



Item No: 2  
Meeting Date. 2/26/13

**To:** Planning Commission

**Date:** 2/15/2013

**Authorized By:** Ron Munekawa  
Chief of Planning

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**Subject:** **PA 12-054 ST.MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL EXPANSION MASTER PLAN**, Master Plan for an existing private elementary and middle school located at 16 Baldwin Avenue, 15 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, corner parcel at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue/El Camino Real (APN 032-313-010, 034-141-020). Tree removal on an adjacent parcel at 50 N. San Mateo Dr. (032-313-060)

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## RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission approve the project by making the following motions:

- A. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration as adequate to assess the environmental impacts of the project, based on the findings attached as Exhibit A; and
- B. Approve the Site Plan and Architectural Review for the demolition of existing school buildings and the construction new school buildings; the Special Use Permit to construct off-site parking and playground uses; and a Site Development Permit for grading and tree removal based upon the Findings for Approval in Exhibit A and Conditions of Approval in Exhibit B.

## BACKGROUND

The applicant has held various neighborhood meetings for the project and this project was reviewed by the Planning Commission at a study session held on May 22, 2013 (refer to Attachment 5). In response to feedback from neighborhood meetings and this study session, the applicant has revised the project and submitted a formal application.

## **PROJECT SITE DESCRIPTION**

The project site occupies almost an entire block bounded by El Camino Real, Baldwin Avenue, N. San Mateo Drive and 2nd Avenue. The project site includes the following addresses: 16 Baldwin Avenue, 15 Second Avenue, northeast corner of 2nd Ave/El Camino Real and 50 N. San Mateo Drive. (Please note that 50 N. San Mateo Drive portion of the site, the location of the Mills Medical Arts Office Building, is only included as part of the project since the project proposes to remove trees along this parcel adjacent to the property line.). The 16 Baldwin Avenue address is the location of the existing St. Matthew's Episcopal Day School and Church; the 15 2nd Avenue address is the location of the existing Charles House building; and a corner parcel is also included as part of the project site along El Camino Real and 2nd Avenue (refer to Attachments 1 and 2). San Mateo Creek runs through the site directly adjacent to the corner parcel and the Charles House portion of the site. San Mateo Creek is open in this location and to the east of the site runs below grade underneath the existing Mills Peninsula Hospital Buildings.

As stated above, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and Day School is located at 16 Baldwin Avenue in San Mateo, California. The School is located on a portion of a city block bounded by El Camino Real at its western boundary, Baldwin Avenue to the north, San Mateo Drive to the east, and Second Avenue to the south. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church has been located at the site since 1865, and the School has been located at the site since 1953.

The School includes Preschool, Pre-K and Kindergarten enrollment of 50 children and a 1st grade through 8th grade population of 181, totaling 231 students. In addition there are approximately 41 staff, teachers and administrators. There are 35 parking spaces on the School's Baldwin Avenue site.

The school would add the Charles House to its facilities. The Charles House is located at 15 Second Avenue at the southern quadrant of the block at Second Avenue and 500 feet south of the St. Matthew's main site on Baldwin Avenue. The Charles House was built as the church rectory in 1917 and continued in this function until 1956. It is currently operated by the Church and does not host regular academic activities. It supports the Church as it houses members of its staff.

The existing Charles House is two stories in height with a partial basement and an attic. The building includes a kitchen, dining room, sitting room, chapel and two upstairs apartments. There are three parking spaces on the property. In addition to the parking spaces is a large impervious concrete surface located behind the structure. This concrete surface acts as the staging area for Gatepath, a nonprofit gardening operation which is sponsored by Mills Hospital.

Adjacent and to the west of Charles House is an undeveloped 15,961 square foot portion of parcel of land which is owned by Mills Hospital/Sutter Health. This land, defined by 2nd Avenue, El Camino Real, San Mateo Creek and the Charles House is referred to as the "Corner Site". The site is included in the overall master plan and it includes eight parking spaces and playground uses for the school's proposed preschool facility.

Multi-family and single-family residential uses and office uses are located to the north of the project site across Baldwin Avenue; medical office and hospital uses directly adjacent to the east; office and retail uses to the south of the site across 2nd Avenue and multi-family, single-family and medical office uses to west of the site across El Camino Real.

