

INTRODUCTIONS

- We are calling on the recommendation concerning Connaught School to be tabled for now, to allow an independent review of the Stage 1 document and for the undertaking of studies that your consultants recommended should be completed before moving forward to decision-making.
- We are willing to cost share the studies, if that is an issue
- In particular, questions about the stated comparisons between renovation and new construction suggest that trustees need to pause and take a second look at the proposal before rushing to approve it.
- This is a decision that will massively impact our children's learning environment, so we want more than the usual diligence taken.

I. BUDGETARY ISSUES

Stage 1 submission document

p. 8 "Unless the funding gap can be closed, Option 1 does not appear to be viable, although it was clearly strongly desired by the community."

- Was any effort made to seek ways to close the funding gap?
- Was any effort made to independently review the estimates?

Looking at the unadjusted budget, assuming the structural allowance of \$6.25 million is a fixed cost, that leaves \$16,944,580 of potentially adjustable budget space.

Options include a less ambitious renovation plan that is more responsive to expressed community needs/desires, or a staged process that would involve renovating within budget, with a future capital request for a second stage some years down the road.

For example:

The estimate for renovation includes costs for the demolition of 4,000 m², which is just 452 m² short of total demolition.

A notation states: "The expectation is the existing building will be renovated and rehabilitated extensively..."

This estimate is based on the assumption that during the design consultation, the community will favour a design that guts the building. This should not be a guaranteed assumption, from either a budgetary or community buy-in viewpoint. People may wish a less drastic alteration of their children’s school, as indicated in the initial consultation meetings.

For example, a modest scaling back of the demolition and renovation area might look like:

Component of Work	Cost per m2	Component area	RENOVATION Component cost	Component area	NEW Component cost
Demolition	\$110	2,000	\$220,000	4,452	\$489,720
Renovated area	\$2,023	3,000	\$6,069,000		
New construction/addition	\$2,890	76	\$219,640	4,528	\$13,085,920
Structural allowance			\$6,250,000		
Subtotal Renovation and New			\$12,758,640		\$13,575,640
Architect and Engineering Fees		11%	\$1,403,450	8%	\$1,086,051
Construction contingency		10% of const.	\$1,275,864	5%	\$678,782
Total Renovation and New			\$15,437,954		\$15,340,473

This is one small measure that significantly closes the gap. It is difficult to carry the calculation through to the final project total, however, without first clearing up issues with subtotals for additional program space and costs based on Full SA-1 (see attached).

In brief:

P. 22 – Estimated budgets, Renovation versus New Build

There appears to be a mathematical error in the additional program space subtotal. The subtotal should be \$1,404,646, not \$1,407,646.

The subtotal for costs based on SA-1 under the New Build category appear to add up to \$19,385,780, not \$18,880,064.

New Build Budget:

SA-1	\$16,857,200
FF&E at 9% of building budget	\$1,517,148
External works at 6% of building budget	\$1,011,432
Total Based on SA-1	\$18,880,064

Should be:

SA-1	\$16,857,200
FF&E at 9% of building budget	\$1,517,148
External works at 6% of building budget	\$1,011,432
Total Based on SA-1	\$19,385,780

We also have concerns with how contingency costs are stated.

A 10 per cent construction contingency is added to the renovation structural allowance with the following notation:

“The OPC assumes of structural allowance of \$6.25 m as provided by JC Kenyon Engineering in May 2012. This cost may be higher depending on unforeseen conditions.”

However, according to a letter dated May 23, 2012 (attached), the Kenyon estimate already includes a 25 per cent contingency *within* the \$4.5 million underpinning estimate. The OPC does not acknowledge this, and adds an additional 10 per cent contingency to that amount, pushing the total contingency estimate for structural underpinning to 35 per cent of cost, 10 per cent more than the amount suggested by the consulting engineer as a suitable contingency. This in turn has impact throughout the budget comparison, as subsequent calculations are a percentage of building costs.

Meanwhile, the construction contingency for a new build is listed at 5 per cent. A 2010 review prepared by Athabasca University for the Upper Canada District School Board found contingency estimates for Canadian school construction range from 5 per cent to 10 per cent, with 10 per cent being the norm. It appears that the new build estimate employs the *minimum* possible construction contingency, in contrast to the renovation option, which seeks the upper end for both renovation and new construction elements.

