



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

November 3, 2020

To: Superintendent Dr. Ben Drati and  
SMMUSD Members of the Board of Education

From: Carey Upton, Chief Operations Officer and  
Steve Massetti, Bond Program Manager, Consultant  
Facility Improvement Projects Department

Re: Response to Proposal to Re-visit the Samohi Campus Plan and “Save the History Building”

The Board of Education received a request, on October 27, that it agendize a reconsideration of its decision to demolish the History Building. This request prompted the Superintendent and Board leadership to request a memo recapping the background and decision-making process that culminated in the District’s decision four years ago to remove the History Building during development of the Samohi Campus Plan (SCP).

**Executive Summary**

As this memo demonstrates, demolition of the History Building is necessary in order to create the most effective learning environment for the students of Samohi. It is challenging, if not impossible, to satisfy all interested parties; however, the District’s statutory obligation is to provide the highest quality education for our present and future students. The decisions regarding the development of the SCP were made to ensure that SMMUSD prepares its students for the world beyond high school. That said, the planning process has recognized Samohi’s historic place in the community and treated with respect the potentially historic resources on Samohi’s campus. Some of the structures on the Samohi campus are over 100 years old and that was given due consideration. Throughout the development and adoption of the SCP, the District has provided ample opportunity for community input, even going so far as to hold two separate meetings during the CEQA process, neither of which were required, and neither of which attracted any members of the public. The primary goal of the SCP, and each of its phases, is to improve the teaching and learning environment. Unfortunately, the History Building does not help the District accomplish this goal and keeping it would detract from the District’s ability to do so. Additionally, staff does not believe the integrity of the History Building has been preserved over time, rendering its preservation unnecessary as a historic resource. Consistent with that conclusion, the City has declined to identify the History Building on its Historical Resources Inventory undertaken in 2010 and updated in 2018.

The FIP Department, taking guidance from the Educational Services Department, Samohi administration, Samohi teachers, and District administration, has undertaken this work with the goal of creating educational spaces that are conducive to changes in teaching methodology, away

from lecturing to students in rows, and toward collaborative “21<sup>st</sup>-century” future-ready learning. Part of this change means classrooms need to be larger and created in a way that encourage (or at least do not detract from) this way of teaching. Education is evolving, so we must evolve our facilities as well. The goal isn’t to have square classrooms, or just big classrooms. The goal is to give educators the tools (including facilities) they need to educate students in the most effective way possible. To that end, the Function Space Programing process, launched in 2015, identified a need to increase classroom sizes and incorporate small breakout spaces and learning commons into classroom buildings. The History Building is constructed in a way that does not accommodate this needed change.

With respect to community involvement, SMMUSD has made a distinct effort to broaden the input it received to develop the Samohi Campus Plan. Rather than just turning a set of architects loose to determine what is needed, the District made a genuine effort to gather input from the educators, parents, students, and the broader community. Dozens of teachers were involved the development of the SCP. Multiple meetings were held with 40 then-current students in the ASB room in the South Gym to get their input. The draft plans were presented to and reviewed with the site committee and FDAC, both of which included parents, teachers, and community members. Multiple versions of the draft plans were presented at PTSA meetings, FDAC meetings, and in a Board Study Session, all of which would have been perfect opportunities for members of the public to object to the demolition of the History Building.

The EIR was certified over a year and a half ago. The time to challenge it has passed. The Draft EIR was distributed as appropriate, including to various City of Santa Monica Departments. It was distributed to the State Office of Historic Preservation. It was advertised in the newspaper, presented at a community meeting, and available at multiple locations throughout town. Zero comments were received with respect to preservation of the History Building. The Board certified the EIR in February after a yearlong process that resulted in receiving no comments or complaints about demolition of the History Building.

The Board of Education adopted a resolution exempting the Samohi Campus Plan from local zoning laws in August 2018. FIP staff has moved forward with implementation of the SCP at the Board’s direction. The Discovery Building is on schedule to be completed and put into use in August 2021 and classes previously taught in the History Building will be housed in it. The next phase includes demolition of the History Building. The planned Exploration Building will occupy a portion of the current footprint of the History Building.

Revising the SCP to include preserving the History Building at this time would compromise the District’s educational objectives. It would likely cause a delay of at least one year, depriving students of the improved spaces in the Exploration Building, and would likely result in significant negative financial impacts to the District.

