



DLR Group inc.
a Washington corporation

51 University Street, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98101

September 30, 2022

Nelson Pesigan
City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods
PO Box 94649

Re: Montlake Elementary School – Departure Comment Responses
3039304-SD

Dear Mr. Pesigan,

We received several emails and postcard comments related to our requested Departures from the City of Seattle Land Use Code. Some comments supported and/or expressed a level of low concern for the Departure requests while others raised concerns. There were also several comments outside of the scope of the Departures process that are unrelated to the requested deviations from the Land Use Code; DLR Group and Seattle Public Schools will work to address these comments. In fact, SPS and members of our design team participated in a meeting held at the school 9/28/22 with a few community members that submitted comments during this departures process. This letter is intended to clarify the Seattle Public School's thinking related specifically to the proposed Departures from the Land Use Code.

Several neighbors expressed concern over traffic from buses, vehicle parking around the school site, and the lack of vehicular parking on site. Currently, school bus loading and unloading occur on-street in the existing bus loading zone area and there is no striped vehicular parking on site. The proposed design maintains the existing conditions related to bus loading and striped vehicular parking. Due to the limited area of this site, providing on-site vehicular parking would result in sacrificing educational program and outdoor play space. Parking requirements of the Seattle Municipal Code are measured by the square footage of assembly space, and not the number of students or teachers. As such, it vastly overestimates the parking needed for a school. Results of a traffic study conducted by Heffron Transportation, Inc. indicated on street parking space utilization is below levels considered full capacity and there is sufficient available on-street parking to accommodate daily parking. and to accommodate events. Transportation and parking recommendations for large events are provided within the above-mentioned traffic study. Those recommendations are also included on slide 68 of the Departures presentation slides dated July 2022

Several comments expressed concern over the requested Departures for lot coverage, setbacks, and building height, stating the proposed design results in a building out-of-scale with the surrounding residential neighborhood. The proposed design calls for these Departures to meet the Seattle Public Schools educational program specifications. On lot coverage, the limited size of the site necessitates that the addition would require a departure from lot coverage requirements to meet educational program requirements without requiring an expansion of the site into adjacent residences. Concerns over the building's scale may be lessened by the property line not being at the sidewalk and the existing trees surrounding the site which will remain or be replaced at select locations. The existing property line is 6'-6" from the back of sidewalk consistently around the site. While the SMC requires the setback to be calculated from property line, the actual distance from the

sidewalk to building face will be greater. This additional distance will make the perceived setback more generous and soften the transition in scale. The three-story addition allows for educational program, some of which the current school does not have, while also respecting the height and materiality of the existing Landmarked building. The building height Departure is only required to accommodate a mechanical penthouse, which covers approximately 11% of the overall roof area and is set back from the edge of the building. The building has been designed to respect the height of the existing Landmark school and align with that height.

Comments were received regarding the requested Departure for long term bike parking quantity. The proposed design provides 30 long-term bicycle spaces. The current site does not provide any bike parking that meets the standards for long-term bike parking. A study conducted by school staff found between 3-5 students regularly bike to school each day and at most, 8 students bike to school each day representing approximately 4% of the existing student population. The proposed school design is intended to accommodate a student enrollment of 500, the 30 long-term bike parking spaces provided will accommodate 6% of the maximum enrollment. The proposed quantity brings the site closer to compliance with the code.

Several comments expressed concern over the Departure to allow a changing image message board sign, stating that it would be unnecessary and/or intrusive to the residential neighborhood. As indicated in the Departures request, the sign will not include video, flashing, scrolling, tumbling, or moving images and will operate during specific times (7am to 9pm). The sign allows SPS to alert families and the community to events taking place at the school and allows for the display of messages in multiple languages. The proposed location of the sign is set back from E Calhoun St and is located across the street from residences with significant foliage and homes similarly set back from the right of way. As such, the sign will not be of significant impact to the adjacent neighbors.

Lastly, there a few comments requesting to be included on the notification list for public meetings related to the Departures process. We assume you will notify individuals regarding further opportunities for public comment, whether that be virtual or in-person.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to comments on the proposed design.

Sincerely,
DLR Group



Ryan Luthman, AIA, CDT
Associate