

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SOUTH COAST AREA

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LONG BEACH, CA 90802-4416

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Th 8b
Filed: 11/15/96
49th Day: 1/3/97
180th Day: 5/14/97
Staff: AJP
Staff Report: 1/13/97
Hearing Date: 2/4-7/97
Commission Action:

STAFF REPORT: PERMIT AMENDMENT

APPLICATION NO.: 5-94-033A1

APPLICANT: Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District

AGENT: Sherman Stacey

PROJECT LOCATION: John Muir Elementary School (Ocean Park School) at 2526 6th Street, Santa Monica, Los Angeles County.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT PREVIOUSLY APPROVED: Demolition of all permanent structures and construction of a new school campus on an existing school district site formerly used for school purposes. The proposed campus will consist of 5 buildings, totalling approximately 45,000 square feet, approximately 20,000 square feet of parking and circulation area, and approximately 3.2 acres for recreational use. The buildings will vary from 22 feet to 36 feet.

DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENT: Placement of three 960 square foot, 12-foot high, relocatable classrooms, with handicap access, for child care and other school use, in place of child care building (Building "E") approved under the original permit.

LOCAL APPROVALS RECEIVED:

SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS: Santa Monica certified, with modifications, LUP.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the Commission determine that the proposed development with the proposed amendment is consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act.

PROCEDURAL NOTE: The Commission's regulations provide for referral of permit amendment requests to the Commission if:

- 1) The Executive Director determines that the proposed amendment is a material change,

2) Objection is made to the Executive Director's determination of immateriality, or

3) the proposed amendment affects conditions required for the purpose of protecting a coastal resource or coastal access.

If the applicant or objector so requests, the Commission shall make an independent determination as to whether the proposed amendment is material. 14 Cal. Admin. Code 13166.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

I. Approval

The Commission hereby grants a permit for the proposed development on the grounds that the development will be in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act of 1976, will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, and will not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act.

III. Findings and Declarations.

The Commission hereby finds and declares as follows:

A. Project Description and Background

This is a request to amend permit #5-94-033 by the placement of three 960 square foot, 12-foot high, relocatable classrooms, with handicap access ramps, for child care and other school uses, in place of child care building (Building "E") approved under the original permit (see Exhibit #2, 3 and 4).

The school is currently under construction. A few of the buildings proposed under permit #5-94-033 have been completed and are currently in use (See newspaper article, Exhibit #9). The three relocatable classrooms have been installed without the benefit of a Coastal Development permit.

The school site is located on a 5.6 acre parcel of land in the Ocean Park area of the City of Santa Monica. The site is bounded by Hollister Avenue to the north, Ocean Park Boulevard to the south, 5th Street to the west and 6th Street to the east (see Exhibit #1).

The surrounding area consist of a mix single and multiple-family residential development. The site is approximately one-half mile from the beach.

Coastal Permit #5-94-033 was approved for the demolition of all permanent structures located at an existing school district site that was formerly used for school purposes and construction of a new school campus. The new campus consisted of 5 buildings, totalling approximately 45,000 square feet, approximately 20,000 square feet of parking and circulation area, and approximately 3.2 acres for recreational use. The buildings varied from 22 to 36 feet in height.

Because the original project description and submitted plans indicate that the project was to consist of 5 buildings the change from 4 buildings and 3 relocatable classrooms is considered a change in the project and requires an amendment to the original permit.

The amendment request was submitted in November 1996. After review of the amendment and the original file staff determined that the project was consistent with the Commission's permit action on the original permit and with all relevant sections of the Coastal Act. Pursuant to 14 Cal. Admin. Code Section 13166(a)(2) the amendment was considered to be immaterial. The immaterial amendment was scheduled for the Commission's December 1996 hearing. However, Commission staff received three letters objecting to the proposed project within the ten working day appeal period. Due to these objections the amendment was rescheduled for the February Commission hearing as a material amendment.

B. Public Comments

As stated, three letters from residents have been received objecting to the placement of the three relocatable buildings (see Exhibit #5, 6 and 7 for submitted letters). The major concerns raised in the letters include:

1. The original plan called for the area to be open space.
2. Use inconsistent with original plan.
3. Design incompatible with the other buildings.
4. Relocatable classroom buildings have a history of never being maintained.
5. Relocatables have been installed prior to obtaining a permit.