## **Discussion**

As our world changes, the way we educate must also change. As you are all aware, education evolves and improves. The practices that educated students just 20 years ago have shifted. Through this process, we came to understand that effective teaching no longer focuses on

lecturing to students in desks. Instead it now entails collaborative group work and increased technology, much like the workplace. For those reasons, Samohi will require larger classrooms and additional support space. If we were to stagnate and continue to teach as we did 20 years ago, or 100 years ago, our students would fall behind their peers and will not be properly prepared for our connected and fast-paced global world.

The team that developed the SCP took to heart the concept that as education has evolved, so must our educational spaces. Prior to Proposition 13 in the 1970's, class sizes were significantly smaller (27:1) than they are today, and when the History Building was originally built in 1913, they were smaller still. Today our class sizes are often up to 37:1. The District's role with respect to facilities is to ensure that they meet the physical needs of teaching and learning today and tomorrow. As Samohi passed its 100<sup>th</sup> year on Prospect Hill, it was clear that the facilities were not only showing their age; perhaps more importantly, they no longer fit current educational needs. This goes well beyond the use of new technology and includes the layout and the size of the classrooms. In working with the Educational Services Department, the FIP team came to understand that the early 1900's lecture format, where the teacher stands in the front of the class lecturing to rows of students seated behind desks is no longer predominant and is falling out of favor. In the 100-year old layout of the History Building, it was possible to pack a maximum number of students into a smaller than optimal space if the teacher used only this lecture format. As we evolve to improve our teaching and learning, the number of students able to fully participate in these smaller classrooms is highly constrained. We understand that effective teaching and learning have shifted to include differing modes and pedagogies, including collaborative small-group work, individualized study, blended learning with technology, along with individual and group presentations. The classroom and the areas outside the classroom must be able to support variation, hands-on engagement, and adaptation. This is most clearly displayed by the design of the Discovery Building, currently under construction, which will replace the History Building, among other campus facilities. The History Building does not meet these needs, and it is infeasible to adapt it in a way that would meet them.

### **Development of the Samohi Campus Plan**

The SCP process began in 2015 with a Function Space Program, where Samohi educators and administrators, along with the Ed Services Department, began to visualize the facilities they would need to teach current and future generations of students. Practically, the classrooms needed to be larger to support differing modalities of teaching and learning. The State standard size for a classroom for about the past century has been 960 square feet. To meet SMMUSD's educational goals, the Function Space Program determined that a standard classroom needs to expand to 1,100 – 1,200 square feet. In addition, classrooms need to be paired with small breakout spaces, commons, and accessible outdoor learning areas. Lab, Tech and Studio spaces should expand to 1,400 – 1,600 square feet.

To support expanded classrooms, usable interior spaces at Samohi would also need to expand by close to 50%. Fitting these expanded learning areas along with necessary athletic fields and courts onto the small 26-acre site is a challenging endeavor. During the SCP process, our architects stated that for a suburban high school of approximately 3,000 students, it would be more common to have a site of nearly 50 acres.

As part of the SCP process, the needs of classrooms and other facilities were evaluated by architects, engineers, teachers, staff, site administration, and District administration. This process included analysis of each existing building to determine whether it could be renovated to meet the District's needs or would need to be replaced. The SCP built on the recently constructed Innovation Building project that became, in many ways, Phase Zero, and as a brand new building, the Innovation Building was not considered for replacement or renovation. Throughout the planning process, we have taken ample steps to consider historic preservation opportunities. We have attempted to continually balance the desire to preserve the school's architecturally significant past with the education needs of the present. Early on in the SCP process, the English and History buildings, Barnum Hall, and the Memorial Open Air Theater (the Greek) were identified as existing campus features where the goal would be to maintain and renovate them if feasible.

It was determined that Barnum Hall would be preserved with necessary, but minor alterations. The Greek would most likely require accessibility upgrades and a stage house would be added to replace the one lost when Drake Pool was built.

Analysis of the English Building demonstrated some challenges. Its classrooms are small and narrow, and thus unsuitable to serve as standard classrooms for modern day and future teaching and learning. However, the team recognized that this 1911 building could be retained if it were repurposed as the new Administration Building. By reopening the decorative entrances on 7<sup>th</sup> Street into the building, access to the administrative offices will be improved, one of the goals of the SCP. The undersized classrooms could be renovated in a manner that would allow it to serve as administration and support offices. The current building also contains the Humanities Center, the former library currently used as a theater, which is perfectly functional and would be expensive to duplicate. Re-purposing the English Building as the Administration Building maximizes available open space on the campus. The SCP that was developed and ultimately adopted includes keeping the English Building with a full interior modernization, an addition to the back (campus) side of the building, and exterior improvements on the street-facing side of the building.

