



Technical Memorandum

P.S. 557, Brooklyn (SEQR Project No. 17-024) –
 Review of 2018 Proposed Design Modifications (Post-FEIS)

July 26, 2018

The New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) proposes to create a new 332-seat primary school (PS) facility, currently known as PS 557, at 4302 4th Avenue in the Sunset Park section of Brooklyn (“proposed action”). The proposed new school will serve students in grade levels pre-kindergarten through grade five within Community School District (CSD) No. 15. Pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), the SCA determined that the proposed action is a “Type I” action, as defined by 6 NYCRR 617.4, and, therefore, prepared a comprehensive Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The FEIS, along with a Notice of Completion for the FEIS, were issued on July 7, 2017. The Statement of Findings was issued on July 17, 2017.

Since issuing its Statement of Findings,, the SCA has modified its original, proposed design of the new school facility.¹ This technical memorandum presents the proposed changes in the school project design, and assesses whether these project changes will affect the analyses and conclusions reached in 2017 (as presented in the 2017 FEIS, Notice of Completion for the FEIS, and the Statement of Findings). As indicated in Table 1, “Summary of Proposed Design Changes to the New School Facility for PS 557,” the proposed changes, included, an increase in overall floor area; reduction in overall height of the building; and a modest reduction in the size of the playground.

Table 1: Summary of Proposed Design Changes to the New School Facility for PS 557

	2017 FEIS	2018 Proposed Design Modifications	Increment/Change
School Building Size	30,060 sf	50,569 sf	+20,509 sf
School Building Height/ # of stories	75 ft/ 5 stories	70 ft/ 4 stories	-5 ft/ 1 story
Rooftop Playground (located on the third floor above the gymnasium)	3,550 sf	3,219 sf	-331 sf

¹ The proposed seating capacity (332 seats) and Build Year (2022) assumed in the 2017 FEIS remain unchanged in the assessment of the 2018 proposal.



Given the type and limited magnitude of proposed design modifications to the new school facility, the original analyses will not change and no further evaluation is warranted with respect to socioeconomic conditions, community facilities and services, open space, historic and cultural resources, natural resources, hazardous materials, solid waste and sanitation services, transportation, air quality, noise (mobile source and school interior noise levels), public health, neighborhood character, and construction.

The proposed modifications to the new school design may affect the original analyses concerning: land use and zoning, shadows, urban design, water and sewer infrastructure, energy, and noise (playground noise). Thus, the foregoing areas have been reviewed with consideration of the changes set forth in Table 1 above.

Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy. As presented in the 2017 FEIS, the SCA will request zoning overrides from the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development for zoning bulk noncompliances. The 2017 findings noted that there will be no significant adverse impacts to land use resulting from the proposed construction of PS 557, and as the zoning overrides will pertain only to the project site, no significant adverse impacts to zoning will occur.

The proposed design modifications (shown in Table 1 above) will increase the size of the school building by 20,509 sf, decrease the height of the school building by both five (5) feet and one (1) story, and decrease the size of the rooftop playground by 331 sf. As described in the 2017 FEIS, the proposed project will affect only the project site, and any additional zoning overrides required with the 2018 modifications will also affect only the project site. Therefore, both the land use and zoning patterns of the surrounding area will remain unaffected., Thus, the findings of no significant adverse impact related to land use, zoning, and public policy, as determined in the 2017 FEIS, remain unchanged with consideration of the 2018 proposed design changes.

Shadows. Based on the height of the building considered in the 2017 FEIS, four (4) potentially sunlight sensitive resources of concern are potentially within reach of the maximum shadow of the proposed new PS 557 building, including St. Michael's R.C. Church complex (church and school buildings) and the open space area at the northern edge of the complex; the (former) Sunset Park Court House; and a portion of the Sunset Park Historic District. The analyses presented in the 2017 FEIS led to the determination that the incremental shadow from the proposed school will not result in a significant adverse impact to St. Michael's R.C. Church complex, the open space area, the (former) Sunset Park Court House, and the Sunset Park Historic District.