The applicant's representative, Mr. Sherman Stacey, has submitted a letter in response to the concerns raised in the three objection letters (see Exhibit #8). Concerns that may raise coastal issues are addressed below.

C. Coastal Access

Section.30252 of the Coastal Act states:

The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by (1) facilitating the provision or extension of transit service, (2) providing commercial facilities within or adjoining residential development or in other areas that will minimize the use of coastal access roads, (3) providing nonautomobile circulation within the development, (4) providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation, (5) assuring the potential for public transit for high intensity uses such as high-rise office buildings, and by (6) assuring that the recreational needs of new residents will not overload nearby coastal recreation areas by correlating the amount of development with local park acquisition and development plans with the provision of onsite recreational facilities to serve the new development.

Development can adversely impact coastal access if development provides insufficient parking to support the parking demand and if the additional

traffic generated by the development increases traffic congestion to a point where additional traffic interferes with the public driving to the beach and trying to find street parking.

The original 45,000 square foot campus was approved with 42 parking spaces, based on the Commission's parking standards of 2 parking spaces per teaching station (classroom). The proposed three relocatables would replace Building "E" as shown on the approved plans and in the EIR that was submitted as part of the Coastal Development Permit application.

The three relocatables measuring 2,880 will replace the originally proposed 4,000 square foot Building "E" and will not increase the number of classrooms. Therefore, the proposed amendment will not increase the total campus square footage nor increase the parking demand of the campus. Furthermore, traffic generated by the original project was found by the Commission in the original permit not to have a significant impact on beach access due to the distance from the beach and beach parking areas. The Commission, therefore, finds that the proposed amendment is consistent with Section 30252 of the Coastal Act.

D. Recreation

Section 30210 of the Coastal Act states:

In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

Section 30211 of the Coastal Act states:

Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation.

Section 30213 of the Coastal Act states in part:

Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred.

Policy #119 of the City's certified LUP states in part that:

. . .Existing neighborhood park acreage shall be maintained. As the area becomes built out, the City shall assure that the recreational needs of the new residents do not overburden coastal resources by providing an adequate level of neighborhood recreational facilities.

The campus was designed with the buildings occupying the southern portion of the 5.6 acre site. The northern portion was reserved for recreational use. The northern portion had been used for many years for neighborhood

recreation. The area contained a large playing field, tennis courts, and a basketball court. In the past the school district has made the recreational facilities of the site available to the City for organized sport activities and for general public use. As stated in the original permit with the development of the new campus the recreational facilities will continue to be available for public use.

Although the recreational facilities and property in the northern portion of the site are not owned by the City, the property is still public lands and operated by a public entity. As public lands the Commission found in the original permit that such uses should be preserved and continued to be made available to the general public for recreational purposes so that neighborhood recreational facilities will continue to be provided in the area and the neighborhood community, as it continues to grow, will not overburden coastal recreational resources.

The proposed relocatables are sited in an area that was originally proposed for building development and will not impact the school's open space or recreational facilities. The recreational facilities, as originally proposed, will continue to be available to the general public. The relocatables will not use space originally designed as open space nor will the amended project eliminate any recreational facilities that were originally proposed. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed amendment will not adversely impact coastal access or coastal recreational resources and will be consistent with Section 30252 of the Coastal Act and with the applicable policies of the LUP.

E. Community Character/Visual Resources

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

The proposed site has been owned by the school district since 1913. Between 1914 and 1933 the southern portion of the site contained a junior high school, which was demolished due to earthquake damage. Prior to the construction of the new campus the site contained various child care and educational facilities. Therefore, the proposed use is consistent with past and current use of the site.

The new existing buildings approved under the original permit range in height from 22 to 36 feet. The relocatables will be smaller in scale than the existing buildings and will measure only 12 feet in height. Furthermore, due to the distance from the beach and surrounding development there are no public coastal views from the area surrounding the proposed site. Therefore, the

development will not interfere with any public coastal views. The Commission, therefore, finds that the proposed development is compatible with the surrounding development and is consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

F. Local Coastal Program

Section 30604(a) of the Coastal Act states:

(a) Prior to certification of the local coastal program, a coastal development permit shall be issued if the issuing agency, or the commission on appeal, finds that the proposed development is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200) of this division and that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a local coastal program that is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200).