During the SCP process, it became clear that the History Building posed significant impediments and could not be retained. Originally constructed in 1913 as the Academic and Administrative Building, it was irreparably damaged during the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. That original building is gone. The building was substantially rebuilt as a Works Project Administration project in 1937. It was later extensively remodeled, the auditorium wing was demolished, and it was renamed the History Building in 1960.

Based on these cumulative substantial alterations, the well-regarded Historic Resources Group (HRG) opined that the History Building no longer retains historical integrity, is not listed on the City of Santa Monica's list of locally designated Structures of Merit or Landmarks, and would not be considered a historic resource under the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historic Resources. HRG's analysis was fully discussed in its report and in the Cultural Resources Section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Link: [Santa Monica High School Campus Plan Project Draft Environmental Impact Report](#)

Unfortunately, the History Building's physical configuration makes it generally unusable for modern education. It was built as a double-loaded corridor with a central hallway and classrooms on either side of the hallway. The 23 classrooms range in size from 584 – 801 square feet, with an average size of 687 square feet. This is significantly below both the State's minimum standard of 960 square feet and the Function Space Program's need of 1,100 – 1,200 square feet. These rooms can barely fit a class of 36 students packed in rows of desks, plus technology. Teachers are unable to easily circulate throughout the room in this tight configuration.

Adaptive reuse of the History Building was given serious consideration; however, it was ultimately determined that the building could not feasibly be altered to effectively support larger classrooms or other campus needs. Any significant changes would require a mandatory seismic and structural upgrade of the building to the current code, which likely would exceed the replacement value of the existing building. Although this analysis was initially performed during the SCP process, the District recently requested that the architect prepare a memo to discuss the analysis done at that time and to incorporate more current construction values (including the concept of saving just the shell or façade of the History Building) in order to provide additional background on this issue. Please see the attached memo from Chan Young Architects for further details.

Based on these analyses, it became clear that the History Building was no longer useful and would be an impediment to re-planning the campus. The SCP was developed in 2015 and 2016. Multiple campus layouts were tested. Throughout the process, students, educators, staff and administration participated in multiple workshops and meetings. Architects and FIP staff conducted five focused meetings with staff and teachers specifically on development of the SCP between September 2015 and November 2015. Multiple user groups and community meetings were held to solicit feedback on the draft SCP. The SCP was discussed and reviewed in January 2016 and February 2016 by the Samohi Site Committee, made up of faculty, staff and parents.

The draft SCP was discussed and input was received from a group of about 40 current students on March 4, 2016 and April 13, 2016. It presented to the PTSA on April 4, 2016. The Facility District Advisory Committee reviewed the draft plan at three different publicly noticed meetings that were open to the public (4/11/16, 5/16/16, 7/18/16). The Board of Education held a study session on the SCP on April 14, 2016, at which all Board members were in attendance and during which the Board gave direction to staff to pursue the Blue Plan design concept, which included demolition of the History Building. The Board of Education was presented a discussion item, which adopted the final plan, on July 20, 2016, at which all Board members other than Mr. Jose Escarce were present and during which the Board gave direction to staff to move forward with the EIR/CEQA process and other activities associated with Phase 1, including examining the possibility of planning for a combination of Phases 1 and 2. All of the FDAC and Board Meetings were properly noticed and open to the public for comment. At every single one of the aforementioned meetings, the drawings showed that the History Building would be removed.

Regarding public knowledge of the development of the SCP, all aspects were widely communicated and promoted. In fact, it should be noted that the Santa Monica Daily Press published stories regarding the development and evolution the Samohi Campus Plan on March



21, 2016, April 13, 2016, April 30, 2016, August 29, 2017, and September 12, 2017. A well-publicized (sent to all JAMS, LMS, SMASH, and Samohi families) community workshop was held on May 2, 2017, following a survey asking families to express their interests and priorities for the Samohi campus. The April 17, 2018 presentation to PTSA, publicized to all Santa Monica parents, also included images of the eventual built-out campus, clearly showing that the History Building would be removed. In addition, The Samohi (Samohi student newspaper) published an article on November 14, 2017, right in the middle of the CEQA NOP review period, that clearly articulated that Phase 3 would begin with demolition of the History Building. Any assertion that this plan was developed in secret, or without a genuine effort at obtaining community input are demonstrably false.

