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To: Planning Commission  
From: Urban Design Committee  
Date: May 21, 2018  
RE: **Final Location, Character, and Extent review of Overby-Sheppard Elementary School window renovations, 2300 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue; UDC 2018-21**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Robert (Bobby) Hathaway

**II. LOCATION**

2300 1<sup>st</sup> Ave.

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond School Board

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for final 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 a combination of transparent laminate glass and frosted glass. In addition to increased security, the proposal seeks to prevent further vandalism and to reduce utility and maintenance costs.

Staff is generally supportive of this application as the resulting UDC subcommittee held an in-depth discussion, an onsite analysis, and compromised with all parties involved including the principal of the school and representatives from Richmond Public Schools. This application speaks to enhanced security by maintaining visibility to the exterior while, simultaneously, retaining the value in obscurity should an external threat arise.

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 transparent-materials allows for the continuation of this feature.

Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant final approval with the following conditions:

- If there are budgetary constraints to the scope of the application, elevations labeled 12,13,14,15, and 16 may substitute the milky white glass material (MW) with bronze paneling.

**Staff Contact:**

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## **V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

Overby-Sheppard Elementary School is bounded by 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**

Overby Sheppard ES was opened in 1977. All of the windows have been broken and currently have plexiglass installed in them with some areas including a metal grill covering over the windows for additional security. Any new glass type replacements are continually vandalized and present a repetitive cost to RPS in trying to maintain the glass.

The plexiglass is currently faded with scratches and burn holes and do not have a good seal which allows for air leaks into the building. The leaks cause the heating and cooling system to work harder, which drive up electrical cost which RPS has to pay for. The plexiglass can easily be shoved in and allow for someone to break into the building during or after school hours. The school had a break in within the last 8 months, which were the same children that shot an RPS employee.

Richmond Public Schools is proposing to install a new, more secure window system. The proposal consists of 19 window assemblies and will consist of removing the existing clear panels of Plexiglas, the installation of new horizontal mullions, and the installation of a combination of two types of glass. One will be laminated glass, identified on the plan as “CLEAR” and the other will be milky white glass, identified as “MW”. The pattern in which they will be arranged speaks to enhanced security while maintaining natural light.

### **d. UDC Review History**

In March 2018 Staff reviewed plans for window renovations. The plans were consistent with those presented at the January meeting with Staff recommending denial of the conceptual plans as presented as it did not meet guideline recommendations. After further discussion, the UDC recommended that the CPC defer the application for resubmission. Additionally, the UDC developed a sub-committee to convene a public meeting onsite and to review the proposed plan. The subcommittee convened on April 10, 2018 to discuss the plans and came to a compromise that serves as the foundation for this application.

In January 2018 Staff reviewed plans for window renovations. The plans consisted of replacing the existing plexiglass material with a pattern of opaque paneling to match the existing framing and paneling and glass. The overall plan reduced the amount of transparent material between the interior and exterior. Staff communicated with the applicant that the Staff Report would recommend

that the UDC recommend that the CPC deny the conceptual plan as presented as it did not meet guideline recommendations. Thus the applicant withdrew the application.

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**