In August 1992, the Commission certified, with suggested modifications, the land use plan portion of the City of Santa Monica's Local Coastal Program. The certified LUP contains polices to guide the types, locations and intensity of future development in the Santa Monica coastal zone. Among these polices are those specified in the preceding section regarding public access--parking, recreation and visual resources. The proposed amendment is consistent with all relevant policies of the LUP regarding public access and visual impacts and will not prejudice the ability of the City to prepare a Local Coastal Program implementation program consistent with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act as required by Section 30604(a).

G. Unpermitted Development

The applicant has placed the relocatables on the school site. There are no records of permits issued for this recent development. Therefore, the Commission finds that the existing development was placed without a coastal development permit, thus it is unpermitted.

Although unpermitted development has taken place on the property prior to submission of this permit application, consideration of the application by the Commission has been based solely upon the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. Action on the permit does not constitute a waiver of any legal action with regard to the alleged violation nor does it constitute an admission as to the legality of any development undertaken on the subject site without a Coastal permit.

H. CEQA

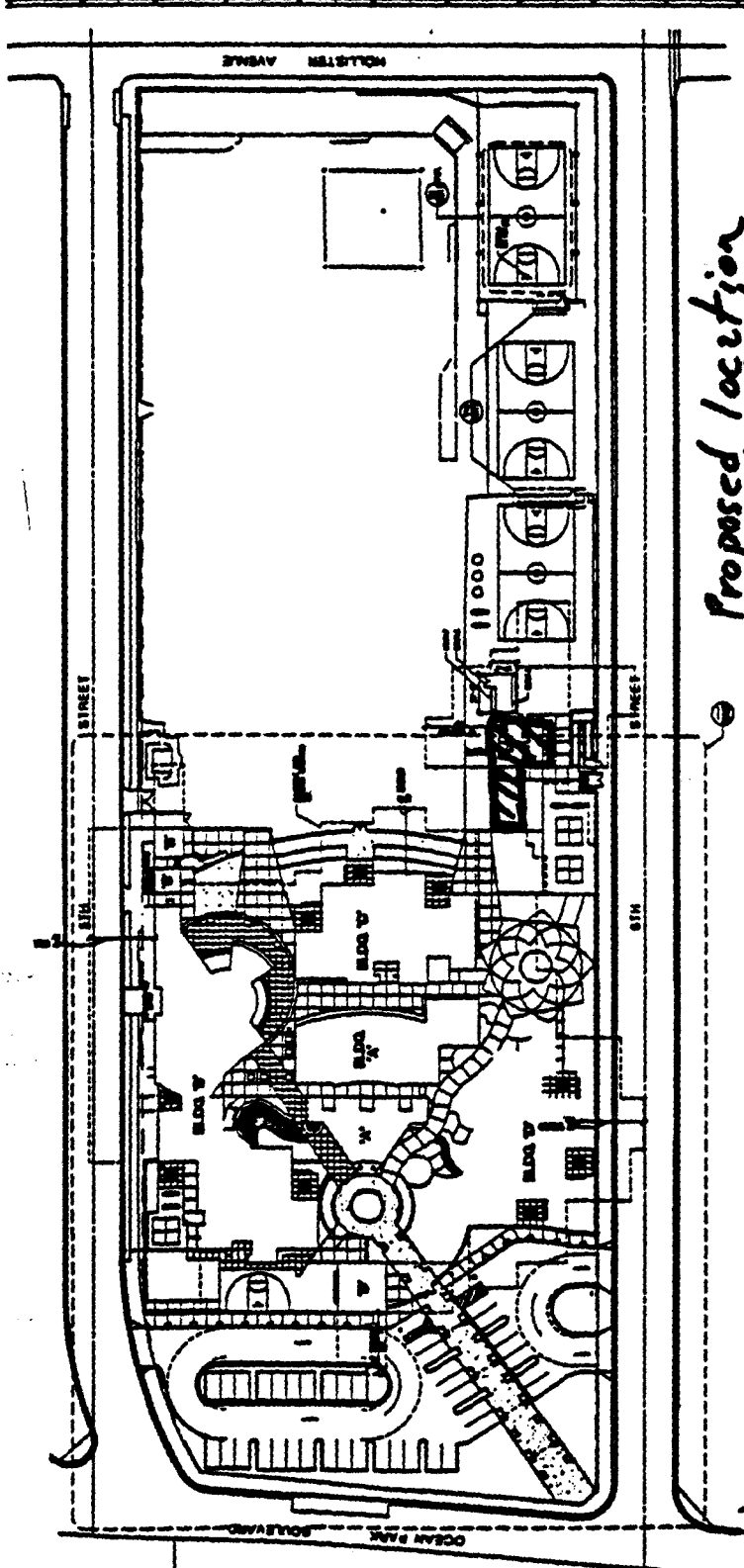
Section 13096 of the Commission's administrative regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permit applications to be supported by a finding showing the application, as conditioned by any conditions of approval, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(d)(2)(i) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any

significant adverse impact which the activity may have on the environment.

