



## Brooks and Associates

Civil Engineering - Marketing - Technical Support

## MEMORANDUM

TO: File  
FROM: Kathy Burgess  
SUBJECT: New South Anchorage Area High School  
Building Design Committee Meeting December 6 & 7, 1999  
DATE: December 8, 1999

### December 6, 1999

Terry Hyer of ECI/Hyer welcomed everyone and began a round of self-introductions. He directed the group's attention to a chart in the day's handouts called "South Anchorage Area High School Road Map" which shows the steps in each stage of the design and building of the new school from pre-design to occupancy. The business of the current meetings is the Concept Design stage. Terry also described the various entities participating in the school's design and development process and explained their responsibilities. The Building Design Committee is an advisory group to the School District. The committee will review and discuss several concept design options presented by the architects and this input will be used to shape the Conceptual Design to be proposed to the School District.

Amy Yurko of Perkins & Will gave a brief review of the space program previously discussed and refined by the committee from the options given in the Education Specification that has been adopted by the Anchorage School District.

John Dale of Perkins & Will then presented three options for the conceptual building design. It is not expected that any of these will be adopted exactly as is; they are to serve as starting points for the discussion about adjacencies and relationships of the different parts of the building.

**Option A's** most prominent feature is that the main areas of the building are organized along a long central corridor like buildings on a street. Common areas like the gym, cafeteria, auditorium, music rooms, and library/media center are all on one side of this "street" and the academic areas (mainly classrooms) are on the other side arranged in a series of L-shapes that form a saw-tooth pattern. These rooms would most likely be south-facing for maximum natural light in the classrooms.

Another distinguishing feature of this option is that the building has 3 levels. The bottom level has half the rooms of the academic areas. The second level is the main floor, with the upper half of the academic area classrooms on one side of the "street" and the PE facilities, auditorium, music rooms, dining facilities, and central administration offices on the other. The top level is over the common area side only, allowing those rooms to have light and views to the south over the second classroom level's roof. Areas proposed for this top level are the library/media center, business and technology classrooms.

Within the academic areas, science classrooms would be located in pairs on the lowest level. The angle of each L would be an open commons area separated from the main corridor by an island which would contain teacher work areas and distributed administrative offices.

**Option B** features a large open plaza commons area that would also work as a dining area at lunchtime. Several large spaces are adjacent to this plaza—the auditorium (for which the plaza would serve as a lobby), music rooms, main administrative offices, and P.E. facilities. Across the plaza from the auditorium is the library/media center, and clustered around that are 2-story academic areas. They form a square with the library/media center in the middle. On the upper level bridges cross the commons to the second floor of the academic areas.

Classrooms form U-shaped academic areas with science rooms paired between each set. The areas could be designated as two U's on the same floor or on two levels, one above the other. Part of the center of each academic area is an open commons on the lower level and an open well on the upper level.

**Option C** is called a crossroads plan. There is a large open foyer near the main entrance with auditorium, music rooms, gym and central administration nearby. The dining area is openable to the foyer. Academic areas are down a long street-type corridor with science rooms all in a line together on one side of the “street” and the other classrooms in two large u-shapes on the other side. These would probably be facing south and receive the best natural light. The library/media center, technology, and business classrooms are on the second level above the administration offices and other common first-level areas.

The non-science academic area classrooms are around the outside of the U-shaped wings; each area faces its own science rooms at the open end of the U and across the “main street” corridor. The center of the U's loop contains teacher work space and resource rooms, as well as an open commons area.

One of the spaces strongly advocated within the building design committee is a large theatre. Amy showed some illustrations of a theatre with partially stowable seating. This seating, in combination with operable walls, could allow for shared use of part of the theatre space without compromising acoustics or sight lines during theatre use. There ensued a long discussion of possible space compromises for achieving a theatre within the ed spec limits.

*After a break, the committee divided into smaller groups to discuss the three conceptual design options presented. The following is a summary of the comments shared with the full group afterwards.*

### **Option A**

- It limits the options for its location on the site.
- Because it has 3 levels, it has a smaller footprint and would use less area of the site. There may also be energy savings in operation.
- The way the L-shapes look out at the view and take in the light is really great.
- Balconies on the upper levels are a worry.
- The academic areas side is great, but the strung-out common facilities is a less desirable feature.
- The lined-up common areas could easily have possible access outside of school hours through their own exterior entries or through entries let in between major areas.
- The library is far away from the academic areas. This could mean extra travel for classes wanting to use its facilities. It also might be a positive feature, as a quiet place away from the hubub of the main circulation
- This option looks like it would have a great relation to the site.
- There are potential traffic conflict points at the blind corners between academic areas.
- With such an elongated plan the location of stairs and elevators will be important, especially for disabled students.
- The classrooms on the outside corners of the L's look like especially wonderful spaces with potential light sources and views on two sides.
- Sight lines for supervision are not very good.
- The main entrance should perhaps be more nearly in the middle of the building.
- There are lots of areas for student socializing.
- The shallow hallways are good. (*Shallow is in reference to the distance from the entry to the house from the main street circulation.*)
- The theatre should be nearer the main entrance.
- Perhaps the theatre should be rotated to open toward the cafeteria.
- Public access to the library and classrooms of the upper floor would not be easy.
- There is no central gathering place or focus point.
- Perhaps the sawtooth academic area shape could be combined with common areas around a plaza commons space.

