

PALO ALTO HIGH SCHOOL MASTER PLAN
Palo Alto Unified School District

MASTER PLAN MEETING NO.2

DATE: 25 November 2008, 3:30–5:00 pm

SUBJECT: Master Plan Meeting with Palo Alto HS Facilities Steering Committee

ATTENDEES: See attached sign-in sheet

The following are the highlights of the meeting:

1. The architect, Erwin Lee, began the meeting by reviewing the site plan that was presented at the previous meeting and the comments from the facilities steering committee regarding that site plan.
2. Two site plans were presented incorporating the comments from the previous meeting as well as new ideas. The new plan had the following elements:
Plan A
 - The revised plan preserved the central idea of creating a large quad to organize the campus.
 - New student center with plaza remains per the previous plan but has more definition.
 - The proposed theater is positioned to create a plaza between the new and existing Haymarket Theater with the lobby of the new facing the façade of the existing. The new theater is connected to the Art Building providing interior circulation from the existing music and drama rooms to the new theater.
 - The architect noted that the footprint of the theater is for approximately 500 seats.
 - A new building is proposed east of the existing Art Building to house functions and programs displaced by the expansion of the Theater.
 - Renovate the library and create a presence along the quad.
 - A 26-classroom, two-story building is located behind the existing math building. The classroom building shows a how the individual classrooms would be configured
 - South of the math building is a new building to house the adult educations, shops and other classroom functions.
 - The gym is located on the quad side and connects the two existing gyms together. The plan shows the size of a main basketball court and two, cross-courts for relative scale.
 - Vehicular access onto the site would be restricted. Paving materials and removable barriers would provide control.

Plan B

Same as Plan A except for the following:

- The proposed 26-classroom building is located north of the English and Social Studies buildings.
- A future classroom building is proposed behind the existing math building. The building is in a courtyard configuration to maximize light.
- The adult educations, classrooms and shops are in a building south of the math building.
- The new gym is located to the south of the existing gym. A lobby space is created between the two as well as accessory spaces. A smaller building connects the two existing gym which would house a new weight room and possible a fitness center. It would also provide the closure at the end of the quad.

3. The following were the comments and discussion items from the facilities steering committee based on the plans:

Plan A

- The placement of the theater and the creation of a performing arts complex were desirable. It was suggested that a portion of the lobby could become a gallery. Good visibility and public access would make it an ideal location. It was also suggested that the theater have a larger capacity and that the 500-seat capacity planned would be too small.
- New building north of the Art Building could house both the displaced art program and the Media Arts Center (perhaps on second floor).
- It was noted that the art program includes a glass blowing component.
- It was suggested that the parking might expand into the corporation yard.
- An enclosure should be provided around the pool and adjoining PE facilities.

Plan B

Same comments as Plan A plus:

- Two-story classroom building, as shown, located east of Art Building is interesting idea.
- It was suggested that the existing Art building could be expanded to the north.

4. The architect presented a third plan that considered one possibility if the corporation yard and district office were moved off site. The plan showed the following:

- The central plant facility remained.
- An L-shape building was created to the southeast of the central plant.
- The gym was located east of the existing large gym with a lobby on the Southside facing the parking area.
- A vehicular turn-around was created to terminate vehicular access.
- A new emergency vehicle and service access road configuration was shown.
- The classroom building is similar to that in Plan A except smaller.
- The plan preserved the soccer field along El Camino.
- The area occupied by the district office was indicated as additional field area.
- The southern portion of the corporation yard not used for building was indicated as additional field space.
- With the district office relocated, the existing parking area could be expanded.

5. The following were the discussion and comments regarding the third plan:
The architect was asked about building the new theater on the existing soccer fields along El Camino. He gave the following considerations for not locating it there as it had been shown in a previous master plan:
- It is not necessary and the value of having a large contiguous playfield on an impacted site cannot be duplicated elsewhere on the site.
 - The Tower Building is the icon of the high school and placing any building proud of the Tower Building would compromise it. The Tower Building should not be viewed from around the corner from another building.
 - The soccer field creates a front yard to the Tower Building and allows sight lines from El Camino enhancing its importance.
 - Locating the theater on the fields could cause potential traffic issues due to the proximity of the encroachment to the parking.
 - The existing parking lot is under utilized and provides ample space for the new theater.

Regarding possible uses for the corporation yard:

- The general consensus was that the site is too remote for classroom buildings and contradicts one of the master planning goals to prevent the campus from sprawling outward. There was a concern that the distance would make it difficult for students to negotiate during the passing period.
 - Increase or expand parking was another use discussed.
 - A brief discussion was also held regarding the potential hazardous clean-up aspect or clearance of the site in order to build new buildings. It was noted that it could take significant time and resources.
 - The corporation yard is probably best suited for expanded field area. It was not known if a regulation soccer field could be placed in the space.
 - It was suggested that the proposed student center be moved so that a more square shaped quad be created and a building be placed in front of the gym. It was the consensus of the group that the longer rectangular quad configuration is more desirable.
6. The architect noted that he is not designing buildings at this time. Discussion of program and building needs are relative to determining the approximate size of the new building footprints. It also helps to determine what are the best uses for new and existing buildings.
7. Each department head will determine what's important for them and provide this information to the architect.
8. The next meeting will discuss the finding by the departments and the collective message to be conveyed in the upcoming board working session and board meeting.

Next Meeting is scheduled for 3 December 2008 at 3:30-5:30 pm.

END

Prepared by Erwin Lee of Deems Lewis McKinley. Please advise if you feel that any of the above items are inaccurate or need further clarification or detail.

cc: Attendees
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