



Variance Application

Rev.20180103

1. Fill out the following information for the variance being requested:

	REQUIRED	PROPOSED
Front yard setback	15' (at 36 th and 37 th)	59' at 36 th & 16.9' @ 37 th
Rear yard setback	No rear yard, side yard is 5'	13.75' at Regal
Lot coverage percentage	2,250 SF + 35% over 5,000 SF max	2,250 SF + 20% of 156,532 SF
Lot size	existing	3.7 acres (161,532 SF)
Lot width	existing	612'
Height	40' max (as of 1/1/24)	47' only at 3 rd floor
Other (specify)		

2. What physical characteristics of the property interfere with your ability to meet the required standards?
 - The 3.7-acre site is extremely compact for an elementary school parcel for any elementary school, including for Spokane Public Schools. A typical elementary school site is 10-12 acres. The original 3-story building was built in 1910 in the middle of open land. It is currently now surrounded by a densely developed neighborhood and is bound on all sides by highly used, high-traffic streets (Regal (west), 37th (south), 36th (north)) or an easement for a future street (Fiske (east)) without any opportunity to expand the available site area. The site is also physically restricted by shallow subgrade bedrock that would be cost-prohibitive to remove in the extents necessary to provide a fully accessible site. With the site bordered so closely to existing perimeter grades at each of the streets, the building was lowered as much as possible to avoid rock removal and get as close to perimeter grades. Even with this extensive effort, there remains relatively steep grades between the building pad and the perimeter sidewalks, yet the building and site are fully ADA compliant.
3. How does this property physically differ from other similarly zoned properties in the area and how do the physical characteristics of the subject property prevent developing to the same extent?
 - This property is zoned RSF but has never been used for single family residential, the perimeter properties are primarily zoned RMF, with RSF at the far northeast end (where there is proposed open space), and south at Ferris High School. The existing 3-story Adams Elementary School is 42' above the existing highest grade position and has been located on this site for 113 years, serving the surrounding

RSF and RMF zoned parcels since 1910. The physical size of the building is larger than single family residences to support the students and community needs as an elementary school.

4. What hardship will result if the variance request is not granted?

- **Reduced outdoor gross motor and physical activity space:** The present design includes some 3-story elements that exceed the height limits. The design reduces the overall footprint of the building on the site to maximize the outdoor play and green spaces for students and the surrounding neighborhood. To comply with the 40' height limitation the portion of the building on the third floor would have to be integrated into the 2-story portion of the building reducing the amount of open space available on the site to provide outdoor space to provide equitable program space for physical education classes and recess for students. Any additional parcel space allocated to the building footprint would reduce the amount of outdoor playground and playfield space available to students.
- **Adams Elementary School is a Title 1 school serving a low-income student population, reducing the outdoor play space further exacerbates the disadvantages these students are already facing.** To provide equitable amenities across the district for all elementary students, including both Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools, moving a portion of the building to 3-stories maximizes the outdoor space for PE, recess and outdoor learning. Adams students should have equitable amenities to other elementary peers within Spokane Public Schools.
- **Reduced public access to neighborhood green spaces:** There are no City-provided public parks within the Adams attendance boundary. Neighborhood access to green space within walking distance would be reduced significantly if the building footprint was increased from the current design. This would be a detriment to the livability of the neighborhood and would conflict with the current City of Spokane Design Guidelines for Public Projects section B-5 "Public Amenities: Providing Inviting and Usable Open Space."
- **Decreased sustainable features:** The current 3-story configuration maintains a compact footprint on the site. Increasing the footprint would conflict with the current City of Spokane Design Guidelines for Public Projects section A-2 "Urban Design: Provide a Sustainable Framework."
- **Decreased accessibility:** The existing grading constraints between the sidewalk level and the main entry to the building are challenging. The proposed compact footprint allows more perimeter space to create a fully accessible site. The existing building is not accessible. The approach to achieving accessible is supported by the Design Review Board comment below:
 4. **The Board appreciates the Applicant's extra proposal to lower the school's first floor elevation and in doing so the design will benefit those building occupants and visitors with physical disabilities allowing their participation in the educational community.**