Finally, there is an inconsistency in that new construction carries a 10 % contingency in the Renovation Column, but 5% in the New Build column. As they are both new construction, they should be given equal contingency value. Recognizing that new and additional structures within a renovation might have some additional challenges, if new construction contingency is to be equally applied, as it should be, we would suggest pegging it at 10% for both.

Next Page: Budget adjustments based on corrected subtotals and revised contingency costs, with new construction equally applied at 10 %

Unless there is a reason for the subtotals not to add up, making those corrections, along with a more detailed contingency costing to ensure contingency is neither double-counted or under-counted, would in itself close the gap significantly, from \$4.3 million to \$1.77 million.

A modest scaling back of the renovation plan would do the rest of the job of providing viable options that are in the same funding ballpark – thus avoiding having to ask the government for additional funds for a renovation.

			Reno/Addition		New Build
Component of Work	Cost per m2	Component area	Component cost	Component area	Component cost
Demolition	\$110	4,000	\$440,000	4,452	\$489,720
Renovated area	\$2,023	4,452	\$9,006,393		
New construction/addition	\$2,890	76	\$219,640	4,528	\$13,085,920
Structural allowance					
Underpinning			\$3,750,000		
Upper floor structures			\$1,000,000		
Additional modifications			\$750,000		
Subtotal Renovation and New			\$15,166,033		\$13,575,640
Architect and Engineering Fees		11%	\$1,668,263	8%	\$1,086,051
Const. contingency - underpinning		As stated in estimate	\$75,000		
Const. contingency - remainder		10%	\$150,910	10%	\$1,357,564
Total Renovation and New			\$17,060,206		\$16,019,255
Additional program space	\$2,890	185	\$535,000	185	\$535,000
32-51 daycare spaces	\$2,890	245	\$708,050	245	\$708,000
Architect and engineering fees		8%	\$99,444		\$99,444
Contingency for additional spaces		5%	\$62,152		\$62,152
Subtotal Additional Program Space		4,958	\$1,404,646		\$1,404,596
Total Renovation and New		4,958	\$18,464,852		\$16,745,069
<i>Difference of renovated vs. new</i>					\$1,719,783
Retained value of existing building					-23%
Preliminary SA-1	2890	4958			\$14,328,620
Costs based on full SA-1			Renovation		New
SA-1	3400	4958	\$18,464,852		\$16,857,200
FF&E at 9% of building budget	as per MoE	same as new	\$1,517,148		\$1,517,148
External works at 6% of building budget	as per MoE	same as new	\$1,011,432		\$1,011,432
Total Based on SA-1			\$20,993,432		\$19,385,780

II. RECOMMENDED STUDIES

J.C. Kenyon Engineering letter to James Youck, dated May 23, 2012

“...prior to any decision regarding proceeding with a renewal process, we recommend that a more detailed investigation program be undertaken to assess the condition of the building structure. This would include exposing the footings at several locations to determine the condition of the concrete, retrieval of core samples at the footings and the superstructure and an investigation into the slab and beam rebar.”

- Was this investigation completed as recommended, prior to any decisions proceeding?

Initial Heritage Assessment by Jonathan Yardley, dated April 30, 2012

“...the building could well be re-used for its original educational purpose. This will require much further study related to programs and a full heritage conservation plan to enable the most appropriate decisions to be made. It is hoped that this brief overview of the heritage aspects of Connaught School will enable a rational plan to be developed.”

- We note that the document is called *Initial* Heritage Assessment. Has the recommended conservation plan been completed?

P3A Stage One Submission Document, dated May 31, 2012

P. 21 - Valuation of existing structure

“The OPC does not assign a value to the heritage aspects of Connaught School...It is difficult to assign a value to a subjective element such as heritage value, however, it was clear in the community consultation process the attendees felt that the heritage component should have great value.”

- It is *not* difficult to assign a value to heritage. There exists a class of professionals called heritage economists dedicated to the task of objectively assigning value to heritage. There are non-market valuation experts who are part of our community. Community members have asked in consultation meetings and by letter for a complete valuation study. The heritage consultant Jonathan Yardley stated in a meeting with the SCC that affixing a dollar figure to the heritage value is a recommended step.