There are no negative impacts caused by the proposed development which have not been adequately mitigated. Therefore, the proposed amendment is found consistent with CEQA and the policies of the Coastal Act.

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DATE	
BY	
SCALE	
PROJECT NO.	



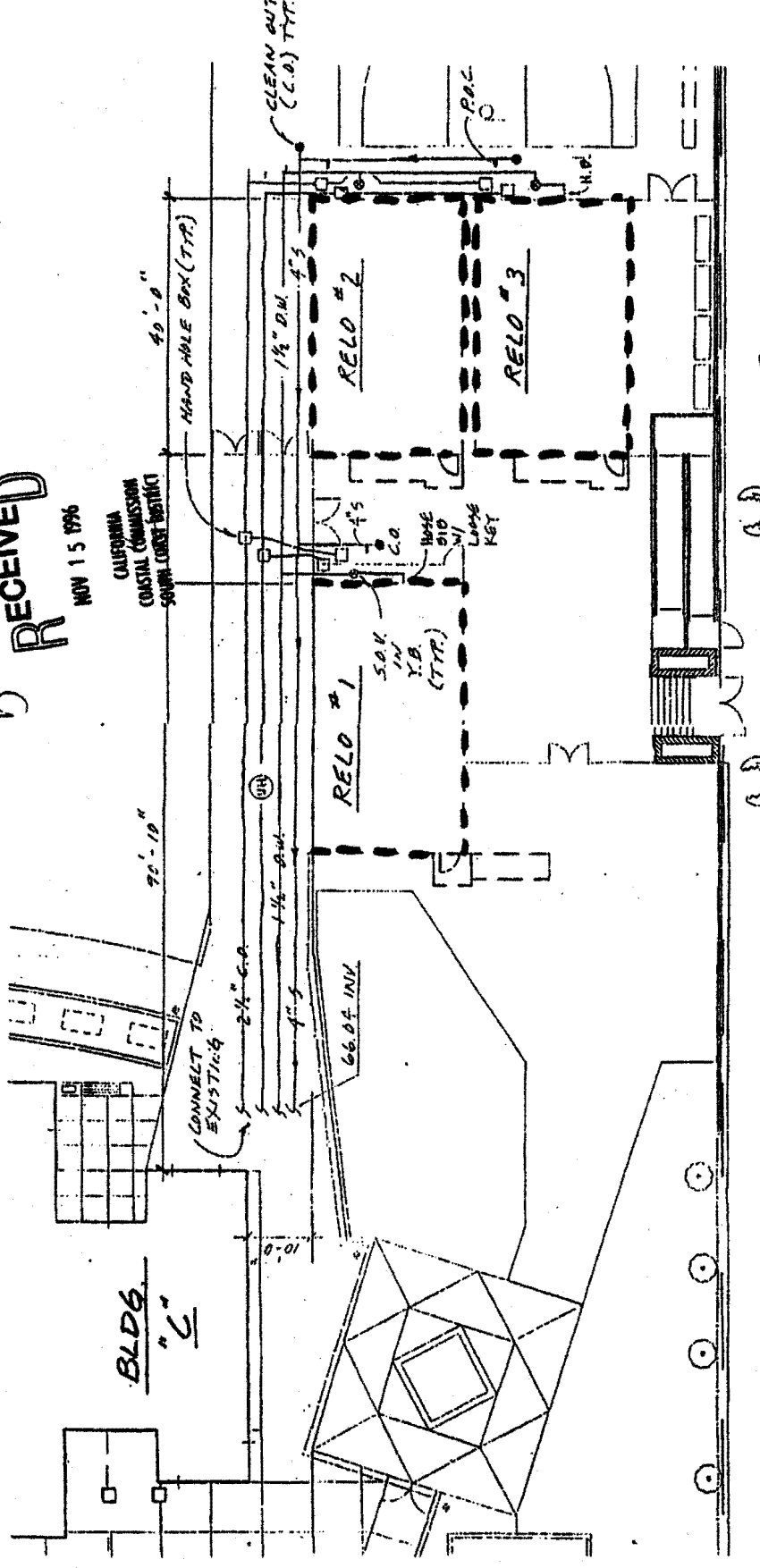
*Proposed location
of Reboctables
and previous proposed
location for a
Building "E"*