- **Insufficient space for required systems:** Schools and classrooms are required to meet specific code requirements for noise reduction, increased daylighting, and healthy indoor air quality. The systems needed to meet these requirements such as taller windows, large ductwork and piping require taller floor to floor heights and placing mechanical equipment on the roof. If the building was required to meet the 40-foot height limit, each floor would be compressed to an insufficient height to accommodate these code-required systems.
- **Inefficient use of public funding to operate school:** The new layout and programming of the building right-sizes the school for the appropriate student population of 400 students. The existing building is too small and limits academic offerings and support to students. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) recommends a minimum student population of 400 students to optimize operational functioning and staffing efficiencies. In 2016, when SPS began the process of redrawing attendance boundaries, the attendance boundary was reduced. Reducing the attendance boundary to serve a smaller student population allowed the district to also reduce the new replacement building size, the amount of parking required, and ultimately, maximizing the amount of open space to serve the school and greater community. If the district had not reduced the attendance boundary and left it as it currently is, a much larger building would be required along with increased parking, drop-off/pick-up, and outdoor play areas. Therefore, the new building footprint has already been reduced to the extent that it will not create operational hardship due to the inefficiencies noted above.
- **Potential inability to move Designated Instruction students back to Adams Elementary School.** Due to limited space in the existing Adams Elementary School, Designated Instruction (DI) students within the attendance boundary of Adams are not able to be served and attend a different school that has space. The new Adams Elementary School will have a designated DI classroom, allowing DI students living within the Adams attendance boundary to attend their neighborhood school. DI programs provide a focused instructional and intervention model to students with low cognitive abilities to support their growth in appropriately leveled academics, functional daily living, and employability. Services are provided in a small classroom setting with intentional access to general education settings.

5. Is the hardship merely economic or self-created? Please explain.

- No, the hardships noted above are not merely economic or self-created.
- School district projects are subject to meeting numerous requirements and regulations to support students' academics, physical health, safety, and social-emotional well-being. These regulations are largely more onerous than a typical residential building within a RSF zoned site.
- Schools are highly valuable community assets that support the livability of the surrounding neighborhood. The planning efforts for this project take this into account and are responding directly to the constraints of the existing site along with the values of the community.

6. Does compliance with the requirement eliminate or substantially impair a natural, historic, or cultural feature of area-wide significance? If yes, please explain.

- Yes, the applicant believes a one or two-story building would contradict

the historical and cultural significance of the existing three-story school that has been a part of this neighborhood since 1910. The building is currently 42' above grade and 44' in overall height from the lowest floor level.

- When planning this project, Spokane Public Schools performed extensive community outreach activities to best understand the cultural significance of the school as expressed by past and current staff, students, and public users. Participants were also asked what they would do to improve the school when it was replaced. The feedback heard repeatedly is as follows:
 - The existing 3-story, red brick building is familiar and beloved by families both with students in school and those in the surrounding neighborhood who do not have kids in the school.
 - Families tend to stay in the neighborhood for generations with the school viewed as more valuable than simply a school, it is truly a community hub.
 - The new design should draw on familiar characteristics from the existing building, while also being updated to reflect modern criteria along with positively impacting the students and neighborhood for another century, like the prior Adams Elementary building.
 - Providing a variety of outdoor learning spaces and large open play areas is a high priority.
 - The new design should increase the safety, security, and accessibility of the building.
- Additional photos and an article discussing the "spirit" of Adams Elementary are included as Exhibit A.

7. Will surrounding properties suffer significant adverse effects if this variance is granted? Please explain.

- No, if the variance is granted it will not cause any adverse effects to surrounding properties. The design and layout of the project has been carefully planned to avoid this in the following ways:
 - The new building is situated closer to the surrounding multi-family residential zones (to the northwest and west which currently have multi-story buildings) and further from the limited section of lower-scale single-family residences to the northeast. The property to the south is Ferris High School. It will not be impacted at all by the 3-story design of Adams, since it also has portions of the building that are also much taller than the 40' limit (as approved by a previous design variance application)
 - The 3-story portion of the building along the "front-yard" on 36th is set back from the property line by 4 times the amount required (59') and generous amounts of landscaping and trees will be used in this space to soften the appearance from across the street.
 - The larger green space is a valuable neighborhood amenity and will

be available for public use outside of school hours.

- The rooftop mechanical units can be screened by extending the walls of the 3rd floor and therefore creating a more attractive architectural solution for the neighboring properties.
- The proposed design consolidates multiple buildings into one compact footprint and will eliminate the outdated portables. The single-family residences at the northeast corner will end up with improved views to the green space if the variance is granted to allow a smaller building footprint.

