

A Way Forward for Orcas Schools

An Interim Report to the Orcas Community and the OISD Board

prepared by

A Group of Orcas Island Construction Professionals

June 4, 2011

Background

Item 3 of the Statement of Consensus forged by 43 Islanders in meetings held between April 2 thru 9 of this year requested that *“a team of island professionals - contractors, architects, engineers - review and assess the existing studies / plans related to the ‘1980 buildings’.*

“This qualified, local team of professionals will be asked to evaluate the available studies and cost estimates, identify what is missing or outdated, examine the facilities in their current state, and provide recommendations to our acommunity and to the school board.”

Accordingly, under the leadership of Clyde Duke (contractor) and David Kau (Architect), a group of local construction professionals toured the “1980 buildings” and held meetings on May 12 and May 20 for a total of four hours. Additionally, David Kau spent a number of hours reviewing design studies and cost estimates for work on our schools going back to 2005 and prepared a timeline of various studies and key events leading up to the votes in February and August, 2010. There was no discussion of either the elementary school or the high school

See Note 1 below for a list of school services and activities provided in the “1980 Buildings”.

See Note 2 for a copy of the complete Statement of Consensus referred to above.

The report of this group to the Orcas Island community and the OISD Board is as follows:

Conclusions (8)

1. The group of island construction professionals was unanimous in its conclusion that the 1980 Buildings in their current state are deficient with respect to heating and ventilation, seismic, ADA (accessibility code requirements), moisture intrusion, fire suppression and fire walls, roof details, and energy consumption.

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2. Agreement was also unanimous that the 1980 Buildings have suffered from inadequate attention to maintenance issues. This inadequacy has only recently been addressed by OISD; however, due to the school board's decision to demolish the 1980 Buildings, no funding or effort has been allocated to repair the consequences of the previous neglect.
3. The group determined that anecdotal comments about the 1980 Buildings having no insulation throughout were incorrect; Clyde Duke core drilled (and plugged) at eleven locations and found insulation in each instance. Previous studies also cited failure of roofs as a contributing factor for their recommendation to demolish the buildings whereas Clyde (with intimate knowledge of the roof conditions) has assured OISD that the existing roofs are now good for 10-15 years w/ proper maintenance.
4. During its tour of the facilities, the group noted the fire sprinklers and roof smoke relief vents in the Music Room adjacent to the Cafeteria and was informed that elsewhere in the buildings, the plenum space above the ceiling is used as an uninterrupted air return. There are some instances where the distance between walls of adjacent buildings appears to be less than that required by current code for unprotected wood frame construction.
5. There was agreement that all of the deficiencies in the 1980 Buildings could be corrected, and a considerable range of opinion and uncertainty as to whether or not doing so would be cost effective or desirable over the long term. There was substantial agreement among the architects that the spaces, both interior and exterior, formed by the 1980 Buildings were dreary and uninspiring for achieving educational excellence, and that vehicular circulation is poor with an "accident waiting to happen".
6. Additionally, the group was uncertain as to the extent to which the 1980 Buildings, even with their above-listed deficiencies remedied and necessary alterations completed, can efficiently support OISD's Education Specification for the 21st century in a cost effective manner. Making this determination was deemed to be beyond the scope of the group's charge.
7. The group determined that the school board relied upon the studies and recommendations of Sierra-Martin Architects when deciding to tear down the 1980 Buildings, before the economic downturn, and prior to engaging the Mahlum architectural firm. Mahlum's scope of work was limited to preliminary design and budgeting for a campus based entirely upon replacement of the 1980 Buildings.
8. It may be of interest to some that for the work completed to date by the Mahlum firm, the contributions of its principal, Butch Reifert, has been 100% pro bono; Butch has owned a home at Point Lawrence for fourteen years, and is a part-time Orcas resident. Only staff time has been billed to OISD.

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Recommendations (5)

1. Reconsider the school board's previous decision to demolish the 1980 Buildings.
2. Consider the possibility that the Educational Specification of OISD can be accommodated by and large within the 1980 Building envelopes, assuming their deficiencies are corrected and a reasonable, cost-effective amount of interior remodeling and modernization is undertaken.
3. Consider a plan which might include some new construction of flexible space in order to accommodate the educational needs while renovation work on the 1980 Buildings proceeds on a phased basis.
4. Engage the Mahlum architectural firm to do a thorough study of whether or not the Educational Specification of OISD can be accomplished within the envelopes or portions of the envelopes of the 1980 Buildings, and if so, prepare a cost estimate for correcting their deficiencies, implementing any necessary reallocation of interior spaces and modernization. If necessary, options should be prepared, because different parts of the 1980 Buildings are in different physical condition and can fulfill different educational needs. This study should incorporate analysis of "total cost of ownership" over the next 15 years, so that using Mahlum's expertise, the community can be presented with a comparison of true costs between different options. If one option, along with its estimated costs, resonates with the community and the school board, Mahlum should then be engaged to prepare schematic plans which demonstrate that the upgrades and changes result in a vibrant and inspiring educational environment. Such plans should also address potential improvements in vehicular circulation/safety.
5. Establish an adequate facilities maintenance budget to ensure that future M & O Levies are calculated in anticipation of maintenance expenses commensurate with the needs of the various OISD building construction types.

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Note 1; list of school services and activities provided in the "1980 Buildings": (Kitchen, Cafeteria/Assembly, Music rooms, Library, High School OASIS room, Middle School rooms (2), Offices (2), Home Economics room, Wood Shop, Career and Tech Ed Office, and High School rooms 105, 301 and 302).

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Note 2; For a complete Statement of Consensus issued following the April 2 thru 9 meetings: Go online to: <http://orcasissues.com/consensus-reached-on-a-way-forward-for-orcas-schoolchildren>

List of Participants

- May 12th Meeting: Clyde Duke, Fred Klein, David Kau, Justin Paulson, Glen Monson, Ron Wallace, John Campbell, Dave Russillo, Mark Padbury, Jonathan Loop, George Larson, David Will, Burke Thomas, Dwight Guss, Prescott Jones, April Duke
- May 20th Meeting: Clyde Duke, Fred Klein, David Kau, Glen Monson, John Campbell, Dwight Guss, Bill Trogden, Butch Reifert (Mahlum), Prescott Jones, April Duke