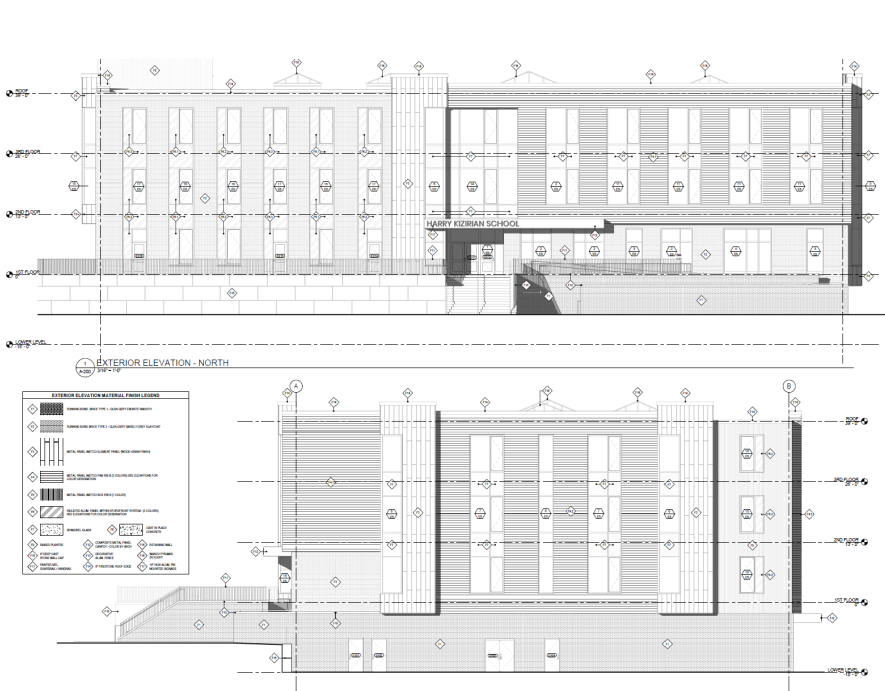


Providence City Plan Commission

April 16, 2024



AGENDA ITEM 3 ■ 60 CAMDEN AVE



Building rendering



View of site with parking area



Aerial view of the site

OVERVIEW

OWNER/ APPLICANT:	City of Providence, Owner and Applicant	PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	The applicant is requesting to combine master and preliminary plan approval for construction of an elementary middle school building with waivers from submission of state approvals.
CASE NO./ PROJECT TYPE:	24-004 MA Master and Preliminary Plan		
PROJECT LOCATION:	60 Camden Ave AP 69 Lot 215 Public space zoning district	RECOMMENDATION:	Approval of the master and preliminary plan and variances as detailed
NEIGHBORHOOD:	Smith Hill	PROJECT PLANNER:	Choyon Manjrekar

spaces will be provided in a secondary parking lot accessible from Danforth Street. A drop-off lane will be created in front of the building on Camden Ave. The rear parking lot is currently used for bus drop offs. This lot will be enhanced with the creation of a turnaround for more efficient bus pickup and drop offs.

In addition, bicycle parking zones will be provided in the front, side and rear of the school and in the parking lot.

Traffic Management

Traffic on Camden Ave currently runs one-way northbound between Chalkstone Ave and Chad Brown Street. The applicant has submitted a traffic study in support of a proposal to change the direction of traffic on Camden Ave to one-way southbound between the two streets. Per the study, the current configuration results in congestion and safety concerns during pickup and dropoff times. During the morning dropoff, vehicles traveling northward were observed to be stopped on both sides of the street, with students existing cars sometimes stopped in the middle of the road and walking between traffic. During pickup times, parents are required to park cars at the side of the street and pick up children from the school. This has resulted in congestion on the street and families often having to walk between traffic to access vehicles and have caused delays on Camden Ave.

With the direction of traffic reversed to travel south one-way, the study proposes using a pickup/dropoff lane in front of the school. This would allow for more efficient movement of vehicles on Camden Ave, eliminate the need to stop vehicles in the middle of the street and reduce congestion. The change will require modifications to the signalized intersections of Smith Street and Chalkstone Ave. The study does note that the change in direction will result in a reduced level of service on Chalkstone Ave, Smith and Bath Streets during morning and afternoon peaks. However, it would result in a more orderly traffic pattern on Camden Ave.