With the proposed 2018 design modifications, the height of the school will decrease by five (5) feet, which will cause the proposed school building's maximum shadow to be decreased by approximately 22 feet. With the proposed decrease in height of the proposed school building, there is no potential for additional sunlight-sensitive resources to be affected by shadow from the new structure. Likewise, there is no potential for shadows lasting longer than originally predicted for the taller building analyzed in the 2017 FEIS. Therefore, as with the 2017 design, no significant adverse shadow impacts will result with the 2018 modifications

Urban Design and Visual Resources. As presented in the 2017 FEIS, the new PS 557 design will not result in significant adverse impacts to urban design and visual quality. Rather, the new school will contribute to the urban characteristic of the 4th Avenue streetscape and be consistent



with the nearby institutional uses and visual resources. More significantly, the new school will result in the improvement of a currently derelict site, while preserving and stabilizing the existing street-facing facades of the historic station house building, thus improving the aesthetic character of the streetscape.

As analyzed within the FEIS, the taller portion of the proposed school building will surround a new three (3) story building that will follow the original station house footprint and that will retain the massing of the former police precinct facility in its current position at the street corner. Given that the 2018 design change is similar to the proposed school design presented in the 2017 FEIS, with regard to building footprint, orientation on the project site, and massing, the 2018 design will be expected to have a similar, positive effect with regard to urban design and visual quality in the study area. Therefore, significant adverse impacts with regard to urban design and visual quality will not occur, and the findings for the 2017 FEIS remain unchanged.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure. The analyses presented in the 2017 FEIS led to the determination that the proposed school will not result in significant adverse impacts to water supply.

The design modifications will increase the size of the school by approximately 20,509 sf, and thus, will consume an additional 3,487 gallons per day (gpd) for air conditioning during the cooling season. The total water usage of 12,247 gpd at the proposed PS 557 will not lead to a significant adverse impact to water supply and sewer infrastructure, and so the findings for the 2017 FEIS remain unchanged with, and are applicable to, the 2018 proposal.

Energy. As presented in the 2017 FEIS, the PS 557 design will not result in significant adverse impacts associated with energy, or the capacity to provide service to the project site and surrounding area.

With the design modifications and increase in the size of the proposed school building, there will be an overall incremental increase in the estimated annual usage of energy following construction of the proposed school building by approximately 5.1 billion British Thermal Units (BTUs), or 3.9 billion BTUs for the nine-month academic year; the total estimated annual usage of energy of 12.6 billion BTUs, or 9.6 billion BTUs for the nine-month academic year, will not lead to a significant adverse impact related to the capacity of Con Edison and National Grid to provide service to the project site and surrounding area, and so the findings for the 2017 FEIS remain unchanged with, and are applicable to, the 2018 proposal.

Noise.

Playground Noise

The analyses presented in the 2017 FEIS led to the determination that there will be no significant adverse impacts related to playground noise with the proposed action.

As part of the design modifications, the rooftop playground area to be provided on the northeast portion of the third floor of the school building will be decreased in size by 331 sf. Based on the geometry of the proposed building, the only noise sensitive property that will have a direct line-of-sight to the proposed playground will be the top floor windows of the former St. Michael's



School building at 4222 4th Avenue, which is currently occupied by PS 516 (Sunset Park Avenues Elementary School). The former St. Michael's School building is located across 43rd Street, approximately 57 feet from the northern edge of the proposed rooftop playground at PS 557. As a result, potential future school-related noise impacts related to the proposed school rooftop playground were examined.

Based on the overall playground assessment, the increase in the future project noise levels at the former St. Michael's school building will not exceed the five (5) dBA SCA impact criteria during the Midday period. As a result, noise impacts related to the rooftop playground affecting any surrounding sensitive noise receptors are not anticipated. Therefore, the findings related to playground noise, as reported in the 2017 FEIS remain unchanged with, and are applicable to, the 2018 proposal.

NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY


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