Santa Monica High School is not included in the City's list of locally designated historic districts, nor does the campus contain any locally designated Structures of Merit. Barnum Hall is the only landmark on campus, designated as Santa Monica's Landmark No. 47, making it a presumptive historical resource. The entire exterior of Barnum Hall, as well as the tile mosaic in the foyer, the fire curtain mural, and the foyer's original terrazzo flooring are historically significant. Neither the Santa Monica High School campus as a whole, nor any individual campus buildings (with the exception of Barnum Hall) or features, appear in the last few versions of Santa Monica's Historic Resources Inventory. Similarly, neither the Santa Monica High School campus as a whole, nor any individual campus buildings or features, are listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources.

### **CEQA Process**

Following Board direction, and as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the District prepared an EIR on the entire SCP. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines § 15063, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study were prepared and distributed to the State Clearinghouse, responsible agencies, affected agencies, and other interested parties from October 26, 2017 to November 27, 2017. Specifically, the District requested that the State Clearinghouse distribute the NOP and Initial Study to the State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO). The NOP was posted in the Los Angeles County Clerk's office for 32 days. The NOP was mailed directly to the City of Santa Monica Planning Department and the Transportation, Engineering & Management Department on October 25, 2016. The NOP was also posted in a local newspaper, distributed to students and parents/guardians of Samohi, and made available on the District and Samohi website for the entirety of the CEQA process. While the District was under no legal obligation to hold a public meeting, a Public Meeting was held on November 13, 2017, at the Samohi cafeteria to solicit input from interested agencies and the public. No comments were received at the public meeting; however, five comments were received during the 32-day comment period. No comments on historic resources or the History Building were received during the NOP's 32-day comment period.

Consistent with the requirements of CEQA Guidelines sections 15087 and 15105, the Draft EIR was submitted to the State Clearinghouse, Office of Planning and Research (OPR), and was circulated for a 47-day public comment period commencing on November 30, 2018, through January 16, 2019. As with the NOP, the District requested that the State Clearinghouse distribute the EIR to SHPO. Similar to the NOP, the EIR and Notice of Availability were posted in the

Los Angeles County Clerk's office, posted in a local newspaper, distributed to students and parents/guardians of Samohi, and made available on the District and Samohi website for the entirety of the CEQA process. It was also mailed directly to the City of Santa Monica Planning Department, the Public Works Department, and the Transportation, Engineering and Management Department on November 28, 2018. The District held another Public Meeting to discuss the EIR on December 17, 2018. No members of the public attended, so no comments were received at the public meeting; however, four written comments were received upon the close of the comment period. No comments on historic resources or the History Building were received during the 47-day comment period. The Board certified the Final EIR at its publicly noticed meeting that was open to the public on February 7, 2019. No public comments on the Final EIR were made at the SMMUSD Board Meeting.

Throughout the development of the SCP and the Campus Plan's CEQA process there have been numerous opportunities for public comment. In order to be completely transparent and provide the public with information of potential adverse effects of the SCP, the District went beyond the CEQA requirements by providing notice of both the Initial Study and the Draft EIR in multiple formats. Similarly, the District held both a Scoping Meeting on the NOP and a Public Meeting on the Draft EIR, and provided multiple formats of noticing for each meeting, including mailing of 667 notices to surrounding residents, advertisements placed in the newspapers, communications sent out to local community and neighborhood groups, and emails sent to stakeholders. The Draft EIR remains available on the Samohi website to this day. A total of four comments were received on the EIR, one from the State Clearinghouse confirming receipt and distribution to the requested agencies – including SHPO – two on traffic safety by Metro and Caltrans, and one on the proper disposal of potentially contaminated materials by the Department of Toxic Substances Controls. None of the written comments were concerned with removal of the History Building, nor any other building for that matter.

Zero objections to the removal of the History Building were made during any of the public CEQA meetings, the comment period on the NOP, the comment period on the Draft EIR, or at multiple Board meetings.

The Board unanimously approved certification of the Final EIR as a Major Action Item at its public Board meeting on February 7, 2019, at which all Board members were present. The staff write-up for that agenda item includes the following relevant information:

"On October 26, 2017, the District issued a Notice of Preparation of a Draft EIR and the Proposed Project's Initial Study for public review and comment. The comment period ended on November 27, 2017, 32 days later. Five (5) comment letters/emails were received that raised concerns with cultural and tribal resources, disturbance of the neighborhood and students, traffic congestion, motorist safety, noise and vibration from band activities at the football field, and a request to evaluate an alternative location. In addition, District staff held a public scoping meeting on November 13, 2017. **No one attended the meeting.** The Environmental Consultants and District staff considered all of these comments in preparing the Proposed Project's Draft EIR.

