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**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 January 11, 2000  
DATE: January 27, 2000

Terry Hyer of ECI/Hyer welcomed everyone and started a round of self-introductions of all present. This meeting will very likely finish the Conceptual Design phase of the project. From consensus here we move on to the Schematic Design phase.

Amy Yurko, of Perkins & Will, briefly reviewed the design schemes presented at the previous meeting and listed the features the committee liked the best:

- Classrooms facing south.
- Sawtooth arrangement of academic areas with mini-courtyards.
- Shared facilities in a two-story curved shape.
- An open commons between the shared facilities and classroom areas.

These were aggregated in a fourth design scheme created at the last meeting, Scheme D, that united the common facilities from Scheme B and the classroom arrangement from Scheme A. This design, integrated into the site, has been further developed and will be the topic of this meeting's discussion.

John Dale, of Perkins & Will, began a general examination of the design. The academic areas are in a sawtooth outline on the south-facing side of the building. Common facilities are in a curved, arc configuration on the north side of a commons area. A person arriving at the main entry on the east end enters on the upper floor and proceeds downward as the building is fitted into the slope of the land.

Arriving at the main entrance, one would encounter the administration suite first on the right, then guidance, then the media center, and the upper gymnasium on the west end opening to the playfields. The elongated center of the building is a 2-story open commons with wide, amphitheater-style steps at the east end. Across the commons are the academic houses, each stacked on two floors and united by a central light well. On the lower level of the common facilities side are the career classroom clusters visual arts, life skills/intensive needs, auditeria (combined auditorium and cafeteria), and gymnasium.

The auditeria will include a full-sized stage and direct exterior access doors for performances and events outside of school hours. Lunchtime dining can spill out of the auditeria into the commons (possibly using amphitheater steps as seats) and across into the academic areas.

Inside the building, as many spaces as possible will be filled with natural light by bringing light through double-story spaces down to the lower floor and interior rooms. The building will step down with the slope of the land; with interior stairs and ramps.

Outside, the southern academic area side of the building will seem more on a residential scale, as the large volume of the common facilities on the north is tucked into the hill. There could be an outdoor entrance for each academic area to speed students' entry and exit. Lockers will be located in each academic area so that students' belongings will be near their classes.

Greg Frosberg of ECI/Hyer began a view of the site plan by recapping the goals for the site enumerated in the summary of the committee's previous meeting. These goals are:

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

There was discussion about the vehicle access point options. If Elmore is to be extended to the south to connect with DeArmoun, land on the sides of the existing right-of-way will have to be acquired in order to build the road through. Land would also need to be acquired to make a connecting driveway that entered the site at some other point on the southern edge. It will be up to the Municipality, with support from the District, to study the cost/benefit of the different road access options and to recommend to the School Board and Municipal Assembly the most suitable plan and funding needs for implementation. The design for the site can accommodate whatever option is chosen. Current zoning limitations allow only one site access from Elmore Road. However, this would increase site development, set aside for vehicle queuing, and decrease preserving mature vegetation.

The forested northeast corner of the site, the portion with the oldest trees, will remain undisturbed. Student parking for 500 cars will be on the south of the building; staff and visitors will park on the north. Buses will load and unload students on the west end of the building, well separated from student parking. The student lot will be very visible and easily supervised from the many academic area classroom windows.

There was discussion about making some formal pedestrian access to the school from the Leyden Road side on the north. There are de facto footpaths there now at the points where people enter for recreational use of the land. A neighbor expressed opposition to

encouraging any type of pedestrian traffic that would use the narrow, unimproved roads to the north and potentially bring people, bikes, and cars into conflict. The current zoning limitations on the land say that there should be no access from Leyden Road.

All these site issues have been identified with the Municipality and there is ongoing work to resolve them. It was suggested by the project team that perhaps developments in this area could be posted on the website in order to keep the committee and the general public informed.

A question was raised about where intensive needs students would enter the building. This could be anywhere. They might use the main entry, the bus entry on the west end, or have a special entry from the staff and visitor parking lot directly into their classrooms.

After a break, Amy Yurko led an area-by-area review and discussion of the different parts of the building's design.

#### Academic Areas

Each academic area is a two-story triangular shape with 6 classrooms (at each floor level) on the two exterior, southern-facing sides and a resource classroom and support rooms (at each floor level) on the interior side bordering the commons atrium. The two floors of each area are connected by a central triangular light well and by a staircase. Resource classrooms have an operable wall that allows them to be used as one large or two regular-sized rooms. Science classrooms are located on the lower level and, because of their larger size, might have a greenhouse-type window arrangement projecting beyond the wall above. The academic areas step down the slope of the land in a sawtooth shape and are connected to each other indoors by ramps.

#### *Comments and discussion:*

- Are there enough bathrooms? In keeping with the goal of dispersed facilities, the restrooms are many, smaller, and scattered throughout the building. Each house has male and female student restrooms on each floor as well as a staff restroom.
- Is each house securable separately from the others? They could be, perhaps by doors held open automatically. This would lessen any feeling of confinement, and if the doors were largely of glass, light could still be transmitted through the building. The new Dimond High School design has rolling doors for building zoning. Safety and accessibility is a big concern.
- With all this openness, would the acoustics of the large commons be affected by noise from the academic areas? The acoustical considerations for noise levels and sound transmission between the commons and academic areas must be analyzed and be part of the design solution.
- How does this design rate for energy efficiency? It is probably not the most energy efficient, but we will know more when it is analyzed later. The atrium concept is fairly good at energy conservation compared to a completely linear building shape.

### Administration and Guidance Areas

In the administration suite, offices will be on the perimeter with access to natural light and support areas will be in the center. Attendance and security offices will be nearest the entrance. The principal's office will be on the corner with windows in two walls.