8. Will the appearance of the property be inconsistent with the development patterns of the surrounding property? Please explain.

- The appearance of the proposed design is consistent with the existing 42' high, 3-story, red brick school building that has existed on this site since 1910. This approach was supported by the Design Review Board as noted in the comment below:

3. The Board recognizes and appreciates the positive architectural design quality presented, noting the "birdhouse" elements important to the building character.

- The proposed design is sensitive to the surrounding properties by limiting the area that will exceed the height limit, which is a small portion of the overall building. The 3rd floor areas that do exceed the height limit are stepped back from the face of the more dominant two-story mass and therefore follow the typical height mitigating designs allowed by RMF zoning. The layering of masses softens what would otherwise be an abrupt visual impact.
- The building has a variety of heights and shapes that add visual interest and is more compatible with the surrounding context. The weighted average of the building height is only 35' along the length of the perimeter walls.

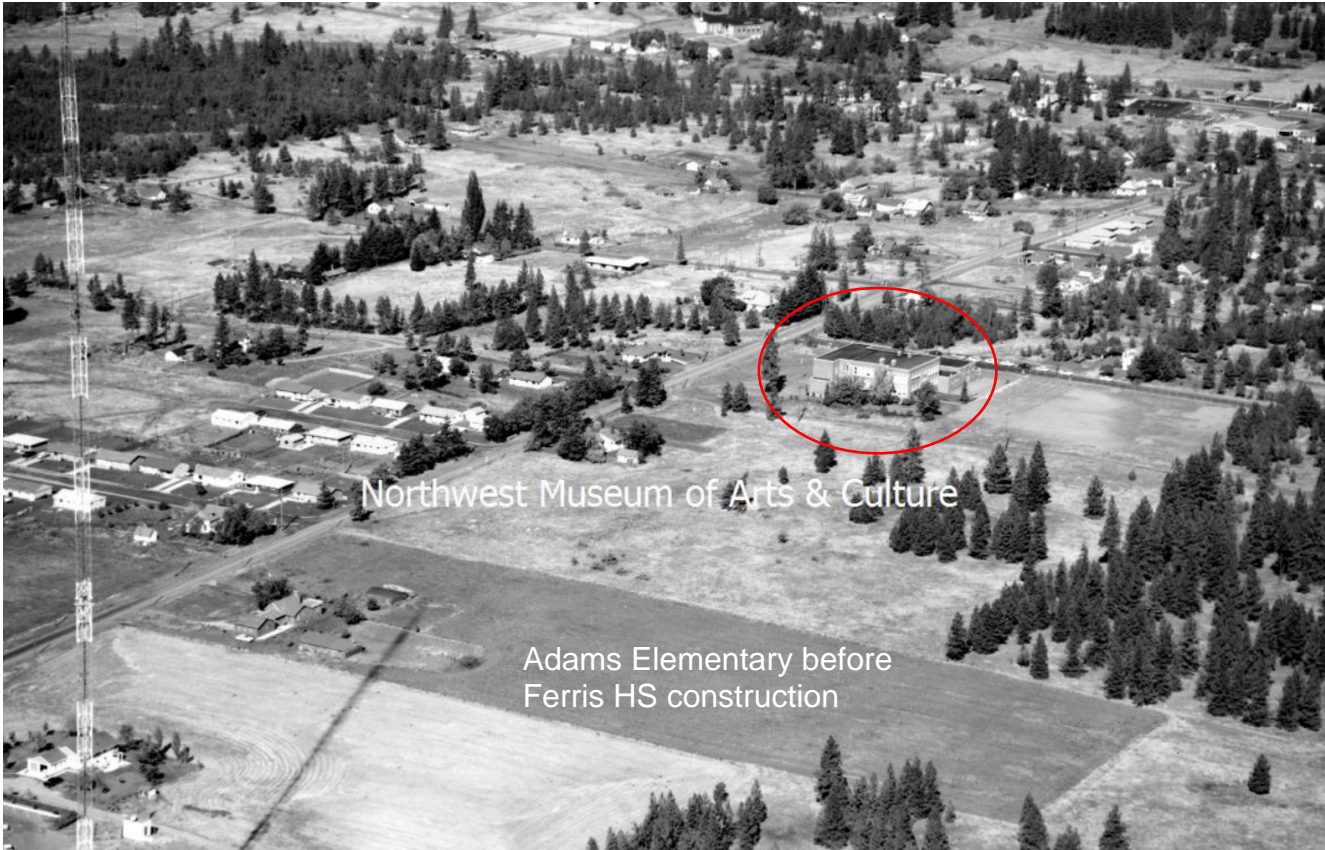
Attachments:

Exhibit A: Adams historic photos and article

Exhibit B: Renderings of the proposed design site plan and 3D views

Exhibit C: Community Survey Results

EXHIBIT A: Historic Photos



Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture

Adams Elementary before Ferris HS construction

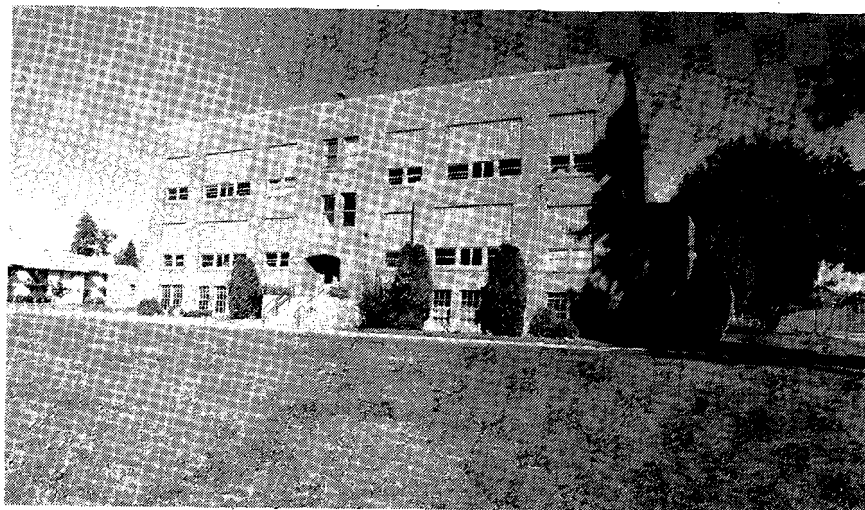


Adams Elementary after Ferris HS construction

Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture

ADAMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

E. 2909 - 37th Avenue
Spokane, WA 99203
Opened: 1908
Namesake:
Charles Adams



Research Team:

Staff	Doris Voshell
Volunteer	Susan Havey
Resource	Marilyn Highberg
People	Lucille Silver
	Jo Brousseau

Adams Elementary School is located at East 2909 - 37th Avenue in Spokane, Washington. Its location in the southeast area of the city is central to the Lincoln Heights community and lends itself to many community activities.

Two Rooms, One Teacher

The original building was a two-room, wooden structure known as Garden Park School, built in 1902. It was part of School District 103, which was made up of schools outside the city limits of Spokane. The first teacher was Miss Clara Nicholls, who was the only teacher for all the students.

In 1908 the school was annexed into District No. 81. It was probably named for Mr. Charles Adams who owned the 14 1/2 acres of land between Ray and Regal Streets.

Population Overflowing

During 1909 and 1910 a brick building was constructed to replace the wooden structure. The new building consisted of four classrooms, an industrial arts room, and a social room. In 1917 the first addition was made, adding four more classrooms and increasing the size to 16,530 square feet. In 1948 the

multipurpose room, kitchen, utility room, and six additional classrooms were added. The first portable building was added in 1974 with a second portable built in 1987 to accommodate the increasing enrollment. A portable trailer unit houses the music program. The present enrollment of 559 students necessitated the movement of three kindergarten classes to Ferris High School in the fall of 1988. The community, especially students and staff in the high school, were instrumental in making this transition successful.

Valuable Support

The Adams School community is supportive of all areas of education. Adams was a pilot school for the Tessera program for gifted students which began in 1974 and was one of the original Community Schools which developed the Express Program, a before- and after-school child care program. The Adams PTA has existed as prime benefactor for the school for over 60 years.

Adam's volunteer aide program enriches the opportunities for students as does the business partnership with KREM TV 2, the sister school affiliation with Taisha in

Nishinomiya, Japan, and the activities of the Adams Parent Advisory Committee.

The certificated staff members are skilled professionals with an average of 16 years of experience in education; 20 percent have master's degrees. Adams was one of the first elementary schools to receive training in equity education. This enhanced the curriculum for the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. The staff of 47 includes 28 certificated personnel and 19 classified personnel.

Adams has 22 regular education classrooms, kindergarten through sixth grade. One learning support center room and two learning assistance classrooms provide support services for students needing them. Children are involved in many after-school sports and participate in Student Council, chorus, and school safety patrol as part of the educational program at Adams School.

