

PALO ALTO HIGH SCHOOL MASTER PLAN
Palo Alto Unified School District

MASTER PLAN MEETING NO.5

DATE: 07 January 2009, 3:15–5:00 pm

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

ATTENDEES: No sign-in sheet available

The following are the highlights of the meeting:

1. As an introduction, architect Erwin Lee reviewed the master plan site diagrams that were presented at the last meeting. The highlights of the presentation were:
 - Demolish the current student center and build a new, two-story student center with a double-story volume attached to the Tower building.
 - Build a new, two-story Media Arts building with flexible spaces adjacent to the English classroom building.
 - Build a new Performing Arts complex with theater adjacent to the Haymarket Theater.
 - Take all classroom functions out of the Tower Building and replace with offices and support programs.
 - Build a new, two-story classroom complex adjacent to World Languages (400) and Math (700) building with flexible space for the Adult Education and Industrial Arts Programs. This complex would also house two new science labs.
 - Demolish the existing “Girl’s” Gym and build a new gym with an infill building connecting the new gym and the existing “Boy’s” gym together. The connector building would house the weight room, fitness center and exercise room. It would also provide a lobby to the new athletic complex.
 - Locate all bike racks along the east and west sides of the campus, so that the bikes no longer obstruct courtyard paths. Lee advised that the inverted “U” bike racks would require more space than the bike racks that are currently used.
 - Possible to provide additional space in the new gym for custodial use.

2. After reviewing the master plan, Lee presented a revised classroom distribution diagram based on information from the last meeting. Discussion of the diagram included:
 - Remove Guidance from the original library and restore the library to its original condition. The restored library could be used as a meeting room or “alumni hall.” Guidance could move to another location in the Tower Building. Guidance would like to have a classroom locate near it. The second floor of the Student Center could provide this opportunity.
 - The new Student Center should have room for student leadership.
 - The new diagram showed math moving to the second floor of the new building.
 - The new diagram showed world languages in the ground floor of the new building.

- The 400 building was shown as a combination of social studies and world languages.
3. After the presentation of the new site layout diagram, Lee asked for additional input regarding the needs of individual departments. The following were comments and suggestions by the steering committee:
 - The Math department likes their current location. They need to be together in the same building because the classes are shared by the teachers, and there is constant dialogue between classrooms during the day. The dynamics of the math culture on campus would change dramatically if the classrooms were spread out.
 - The Social Sciences department also needs to have dialog between classrooms during the day, and would like to stay in their current building.
 - Some Media Arts classrooms are also used for English, as they are shared with the English department.
 - Classrooms should be rearranged so that each department would have its own building.
 - The library should house support programs (Test Center, ARC) and all computer labs. This is good for supervision of the equipment and after-hours student testing.
 - The Academic Resource Center is in a good location because it requires supervision, but needs to be larger. The library could include a shared conference center and a silent reading-room space.
 - Student Leadership needs a home. This could include a student store, workspace, and office space adjacent to the Tower building.
 - The Media Arts department would be willing to sacrifice additional office space for gallery space to show student work.
 - Custodial services might need a larger space than they currently have.
 - Flexible spaces need to be programmed into the master plan for emerging programs and student body growth. The focus for these spaces should be on the Media Center and the Career-Tech department.
 4. Lee indicated that what he is hearing from the departments is that the building configuration of classrooms arranged around a central common core is more important to how the curriculum is taught than the need to provide single loaded classrooms with windows on two sides or the need for cross ventilation. He went on to say that the building configuration that the departments want is the same configuration that they have but larger. For the next iteration, he will show the classroom building in this configuration.
 5. Principal Jacquie McEvoy discussed the needs of the departments, excluding the Special Education department, as summarized by her meetings with them. Further information is needed from the Special Education department, as they have not yet reported their needs to the committee:
 - The English and Social Sciences departments are okay with their offices moving out of the library.
 - The Math department wants to stay where they are and would like additional classrooms in an adjacent building.
 - AVID would need a new location if moved out of the Tower building.
 - There should be no classrooms in the Tower building; it should become more of a student and administration center with support programs.

- The Guidance department should stay in the Tower Building for convenience. This location makes it easy to meet with college representatives and parents. Visitors shouldn't have to go across the campus for appointments.
6. There were many comments about the location of the new theater. Lee advised that this project is still in the preliminary, master plan phase and that the current placement of the theater is only a suggestion that it occurs in this general area. He offered the following:
- A programming phase will occur which will determine the specific needs and requirements of the theater design.
 - The size of the theater will be determined by the seating capacity.
 - The theater placement and orientation will be determined during the building design phase and after the program for the theater has been developed.
 - A new theater placed in the courtyard would create many conditions that would be difficult to supervise. The theater walls would become obstructions in the courtyard.
7. The meeting was opened for public comment. The highlights of the comments and questions from the public audience were:
- There is great confidence that DLM, in collaboration with the facilities steering committee will design a great theater. This design should be a good example of visual arts for the kids, and should welcome guests to the campus.
 - The amount of brainstorming and effort put forth by DLM and the facilities steering committee is impressive. The departments should be kept together, the bike parking should include security cameras and be located along the east and west side of campus. The deck should be removed from the courtyard space to reclaim the "quad".
 - The entrance to the school should make people in awe of the great campus that Palo Alto High School is. A new theater seems unnecessary when an expansion of the current Haymarket Theater would seemingly suffice.
 - The theater should not turn its back on Embarcadero or the entry to the school. Other locations and options should be investigated.
 - The effort put forth in the master planning so far is admirable. This is a great opportunity to make a fabulous theater building. The performing arts should be a central part of the campus.
8. Next Meeting is scheduled for 21 January 2009 at 3:15 pm.

END

Prepared by Dean Schmitz 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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