Relocation

P. ii “The consultant’s recommendation to the Board is to review student relocation options while submitting a request to the Ministry.”

- Was this review completed and were options sought from the school community? Is there a report available?

Playground Assessment

The value of sweat equity and donations from individuals, business and partnering agencies, as well as equipment, public art, trees and grass must be added up and accounted for if the area is going to be impacted. The playground represents a significant community investment.

School Design and Learning

Stage One Submission P. 23 – “The building performs poorly as a modern teaching environment and the traditional layout is restrictive to creating a learner based educational environment.”

- What is the research basis of this statement and what is the comparative data for the alternative being offered? Parents in the Connaught community, as well as across North America, have expressed serious and valid concerns with style of design being promoted for new builds, as have some education and education design experts.

Independent Review

As noted previously, there are several issues with the way options are costed and presented. An independent review – conducted by someone who has no connection to the city and who is unlikely to bid on the project – would reflect best practices for project planning.

Cost of Studies

At the beginning of the process, several recommendations were made for further investigation before decision-making proceed. These studies are very important to informed decision-making. RealRenewal is willing to cost-share these studies to make them happen.

Provincial Pressure

The wording of the board administration’s recommendation hints that this recommendation is in response to direction from the province that favours new construction over renovation. If this is the case, we should know about it. We suggest the following:

- Adjust and resubmit an estimate for renovation that is equal to or lesser than a new rebuild (by correcting mathematical errors and double-counting of contingency costs, and/or by scaling back the scope of the renovation at this time) so that the government is not faced with having to spend more on a renovation
- We note that Moose Jaw was able to obtain provincial funds to renovate their historic schools. If Regina is getting a different message, this is inconsistent and should be challenged.
- An informed community can lobby the province to lift restrictions and directives. We can say things to government that school board officials cannot. We have a shared interest in promoting local autonomy for decision-making.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

P3A Submission – P. 1

“The difficulty in renovating to create 21st Century learning environments was also identified as problematic. This is partially due to the fact that the community consultation process revealed a very strong desire to retain the existing Connaught School building ‘as-is.’”

- This statement reveals that the community is seen as a barrier to what is already planned, rather than a source of direction on what should be done.
- (By ‘as is’ we assume this means ‘as is,’ in the sense of building retention, but with desired repairs and renovations, as there was not a strong call for no changes at all.)

The U.S. National Historic trust – the go-to body on Historic Schools and 21st Century Learning – asks the following questions:

Public Participation and Community Planning

1. Was a citizen’s or advisory committee formed to help explore options and issues?
2. Did design meetings ask the right questions, were there enough meetings and information, and did they include broad community representation?

3. Does the study take into account the Neighbourhood Concept Plan?
4. Were site visits made to other successfully renovated buildings/schools?
5. Who reviews the consultant's work and what are their qualifications? Is anyone involved with expertise in preservation of communities?

The National Trust's checklist is the difference between intelligent, critical, partnering engagement with communities versus handing out felt pens and sticky notes.

People were unsatisfied with the consultation meetings. They felt talked down to, there was almost no solid information on the table, and there was no opportunity for community members to present information to decision-makers.

Part of the disconnect involves accepting diversity and knowing who your audience is. A slide show featuring only new construction of a certain style and a lecture on creative age theory is not a good idea in the Cathedral Area.

Included are copies of letters from the Connaught SCC and RealRenewal regarding requests for information, and deficiencies in the consultation process. These concerns remain unaddressed.

The desire to be given full information and to be included at all stages of decision-making has been ignored. Information is sparse, and the most major decision of all – whether to renovate or replace – was done out of sight, and not revealed until 4:30 p.m. on the Friday before a Tuesday meeting.

We are parents, with family lives and jobs. This approach makes it very difficult to participate when it really counts.

Genuinely partnering with the community and respecting parents' intelligence and abilities can reap great benefits. These are ways we can help:

1. Cost-sharing of recommended studies.
2. Ability to fundraise and apply for grants.
3. Sweat equity and in-kind professional services.

The Cathedral Area has an enormous amount of energy and social capital that could be brought forward in support of a plan that respects their neighbourhood's intelligence, planning abilities, vision, and the built environment they want their children to live and learn in.