### **Option B**

- Having science classrooms on two levels makes it hard for science teachers to share equipment and expertise.
- Some academic area classrooms look out on other walls.
- Having intensive needs special education on an upper floor is unworkable.
- Having the library in a position where the academic areas embrace it is excellent.
- There is a sense of community, a good focus for the school.
- The academic areas are a box.
- JROTC and the weight room should be closer to the center.
- The auxiliary gym with separate exterior access is good.
- The academic areas are very practical and flexible.

- This plan would zone well for public use.
- The kitchen should be moved nearer the gym and arts nearer to administration.
- The short halls are good.
- Perhaps the cafeteria space could be smaller and that space added to the commons.
- There is some concern about the long box shape of the library, but much would depend on the internal layout.
- There might be security problems at the commons with two lunch periods.
- This is the best, most compact design for energy conservation.
- The plan of the house looks congested. Perhaps some of the large commons area could go around the library.
- The upper bridge walkways are cool; all the open space is nice.

### **Option C**

- It achieves the house organization, yet keeps all the science classrooms together, very desirable by science teachers.
- The academic areas are isolated, making them very easy to close off.
- There might be security risks with all the nooks outdoors around the building. These areas would, however, be within view of many windows.
- Perhaps there should be entry points nearer the academic areas.
- The library is far from the academic areas.
- There might be security problems within the academic areas—people can hide and dodge around the central island rooms.
- This plan looks congested.
- Perhaps the academic area wings could be moved to have one on each side of the central corridor. That would shorten travel distances to other parts of the building.
- The main entrance is too canyon-like. Perhaps it should move to the center of that side of the building.
- The long central corridor isn't desirable.
- The bathrooms should be closer to the main hall.
- More right angles would minimize construction cost.
- Science area is very flexible.
- The cafeteria is good and very flexible.
- The music rooms are near the auditorium but far enough from other areas to minimize noise disturbance.
- This plan has good public use possibilities.
- There is a good potentially usable outdoor space between the academic area wings.
- The cafeteria space should be reduced because it isn't heavily used. That space could be re-employed as small scattered study areas.
- The long hall makes for easy circulation and wayfinding. It's not a maze.
- The academic area wings could be changed so they don't look in on each other—rotated into a V, for instance.

The discussion made it clear that the committee had a strong liking for the sawtooth classroom arrangement of Option A and the commons plaza arrangement of Option B. The architects will try to combine these two elements into a new conceptual design, **Option D.**

### **December 7, 1999**

Jon Steele of ECI/Hyer began an examination of the site parameters by displaying several types of graphic depictions of the land: an aerial photo of it, a topographical map showing its contours, a property diagram showing easements, vegetative buffer zones, etc, and a sun analysis that showed Chugach mountain view potentials and orientation, significant prevailing winds, and sun angles and rise and set at various times of the year.

Elise Huggins of Earthscape presented a slope map that categorized slope areas and indicated drainage directions, and a vegetation map that showed two basic areas— spruce-birch forest over most of the area and birch-spruce forest in the southwest part. Soils are similar throughout the site.

Jon reviewed the site's zoning. It is classified R1-SL, residential with special limitations. It is permissible to build a school on R1 land. The limitations include having a vegetation buffer around the edge of the site, one vehicle access from Elmore Road, and no vehicle access from Leyden Road. The current land use zoning, R1-SL, permits a structure height of up to 30 feet.

There is a small area cut out of the site at the southeast corner. This is Tract B2, an Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility pump station.

Amy presented three suggested site plan options. The options were lettered the same as the building concepts and showed the corresponding letter's building shape placed on the site. The particular building and site arrangements are not necessarily tied to one another; they are there to illustrate the options. All of the plans show the required vegetation buffer all the way around the edge.

**Scheme A** has the building centered on the site. There is a main automobile entry point on Elmore Road, with a separate bus entry to the north of it. Parking areas for student cars, staff cars, and buses are grouped together to the northeast. Athletic fields are on the west and south, with a large nature area remaining forested on the south.

**Scheme B** also has the building placed in the center of the site. Automobiles and buses have separate entry points from Elmore Road. Cars park in lots on the east; buses park in an area to the southeast. There is a thick wooded buffer all the way around the site, with two small wooded areas near the academic area part of the building. Athletic fields are to the west and south. There is less of a nature preserve in this scheme, but it would leave undisturbed some of the land's oldest and largest trees on the north and northeast edges.

**Scheme C** has the building centered on the south of the site. There is a single vehicle entrance, with car parking to the northeast and buses to the southeast. There are no woods near the school building. There are open areas on the northeast, south, and southwest, with athletic fields on the west and southwest.

The following is a summary of comments made in the discussion of the site plans.