On November 30, 2018, the District issued a Notice of Availability and the Proposed Project's Draft EIR for public review and comment. The Notice of

Availability was also published on the District's website, in a local newspaper, and directly mailed to each commenter on the Initial Study and affected public agencies. The Draft EIR was made available on the District's website and at the District's Offices, Samohi Library, and at the Santa Monica Main Library. The comment period for the Draft EIR ended on January 16, 2019 (a total of 47 days). Comments on the Draft EIR were only received from the Metro, Department of Toxic Substances Control, and Caltrans. ***None of the comments opposed the project***, but rather provided general information.

On December 17, 2018, District staff conducted a community presentation on the Proposed Project and the Draft EIR. ***No members of the public or any representatives of a public entity attended.*** (emphasis added)

### Exemption from City Code

Separately, the Board of Education, at its August 16, 2018 meeting, during which all Board members other than Ms. Laurie Lieberman and Ms. Maria Leon-Vazquez were present, voted unanimously to approve Resolution 18-03, exempting the Samohi Campus Plan from the City of Santa Monica Zoning Code. The meeting was properly noticed and was open to the public for comment. The Board agenda item describes the SCP at length and includes the following with respect to Phase 3 and the History Building,

***“Phase 3 would consist of demolition of the History Building, Drake Pool Building, South Gym and cafeteria; construction of a new, three-level classroom and Administrative Building, a new, two-level gym and classroom building; and improvements to utilities.”*** (emphasis added)

No public comments were received with respect to this agenda item.

### Implementation of the SCP

The Board directed staff to investigate whether it would be feasible to consolidate Phases 1 and 2 into a single project for efficiency. Staff determined that it was possible with additional funding, which the Board approved. Designs of a combined Phase 1 and 2 project were completed. The project went into construction in June 2019. These combined phases of the SCP became the new Discovery Building and will replace the current educational functions of the History, Business, Cafeteria and Drake Pool Buildings, providing new classrooms, a new cafeteria and pool along with added parking. Construction of the Discovery Building is more than 60% complete and the building is scheduled to open in August 2021. The 23 classrooms from the History Building are all scheduled to move into the Discovery Building. The standard classrooms in the Discovery Building will be over 1,100 square feet and will also include common areas and small breakout spaces for varied learning. The Discovery Building is being built utilizing an open-building model, designed to be resilient with a structure that can be adapted to the unforeseen educational changes it will experience over its long life.

Once the Discovery Building is operational the History Building will no longer be needed. It is slated to be demolished in the summer of 2021 to make way for the Phase 3 Exploration Building that is more than halfway through its own design phase. Phase 3 consists of two



facilities, the first of which is the new South Gym, housing a 2-court gym, an auxiliary 1-court gym, yoga, dance, and fitness studios, along with locker rooms and support spaces. The new South Gym will be constructed along the Pico alignment between the Language Building and the existing South Gym. The second facility is the Exploration Building, the east end of which conflicts with the History Building. The Exploration Building will include 2D and 3D visual arts and media arts programs including photography, film, and multimedia as well as the Capstone program, which initially consists of three pathways: Project Lead The Way/Engineering; Health/Wellness/Sports Medicine; and Law/Justice/Government.

Despite claims to the contrary, “saving” the History Building will not in turn save the District money. It is a building that no longer serves the needs of the campus. Keeping it would undermine the District’s educational objectives and would not avoid the need to build replacement space. The History Building will not be replaced by a separately purposed building. Instead it, along with the Business Building, the Cafeteria, and Drake Pool, are being replaced by the Discovery Building, which is already funded and well under construction. The entire cost of the Discovery Building project has been either spent or encumbered. Retaining the History Building would not save or recover any of this money but would come at a substantial additional cost. Most of the SCP would need to be reworked to accommodate the History Building’s location, including the preparation of a new CEQA review. It would further halt progress and significantly delay commencement, and thus completion, of Phase 3. Lastly, it would make future phases of the SCP unworkable, all of which would negatively and unfairly impact our students.

