

MEMORANDUM

July 27th, 2021

Cranston Planning Department
Attn: Doug McLean
Cranston City Hall
869 Park Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

RE: Cranston Public Schools - Garden City Elementary School Building Height Clarification

Dear Mr. McLean,

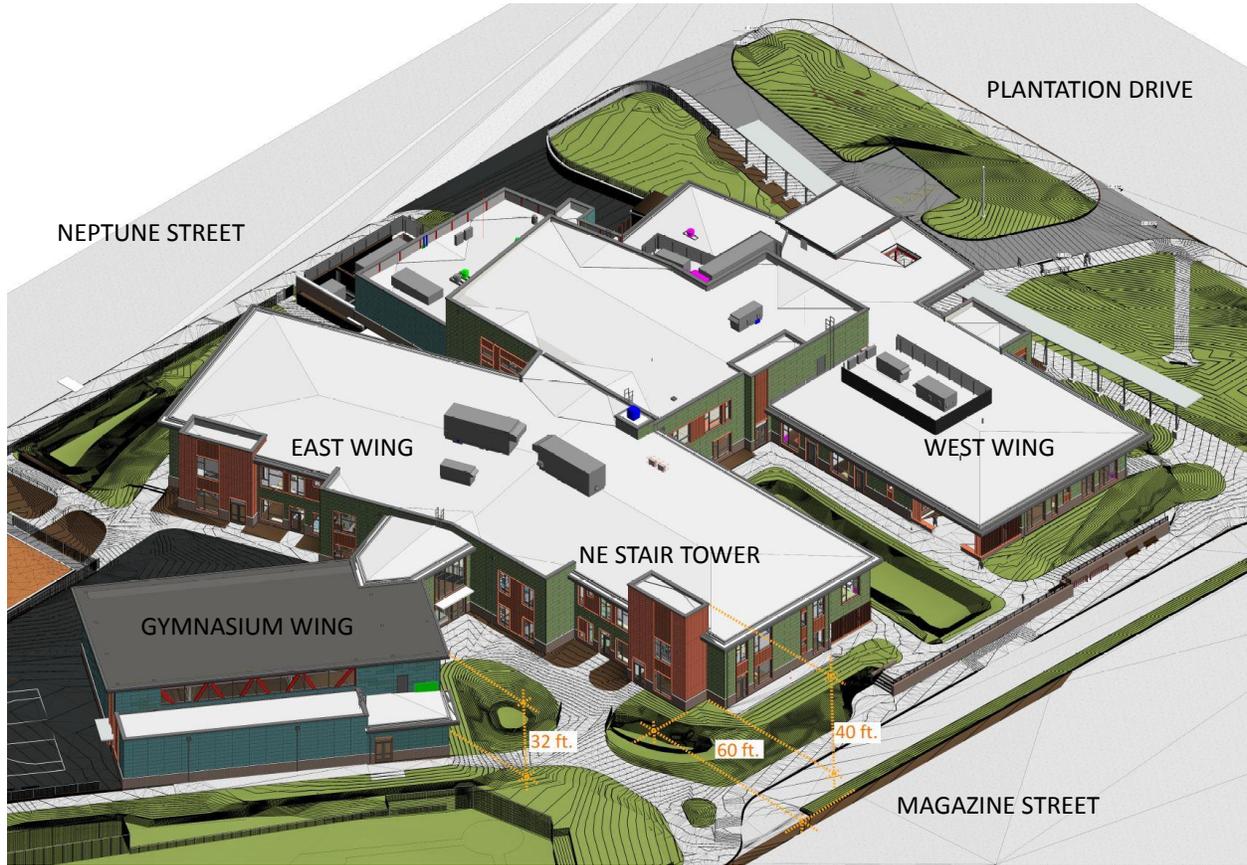
In response to our planning submission for Garden City Elementary School provided to you by our Civil Engineer, Mike Zavalia at Commonwealth Engineering, a follow-up item was requested giving a clarification of the building height relative to the zoning height limitation. After submitting a clarification memo, a building official recommended that we seek a zoning variance for a portion of the building, limited to a single stairway, that exceeds the 35ft height limit

The zoning ordinance of the City of Cranston, under the [Section 17.20.110 – Residential yard exceptions](#) the table in [Section 17.20.120 Schedule of intensity regulations](#) lists school EI (Educational Institutional) use groups at a maximum height of 35 feet.

The design of the proposed building has three primary wings:

- **West Wing:** The west wing is a one story structure that is 15'-7" tall from finish floor elevation to the top of the roof ridge. There is also mechanical equipment and an equipment screen that is approximately 7'-0" tall. The highest point of the west wing is 22'-7" tall including the mechanical equipment, which is fully compliant with the 35'-0" height limitation.
- **East Wing:** The east wing is a two story structure that is 29'-8" tall from finish floor elevation to the top of the roof ridge. There is a parapet detail around the cafeteria section of the east wing that is 31'-5" tall. In general the west wing complies with the thirty-five foot height limit, with the following caveats:
 - In the north east corner of the building, a single stairway extends above the roof for maintenance access purposes. In this one case, the height is forty feet 40'-0" above grade. Please see our diagrams below for additional information about the stairway.
 - Rooftop mechanical equipment is centered on the east wing which is approximately 7'-0" tall, which puts their tallest point 36'-9" above the finish floor elevation. We understand mechanical units to be exempt from the zoning height limitations, and these units are as far away from the roof perimeter as possible.
- **Gymnasium Wing:** The gymnasium is a one story "double height" structure that is a maximum 32'-0" tall from finish floor elevation to the top of the roof ridge. There are no mechanical units on the roof, and this wing is fully compliant with the 35'-0" height limitation.

It is our belief that the proposed building is in full compliance with the height and yard setbacks with the exception of the northeast stair. The below diagram shows the relationship of the stair to the building mass and the street frontage.



At the northeast stairway location of the east wing, the structure is sixty feet from the property line (40ft more than the required 20 foot yard setback) and is only an additional five feet of height to be over 35 feet. Additionally, it is located towards the center of the property along Magazine Street. The stair is not near any adjacent properties, and only faces an adjacent baseball field, therefore we do not see that this is creating any harm to nearby residences. The relief for the height will also greatly benefit the functionality of the building as the stair is also the primary roof access for maintenance and provides a safe path for maintenance staff.

Thank you for your consideration in the request for this variance, and if there are any supplemental materials needed, please feel free to contact me and we will get them to you as soon as possible.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jay Litman
Principal, Fielding International