The project site is currently designated as Downtown Retail Core in the General Plan. The zoning district classification for the site is Commercial Business District/Residential Overlay District (CBD/R). School uses are a permitted use in this district.

## **PROPOSED PROJECT**

A Master Plan is proposed for the school to manage increasing enrollment demand. The School proposes to construct on the Baldwin Avenue campus a new classroom building known as St. Matthew's Hall as described below.

Currently, the school operates with single sections (i.e., one classroom) of 22 students per grade level. With the new classroom space and the addition of Charles House to its facilities, the School would provide two sections of 16 to 18 students per grade level, accommodating up to 375 students in preschool through 8th grade, an increase of 144 students to the current school population. The project proposes a maximum of 50 staff for this student population.

The preschool referred to as the Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC), would be relocated from the existing school building known as the Nursery (on the campus' northeast corner at Baldwin Avenue) to Charles House. The ECLC would accommodate up to 45 students. The other 330 students would be located at the Baldwin Avenue site in the existing building known as the Classroom Building and the new classrooms to be developed at St. Matthew's Hall. There would be a gradual increase in enrollment between 2014 and 2019 that would stabilize at no more than 375 students in the year 2019. Preschool enrollment would increase by approximately 12 students in 2014, to a total of 45 students in grades Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten, all at the Charles House ECLC.

At the main Baldwin Avenue site, additional students would be enrolled each year into the key entry points in Kindergarten and 6th grade. Beginning in 2014 and to 2016, non-preschool student enrollment would increase by approximately 24 additional students per year. From 2017 to 2019, school enrollment would increase by approximately 12 additional students per year, when the kindergarten through 8th grade population would meet the enrollment target of 34 students per class.

### Proposed Phasing

The School Master Plan consists of three phases:

I. Addition to the Charles House for the Early Childhood Learning Center and development of an outdoor play space at the Mills Corner Site.

II. Removal of the Nursery Building and its replacement with a new 4th grade through 8th grade classroom building including a below grade gymnasium. Phase II would also include the addition to and reconfiguration of the main parking area and landscaped entry court.

III. Improvement of the Julia Beylard Hall's (JBH) multipurpose and theatre space and the addition of a rooftop play area.

*Phase I - The Early Childhood Center at Charles House:*

The existing Early Childhood Center which operates in the Nursery Building at 16 Baldwin Avenue will be relocated to the Charles House site located at 15 Second Avenue (refer to Attachment 1).

The existing Charles House is an existing 7,397 square foot wood frame structure. The new facility will be expanded at the rear (to the north) of the existing structure with a single story 2,854 square foot wood frame flat roofed building. The total building area when completed will be 10,251 square feet of space (including an existing 1,185 square foot basement area and 684 square foot attic).

Phase I will take seven months to complete with occupancy being at the start of the 2013/2014 school year. The student and staff population from the Nursery Building will move to the Charles House addition in when it is completed.

The Charles House addition will be comprised of three classroom spaces including new restrooms and storage areas. Portions of the rear (north side) of the Charles House including the existing kitchen will be integrated into the preschool space while the remainder of the Charles House will remain largely unimproved and dedicated to the use of the Church. The two apartments on the second floor are to remain and will continue to house members of the Church staff.

The addition is to be built at the northern side of the Charles House, within and over the area that is currently covered with a concrete drive surface. The new addition is to be set back adequately from the top of the San Mateo Creek bank and from the riparian edge.

The site will be developed to include parking for 11 cars. Three of the vehicles would be parked at the existing curb cut and driveway on the east side of the Charles House and eight vehicles will be parked at a newly constructed parking area which would be accessed by the new curb cut and driveway to the west of the Charles House.

The project also includes a new loading area (for drop off and pick of students) along the project site frontage. This area will require the removal of four metered parking spaces. The public works department and Hexagon have reviewed this and determined that given the location and utilization of these spaces, parking operation in the downtown will not be significantly impacted. However, the project is required to enter into a street parking and leasing agreement to compensate for the lost revenue of these spaces.