#### *Comments and discussion:*

- Where will the career resource room be? In the media center.
- Shouldn't the staff lounge in the administration area be larger? Staff workrooms are dispersed throughout the building, reducing the need for a large central staff room.
- There should be a moveable wall to close off the reception area outside of school hours.
- The stock clerk and principal's administrative assistant need closed spaces in order to secure items such as catalogs and personnel files.
- There needs to be quick accessibility to the nurse's area and a place within it for the nurse to give confidential counseling.
- There needs to be toilet access directly from the nurse's area.
- There must be space for both a nurse and a nurse's aide in the area.
- It would be a good idea to have a walk-up counter for the attendance office accessible from the hallway.
- The Community School office should be open to the hallway and close to the main entrance for after-hours access when it is the most active.
- The counseling waiting area does not need to be enclosed.

### Media Center

The student area is on the side of the space that has outside walls for access to natural light. Support areas are on the side near the building center.

#### *Comments and discussion:*

- The electronic gate for preventing materials theft should be further back in the access corridor. This will allow the career resource room to be open independently from the main media center.
- Is it possible to move the support cluster of rooms so the entry to the Media Center is not as lengthy?
- Perhaps there could be direct access to the career resource room from the hallway.
- The three academic area classrooms near the media center could have operable walls for potential use as a large group instructional space.
- The elevator located in this area needs to be very large in order to accommodate some of the large special-needs wheelchairs along with the students' attendants.

### Career Cluster

- The technology office and storage area should change places.
- The mini fabrication shop and storage should swap.
- If the cooking part of the family and consumer science room could be closed off, it could be used separately from the sewing lab.

### Visual Arts

- There should be a separated area for ceramics work on account of cleaning considerations and silica control requirements.
- The office and kiln room should move toward the center of the area so that its outside windows would be available for the classroom.

### Life Skills

- The restroom should have a changing table and be large enough for staff to assist students. It would be a good idea to look at the Dimond plan for the intensive needs area.
- It is good to have the life skills students near the career cluster and in the center of the school rather than off in a corner.
- It would be helpful for the life skills to be within easy reach of the nurse's rooms. These students sometimes have need for emergency medical assistance.
- There needs to be office space in the life skills area.
- Perhaps the life skills rooms could trade places with the academic classrooms on the upper floor. They would be closer to the nurse and emergency services access at the main entry, yet still in the heart of the school.

### Physical Education

- It is potentially disruptive to have to walk through the main gym to get from the locker rooms to the auxiliary gym.
- The activities secretary needs user access from the main hallway.
- The storage area at the side of the main gym looks skinny. It is the width of the running track above.
- We need to re-think the entrance to the gym from the atrium commons. It needs to be bigger.
- Presumably there will be ski trails around the site.
- The ski waxing area needs to have an outdoor access. There is a concern with wax deposits on the interior floor surfaces. There will need to be an arctic entry. The public entrance to the gym is too close to the locker room entry.
- Will there be oversize storage lockers for students' seasonal sports gear? This has been discussed by the architects and they will try to fit it in.

### Music Rooms

- Could the practice rooms have access from the corridor rather than from within the music rooms? Teachers find that supervision is better when access is from the room.
- Perhaps instrument storage lockers could be in the hallways of the music suite? It is a likely source of congestion.
- It is preferable to have the music office inside the music rooms.

### Auditeria and Stage

- The auditeria will be very much like the Dimond plan.

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- The proscenium should be 44 feet in length in order to accommodate standard rental scenery.
- In order to get everything into the school and stay within ed spec limits the seating area of the theater has to be dual purpose—seating for lunchtime as well as for performances. The space gained from this doubling enables the school to have the atrium commons.
- The large volume of the auditeria will enable the design of good acoustics.
- There is no decision yet on whether there will be an orchestra pit.
- This looks like it will approach a good theater standard. It will look and feel like a grown-up (age appropriate solution for both dining and auditorium use by high school students and the Anchorage community) facility.

The committee's general consensus of approval for the buildings design means that the project team can finish up the Conceptual Design phase and move on to Schematic Design. There will be no need to meet for a second day.

A member asked when this conceptual design will be presented to the Anchorage community at large. It will be available on the website in a report of this meeting perhaps accompanied by some drawings. Also, community councils can request presentations from the Anchorage School District Facilities Department.

The committee will have another meeting next month at a day and time to be announced.

ATTENDEES

PROJECT TEAM

Ray Amsden, ASD Facilities  
Rob Balivet, ASD Project Manager  
Kathy Burgess, Brooks & Associates  
Nancy Casey, MOA Planning Dept.  
Ed Conyers, ASD Facilities  
Esther Cox, ASD Coordinator  
John Dale, Perkins & Will  
Greg Frosberg, ECI/Hyer  
Terry Hyer, ECI/Hyer  
Jerry Sjolander, ASD Special Education  
Jon Steele, ECI/Hyer  
Amy Yurko, Perkins & Will

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tony Bennett, Turnagain View Estates  
Shirley Coulson, Bear Valley PTA  
Mary Daum, Service HS  
Dawn Hibbert, Rabbit Creek PTA  
Patti Higgins, Abbott Loop CC  
Angela Kuentzel, Huffman/O'Malley CC  
Jesse Martin, neighbor & parent  
Johanna Naylor, Goldenview MS  
Guy Okada, Dimond HS  
Pat Podvin, Service HS  
Mary Rassmussen, Mears/Dimond  
Debbie Rozman, Goldenview MS  
Marianne See, Alaska DEC & parent  
Jan Thompson, Dimond HS  
Kristine Vangstad, Dimond (Birch Lake)

PUBLIC

Bobbie Jean Molle, site neighbor  
Gail Strid, Service HS parent