
DATE: November 2, 2023

STAFF REPORT

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.1

TO: FOSTER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

PREPARED BY: HELEN GANNON, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

CASE NO.: UP2023-0063

PROJECT LOCATION: 1998 BEACH PARK BLVD. – NEIGHBORHOOD 2

REQUESTED ACTION/PURPOSE

Use Permit request to approve a 1,298 square foot addition, interior remodeling, removal of the south entrance and formalization of the north entrance, addition of seven new windows, expansion of outdoor learning space, and new street-side landscaping at the existing Kids Connection Elementary School located at 1998 Beach Park Blvd. (UP2023-0063) and find the project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15301.

GENERAL INFORMATION

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Service Commercial

ZONING DISTRICT: C-O Commercial Office

HISTORY: On February 2, 1995, the Planning Commission approved Use Permit (UP-95-001) through Resolution No. P-07-95 for the conversion of a former restaurant into a private elementary school (Grades K-5).

On May 1, 1997, the Planning Commission approved Use Permit (UP-95-001B) through Resolution No. P-30-97 to add 7,105 square feet to the Kids Connection elementary school to support a future student population of 245 and 17 faculty/staff.

SURROUNDING LAND USE

North:	State Route 92
Northeast:	Commercial office (preschool)
South:	Beach Park Boulevard
Southwest:	Commercial Office (Hillsdale Office Center)

LOT SIZE: 30,622.68 SF (094-191-210)

PUBLIC HEARING PUBLIC NOTICING

The public was advised of this Regular Meeting in the following ways:

- Ad in the Foster City Islander – October 11, 2023
- Foster City Website: www.fostercity.org – October 11, 2023
- Foster City TV Channel 27 – October 19, 2023, through November 2, 2023
- Electronic Marquee Sign in Leo Ryan Park – October 19, 2023, through November 2, 2023
- Email Notification to listserves – October 11, 2023
- Mailing to property owners who own property within a 300-foot radius – October 17, 2023
- Public Posting Places – October 11, 2023

NEIGHBOR NOTIFICATIONS

Consistent with the Use Permit (UP) process and procedures, the applicant is required to provide neighborhood notification to the adjacent properties of the proposed project site. The intent of the Neighbor Notification Form is to inform potential interested parties of the proposed site developments and encourage neighbors to submit any questions or concerns. Neighbor Notification Forms were provided to four (4) adjacent properties (by mail) of 1998 Beach Park Blvd. including 1900 Norfolk Street Unit 150, 1999 Beach Park Blvd., 1291 Hillsdale Blvd., and 1981 Beach Park Blvd. Staff did not receive any Neighbor Notification Forms expressing any questions or concerns with the proposed project.

In addition to the neighbor notification forms provided by the applicant to the adjacent property owners, a Public Hearing notice was sent to the adjacent property owners within 300 feet informing them of the November 2, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting.

BACKGROUND

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The subject site is located within the commercial area of Neighborhood 2. The site is bounded by Beach Park Boulevard to the south, an existing surface parking lot to the north, and existing commercial/office buildings to the east and west.

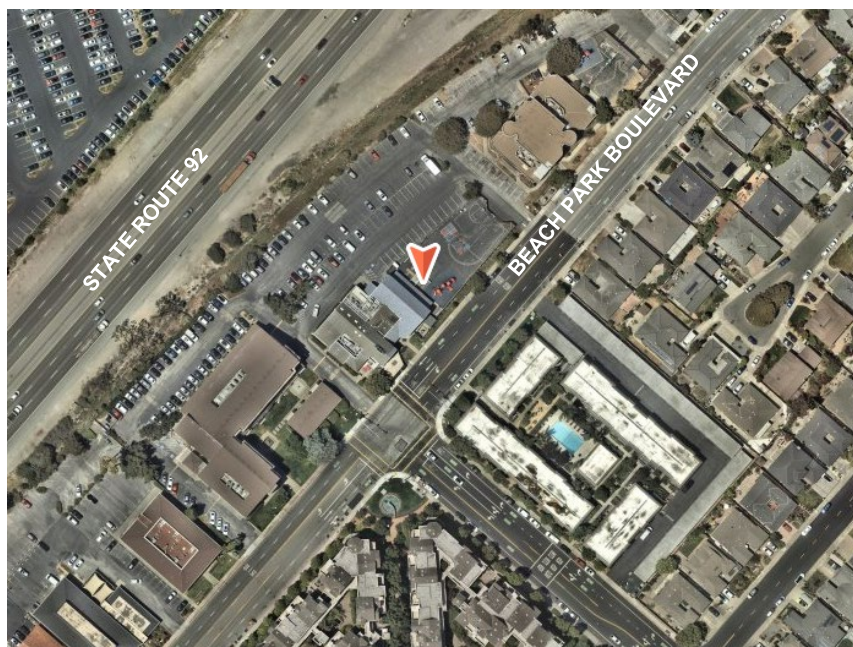


Fig 1: Location Map; Source: NearMap 2023

PROJECT OVERVIEW

On May 10, 2023, a Use Permit application was submitted by Kids Connection for a 1,298 square foot addition, interior remodeling, removal of the south entrance and formalization of the north entrance, addition of seven new windows, expansion of outdoor learning space, and new street-side landscaping to the existing elementary school located at 1998 Beach Park Blvd. The proposed project will not change the number of students or faculty/staff on site and parking will remain the same.