EXHIBIT NO. 2
Application Number 5-94-033A1
Site Plan for Campus California Coastal Commission

OCEAN PARK SCHOOL
 RELOCATABLE UTILITY PLAN
 1" = 16'-0"
 9/19/96

PR-43.1

6 RECEIVED
 NOV 15 1996

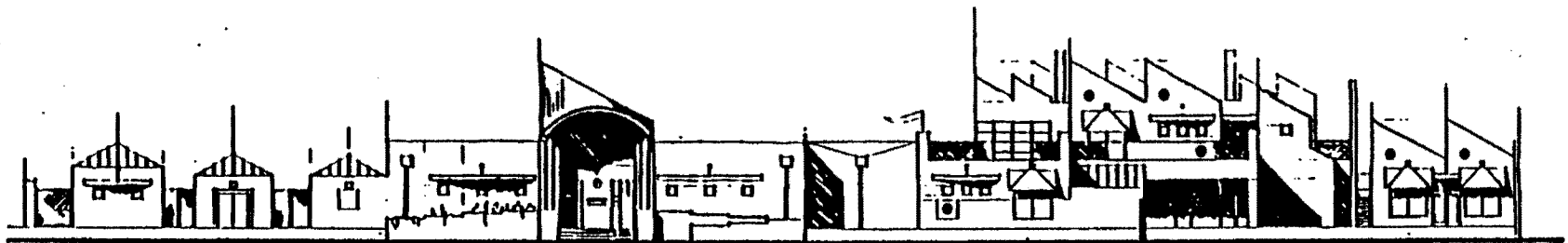


SIXTH STREET

EXHIBIT NO. 3
Application Number 5-94-033A1
Site Plan for Proposed Relocatable California Coastal Commission



ELEVATION (1) S.M.A.S.H. EAST ELEV. FROM INTERIOR



ELEVATION (2) S.M.A.S.H. WEST ELEV. FROM 5TH STREET

OCEAN PARK SCHOOL
SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

Planning
Consultants
Research

0 16 32
SCALE IN FEET

Source: Dougherty and Dougherty

EXHIBIT NO.	4
Application Number	5.94-033A1
Elevation of Existing	Campus
California Coastal Commission	

December 14, 1996

RECEIVED

DEC 5 1996

CALIFORNIA
COASTAL COMMISSION
SOUTH COAST DISTRICT

To: Peter Douglas, Executive Director,
Al J. Padilla,
California Coastal Commission

From: Bill Sundblad, *Bill Sundblad*
Ocean Park resident, 2435 6th Street

Re: Permit No. 5-94-033, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
1st Amendment

The placement of three 960 square foot, 12 high, relocatable classrooms for child care use in place of child care building (Building "E") is not consistent with the original project for the following reasons:

1. The original plan called for the area to be hard surfaced play area which conformed to the open space limited development concept envisioned by the community and agreed to by the school district.
2. No public notification was made to the community or residents that this area was to be reallocated to child care building space.
3. No notification was made to the community or residents that various parking, access and egress, building space, and recreation areas were to be shuffled around.
4. The original designs called for the planned hard surfaced recreational space to be used for parking during community and school events. No mitigation has been planned to offset the revision in plans.
5. The community and residents were sold on the concept that the school development would fit into the aesthetics of a residential neighborhood and be nonintrusive. Considerable time and effort was devoted to the design of the buildings and materials used. Relocatable classrooms were never envisioned for this project.
6. Relocatable classroom buildings have a history of never being maintained and always being temporary.
7. The School District never had solid financing for this project and various cutbacks and modifications in original project design show it.
8. I question how the school district was allowed to complete the modifications and now only after-the-fact ask for an amendment to approve something that should never have been done without community involvement, notification and approval.

I wish to consider this an objection to the amendment.