Adjacent to the Charles House is the Mills Hospital Corner Site which is defined by El Camino Real, Second Avenue, the Charles House, and the San Mateo Creek. The church and school are finalizing an easement with Sutter Health/Mills Hospital to establish the right to use the Corner Site for outdoor play area and to locate several parking spaces at the Corner Site's southeast corner. The unimproved landscape at the Corner Site would be improved with a new play area which would include hard and soft scape landscape elements. The perimeter stucco, iron and concrete fence surrounding the southern and western edges of the Corner Site would remain intact, except for a new opening required for the driveway entry at Second Avenue.

The use of the corner property will be provided to the School and Church by Sutter Health, the land owner, through a non-exclusive easement with a minimum term of ten years. The 18,566 square foot parcel of land is a remnant of the Mills Hospital site is "landlocked" by the riparian corridor, El Camino Real, Second Avenue and Charles House. Sutter Health recognizes that its use and future development is quite limited and has agreed to provide the easement to the School and Church. The project will require a Special Use Permit to allow for the provision of off-site parking for the Charles House on this corner parcel.

#### *Phase II - St. Matthew's Hall and Site Improvements*

St. Matthew's Hall will be a new 26,759 square foot, three story light gauge steel classroom structure with a 5,200 square foot subterranean gym facility. St. Matthew's Hall is to be located on the site where the Nursery Building and kindergarten play spaces currently reside. The project would involve the removal of the Nursery Building.

The new structure would contain a library, two classrooms (each) for grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, administrative areas and church focused classroom spaces for Sunday school. The new structure would be attached to the adjacent to the Fireplace Room which is located at the northern side of the Julia Beylard Hall (JBH) as described below and as shown on Sheet B-A1.00. The stone wall adjacent to the sidewalk at Baldwin Avenue and the Nursery Building would be removed during construction and reinstalled at the end of construction.

Phase II would also include the reconfiguration and improvement to the parking lot and paved play area and open space that is defined by El Camino Real, Mills Hospital, the Classroom Building and the St. Matthew's sanctuary. The design of the this parking area and courtyard space would require a new curb cut at El Camino Real and the abandonment of the existing curb cut as a vehicular access point in lieu of a pedestrian access point; the placement of the reconfigured parking area within the existing basketball and parking area located at the western side of the property for 39 vehicles; and the reclamation of open space defined by the southern side of the sanctuary to the western end of the Classroom Building with a newly landscaped courtyard.

### *Phase III - Julia Beylard Hall Improvements and Rooftop Play Area*

Phase III includes the preservation, renovation, and expansion of the existing Julia Beylard Hall (JBH) located at the southeast corner of the main campus for use as an improved theatre and church and school community space. The anticipated start date for Phase III is not scheduled and is contingent upon the school and church's ability to raise additional funds.

The JBH would be expanded into the "L" shaped open space at the building's east and southern edges to contain a large open hall that would function as a theatre and community hall. Improvements would include a new stage, new seating area, and new audio visual components. The expansion would involve the removal and replacement of the eastern façade and the replacement of the roof structure.

The JBH renovation would retain and preserve its western façade as well as the interior of the western façade. The roof elements of the JBH as viewed from the school's courtyard would be retained. A portion of the roof of the JBH would be developed to include an open air play area that would be contained within a fence.

The Fireplace Room (also known as the Krebs Room), the kitchen, the entry foyer, library at the mezzanine level, the courtyard and the Classroom building and colonnade would remain intact.

### *LEED Environmental Evaluation*

The project proposes construction of the new buildings in accordance with the City's requirement for LEED Silver standard. Please refer to Attachment 4 for more detailed information on the included LEED checklist.

### *Parking and Loading*

The project proposes a total of 50 parking spaces to serve the proposed school uses. Thirty-nine parking spaces would be provided at the location of the existing school and church. Eleven spaces would be provided at the location of the proposed pre-school in the Charles House Building.

The City of San Mateo Zoning Code requires that preschool, elementary and middle school uses provide parking at a ratio of 1 space per staff person. The project meets this requirement since the maximum number of staff will be 50. A Special Use Permit is being requested to allow eight parking spaces to be located at the corner of Second Avenue/El Camino Real directly adjacent to the Charles House property. Eight of the proposed parking spaces to serve the Charles House will be located on the corner parcel. In order to implement this, a Special Use Permit will be required. In addition, the project will need to execute an easement with Sutter Health to secure this parcel for this purpose.

