



Project Overview

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace has completed its 126 year as a premier, all girls' college preparatory high school serving the San Diego region. Throughout its history in San Diego, the school has provided high quality education for many generations of San Diegans.

OLP occupies twenty acres above Mission Valley, most of which are canyon slopes. Only six acres are suitable for development. Originally constructed in 1917, the estate consisted of three buildings to which another three were added in the 1920s. Those original structures comprise the core of OLP's campus as it exists today. St. Joseph Hall, built in 1965, is the only academic building addition the school has made since the 1920s.

The demand for excellent private schools has increased substantially in our region over the years. Meeting San Diego's growing need for the education of young women has challenged OLP's physical resources. Since 1965, OLP has met increasing demand by stressing its existing facilities beyond their capabilities. The Academy has converted cloakrooms into offices, basements into computer science labs and attics into chorus rehearsal rooms.

After years of consideration and planning, the Academy is currently seeking approval from the City of San Diego for an updated Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and campus master plan. The Academy has hired a team of leading architects to design a plan which will optimize the constrained property to modernize its facilities, improve the library and expand it with a media center, add needed science labs and classroom space, add a full service cafeteria and expand parking, while maintaining the architectural integrity and tradition of our campus.

OLP has been operating since 1995 under a CUP which allows 640 students. The region's growth in recent years has increased the demand for private high school education, and each year applications for enrollment to OLP grow as does the number of students we are not able to accommodate. The Academy is committed to maintaining the culture of a small private school that it has nurtured throughout its 126-year history

and does not intend to increase student population beyond the current level of 750. At this enrollment level, the Academy is able to fulfill its mission of providing a high-quality educational experience while continuing to provide financial aide to approximately 25% of its students.

The current CUP calls for OLP to demolish and pave over the North Terrace lawn. The North Terrace is an integral component of the school's history and tradition, as well as campus aesthetics. Beginning in 1926, an unbroken procession of graduating classes has been celebrated on the North Terrace. This occasion is perhaps North Park's longest, continuously running event.

OLP recognizes that educating our youth in computer science is essential to their advancement and success at university and in their chosen vocations. In 1995, OLP transformed a former sitting room from boarding school days and two other rooms into one unorganized and broken-up computer science facility. Currently there are structural pillars that obstruct the students' views of the teacher's screen at the front of the class. A properly designed media center will enhance OLP's ability to provide this region's young women with training in this field which is necessary to excel in university and at the professional level.

OLP presently has two science labs for 750 students, thus having a 375:1 student to lab ratio. Under the proposed master plan, the school will add two new labs, improving the ratio to 187:1 which is in line with other public and private schools in the region. For example, Lincoln High School has a 125:1 ratio, Cathedral has a 167:1 ratio, and St. Augustine has a 178:1 ratio.

The campus improvements and a new CUP will permit OLP to continue to provide high quality educational facilities in a small, private school setting for the region's young women well into the 21st century. The Academy is committed to create a campus that the immediate neighborhood as well as entire San Diego region will cherish as a regional asset for many generations to come.

Improvements

The Academy's proposed improvements will provide a number of benefits for the school, the students and the community, including:

Master Plan

The adoption of a master plan will mean neighbors, residents and the school will have an agreed upon blueprint for the campus, adding certainty to any future development process and a common reference point for all.

New Campus Parking

The amended CUP will address the parking needs for 750 students.

Traffic-flow

At the end of the 2006-2007 academic school year, OLP hired a traffic engineer to survey the traffic patterns within the neighborhood surrounding the school. Recommendations from the neighbors and from the traffic engineer have been used to create a traffic-flow plan for this school year. These steps include employing traffic facilitators on the street to manage traffic-flow during peak pick-up and drop-off times. Also, during heavily attended special events, OLP will employ parking enforcement officers from the City of San Diego in an attempt to improve traffic-flow and security in immediate area.

Heightened School Security

Expanded on-site parking will provide increased security for OLP students by reducing the need for the girls to walk several blocks to the campus while reducing the impact on our neighbors.

Enrollment

The current CUP authorizes an enrollment of 640 students. The number of young people seeking a private, high school, Catholic education increases every year as the San Diego region grows. OLP has made a conscious decision that it will not accommodate additional growth and has imposed an enrollment cap of 750 students. Maintaining a student body of no more than 750 enables OLP to preserve and continue the small private school culture we have nurtured throughout the school's 125 year history. It is important to note that OLP's decades-old facilities are no longer adequate to meet the educational needs of our students regardless of whether they number 640 or 750.