

STAFF REPORT
To The
KELSO HEARING EXAMINER

PRESENTED BY: Steve Langdon, Interim Planning Manager
HEARING DATE: April 7, 2020
APPLICATION NO.: CUP 20.001
APPLICANT: Kelso School District No. 458
PROPERTY OWNER: Kelso School District No. 458
REQUEST: Conditional Use Permit in accordance with KMC §17.18.040 to allow “Schools.”
LOCATION: 1609 Burcham Street, Kelso, WA (See application for Assessor’s parcel numbers)

ASSOCIATED

CASES: None
ZONING DISTRICT: Residential Single-Family 5 Zone
TYPE OF ACTION: Quasi-judicial

BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

On January 31, 2020 Kelso School District No. 458 submitted an application to the City of Kelso for a conditional use permit. (Exhibit A) This conditional use permit (CUP) will allow the district to proceed with a project to modernize the Butler Acres Elementary School and construct a 4,600± square foot addition to the school. The application was declared complete on February 21, 2020. (Exhibit B)

The project also involves removing existing portable classrooms, reconfiguring the parking lot and installing a bus exit only drive aisle. Also, an existing covered playground area will be converted to classrooms. As part of the project the district acquired six single-family homes that will be demolished to accommodate the parking lot reconfiguration and the new bus only aisle. The number of parking spaces will increase from 70 to 108, an increase of 38 spaces.

In order to accomplish the project, the school district purchased six neighboring single-family lots. At the time the application was determined to be complete, the school district had only acquired five of them. The site plan that accompanied the public notice did not include the sixth lot. Since then, the school district acquired the sixth lot. The attached site plan includes the sixth lot.

The project is not intended to increase the student population

The site is not on any historic register.

Neighboring land uses:

- South – Burcham Street, single-family homes.
- East – North 18th Avenue, single-family homes
- North – undeveloped area
- West – single-family homes and undeveloped area

The Comprehensive Plan classifies the subject property as Lower Density Residential. The parcel is within the Residential Single-Family 5 Zone (RSF5).

The application is attached as Exhibit A.

SEPA DETERMINATION

An Environmental Checklist for the proposed CUP/building project was reviewed pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act and a determination of non-significance was issued on March 5, 2020. [SEP 20-001 SEPA checklist]

The comment period for the SEPA checklist ended on March 19, 2020. One comment letter was received from the Washington State Department of Ecology. SEPA documents are attached as Exhibit B.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of application, notice for public hearing and SEPA determination was published in The Daily News on March 8, 2020. The comment period closes on the hearing date. Notice was mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the site. A notice on site was posted on March 6, 2020. As of this writing, one comment from the public has been received. It is attached as Exhibit C.

Note: The original mailed and posted notices included a site plan that showed only five single-family lots being converted for school use. Since then, the school district acquired another single-family lot. The attached site plan is the revised site plan that incorporates the new lot.

APPLICABLE CODE SECTIONS

17.18.030 Official zoning map.

Subsection A states that “The purpose of the residential single-family 5 (RSF5) zone is to maintain neighborhoods where existing development patterns and the availability of infrastructure support smaller lots and higher density single-family residential development.”

Staff comment: Butler Acres Elementary School is an existing school in an established single-family residential neighborhood. The school serves nearby residential neighborhoods. Upgrades to the school will not negatively impact existing development patterns or

infrastructure. Improvements to parking lot circulation, increased number of off-street parking spaces and a dedicated bus aisle should lessen the impacts to the neighborhood street system.

Conditional Use Permit

The purpose of a conditional use permit is to allow uses within a particular zoning classification that may be of service to the area and with minor mitigation, fit within the zone. Topics traditionally addressed through the conditional use permit process are compatibility with the comprehensive plan, impact to the usability of neighboring properties, noise, light, activity, and traffic.

Kelso Municipal Code does not contain specific criteria for approving a conditional use permit. Instead, staff is using the criteria of site plan approval (KMC 17.10.030) to ensure that basic compatibility is established between this proposal and all other existing development within the City.

The purpose of a site plan review is to help ensure that new development activities do not adversely affect the public health, safety and welfare of residents of Kelso, and that new development activities are compatible with existing patterns of development and the provisions of the Kelso comprehensive plan.

KMC 17.10.030 (C)(1) The project is consistent with the Kelso comprehensive plan and meets the requirements and intent of the Kelso Municipal Code, including the type of land use and the intensity/density of the proposed development.

