



STAFF REPORT
To The
KELSO HEARING EXAMINER

PRESENTED BY: Steve Langdon, Interim Planning Manager
HEARING DATE: March 31, 2021
APPLICATION NO.: LUA2021-0004
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: Huntington Middle School, 500 Redpath Street, Kelso, WA (Assessor’s parcel number 21582)

ASSOCIATED

CASES: LUA2021-0005 Conditional Use Permit to temporarily use Catlin Elementary School for Huntington Middle School students

ZONING DISTRICT: Residential Single-Family 5 Zone

TYPE OF ACTION: Quasi-judicial

BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

On February 8, 2021 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 Huntington Middle School and construct a 6,000± square foot addition to the school. The addition will house a new auxiliary gym and a new main building entry. The application was declared complete on February 21, 2020.

The modernization project involves upgrades to mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems plus seismic improvements and new architectural finishes. No substantial changes to the school grounds are expected.

The project is not intended to increase the student population

The site is not on any historic register. A “Historic Property Inventory Form” is included with the application.

Neighboring land uses:

South – School athletic fields, single-family homes.

East – Forested steep slopes, Interstate 5

North – Single-family homes
West – North Kelso Drive, single-family homes

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

The application is attached as Exhibit A.

SEPA DETERMINATION

The City of Kelso State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) official determined that the project is categorically exempt from the SEPA process.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of application and notice for public hearing was published in The Daily News on March 17, 2021. The comment period closes on the hearing date. Notice was mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the site on March 15. A notice on site was posted on March 19, 2021. As of this writing, no comments from the public have been received.

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: Huntington Middle School is an existing school in an established single-family residential neighborhood. The school serves nearby residential neighborhoods and rural areas. Upgrades to the school will not negatively impact existing development patterns or infrastructure. The student population is not expected to increase as the result of this project.

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. The project does not involve any substantial reduction in parking spaces. 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: There are steep forested slopes to the north and east of the project area. The project does not involve any work near those slopes.

(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: There is adequate public access and circulation for the existing school. The student population is not expected to increase as a result of the project. The building additions will not disrupt existing access and circulation. 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. The project primarily involves the modernization of an existing 78,519 square foot building. The 6,000 square feet of additions will primarily supplant a lawn area that is well away from any neighboring land uses. 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: The applicant submitted a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist with the application. After review of the checklist, the Kelso SEPA official determined that the project is categorically exempt from the SEPA process

(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 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 LUA2021-0004 for the Huntington Middle School project at 500 Redpath Street with no conditions.

EXHIBITS

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

Staff report date: March 22, 2021