



November 16, 2007

Hello everyone!

Here is an update on recent developments concerning the fate of Ridgeway Elementary School.

The North Vancouver School District presented revised costings for the proposed restoration of the school to the School Board at a facilities meeting on Nov. 6, which was attended by several representatives of the Ridgeway Heritage Committee. All figures have gone up due to a combination of cost inflation and more detailed studies.

The main change was that the School District has modified its two renovation options -- Option 1 (retention of the 1911 and 1926 wings) and Option 2 (retention of the 1911 core) -- to include related proposals (1A and 2A) that would gut and rebuild the interior, while preserving and restoring the exterior. It says this move was prompted by cost considerations, particularly the poor quality of concrete pillars and horizontal beams that need to be replaced at each floor level.

Here is a basic summary:

| \$ million | Replacement | Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 1A | Option 2A |
|------------|-------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| April 2007 | 15.1 | 21.7 | 19.7 | | |
| Nov. 2007 | 17.7 | 25.3 | 25.2 | 24.6 | 22.6 |
| Gap (Nov) | | 7.6 | 7.5 | 6.9 | 4.9 |

The original (April) gap between replacement and renovation was \$4.7 million (Option 2) and \$6.7 million (Option 1), according to School District figures. There is now little difference between Options 1 and 2, but a significant difference between these and Option 2A – but Option 2A would involve demolishing the wings, gutting the interior and preserving only the façade of the 1911 core.

Committee members asked about maintaining the heritage integrity of the interior, and were told that the rooms would still be large, with high ceilings and similar windows, but that other aspects like cloakrooms and staircases may not be priorities -- all depending on how much money they have to work with. They do not seem to have developed floor plans for these alternative proposals.

Would such an approach be acceptable? There is a wider debate in the heritage community about this trend, dubbed "façadism." (A local example is the Aberdeen Block in Lower Lonsdale, the former home of Paine Hardware.) Some see it as a reasonable way to tackle the economic challenges of heritage preservation, and clearly preferable to

replacement; others regard it as tokenism. The arguments in favour are obvious, given the cost savings. An article by someone in the opposing camp follows:
http://www.vancouverreview.com/past_articles/facadism.htm

We'd be interested to hear your views on the subject. As with the earlier planning for Ridgeway, we believe the School District must be accountable to the community it serves.

At the meeting, School District staff promised to look into suggestions that they contact APEGBC (Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC) with regard to bridging guidelines for seismic upgrades, for possible cost savings.

Staff said there is no official deadline for the submission of a feasibility study, and that ministry funds will not be compromised if planning takes longer than expected.

The district has received proposals from developers for the Lonsdale and partial Queen Mary sites, but staff and board members declined to discuss details. As you may recall, the School District would use part of the funds for a new administration and Artists for Kids building at Lonsdale, and part -- mainly from density transfers -- for heritage preservation projects at Ridgeway and Queen Mary schools.

Current staff thinking is to move all Ridgeway operations to the leased Cloverley site, with extra portables, during the construction period. As the project is comparable to Sutherland, it could take two years or more to complete.

For those interested, the consultant team for Ridgeway is led by Downs/Archambault Architects. The structural engineering consultant is JKK Engineering. The architect attends relevant meetings. The School District (facilities manager Ian Abercrombie) asks that contacts with the consultants be directed through the School District or public meetings.

Yours,
The Ridgeway Heritage Committee