EXHIBIT NO.	5
Application Number	5-94-0331
<i>Letter of Objection</i>	
California Coastal Commission	

Darius Anderson, Ocean Park Resident
2437 6th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90504

December 10, 1996

Peter Douglas, Executive Director
Al J. Padilla, California Coastal Commission
P.O. Box 1450
Long Beach, CA 90802-4416

Dear Peter:

I object most vigorously to Permit No. 5-94-033 Amendment 1 granted to Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District which allows the placement of three 960 square foot, twelve foot high relocatable classrooms for child care use instead of Building E.

I urge you to deny the Amendment for the following reasons:

1. No public notification was made to the community or residents that this area was to be reallocated to child care building space.
2. The design aspects of the temporary trailers are not consistent with the other buildings thus creating an eyesore.
3. Relocatable classroom buildings have a history of never being maintained and always being temporary.
4. The original designs called for the planned hard surfaced recreational space to be used for parking during community and school events. No mitigation has been planned to offset the revision in plans.

I wish to register this an objection to the amendment.

Sincerely,



Darius Anderson, Resident

cc: Rusty Arcias

EXHIBIT NO.	6
Application Number	5-94-033 A1
	Letter of Objection
California Coastal Commission	

RECEIVED
DEC 10 1996

Date: December 8, 1996

To: Peter Douglas, Executive Director, California Coastal Commission

From: Terri Walsh, Resident, 2507 6th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90405

CALIFORNIA
COASTAL COMMISSION
SOUTH COAST DISTRICT



Subject: Permit No. 5-94-033 granted to Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.
Placement of three 960 square foot 12 foot high, relocatable classrooms for child care use in place of child care building (Building "E").

Objection: The relocatable classrooms, as well as associated foundations and ramps, were installed prior to this notice. This does not represent due process.

EXHIBIT NO.	7
Application Number	5-94-033A
	Letter of Objection
California Coastal Commission	

EXHIBIT NO. 8
Application Number 5-94-033 A1
Applicant's Response to Letter of Objection

LAW OFFICES OF
SHERMAN L. STACEY
233 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD
SUITE 510
SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA 90401
TEL (310) 394-1163
FAX (310) 394-7841

RECEIVED
JAN 13 1997

CALIFORNIA
COASTAL COMMISSION

January 10, 1997

Mr. Al Padilla
California Coastal Commission
245 W. Broadway, #380
Long Beach, CA 90802

Re: Santa Monica/Malibu School District
Ocean Park Elementary
Amendment to Permit 5-94-033

Dear Mr. Padilla:

On behalf of the Santa Monica/Malibu School District I am responding to the objections filed in opposition to the Amendment Request for Permit No. 5-94-033 for Ocean Park Elementary School. The amendment would authorize the placement of three 960 sq. ft., 12 foot high relocatable classrooms for child care use in place of child care building "E". The Executive Director had previously determined the changes to be immaterial but as a result of objections, a public hearing is required.

The change from a separately constructed building to three bungalows arose due to budget constraints for the School District. The construction project consisted of a total of 45,000 square feet of new school buildings. This change in form of construction has no effect and certainly implicates no issues under Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. Ocean Park Elementary School is 3/4 of a mile from the beach on the site of a prior school which was closed many years ago.

The objections from neighbors are local issues many of which were dealt with at the local review process. The School District understands that persons residing near an underused site may be sensitive to a new elementary school particularly after more than a year of construction. However, there is nothing in the School District request to amend its permit which would give rise to the Coastal Commission intruding in the decision of locally elected school board members to build a new elementary school or to use bungalows when the budget does not allow the new construction of a building.

Mr. Al Padilla
California Coastal Commission
January 10, 1997
Page 2

EXHIBIT NO. 8
Application Number
192
California Coastal Commission

Response to Letter from Terri Walsh.

The bungalows were installed prior to obtaining the amendment to the Coastal Development Permit. Initially, the School District did not believe that an amendment for such a matter was necessary but decided to file one in any event to assure that your Coastal Commission records and the School District project would be consistent. The School District needed to acquire the bungalows as soon as possible as school bungalow buildings are increasingly difficult to purchase due to the recent "Class Size Reduction Act". School districts throughout the state are purchasing bungalows faster than they can be produced. Ocean Park Elementary School was fortunate to find three bungalows available for a mid October delivery date. Since a permit for Building E was already approved, the School District could imagine no reason why the Coastal Commission would object to the three bungalows. The amendment request was made on November 12, 1996.

