

December 14, 2023
Yalecrest Neighborhood Council
Re: SLC Planning Division Project PLNPCM2023-00836

Senior Planner Diana Martinez:

The board of the Yalecrest Neighborhood Council wishes to comment on project PLNPCM2023-00836 – Rowland Hall Middle and Upper School Design Review -- on Sunnyside Avenue. We have received feedback from local Yalecrest residents whose homes border the school on Sunnyside Avenue, are within a quarter to half-mile radius of the school, as well as other nearby residents.

The issues most frequently mentioned to us include:

1. **Height extension from 30 to 65 feet.** Architectural designs seem to indicate that the impact of the additional height will be somewhat ameliorated since that section of the new school will be located on the far western side of the property below a natural slope in the hillside. Nonetheless that section will still rise above the main two-story addition and be a physical barrier on the northwest horizon. The 2011 Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CCR) called for preservation of the NW corridor view. They should be reviewed and honored.
2. **Sunnyside Avenue entrance and traffic concerns.** Several months ago, an executive in the planning division told us that Sunnyside Avenue was the least regulated street *of its size* in Salt Lake City. Traffic volumes have increased significantly in recent years and will only continue to rise. It is a busy and active thoroughfare. This summer there were three major traffic accidents on Sunnyside Avenue – two hit and runs with critical injuries to two individuals that required hospitalization, and a two-car collision resulting in one car being flipped on its roof. Two other schools are within yards of Rowland Hall – East High School and the Pingree Autism Learning Center adding more students, more drop-offs and more auto congestion to the immediate area. Rowland Hall serves about 1,030 students – 400 of which are in high school; East High about 1,900, and Pingree 350.

Locating the main school entrance off Sunnyside Avenue will add more car traffic – especially during morning commutes -- and could lead to potential traffic problems. Human nature shows that cars will be tempted to make left hand turns coming out of Rowland Hall across oncoming traffic on Sunnyside Avenue -- a potential prescription for disaster. Even with signage prohibiting left hand turns, high school students with cars will be part of the traffic mix.

Adding to the severity of potential problems is the slope of Sunnyside Avenue near that location – where eastbound cars will be coming up a hill. Cars turning left out of Rowland Hall will be moving from a standstill, making it difficult to get quickly and safely into the eastbound lane and avoid fast-moving cars coming up the hill. This must be carefully studied with possible adjustments to prevent accidents. We'd like to see

alternative plans for ingress and egress from the main entrance as well as traffic safety measures.

3. **Scale and mass.** There are some nice architectural features in the new Rowland Hall proposal especially the high ceiling glassed entryway, which is quite striking. However, the mass of the two angular buildings or spokes that jut west from the main center will be in stark contrast to the village-like feel of the existing McCarthy Campus, home to the Beginning and Lower School.

The design team may have faced constraints regarding the size of the land, the classroom and operational needs, as well as financial considerations. These could have pre-determined the degree of their creativity. Taste can be an individual matter, but the proposed new buildings look very industrial – especially when matched against the more creative character of the McCarthy Campus.

We hope that the design team and school will consider our comments and use them in a constructive way to address community concerns and seek common ground.

Respectfully

Yalecrest Neighborhood Council
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