

Appendix B-3:
Update to Historical Resources Technical Report



Memorandum

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Project: SMMUSD Historic Resources Consulting

Project No.: 210301

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Via: E-mail

RE: Review of Updated Campus Plan, Franklin Elementary School, Santa Monica

In 2022, Architectural Resources Group, Inc. (ARG) prepared a Historical Resources Technical Report (HRTR) evaluating a proposed campus plan for Franklin Elementary School, which is located at 2400 Montana Avenue in the City of Santa Monica.

The campus plan was further refined and updated following the preparation of the HRTR. Pursuant to your request, ARG has reviewed the updated campus plan to assess potential impacts to historical resources. This memorandum includes a discussion of ARG's analysis, and is intended to be an addendum to the existing HRTR.

Background

In 2019, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD, or the District) adopted Districtwide Educational Specifications to provide guidance on developing future learning environments in a manner consistent with the demands of twenty-first century instructional design. Following adoption of the Educational Specifications, SMMUSD assessed the campus of Franklin Elementary School and identified a series of proposed improvements that, when implemented, would bring the campus into conformance with the Educational Specifications.

Between 2020 and 2022, a campus plan for Franklin Elementary School was prepared by dsk architects. The campus plan proposed the demolition and removal of eight existing portable buildings, two modular buildings, and one permanent building; construction of three new buildings; and renovation of two existing buildings and outdoor areas on the existing campus and an adjacent satellite facility.

Between 2021 and 2022, ARG prepared a Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) of Franklin Elementary School to identify potential historical resources on the campus.¹ Through this process, one campus building, Building B (constructed in 1937 and enlarged in 1952), was found to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and for local (City of Santa Monica) designation. This evaluation included both the building and its associated front landscape. Building B (including its front landscape) is a “historical resource” as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as well as District policies and regulations. No other buildings or improvements on the campus were found to be eligible for historic designation.

In October 2022, ARG prepared a Historical Resources Technical Report (HRTR), which included an evaluation of potential impacts to historical resources resulting from implementation of the campus plan. The HRTR evaluated both direct and indirect impacts to historical resources, and arrived at the following conclusions:

- The Project would not result in direct impacts to historical resources. The California Register-eligible Building B would neither be demolished nor materially impaired by implementing the campus plan. In addition, the potential Montana Avenue Multi-Family Residential Historic District – which was identified as a potential historic district by the City of Santa Monica, and includes the Franklin Elementary School campus – would not be demolished or materially impaired by implementing the campus plan.
- The Project would not result in indirect impacts to historical resources since there are no historical resources adjacent to the campus.²

Summary of Revised Project

Between 2023 and 2024, dsk architects further refined and updated the campus plan for Franklin Elementary School to account for new information. Following are key elements of the updated campus plan:

- Interior renovation of the existing Building B to accommodate administrative and support spaces, one classroom, and two teaming rooms

¹ The HRI was prepared to comply with Board Policy (BP) 7113 and Administrative Regulation (AR) 7113, which were adopted by the District in 2021, and require the District to identify and evaluate potential impacts to historical resources on its campuses prior to approving a master plan or school facilities project.

² For purposes of the HRTR, “adjacent” refers to designated and potential historical resources that are located directly next to, or in direct view of, the Project Site.

- Interior renovation of the existing auditorium building (Building A)
- Demolition of five existing buildings: C (library), D, E, F (classrooms), and G (kindergarten)
- Construction of six new buildings:
 - Flex Science, Music, and Art (4,300-sf)
 - Library (5,000-sf)
 - Kitchen/Cafe (7,600-sf)
 - Makerspace (4,200-sf)
 - Classroom Building (31,000-sf, divided between two stories)
 - Kindergarten/Transitional Kindergarten Complex (10,700-sf) and play yard
- Construction of new outdoor spaces:
 - U-10 soccer field with running track
 - Hardscape play area with basketball and handball courts
 - New play equipment
 - New parking lot with approximately 44 spaces

With the exception of the classroom building, which would be two stories tall, new buildings associated with the updated campus plan would be one story tall, and would largely be located on the west and east perimeters of the campus. The Makerspace building would be located at the center of the campus, to the rear (south) of the existing Building B, which would remain. New outdoor spaces would be located in the southern half of the campus, with the soccer field located at the southwest corner of the campus. The new parking lot would be located on the site presently occupied by the auxiliary kindergarten campus at Montana Avenue and 25th Street.