Response to Letter from Bill Sunblad.

1. The original plan for the school approved in Permit No. 5-94-033 provided for a new child care building (Building E) to be constructed in the same location as the relocatable classroom bungalows. Building E was to be approximately 3,600 square feet in size and 16 feet in height. The existing grass area was to remain a grass children's playground and maybe used for overflow parking.

2. The original Building E was included in the EIR prepared for the project and the impacts were addressed. The use of the child care bungalows has not changed either the use which was evaluated by both Coastal Commission and the EIR or the location of that use.

3. All of the parking, access and egress, buildings and recreation spaces remain the same as they were originally planned. The installation of the child care bungalows in place of Building E does not change the uses or the location of the uses on the site.

4. The paved area where Building E was to be located was not to be used for overflow parking during community and school events as this area is within the kindergarten play ground. The grass field was to be used for this purpose. It is not anticipated that these events would occur more than 10 times in a year.

5. The aesthetic qualities of the new school are a matter of subjective judgment and are certainly not an issue under the Coastal Act. However, the School District believes that the

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SHERMAN L. STACEY

Mr. Al Padilla
California Coastal Commission
January 10, 1997
Page 3

EXHIBIT NO. 8
Application Number
P93
California Coastal Commission

buildings do fit in with the neighborhood which is characterized by a mixture of different undistinguished designs of multifamily residential development with no particular design or aesthetic scheme. Building E was 4 feet taller than the bungalows.

6. The bungalows are not intended to be temporary uses but rather to be permanent. The bungalows will be well maintained as are all school district buildings. The bungalows have been repainted to match the colors of the adjoining school buildings.

7. The project is fully funded by the School District from bond issue revenues approved by the voters and other School District revenues.

8. The modification to the bungalows in place of Building E is the only modification sought by the School District.

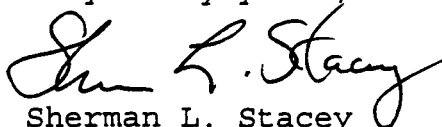
Response to Request from Darius Anderson.

1. Building E was a child care building included as a part of the original application and Permit No. 5-94-033 approved by the Coastal Commission on March 17, 1994.

2. The bungalows, although of a different architectural design from the other school buildings, are not an eyesore. The bungalows are new buildings painted to match other structures.

3. The bungalows are permanent improvements and will be well maintained.

4. The paved area where Building E was to be located was not to be used for overflow parking during community and school events as this area is within the kindergarten play ground. The grass field was to be used for this purpose. It is not anticipated that these events would occur more than 10 times in a year.

Very truly yours,

Sherman L. Stacey

SLS:js
cc: Ms. Julie Leap
Dr. Arthur L. Cohen

OPENING DAY

Long-awaited campus welcomes SM students

By Lisa Mascaro
STAFF WRITER

The first public school to be built in Santa Monica in decades opened for class Monday morning, and second-graders Alex Tamaki and Anda Clark had plenty to say about their new digs.

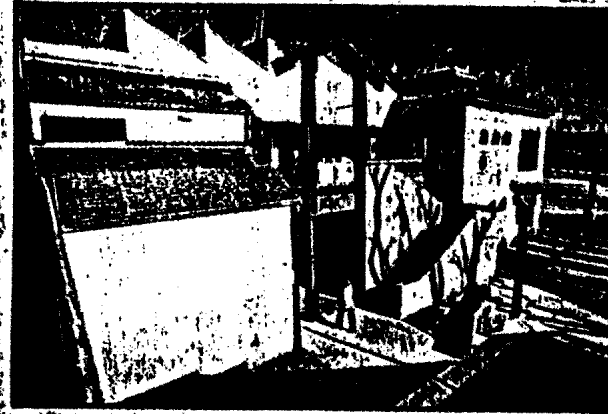
The grassy playing fields are great. So is the wide-open feeling on campus, particularly from classrooms on the second floor. But sometimes it's hard to find your way around campus. And the construction work has got to go.

"We have a much bigger yard, and we have grass," said Anda, 7, who was looking forward to having grass stains rather than scraped knees. "We don't get hurt as easily."

But as work crews pounded away nearby, trying to complete the second-half of the not-yet-finished campus, the commotion was grating on young nerves.