Replacing the History Building was a difficult decision that was thoroughly analyzed and not taken lightly. We appreciate what it means to some members of the community, and we understand that it will be missed. As described above, the SCP does preserve the English Building, the Greek, Barnum Hall and all the other historical resources. When developing the SCP, attention has been paid to the need to preserve what is capable of being preserved while meeting the District’s educational mission. Our world is changing (a phrase that seems even more poignant in 2020), education is changing, and Samohi must also change. Samohi will continue to shape and prepare the students for tomorrow as it has for the past century. With each step, Samohi is enriching and adding to its history.

Implementation of Phase 3 of the SCP, through construction of the new South Gym and the Exploration Building, is the next step in the exciting progress being made at Samohi. This transformational work will result in a much-improved campus that will greatly benefit current and future students, staff, and the community.

For ease of reference, the following is a high-level recap of the timeline of site, District, and community input:

#### SCP Development and Approval Timeline:

- SCP Development – Admin, Staff and Teachers – 5 meetings Sept – Nov 2015
- Samohi Site Committee – January 2016
- Samohi Site Committee – February 2016
- SCP Working Session with 40 students – March 4, 2016

- SCP Presentation to PTSA – April 4, 2016 (open to the public)
- SCP Presentation to FDAC-SM – April 11, 2016 (open to the public)
- SCP Working Session with 40 students – April 13, 2016
- Board of Education Study Session on SCP – April 14, 2016 (open to the public)
- SCP Update to FDAC-SM – May 16, 2016 (open to the public)
- SCP Update to FDAC-SM – July 18, 2016 (open to the public)
- Board of Education Discussion Item on SCP – July 20, 2016 (open to the public)

CEQA Development Timeline (NOP and Initial Study):

- District issued Notice of Preparation of Draft EIR and Initial Study – October 26, 2017
- NOP published in Santa Monica Daily Press – October 26, 2017
- NOP and IS distributed to State Clearinghouse – October 26 – November 27, 2017
- NOP posted in Los Angeles County Clerk's Office – October 26, 2017
- NOP and IS posted on SMMUSD and Samohi websites – October 26, 2017
- Public Scoping Meeting mailers (667: 300' radius) distributed – October 26, 2017
- Public Scoping Meeting – November 13, 2017 (zero members of the public attended)
- NOP and IS Public comment period closed – November 27, 2017
  - No comments were received with respect to removal of the History Building.

CEQA Development Timeline (Environmental Impact Report):

- District issued Notice of Availability and Draft EIR – November 30, 2018
- EIR NOA published in Santa Monica Daily Press – November 30, 2018
- Draft EIR distributed to State Clearinghouse – November 30, 2018 – January 16, 2019
- EIR NOA posted in LA County Clerk's Office – November 30, 2018
- EIR NOA posted on SMMUSD and Samohi websites – November 30, 2018
- Public Draft EIR Meeting mailers (667: 300' radius) distributed – November 30, 2018
- Public Draft EIR Meeting – December 17, 2018 (zero members of the public attended)
- Draft EIR Public comment period closed – January 16, 2019
  - No comments were received with respect to removal of the History Building
- Board Certification of Final EIR – February 7, 2019 (no public comments)

Please do not hesitate to contact either one of us to discuss this issue or if you have any questions. Thank you.



## MEMORANDUM

27 October 2020

Carey Upton  
Chief Operations Officer  
Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District  
T: 310-450-8338 x79383  
E: [cupton@smmusd.org](mailto:cupton@smmusd.org)

Re: Samohi Campus Plan – History Building Replacement

Dear Mr. Upton,

At your request we are providing the background from which decisions were made to replace the History Building as part of the Samohi Campus Plan (SCP) process. During the campus planning, the SCP team gathered input and responded to several goals that influenced the replacement of several buildings in order to provide the best classrooms, more useable open space, navigable campus organization, and *full sports programs* on-campus.

The Ed. Specs generally called for 1,200 to 1,600 assignable square feet (asf) classrooms to address the District's planning for right sized classrooms and flexibility for teaching pedagogies. The existing brick/concrete and wood structure History building totals about 44,000 sf (2 stories + basement). The current 23 general classrooms range from approx. 594 and 801 asf. (687 sf avg.) and are not conducive to the current program needs.