For 80 years the community surrounding Adams School has been an integral part of the educational process, and with continued growth in our community we are confident this "spirit" will always be a special part of Adams Elementary School.

EXHIBIT B: Adams Elementary Site Plan Rendering

Concept Site Plan



EXHIBIT B: Adams Elementary Design Renderings



View from 36th looking west



View from Regal and 36th looking southeast



Section view through site from 36th to 37th



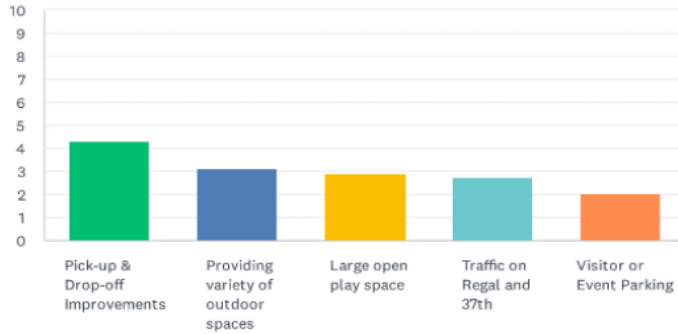
View from 37th & Fiske looking west

EXHIBIT C: Adams Elementary Community Survey Results



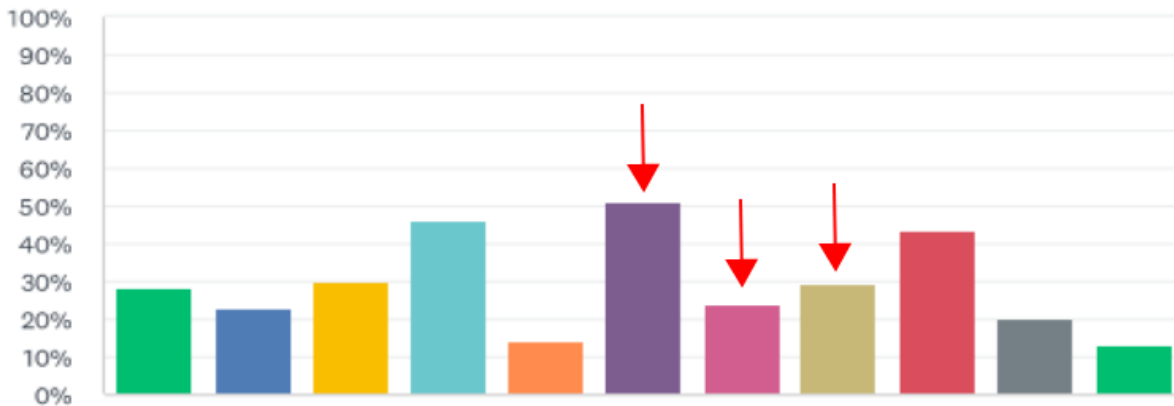
Adams Elementary School: Community Survey: November 1st - 20th, 2022

2. The Adam's site is compact, please rank (1 being very important and 5 being less important) what site components will have the greatest impact for students and families:



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Pick-up & Drop-off Improvements	64.91% 74	16.67% 19	10.53% 12	2.63% 3	5.26% 6	114	4.33
Providing variety of outdoor spaces	16.67% 19	24.56% 28	21.93% 25	25.44% 29	11.40% 13	114	3.10
Large open play space	8.04% 9	20.54% 23	37.50% 42	21.43% 24	12.50% 14	112	2.90
Traffic on Regal and 37th	9.91% 11	23.42% 26	16.22% 18	29.73% 33	20.72% 23	111	2.72
Visitor or Event Parking	1.77% 2	15.04% 17	14.16% 16	20.35% 23	48.67% 55	113	2.01

6. Select (3) types of spaces that your student would enjoy spending time in during the school day:



27.93% A quiet nook to read a book or draw	22.52% Space near classrooms to meet with teachers or other students	29.73% Rooms or spaces with interior / exterior views	45.95% Flexible spaces that can support large projects including art, STEM, & group work	14.41% Active hallways with student work celebration space	50.45% Outdoor active play zone	23.42% Wide open outdoor play space	28.83% Outdoor project/learning space	43.24% Gym or Fitness Space	19.82% Large gathering space with a stage	12.61% Adams history and student celebration space / wall
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