



CITY OF CORONADO

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

September 17, 2024

{{section.number}}{{item.number}}

REQUEST FOR A MAJOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW FOR THE SHARED USE OF A SCHOOL IN AN EXISTING RELIGIOUS ASSEMBLY BUILDING, AND DETERMINATION THAT THE PROJECT IS CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT UNDER CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT GUIDELINES SECTION 15303(C) FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1123 EIGHTH STREET (PC 2023-07)

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution approving the Major Special Use Permit at 1123 Eighth Street, including the findings and conditions, and determine that the project is categorically exempt under Class 3 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15303 (c) (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures).

BACKGROUND:

A Major Special Use Permit (MSUP) is being sought to allow for the shared use of a school within an existing religious assembly building at 1123 Eighth Street, in accordance with Coronado Municipal Code (CMC) Chapter 86.55.

The property, located at the northwest corner of Eighth Street and C Avenue in the R-3 (Multiple Family Residential) Zone, is owned by the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and is a legal nonconforming use in a residential zone. The parcel is 10,500 square feet and measures 75 feet wide along C Avenue and 140 feet deep along Eighth Street. Surrounding uses include single-family and multi-family residences, with commercial zoned properties located to the southwest.

The church was originally built in the 1920's and additions occurred in the late 1940's. The use of the church is considered legal, nonconforming since it is located in a residential zone and no use permit is on file. Although the property is not a designated historic resource, any proposed demolition or removal of original features that are visible from the street right of way will first require a Determination of Historic Significance.

The applicant, "My Montessori School Coronado" had previously operated at 801 Orange Avenue, located at the southeast corner of Eighth Street and Orange Avenue in the Commercial Zone. However, the school has grown, and the existing site cannot accommodate additional pupils. The school has been utilizing the property at the First Church of Christ, Scientist for the past school year during hours when the church is not in session. The applicant reached out to City staff in 2018 and again in 2020 to discuss the change in location and how to obtain proper permits. Staff explained the need for a MSUP since the proposed location is in a residential zone. However, the applicant only obtained State required permits but no City of Coronado discretionary permits before enrolling students for the 2022-2023 school year. The applicant followed up with the City in 2023 to apply for the MSUP. No formal complaints or concerns have been received regarding the school's use upon the church property.

ANALYSIS:

Major Special Use Permit

The proposal is to allow the shared use of an existing church (First Church of Christ, Scientist) with a school (My Montessori School Coronado). The school will serve a maximum of 39 children, aged two to five, and currently 36 are registered. The school will utilize portions of the existing building, including the board room, restrooms, courtyard, rear patio, lounge, and classroom (see Attachment 2 for plans). No additions or alterations to the building or site are proposed. The use of a church or school is permitted in the R-3 zone with an approved MSUP (CMC 86.55.120). First Church of Christ, Scientist was established in the 1920's without an MSUP, therefore it is considered it legal non-conforming. However, the church has been operational for approximately 100 years and has become a recognizable landmark in the community. The proposal to add a school will require an MSUP that will allow for conditions of approval to be placed on the project related to items such as hours of operation, noise, and parking.

The school schedule has been shown to not conflict with the existing church's regular service hours. The church has religious services, religious studies, and office hours every Sunday from 10:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. They also have meetings on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. The proposed school operates from 7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday, opposite the church's schedule. A proposed condition of approval is included in Resolution to ensure that the school and church hours will not overlap.

The shared use of a school within the church property is not expected to generate significantly higher volumes of either traffic or parking since the number of parking spaces required for the school is significantly less than what the church can currently displace. In addition, the times when the church and school are in operation are offset, which will help reduce additional impacts to traffic and parking.

The flow and volume of traffic generated by the drop-off and pick-up of students was evaluated by the applicant over a span of three weeks. While it was noted that some students walk or bike to school with or by their parents or guardians, most are driven. Those parents/guardians who drive the student(s) to school can drop off children at the existing, white-curbed loading zone on Eighth Street. The morning student drop-offs are staggered to help reduce congestion. Some students arrive between 7:30 and 8:00 A.M., with the majority of students arriving between 8:25 and 8:45 A.M. In the afternoon, most students are picked up between 2:45 and 4:00 P.M. Staff discussed the drop-off/pick-up proposal with both Police and Public Services and Engineering to ensure there is no impact to traffic or pedestrian safety. Both departments were satisfied with the proposed schedule and operation.

Because no use permit is included for the church, the church could elect to add additional services, assemblies, or events throughout the week without any review or approval from the City. Under current conditions, the church could displace up to 32 parking spaces during the week to host a service or assembly. The proposed MSUP for the Montessori School would include conditions to control the intensity of use on the property, since the church would not be permitted to host other events when classes are in session. Furthermore, since the time the school has been operating without a permit, current City staff are not aware of any complaints that have been received.

School activities will occur indoors during the day, except for a 30-minute recess that will occur sometime between the hours of 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. The Resolution proposes to prohibit outdoor amplification. Younger students will stay in the onsite courtyard while the older students will be chaperoned by school employees to Spreckels Park. A Right-of-Entry Agreement will be

on file with the City for the school to use the park, and the requirement to maintain this agreement is included in the draft conditions of approval.

Coastal Development Permit

A Coastal Development Permit is also required for all development involving a MSUP in accordance with CMC Chapter 86.70. The project site is located in the coastal zone, but outside the coastal appeal zone. The purpose of the Coastal Development Permit (CP 2023-05) is to ensure that development is consistent with the City of Coronado Local Coastal Program, Land Use Plan, and Local Coastal Policies. The proposed project will not have a significant adverse effect either individually or cumulatively on coastal resources or on public access to or along the coast, as it is located more than 3,200 feet from the mean high tide, and it would just be introducing a new use within the existing structures. The Planning Commission approved the Coastal Development Permit on August 13, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ALTERNATIVE:

The Council may elect to deny the Major Special Use Permit application and make appropriate findings.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT:

CEQA Category Exemption Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Notice of this public hearing was mailed to all property owners within a 300-foot radius of the property and published in the Coronado Eagle & Journal on September 4, 2024.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution No. 2024-46
2. Site Plan
3. Letter Demonstrating Use Not Overlapping
4. Site Photos
5. August 13, 2024 Draft Planning Commission Minutes
6. Declaration of Mailing/Publishing and Public Notice

Submitted By: Community Development Department / Marisa Smith