Staff analysis: Staff finds no conflicts with the comprehensive plan and finds that this proposal will meet the requirements of the Kelso Municipal code.

1. KMC Table 17.18.040, Table of Permitted Uses

Schools are permitted with a Conditional Use permit in the RSF5, Residential single family 5000 zoning classification.

2. KMC 17.22.110 Parking

RSF5 requires parking through analysis.

Staff analysis: The student population is not increasing as a result of this project. Yet the number of parking spaces is increasing from 70 to 108, an increase of 38 spaces. The school district purchased six lots in order to better accommodate parking lot circulation and increase the number of parking spaces. The result will be less impact on neighborhood streets.

Staff finds that the applicant meets the intent of this section of the code.

3. KMC 17.22.100 Landscaping

(A)(2) Providing vegetated screening between single-family residential areas and adjoining land uses.

(A)(4) Encouraging the retention of existing vegetation, tree stands and significant trees by incorporating them into the site design.

(G) Perimeter Landscaping Buffer Requirements.

Staff analysis: Preliminary landscaping plans are not traditionally required at this step in the land use process. However, much of site is already landscaped and the new construction will add landscaping.

Staff finds general compliance with this requirement and compliance will be more specifically addressed during the building permit approval process.

(2) The physical location, size, and placement of the development on the site and the location of the proposed uses within the project minimize impacts to any critical resource or floodplain area to the greatest extent possible or are compatible with the character and intended development pattern of the surrounding properties.

Staff analysis: According to the SEPA checklist “there is an unnamed riparian fish bearing stream flowing to the Coweeman River in the NW corner of the site.” The applicant has stated that no work will be within 200 feet of the riparian area and staff agrees. Thus, staff finds there will be no impact to critical resources or floodplain areas.

(3) The project makes adequate provisions for water supply, storm drainage, sanitary sewage disposal, emergency services, and environmental protection to ensure that the proposed project would not be detrimental to public health and safety.

Staff analysis: Staff finds that as an existing school site all utilities and emergency services are present.

(4) Public access and circulation including non-motorized access, as appropriate, are adequate to and on the site.

Staff analysis: The school district purchased six lots in order to better accommodate parking lot circulation and increase the number of parking spaces. The project also includes installing a dedicated bus aisle. The result will be less impact on neighborhood streets. Staff finds compliance with this criterion.

(5) Adequate setbacks and buffering have been provided. Any reduction to setbacks or buffer widths is the minimum necessary to allow for reasonable economic use of the lot and does not adversely impact the functional value of the critical resource area or adjoining land uses.

Staff analysis: Staff finds compliance with this criterion.

(6) The physical location, size, and placement of proposed structures on the site and the location of proposed uses within the project are compatible with and relate harmoniously to the surrounding area.

Staff analysis: This is an existing school site. Existing portable classrooms are being removed to be replaced by 4,600 square foot addition and the conversion of an existing covered play area to classroom space. Staff finds no additional impact to neighborhood as the result of physical location, size, and placement of proposed structures.

(7) The project adequately mitigates impacts identified through the SEPA review process, if required.

Staff analysis: A SEPA process was conducted for this project. The SEPA comment period ended on March 19, 2020. One comment letter was received from the Washington State Department of Ecology. The Ecology comments will be addressed during the approval process for building permits.

(8) The project would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, or general welfare.

Staff analysis: Staff finds that this project will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, or general welfare.

17.10.140 Permit Processing.

(B) The City may, in approving an application, impose such conditions as may be required to comply with this title and to protect the public health safety and welfare. These conditions and safeguards include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Measures identified during the environmental review process;
- b. Measures necessary to comply with the provisions of the Kelso comprehensive plan;
- c. Measures necessary to comply with provisions of the Kelso Municipal Code; and/or
- d. Measures necessary to ensure compatibility of the proposed development activity with neighboring land uses, and consistency with the intent and character of the zoning district.

Staff analysis: Staff finds that, with the recommended condition as set forth herein, the proposed application complies with the environmental review, Kelso comprehensive plan, and Kelso municipal code and further that that the proposed development activity is compatible with neighboring land uses and consistent with the intent and character of the zoning district.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of Conditional Use Permit CUP20-001 for the Butler Acres Elementary School project at 1609 Burcham Street with no conditions.

EXHIBITS

- A. Conditional Use Permit Petition with applicant's narrative including applicant's site plan
- B. SEPA documents

C. Lynn Woodard comments