

On Tuesday November 13, 2007 three committees met to discuss the current conceptual options on the table for the Wellesley High School project. The meeting was held in the Police Station meeting room. The committees seated at the center table included the School Building Committee (SBC), the Permanent Building Committee (PBC), and the School Committee (SC). Many members from the community at large were seated in the audience.

Stephen Baker, a member of the SBC, a neighbor to WHS, and a professional architect first engaged the group in a revisit to the original Visioning and Programming effort. (The full programming report is available on the SBC website under Dejong Report). Steve asked the group several simple questions and then probed them to describe the qualities they seek in the WHS of the future. The qualities were recorded on large sheets in the order that they were raised and are copied below. These cumulative comments and qualities were then applied as a lens through which the committees discussed options C, F, H, I, J and K.

Why a High School project?

- Overcrowded
- Solve facility inadequacies - poor condition
- Accreditation
- Attract faculty
- Constituents = parents, students, faculty
- Maintenance
- Optimize learning, improve environment
- Embracing change
- Health and safety issues
- ADA compliance
- Community resource
- Property values (high school very important)

- Reduce operating costs
- More adaptive to difference in instructional types = flexibility
- Address student and demographic needs
- Improve community utilization

Design Qualities

- Natural light
- Good environmental controls - temperature
- Excellent architecture that reflects town (town hall, WFL Library, Sprague)
- Supports desired behaviors
- Spatial sequences, collaborating and gathering
- Appropriate materials
- Attention to roof design: scale/architectural details/massing
- Building as educational tool
- Good adjacencies: building/fields/...
- Ease of maintenance
- Sustainability
- Durability
- Comfort
- Appropriate scale to neighborhood
- Flexibility
- Exciting
- Intuitive circulation

- Secure but inviting
- Integrate/respect past, future, present
- Return on investment
- Expandable
- Practical, reasonable, efficient: seek high utilization
- Fosters community
- Good site utilization
- Green strategies: green/grey water
- Meet goals AND budget: reasonable construction costs, appropriate cost/benefit analysis
- Timelessness in design (1938 building, not the subsequent additions)
- Engenders pride
- Student flow = 3 minutes
- Building Security

Landscape

- Minimize visibility of parking
- Extension of park-like setting
- Composting/learning
- Use wetlands as extension
- Low maintenance plantings: little water, minimum cutting
- Easy wayfinding on site
- Artificial lighting
 - Appropriate light levels
 - Strategies to leverage new light technologies
 - Practical strategies: cost of replacement bulbs, number of different bulb types
- Technology infrastructure
 - Quality wiring and flexibility
 - Supports evolving teaching styles
- Proactive technologies to floor plan on site
- Off-season strategies for utilization
- Rental possibility for non-school events: expandability/contractibility
- Flexible mechanical infrastructures
- Lighting
 - View from neighborhood at night
 - Secure
- Acoustic impact to neighborhood
- Traffic/event parking strategies

- o Drop-off/pick-up
- o Bus accommodation
- o Pre-school
- o Visitor parking
- o Special event parking
- Condense parking footprint
- Strategies to reduce parking
- Acoustics: classroom to corridor

Theater/Auditorium/Community Space

- big black box?
- exciting space
- Technologies, and security of
- Comfortable seats
- Support space, back of house
- Ease of audience flow
- Sightlines
- Proximity to cafeteria
- Acoustics
- Flexible/right-sized

Gym

- Flexible
- Good daylight and night light
- Storage
- Sound system
- Mechanical system: cutting edge? New technology
- User-friendly technologies
- Bleacher flexibility
- Ability for extra seating and storage for chairs nearby
- Critical zoning relationships vis a vis academics, gym, and auditorium

Classrooms

- Lighting

- Level of comfort
- Technology and infrastructure adaptive for change
- Quality but practical furnishings
- "sit-off": furniture evaluation by constituents
- Flexibility: not necessarily accordion walls, plan ahead for drywall
- Acoustics
- Classrooms near to central locations in school
- Storage space
- Quality millwork and casework
- Extent of air conditioning ???
- Ventilation strategies ???
- Building as disaster-relief facility ?
 - Middle School is designated now
 - Needs generator: how big?
 - Major requirements per MA/USA
 - How to follow up?

Lessons from Wellesley Middle School

- Constructability
- Phasing
- Duration
- User impact

Fundamentals

- Gym close to playing fields

- Entry not on Seaver Street
- Consolidated parking for supervision
- Maintain Seaver Street sequence: continuation of woods
- Secure/separate academic areas: is library public or private?
- Adequate parking
- Alternate site uses: pool, ice rink, ... ?

Who benefits?

- Students
- Faculty
- Property owners/taxpayers
- Citizens at large
- Community pride
- Senior citizens
- Children younger than high school
- Neighbors

Concerns

- Neighbors
- Taxpayers
- Most of above except students