Landscaping

The PS zone requires 30% of canopy coverage for a lot area of approximately 88,650 SF. The applicant will meet this requirement by using large and medium trees around the site. Trees will mostly be clustered in the parking area with some also proposed in front of the school. Approximately 26,700 SF of canopy coverage is proposed for the site with an additional 3,560 providing the 10% necessary for the parking area.

The Forester has reviewed the site and found that the tree currently in front of the school is not significant and can be removed. The applicant is proposing to retain three large—but not significant—trees to the north of the proposed building and has included them in the canopy coverage calculation. The City Forester is concerned that the trees could be damaged during construction. The Forester recommends that as a condition of final plan approval, the CPC include a condition that the applicant shall replace the trees with an equivalent amount of canopy coverage should they die or be damaged within two years of the school's construction.

Environmental management

A drainage plan and soil erosion control plans have been submitted. The applicant is proposing to install stormwater treatment facilities to the south and west of the building. The plan shows that stormwater runoff will be reduced for one to 100 year events. The erosion control plan includes the use of temporary barriers and vegetation specifications to prevent erosion during construction.

Waivers

The applicant has requested waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage, particularly from the Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC) and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). Approvals from Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RI DOT) may also be required if the traffic pattern were to change. The applicant has contacted state agencies to begin the submission process and has included the location of

drainage infrastructure on the site. The DPD is not opposed to granting the requested waiver as the time required by state bodies to take action can vary. The DPD recommends that the CPC grant the requested waivers with the condition that the items be submitted with the final plan. This would be consistent with good planning practice as it would allow the applicant to proceed with the approval process.

Combination of stages

The applicant is requesting to combine master and preliminary plan approval. Subject to granting the waiver, the DPD recommends that the CPC combine approval, finding that the applicant has submitted the required elements for both stages.

Findings—Land Development Project

Section 1005 of the Commission's *Development Review Regulations* requires that the City Plan Commission make the following findings as part of their approval of all land development project applications. Based on the analysis contained herein and subject to the conditions contained in this report, staff has prepared the following findings regarding the request for approval of the Master and Preliminary Plans:

1. *Consistency—The proposed development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be inconsistencies.*

The subject property is located in an area that the future land use map of Providence Tomorrow: The Comprehensive Plan intends for public space/open space. The plan describes this area as one intended to include public buildings and open space. The development will conform to the comprehensive plan as schools are permitted by right. The development will conform to objective CS-1 of the comprehensive plan which encourages development and provision of public educational facilities in the City.

2. *Compliance with Zoning Ordinance—The proposed development is in compliance with the standards and provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.*

Use: Educational facilities are permitted by right in the PS zone.

Dimension and design: The development complies with the dimensional requirements of PS zone, as discussed.

Parking: The applicant will meet the vehicle and bicycle parking requirement.

Landscaping: The applicant will meet the canopy coverage requirement.

Lighting: A lighting plan indicating conformance with the ordinance has been submitted. The applicant will use a combination of freestanding and wall mounted luminaires to illuminate the site. Per the plan, there will be no light trespass onto neighboring properties.

3. *Environmental Impact—There will be no significant environmental impacts from the proposed development as shown on the final plan, with all required conditions for approval.*

No negative environmental impacts are expected as the applicant is expected to conform to all environmental regulations.

4. *Buildable Lot—The subdivision or development project, as proposed, will not result in the creation of individual lots with such physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations and building standards would be impracticable.*

There are no physical constraints that impact development of this property.

5. *Street Access—All proposed development projects and all subdivision lots shall have adequate and permanent physical access to a public street. Lot frontage on a public street without physical access shall not be considered compliance with this requirement.*

Physical access to the site is provided from Camden Ave and Danforth Street.

Recommendation—Waiver

The CPC should grant the requested waiver from submission of state approvals at the preliminary plan stage subject to the condition that they be submitted with the final plan.

Recommendation—Combination of stages

The CPC should vote to combine master and preliminary plan approval, having approved the requested waivers.

Recommendation—Land Development Project

1. The CPC should approve the master and preliminary plans.
2. The applicant shall replace in kind the canopy coverage of any trees lost during construction, or within two years of completion of construction.
3. The applicant and their traffic engineers shall work with the City traffic engineer on implementation of the traffic study.
4. Final plan approval should be delegated to DPD staff.