ANALYSIS

GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING CONSISTENCY

General Plan Land Use

The Land Use Map of the General Plan designates the use of the subject site as “Service Commercial.” The City’s General Plan includes Service Commercial land use category as follows:

“Service Commercial includes a mix of uses providing general services. The area is bounded by Foster City Boulevard, East Hillsdale Boulevard, and State Route 92 is designated Service Commercial and contains a mix of research and development firms, storage and professional offices. Also located in this area are food establishments, including several fast-food restaurants, and a community theatre (Hillbarn).”

Staff comments: LUC-L-7 of the Land Use and Circulation Element includes “Continue to work with the affected school districts to coordinate the design of school facilities to integrate them into the neighborhood in a manner that is attractive, safe and available for joint school and neighborhood use.” The proposal for addition, interior remodeling, expansion of the outdoor learning space, and new street-side landscaping aims to enhance the existing school facility and make it more secure.

Zoning/General Development Plan

The subject site is zoned C-O where permitted uses include administrative, professional and business offices; accessory uses such as pharmacies in connection with medical offices, restaurants which are clearly subordinate to the main use of the building; parking lots improved in conformity with the standard prescribed for required off-street facilities in Chapter 17.62; and other uses which, in the opinion of the planning director, are similar to and no more offensive than the above-listed uses.

On February 2, 1995, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution No. P-07-95 (Attachment 4) approving the conversion of an existing restaurant into the current elementary school (UP-95-001). In 1997, the original Use Permit was amended to expand the footprint of the building to account for future students and faculty/staff members.

Pursuant to section 17.06.070 Use permit – Grant or denial of the Foster City Municipal Code: *Upon receipt of the application for a use permit the planning commission shall determine whether or not the establishment, maintenance or cooperation of the use applied for will, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the persons residing or working in the neighborhood of such proposed use, or whether it will be injurious or determinantal to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the city.*

Staff comments: The proposed project is consistent with the Zoning because the proposal is to add 1,298 square feet to the existing building, remodel the interior, remove the south entrance and formalize the north entrance, add seven new windows, expand the outdoor learning space, and add new street-side landscaping on the subject site. The project will not increase the number of students and/or faculty/staff members from the Use Permit Modification (UP-95-001B) approved in 1997. The proposal does not change the existing use of the site and the use continues to be consistent with the permitted zoning.

Additionally, the C-O Zoning District (Section 17.22.040 of the Foster City Municipal Code) allows for a maximum lot coverage of 35%, where 34.3% is proposed. Pursuant to Section 17.62.060.B.3, of the Foster City Municipal Code, an elementary school requires one parking stall for each employee (excluding auditoriums and stadiums which must be parked accordingly). The subject school does not have any auditoriums or stadiums, and the project will remain consistent with UP-95-001B which permitted 17 faculty/staff members. The site currently has and will continue to provide 17 off-street parking spaces.

USE PERMIT MODIFICATION

USE PERMIT APPLICATION (UP2023-0014)

The applicant is proposing to add 1,298 square feet, modify the north and south entrances, remodel the interior of the school, add seven new windows, and provide new street-side landscaping. Modifications taking place along the south entrance include the addition of a stage, new drought-tolerant landscaping, and a sound screen wall to provide separation between the outdoor learning space and Beach Park Blvd. The proposed wall will be no greater than six feet in height and will comply with all code requirements found in Chapter 17.52 of the Foster City Municipal Code.



Fig. 2: South Elevation; Source: Project Plans (Attachment 2)

The addition and all exterior modifications will consist of new vertical siding to match the existing building. The north entrance will have a new horizontal accent siding in the Kellymore Water Chi color to complement the existing blue building. All new landscape planters will be drought tolerant. The new roof will match the existing tile roof in color and material.



Fig. 3: North Elevation; Source: Project Plans (Attachment 2)

The proposed modifications will not modify the existing parking, overall height, or setbacks required pursuant to Chapter 17.22 of the Foster City Municipal Code. No signage is requested as a part of this permit application.

Staff comments: The proposed project will overall enhance the architectural style and aesthetics of the existing elementary school. Due to the restriping of the curb frontage along Beach Park Boulevard, the elementary school lost all on-street parking available for easy drop off/pick up at the south (front) entrance. The project will enclose the south (front) entrance, expanding the outdoor learning space, assisting with pedestrian safety and circulation, and making the school frontage more visually appealing. The north entrance will be remodeled and landscaped to provide a safe, new main entrance to the school.

The interior remodel and addition will help provide for additional meeting rooms/offices and new space dedicated to individualized instruction. The project will enhance overall safety, provide additional learning space, and will remain within the approved use for the site. Therefore, the modifications on site will not be detrimental to the health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the persons residing or walking in the neighborhood.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) includes project types that have been determined to not have significant impacts on the environment, which makes them exempt from further studies under CEQA. This proposed project is for the addition of 1,298 square feet and interior/landscaping modifications to an existing elementary school. The existing use will not be changing. Therefore, the project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15301.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Consistent with the findings stated in the Resolution (Attachment 1), the proposal is consistent with Title 17 (Zoning), Chapter 17.06 (Administration, Construction and Enforcement) of the Foster City Municipal Code, the General Plan's goals and policies, and all applicable Planning Commission Policies. For these reasons, staff recommends the project be approved as proposed, subject to the Conditions of Approval in Exhibit A of Attachment 1.

NEXT STEPS

The Planning Commission's action on the proposal is final unless appealed to the City Council. There is an appeal period of ten (10) calendar days following any action of the Planning Commission.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Resolution
Attachment 2 – Project Plans
Attachment 3 – Project Narrative
Attachment 4 – Resolution No. P-07-95

INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS AND DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Foster City General Plan
Foster City Municipal Code
Foster City Environmental Review Guidelines
Project Plans
Project Narrative