; and the addition of more natural light into the public areas. The west façade single glazed casement and fixed windows will be replaced with new thermally improved double glazed windows in a combination of fixed and awning windows with muntins to replicate the look of the existing windows.

Review, by staff in the Office of Urban Conservation of the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, of environmental documents providing information about the potential historic significance of the proposed demolition activities resulted in a conclusion that the existing structure is unlikely to meet the criteria for designation as a City of Seattle historic landmark.

No mitigation of potential impacts to historic resources is warranted.

Aesthetics. The project would be approximately 48 feet in height (three above-grade stories and one partially above grade story); similar to the height of the existing HUB. Principal exterior building materials would include brick, stone, and glass. Vertical and horizontal glass sunshades would be provided over portions of the facades. The ground floor entrances would be located at the southwest and southeast corners of the building. First floor entrances would be located at the north, west and southwest sides of the building. New landscaping would be provided along all sides of the building.

Views to and from the structure are limited due to the extensive landscaping around the building and surrounding buildings. The visual character of the HUB and site would not significantly change as a result of the project.

Light and Glare. Light and glare generated by the HUB would be typical of University buildings, including street lights, interior and exterior building lighting, and light associated with motor vehicles. Some light spillage would result from the structure itself through transparent surfaces during evening and early morning hours. Again this is typical of all University buildings.

Land Use. The CMP-Seattle 2003 does not specifically address remodeling projects. The HUB is located within the historic core of Central Campus. The Plan indicated that approximately 1,590,000 gross square feet of new development is allowed in the Central Campus. The Plan further indicates that up to 20 percent additional gross square feet of development is allowed in each major sector of the campus without an amendment to the Plan. This result in a total of 1,908,000 gross square feet of new development is permitted in the Central Campus. There is adequate development capacity in the Central campus to accommodate the addition of 10,000 square feet.

CUCAC Review

CUCAC (city University Community Advisory Committee) has reviewed the project and had no major comments.

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 portions 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 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: May 24, 2010
Scott Kemp, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development
Land Use Services

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