



To: Urban Design Committee
From: Planning and Preservation Division
Date: January 4, 2018
RE: **Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent review of Overby-Sheppard Elementary School window renovations, 2300 1st Avenue; UDC File No. 2018-2**

I. APPLICANT

Robert (Bobby) Hathaway

II. LOCATION

2300 1st Ave.

Property Owner:

City of Richmond School Board

III. PURPOSE

The application is for conceptual Location, Character, and Extent review of exterior window renovations at Overby-Sheppard Elementary School at 2300 1st Avenue.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The intent of the proposed project is to provide a more secure environment for students and staff during the day and when the school is not in session. The proposal seeks to replace existing Plexiglass panels that were originally used to replace broken glass, with opaque bronze panels. In addition to increased security, the proposal seeks to prevent further vandalism and reduce utility and maintenance costs.

Staff is not supportive of this application and believes the proposed intent will not provide a more secure, efficient environment. The reduction in internal/external visibility with the installation of opaque, bronze panels may increase vandalism due to the perception of no "eyes on the street". Enhancing the security of the school transcends physical modifications and lies more in considering such elements as improved lighting, enhanced surveillance by others, and the programming of space.

In terms of character, the existing building consists of many windowless facades thus making windows a defining architectural feature of the building. The replacement of Plexiglass with bronze panels should be re-evaluated and more transparent-material alternatives should be considered (such as laminated, tempered, or safety glass). Furthermore, the installation of Plexiglass, in this manner, was inadequate and inappropriate for use on a public building and should never be considered an alternative to glass windows.

Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Planning Commission deny conceptual approval as submitted.

Staff Contact:

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

Overby-Sheppard Elementary School is bounded by, currently, an undeveloped, forested area to the west, a small service road adjacent to single family detached homes to the north, Juniper St. to the south, and 1st Avenue to the east. It sits on approximately 10.3 acres that is split between R-5 and R-6 zoned districts. It is surrounded by a residential neighborhood consisting mostly of single-family, detached homes to the north and east with a mix of newly constructed single family attached homes to the south.

b. Scope of Review

The proposed plan is subject to location, character, and extent review under Section 17.07 of the City Charter as identification for a “public building”.

c. Project Description

Richmond Public Schools is proposing to install a new, more secure window system. The perimeter areas will include a combination of a smaller 7/16” laminated glass window at the top with additional solid bronze paneling to match the existing framing and paneling to fill in the rest of the areas. The entrance and cafeteria areas will include an offset ¼” glass window with solid bronze paneling to match the existing framing and paneling and will fill one section on the opposite window. Both will be glass and the panels will be approximately the same size.

d. UDC Review History

In September 2017 Staff reviewed plans to update and enhance the character of roof elements by affixing a ribbed-metal cover to the existing wooden fascia and to use the same material to screen rooftop air conditioning equipment. This plan was approved by the Planning Commission in October 2017.

e. Master Plan

This project falls within the North Planning District of the Master Plan and the Highland Park Southern Tip Revitalization Plan. Aside from illustrating the property to remain as a public/institutional use, Overby-Sheppard Elementary is not highlighted in the plans.

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines impart that “The number, size, style and type of windows should be appropriate for the architecture of the building... Too many different window variations on a building can lead to visual confusion and should be avoided. Window design is also influenced by and should be compatible with details such as sills, sashes, lintels, depth of reveal, decorative caps and shutters.” The Guidelines further state “Window openings should not be filled in with brick because of the difficulties in matching brick and mortar colors. If the filling of openings is unavoidable, the filled surface should be recessed from the original wall surface. Energy efficiency should be considered in window design (page 18).”

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**