Analysis of Updated Campus Plan

As discussed, there is one historical resource on the Franklin Elementary School campus: Building B (including the building and its associated front landscape), which was found to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register and for local (City of Santa Monica) designation. Also as discussed, other buildings and improvements on campus are not eligible for historic designation.

The updated campus plan would result in some alterations to Building B, a historical resource. Specifically, the building's interior spaces would be renovated and reconfigured to accommodate administrative and support spaces, one classroom, and two teaming rooms. However, the scope of these interior improvements is limited to interior spaces, which have been extensively modified

and are not included in the list of character-defining features of the historical resource. Interior alterations to Building B would therefore not result in the removal or destruction of historic fabric. Other alterations to Building B would include the removal of a one-story projecting volume at its northeast corner. This volume is associated with a later addition to the building and is not associated with its historic design. Its removal would not result in the destruction of historic fabric, nor would it significantly change the appearance of the historical resource when viewed from the public-right-of-way on Montana Avenue. It would also allow for a clear demarcation of space between Building B and new construction on the eastern perimeter of campus (discussed below).

The updated campus plan proposes retention of the existing landscape at the front (north) of Building B, which is a part of the historical resource.

Like the 2022 campus plan, new construction undertaken as part of the updated campus plan would be located almost entirely to the rear (south) of Building B. New construction would therefore have limited visibility from key vantage points of the historical resource, which is principally viewed from Montana Avenue to the north. New construction would not be attached to Building B, and sufficient space would exist between the historical resource and the new buildings to allow for an unambiguous delineation between historic fabric and new construction.

Also like the 2022 campus plan, the updated campus plan proposes the construction of a new, two-story classroom building along the east perimeter of the campus. This building would introduce additional height to this area of the campus but would not detract from, or otherwise compromise the significance of Building B. The new classroom building would not obstruct important views of Building B or alter the existing spatial relationship between Building B, its associated front landscape, and the public-right-of-way. By virtue of its height, setback, and visual character, Building B would continue to read as the focal point of the Franklin Elementary School campus, as it historically has.

Building B would retain all of its character-defining features at Project completion. These include:

- Orientation to the north, toward Montana Avenue
- Formal, monumental massing
- Two-story building height
- Simple, rectilinear building forms
- Flat roof and parapet
- Smooth stucco exterior walls
- Central entrance surmounted by a shallow hood

- Extensive fenestration comprising groups of tall, narrow window channels
- Continuous stringcourse delineating the first and second stories
- Wall-mounted sign that spells “FRANKLIN SCHOOL” in Broadway-style typeface
- Minimal decorative details and surface ornament
- Broad lawn, providing an entrance sequence between the street and building
- Mature trees and shrubs (in lawn)
- Central concrete walkway and flagpole (in lawn)
- Concrete planters with buffer plantings near the base of the building (in lawn)

The updated campus plan would not result in direct impacts to the potential Montana Avenue Multi-Family Residential Historic District for the same reasons discussed in ARG’s 2022 HRTR.

Conclusions

ARG reviewed the updated campus plan for Franklin Elementary School with the purpose of evaluating potential impacts to historical resources, both on and adjacent to the campus, and arrived at the following conclusions:

- The updated campus plan would not result in a direct impact on historical resources. The Project would not result in the demolition or material impairment of the significance of Building B. It will therefore not cause a substantial adverse change to the significance of the historical resource. Building B will retain all of its character-defining features and will continue to retain sufficient integrity to convey its historical significance. Building B will thus continue to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register and for local designation as a City of Santa Monica Landmark at Project completion.
- The updated campus plan would not have a direct impact on the potential Montana Avenue Multi-Family Residential Historic District. The Project Site (Franklin Elementary School) is a non-contributor to the potential district and would continue to be such upon Project completion. The district will continue to be eligible for local designation as a City of Santa Monica Landmark at Project completion.
- The updated campus plan would not have indirect impacts on historical resources as there are no historical resources located adjacent to the Project Site.