To modernize the building to support 21<sup>st</sup> century learning would require a renovation to all the interiors, building envelope, ceilings, mechanical, electrical, fire life safety systems, accessibility components, elevators, restrooms, and technology as well as mitigation to some structural issues identified by our structural engineer (See attached report). If the main corridors were retained, larger classrooms could be made by removing interior partition walls to combine classrooms. However, this would make long rectangles that are not conducive to teaching, i.e. taking two rooms that are 22' x 33' (741 sf) and making a 22' x 66' classroom (1482 sf). To make usable, large, and squarish classrooms, would suggest severe reconfiguration of the hallway walls. These walls are structural, seismic and load bearing. Significant changes to these walls and renovating the interior will trigger a mandatory seismic upgrade of the whole building to the current seismic code based on construction costs far exceeding 40% of the \$450/sf (excl. soft costs) replacement value set by DSA in a recent draft memo. In addition, the remaining space left after classroom reconfiguration is inefficient meaning the number of classrooms per overall SF is reduced.

*We should note that incremental renovations costs over the years may also trigger full structural upgrade. If the renovation were to fall below the 40% threshold now, any future upgrades may be limited as future minor improvements may exceed the cumulative 40% threshold when added together.*



Our cost consultant, MGAC, supported the SCP by studying rough order of magnitude costs, and provided the following updated replacement vs renovation values. ROM construction costs are inclusive of all general contractor mark-ups but exclusive of most soft costs such as A&E fees, Management and CM fees and testing and inspection, but it is important to note these costs are per sf and do not have the benefit of a design:

1. Major interior renovation and seismic upgrade to current code (no work to exterior i.e. preservation):  
**~\$19,250,000 (add \$600,000 for hazardous materials potentially)**
2. Replacement building cost:  
**~\$19,800,000 (@\$450/SF per DSA) / ~\$28,600,000 (@\$650/SF)**
3. Convert History to alternate program (i.e. library, etc) - maintain exterior walls only, replacement of all interior, structure and foundations, and roof:  
**~90-95% replacement cost of \$28,600,000; ~100% if preservation of exterior is required.**

*Therefore, recapping the building efficiency, renovating History to create approximately 15 classrooms (@30'x40') might cost approximately \$1.28M per classroom vs \$1.05M per classroom in a new building.*

It is important to note the SCP planning goals also included mitigating the difficult and confusing pathways around campus and specifically Prospect Hill and the History and Business Buildings. There was significant support in all committees to reduce and potentially eliminate campus ramping along major circulation paths and reducing passing bell times that have incrementally increased over the years due to circuitous pathways and ramps. The SCP as planned eliminated almost all campus ramping, added significant useable open space, and increased building sf by approx. 40% while keeping all sports on campus. Prospect Hill is not used for student activities as it is too steep. By replacing the History Building, the SCP allowed for more gradual elevation changes and considerably more useable outdoor space. *Note: the north end basement floor of History is well below the perceived top of Prospect Hill and when it is removed, would have flattened out a significant portion of any grading effort.*

The planning process also investigated the historic importance and operational viability of all buildings. While only the exterior of Barnum Hall is listed, early on in the SCP process the historic/landmark features of all buildings, especially Barnum Hall, the Memorial Greek Theater, the English and History Building, were studied by District consultants. Every consideration was made for renovating or replacing each building and weighed against the goals of the SCP. The English Building is deemed suitable for renovation for three primary reasons – it is on the public boundary at a major campus entrance and therefore an ideal location for Administration (and the Humanities Center), the building renovation into office spaces is cost effective, and the building housed the Humanities Center which would be more costly to relocate. In addition, it was an opportunity to maintain some of the campus's character through exposing some of the architectural features covered over during the years such as an articulated entrance along 7th Street. The District concluded the History Building, while culturally significant, was not logically adaptable to the SCP.



Per the District, the Discovery Building, Phases 1 & 2 of the SCP, is under construction and 60% complete. The building was designed to replace the History Building classrooms and house offices. The project will also replace Business Building classrooms, the Cafeteria Building and Drake Pool, along with adding a significant parking and warehouse services. Specialty classrooms such science, special ed, and computer labs come with a far higher cost/sf. The overall cost for the Phase 1 & 2 project, including the additional parking is budgeted at \$185M hard and soft costs.