The project also includes two loading areas along public street frontages. The loading area for the existing school uses along Baldwin Avenue will remain as it is. Currently, there is a white

striped designated loading area that allows for drop-off and pick-up of children. The proposed new loading area in front of the Charles House will require the removal of four on-street metered parking spaces and would be 58 feet in length. Both of these loading areas would allow for parking between the hours of 6 am to 6 pm. The project will include a condition of approval that the project reimburse the City on annual basis for the revenue lost as a result of the removal of the parking spaces.

### *Bicycle Parking*

The project proposes bicycle parking in conformance with the City Bicycle Parking requirements. The project would incorporate the short term bicycle rack will provide 17 spaces and the long term (locker) will provide the required two spaces. The racks will be located near the Baldwin entry adjacent to the existing back flow preventers. The bicycle parking for the Charles House portion of the site be located at the northern edge of the driveway and southern edge of Charles House. It will provide the required two short-term spaces and 1 long-term (locker) space.

## **STUDY SESSION**

At the study session held on May 22, 2012, the Planning Commission discussed and commented on several aspects of the proposed project including the following (refer to Attachment 5):

- Concerns regarding the construction of new buildings with a historic district. There should be sensitivity to the existing historical buildings located on the site
- Concerns about potential impacts to San Mateo Creek and riparian habitat. The project should provide a setback from the top of bank. The creek should also be incorporated as an amenity for the school.
- How will an agreement to use the Mills property be implemented? This project relies on corner parcel and would not be successful without assuring it is available for the foreseeable future.
- Would like to see pedestrian and bicycle improvements as part of the project. Maybe the school can partner with the City to provide these types of improvements?
- How will drop off and pick up work for both the main school and pre-school sites given that loading is provided on the street?

## **PROJECT ISSUES/REVISIONS**

In response to the Planning Commission comments made at the Study Session, the project has addressed the following issues:

### Historic Resources

The school and church property have been determined to be eligible as an historic resource (refer to a detailed evaluation in the Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study prepared for the

project). The City's historic architectural consultant (Architectural Resources Group) evaluated the proposed project and has determined that the project is consistent with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (The Standards) and The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (The Guidelines). The Standards have been widely applied and have served as a guide for state and local officials across the country. In California, their use has been applied to assess impacts to historic resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A project that meets The Standards is considered mitigated to a less-than-significant level under CEQA.

In addition, the project includes a condition of approval that requires that all permits are reviewed by Architectural Resources Group to ensure consistency with their design review letter and ultimately with the Secretary of the Interior's standards and guidelines.

#### San Mateo Creek/Biotic Resources

In order to determine potential project impacts in the vicinity of San Mateo Creek, a report was prepared by TRA Environmental Sciences Inc, (refer to Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study). The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of riparian vegetation along the creek, discuss the creek's environmental setting, vegetation and wildlife, the potential for special-status species, and any potential constraints to the proposed building extension.

The closest construction proposed adjacent to the creek is for the Charles House. The new classrooms at the Charles House will be constructed on an existing parking lot. Therefore, the area proposed for the school expansion is already developed and does not support natural habitat.

Although several trees are proposed for removal adjacent to the creek, the project includes conditions of approval for nesting surveys so that wildlife is not disturbed during construction. In addition, the project meets the City of San Mateo's Downtown Specific Plan that requires that no structures or obstructions will be placed within San Mateo Creek's banks and that a 10-foot maintenance setback is provided.

The pre-school's play area is proposed adjacent to the creek and is using the creek and the adjacent wooded area as an amenity for this play area, however, this area will also be fenced for safety.

#### Heritage Trees

In order to evaluate existing trees, identify trees to be removed, and provide recommendations for trees to be retained, an arborist's report was prepared by Arborwell (refer to Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study). A total of 34 trees are proposed for removal, 14 of which are Heritage Trees, as defined in section 13.52 of the Municipal Code. A replacement value for the 34 trees proposed for removal has been assigned. As a result, a combination of 32 replacement trees ranging in size from 15-gallon to 24-inch box will be planted onsite. In addition, fees will be contributed toward the City's Tree Planting Fund. The project also includes conditions of approval detail tree protection measures including tree protection zones, monthly

monitoring reports and site inspections to ensure the preservation of existing trees proposed to be retained on the site.