"The only thing I don't like is the noise," 7-year-old Alex said.

"And," said Anda, "we have to be more careful." The cool gray campus along Ocean Park Boulevard has been a long-awaited project, one that has



RICHARD HARTOG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A woman makes her way into one of the new classroom buildings at Muir Elementary School in Santa Monica on Monday.

won friends and foes over the years of planning and construction, but was being celebrated Monday as the principal welcomed families at the gate and PTA leaders took other parents on campus tours.

It was a picture-perfect backdrop for opening day, with sunlight shining through the floor-to-ceiling windows, and the building's contemporary design standing as a bright addition to the neighborhood.

SCHOOL/BACK PAGE

EXHIBIT NO. 9
Application Number 5-94-033A1
Newspaper Article re: school
California Coastal Commission

School

and the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.

The campus, paid for with voter-approved bonds, will eventually house two Santa Monica public schools — John Muir Elementary School, which relocated Monday from its Lincoln Boulevard site, and the Santa Monica Alternative School House, or SMASH, which is scheduled to relocate from its Fourth Street campus after its buildings are completed in spring.

"I'm really pleased," said Muir Principal Linda Harris, who arrived by sunrise Monday to put the final touches on opening day activities. "There's a lot more still to do. We got first day under way, and that's the most important thing."

Still, the new school at the Los Amigos Park site, on Ocean Park Boulevard between Fifth and

Sixth streets, isn't exactly what some had hoped for.

Scaled back from its original \$10 million state-of-the-art design to a more modest \$5 million project, the campus lacks amenities such as the air conditioners, sound walls and environmentally sensitive building materials the community had wanted.

Behind schedule

It opened nearly 1½ years after it was scheduled to be ready, forcing students and teachers to pack up in the middle of the school year and make the switch. Even now, the campus is in the midst of construction — there's no cafeteria or playground, and students ate lunch in their classrooms Monday because the picnic tables were just being delivered — and the SMASH campus is months away from completion.

"I'm just amazed how much more has to be done," said Muir parent Barbara Olinger, picking up her son after school as contractors worked nearby. "Just the noise and the dust is hard, having so many people around."

A group of parents from SMASH are so displeased over the new school — which is smaller than their current Fourth Street campus at a time when schools need all the space they can find to accommodate the new 20-student classrooms — that they are asking the school board this week to allow their children to remain at the old site.

And some Muir parents simply don't understand why the school needed to relocate from the 1930s-era campus in the first place.

"I look at this wonderful, zillion-dollar building, and I think, 'Why didn't they fix up the old

FROM PAGE A1

building?" said parent Chris Hero, the father of Emily, a third-grader. "It's so California," he said, explaining that instead of maintaining older buildings, the philosophy tends to be to create new ones.

Others like move

But many SMASH parents are looking forward to the springtime move to the bright, new campus, and many Muir parents were thrilled their school had relocated from busy Lincoln Boulevard to an area where children have grassy yards for playgrounds and residential homes as neighbors.

"I'm really glad it's off Lincoln," Olinger said about the Muir campus that was at the corner of Lincoln and Ocean Park boulevards. "I'm glad it's out of an old, old building that's crumbling."

On Monday, community politics were far from teacher Kathryn Nicolson's classroom, where presidents' faces peered out from the bulletin boards, desks were arranged in neat pods and the classroom art gallery displayed the works of great painters.

All the fourth- and fifth-grade teacher needed was a doorstep — to hold the door open while children filed out of the classroom, since the door doesn't stay open on its own.

And a wall clock to tell the time and sound the bells, a working intercom system and a piece of glass for the door window to her office. She's making a list, as all the teachers are doing.

Otherwise, it was a great opening day.

"Everything seemed good," said Nicolson, who was among teachers who spent Sunday preparing

classroom with the final touches for opening day. "It was a very peaceful day."

All in all, the students thought it was a pretty good opening day, too.

Sure, some students got lost going to class, even after the campus tour. Others couldn't find the restrooms. One girl said she was a little startled by the barricades that kept children out of some construction zones.

But third-grader Chris Fiala and his little brother, Greg, a first-grader, were ready to stay.

"I like it," said Chris, 8. "The other school was small, and it didn't have grass at all," he added, confident his peers would soon feel the same, especially after the construction was complete. "Once everything's done, we'll be fine."

Exhibit 9
p92