- What do we want and need for site access? More than one access point, good flow through the vehicle areas, good security and minimum traffic congestion both on the site and in the roads leading to it.
- It is most likely that the student population will be coming from south of the school site. We need access from that side via DeArmoun Road.
- A right-of-way exists for Elmore to extend to DeArmoun. However, it narrows south of Leyden. More right-of-way would have to be acquired in order to make a consistent street from DeArmoun to the site.
- Conversations about that road need to occur, and they need to start soon, given the length of the process involved to get it constructed.
- A group of site neighbors feel that there should be a road from DeArmoun to the school and that there should be active encouragement of the southern approach for the majority of traffic. In that direction there is less road slope and fewer public and private schools posing congestion and pedestrian problems.
- These options will be discussed next week in a meeting the project team will have with the relevant departments of the municipality.
- We need to get to work to draw the attendance boundaries for the school so that we know where the students will be coming from and can design the site approach accordingly.
- It would be better to know the access route before placing the building on the site plan.
- Perhaps a site plan can be made that is flexible enough to allow different access points.
- Is there a need for some type of emergency access/exit onto Leyden? Or Ervine?
- Having an intact wooded nature area is important.
- Because there are road and access difficulties, perhaps there should be some scheme to limit the number of cars allowed to park at school. This could be done by lottery or seniority.
- Restricted parking space on campus could cause problems with people parking on the street in surrounding neighborhoods.
- Public event parking needs to be considered. A 500-space lot is adequate for auditorium events.
- Where would the snow dump be? It has not yet been designated.
- Parking needs to work, but there are other priorities that also must be considered.

- The athletic fields are PE teaching stations and need to be located close to locker rooms and the other PE facilities.
- Perhaps parking could be in a long strip on the north side. That would give access to many field and building areas from the same lot.
- Is it possible to get the use of part of the AWWU lot on the corner? Not likely. It has a steep knoll topography and will be occupied by a very large water storage tank.
- Perhaps some of the athletic areas should be in the front of the school to show school identity and activity.
- The closer the parking is to the entry the less land has to be paved for driveways and access.
- If the buses delivered students significantly closer to the door would they be more willing to take the bus and not bring a car?
- Perhaps a traffic circle would help circulation; perhaps a round loop would be a good dropoff area.
- Energy consumption should be a significant consideration in the design of the building and its surroundings. Construction is a one-time cost, but a savings in energy expenses could amount to millions of dollars over the life of the building.
- What is the plan for action on the road issues that will affect site access and entry? The project team will have a better idea after its meeting next week with the municipal departments.

Amy summarized the main priorities for the site understood from the committee's discussion:

1. Pedestrian access should be unobstructed.
2. Parking should be near the site entry.
3. Playfields should have direct access to the Physical Education department.
4. Classrooms should be on the south for maximum light.
5. Common areas should have views where possible.
6. Car and bus traffic should be kept separate.
7. Staff and student parking should be separate.
8. The natural topography should be respected.
9. The site plan should maximize the natural landscape.
10. There should be consideration for snow removal and storage.

The next meeting of the building Design Committee will be Tuesday and Wednesday, January 11 and 12 at Goldenview Middle School library from 3:30 to 8 p.m. The agenda will be to look in more detail at the evolving conceptual design for the building and site.

ATTENDANCE:

Ray Amsden, ASD Facilities  
Rob Balivet, ASD Facilities  
Kathy Burgess, Brooks & Associates  
Sandra Cook, MOA Parks

Esther Cox, ASD  
John Dale, Perkins & Will  
Dave Frenier, MOA DPW Bldg. Safety  
Greg Frosberg, ECI/Hyer

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Elise Huggins, Earthscape  
Terry Hyer, ECI/Hyer  
Jerry Sjolander, ASD Special Ed.  
Jon Steele, ECI/Hyer  
Amy Yurko, Perkins & Will  
Pat Abney, Anch. Assembly  
Tony Bennett, Turnagain Vw. Est.  
Connie Bensler, Goldenview MS  
Heather Brooks, East student  
Roselynn Cacy, Adult Lrng Ctr  
Cynthia Cacy, student  
Shirley Coulson, Bear Valley PTA  
Mary Daum, Service HS  
Cyd Duffin, East HS  
Carol Fries, Rabbit Creek CC  
Chris Haase, Service student  
Liz Hudson, Service HS  
Angela Kuentzel, Huffman/O'M. CC  
Pamela Lloyd, parent  
Jesse Martin, neighbor & parent  
Mark Mason, East student  
Beka Menzel, East student  
Johanna Naylor, Goldenview MS  
Guy Okada, Dimond HS  
Pat Podvin, Service HS  
Mary Rassmussen, Mears/Dimond  
Sallie Ross, Service parent  
Debbie Rozman, Goldenview MS  
Marianne See, Alaska DEC & parent  
Sam Struempler, Service HS  
Amey Tamagni, Kasuun PTA  
Jan Thompson, Dimond HS & neighbor  
Jeff & Shannon Hall  
Dick Tremaine