#### Charles House Parking and Play Yard

The project proposes the use of the corner site at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and El Camino Real for the provision of eight parking spaces and a play yard for the Charles House ECLC. It has been determined that a Special Use Permit and easement is required to allow for these improvements to be provided off-site. The project will be required to obtain the easement allowing the development of the above-mentioned uses with the owner of this property prior to the issuance of any building permit. The project applicant has negotiated this easement with Mills Hospital/Sutter health and has indicated that an agreement is in place to obtain the easement.

#### Circulation/Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan

To determine the project's conformance with the City's Zoning Code and Downtown Area Plan Transportation Demand and Parking policies, the City contracted with Hexagon Transportation Consultants to review the transportation demand management program submitted by the applicant: Circulation and Transportation Demand Management Plan, March 2012, by Fehr and Peers (refer to Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study).

The Fehr and Peers Transportation Management Plan developed for the school identifies programs and policies that the school could implement to reduce automobile travel to school and reduce the potential vehicle queue and parking demand at the school site. Hexagon's review of the Fehr and Peers report indicates that: "Overall, the TDM plan developed for the school's Master Plan identifies possible measures that could be implemented in an effort to reduce school generated traffic and parking demand."

As noted in the Transportation section of this Initial Study, no significant impacts are projected as result of the proposed project. However, the applicant has proposed implementation of the Fehr and Peers transportation demand management program to retain the current operational levels (pick up and drop off) even with increased enrollment. The project includes several conditions of approval to ensure that operational levels remain as they are. During the annual review, City staff will review the effectiveness of the transportation demand management program.

The City of San Mateo is currently in the process of forming a Downtown TMA and participation in the programs offered by a TMA could also help to reduce vehicle trips. Projects being constructed in the downtown area are asked to contribute seed money to the formation of this organization which will provide transportation programs that can be utilized by employees, residents and students in the downtown. As noted above, St Matthew's Episcopal Day School will contribute \$10,000 to the Downtown TMA.

As stated in the project description, the project also includes a new loading area (for drop off and pick of students) along the project site frontage. This area will require the removal of four

metered parking spaces. The Public Works department and Hexagon have reviewed this and determined that the loading area will provide enough length to provide the necessary drop off and pick area for the pre-school and that given the location and utilization of these spaces, parking operation in the downtown will not be significantly impacted. However, the project includes a condition of approval that requires that the project to enter into a street parking and leasing agreement to compensate for the lost revenue of these spaces. The fee will correspond to lost revenue of the meters during the duration of the use on the property and increases will correspond to downtown meter rates.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

A Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study was prepared for the project and circulated for public review from January 23, 2013 through February 21, 2013. This document was also sent to the state clearinghouse for state agency review. This document was provided to the Planning Commission on January 23, 2013 and can be found on-line at the City's website-<http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/DocumentCenter/View/35637>

This document addresses potential impacts resulting from the project in variety of environmental areas including, cultural resources, biotic resources, air quality, noise, traffic and circulation, geology, water quality, hydrology, and hazardous materials. The project has been determined to a result in less-than-significant impacts with the mitigation measures incorporated into the project. The project also includes a Mitigation Monitoring Program as part of the conditions of approval to ensure these measures are implemented.

## **POLICY AND PLAN CONFORMANCE**

For a detailed description of the project's conformance with the objectives and policies of the General Plan and other policies refer to the Findings of Approval included as Exhibit A.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Staff has not received any letters from the public during the review of this project.

## **EXHIBITS:**

- A. Findings for Approval
- B. Conditions of Approval

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1. Project Plans
- 2. Vicinity Map
- 3. Data Form
- 4. LEED Checklist
- 5. Study Session Meeting Minutes from May 22, 2012

*Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study (provided to the Planning Commission on January 23, 2013- also available online at <http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/DocumentCenter/View/35637>*

**CC: (AR and attachments)**

Joel Roos, Applicant

Mark McKee/Eric Hinds, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and Day School

Ed Erwin, Sutter Health

**CC (Email notification)**

Interested Parties and Neighborhood Meeting Attendees

Downtown San Mateo Association

San Mateo Chamber of Commerce