Given the transformative depth of the SCP, the decision to replace any building was thoughtfully considered and communicated at several steps and was accepted and approved at each juncture. The design team conducted a series of District and public meetings at all levels of the process including several with the Samohi staff and student representatives, the Samohi Function Space Program Site Advisory Committee (Campus Leadership), District Maintenance and Operations and Security, the Samohi Campus Plan Facilities Committee (Department representatives), the Samohi Education (Spec) Planning Committee (Heery Int'l), the SMMUSD Facilities District Advisory Committee (FDAC, community), the Samohi Campus Plan Executive Team (Superintendent and Assist. Superintendent and campus leadership), and ultimately the SMMUSD Board. Through those meetings, the SCP narrowed and defined several goals. *Ultimately, the budget, Ed. Spec. requirements for **class size and flexibility**, planning for better wayfinding and reduced travel time/effort between buildings, and the creation of more useable open space provided a clear path forward to support the replace the History building.*

Please let us know if you have any other questions regarding the decision-making process of the SCP.

Best Regards,

Timothy C Young, Principal

*Attachment: History Building Limited Assessment rev. 10/27/2020*





**STRUCTURAL + CIVIL ENGINEERS**

700 South Flower Street, Suite 1800

Los Angeles, CA 90017

213.596.4500

bjsce.com

October 26, 2020 (Rev. Oct. 27, 2020)

B&J #S19-0533, Phase 106

Mr. Tim Young  
Chan Young Architects  
2601 E. Chapman Ave., Suite 207  
Fullerton, CA 92808

Subject: SAMOHI History Building Limited Evaluation

Dear Mr. Young:

The purpose of this investigation is to provide a limited evaluation of the History Building on the campus of Santa Monica High School in Santa Monica, CA.

We conducted neither visual examination nor physical materials testing to confirm strength or quality of structural materials. These activities are outside the scope and your intent of this project. Although limited in scope, our evaluation and this report should be sufficient to provide the information you require and to determine direction for future evaluations, if appropriate.

**Basis of Evaluation**

Our evaluation is based upon reference drawings made available for our review:

1. Title: Rehabilitation of the Santa Monica High School  
Sheets: 8 through 20 of 25  
By: Marsh, Smith & Powell Architects  
Date: January 20, 1936
2. Title: Rehabilitation of the Santa Monica High School  
Architect: John C. Lindsay  
Structural Engineer: John A Martin & Associates  
Dated: April 22, 1960  
Sheets: SAA-1 through SAA-4

The framing sizes, locations and details, as well as material requirements were obtained from these drawings. These items have not been field verified but are assumed accurate for the purposes of this evaluation.

This evaluation is in compliance with the 2019 California Building Code.

### **Existing Building**

The existing building appears to be a 2-story brick or unreinforced building with a basement constructed prior to 1932. A rehabilitation of the building was done in 1932. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor framing consists of 2x10 wood joists @ 16" oc supported by 6x12 wood girders. A 7" concrete slab was added at the corridor. The roof consists of 2x16 wood joists @ 16" oc with a concrete slab at the corridor. It is not clear from the as-built plans, but it is expected that the floor and roof consist of 1x straight sheathing over the wood joist portions. The 1932 rehabilitation removed portions of the brick walls, added some concrete walls and added a layer of gunite over the existing brick walls. Some new concrete footings were added. This appears to be with a consistent the type of strengthening for brick buildings done at the time. The 1960 renovation included revisions to stairs but did not include any significant structural upgrades. We are not aware of any additional structural strengthening done to the building since then.

### **Findings and Recommendations**

A common issue with older concrete or brick buildings with wood framed roofs is lack of anchorage of the walls to the roof and floor. This can lead to potential collapse of the building during a large earthquake due to the walls and the roof separating from each other. The as-built drawings that were provided do not show anchorage of the walls to the roof or floor and we are not aware if any were added since the rehabilitation in 1932. This is a deficiency that should be addressed as part of a voluntary seismic retrofit. This would also likely require strengthening of the wood diaphragms and the addition of cross ties.

It is our understanding that some of the corridor walls would need to be removed and/or relocated to reconfigure the rooms to modern classrooms. These walls are load bearing and are part of the lateral load resisting system. Significant changes to these walls will trigger a mandatory seismic upgrade of the entire building, which may be cost prohibitive.

Per the California Administrative Code Section 4-309 item c, if the cost of alterations or additions to the building exceeds 50% of the replacement cost of the building, a mandatory seismic upgrade is required. DSA asks that this be limited to 40% during the design to account for any potential changes in the field or escalation of costs during construction to ensure that the total is kept to 50% of the replacement costs.

An alternate that was explored was to maintain the exterior walls as a shell, remove and replace the interior walls, floor and roof framing to accommodate a different occupancy such as a library or art studio. This can be achieved using a metal deck roof and concrete fill over metal deck 2<sup>nd</sup> floor supported by steel columns and load-bearing concrete or masonry shear walls. These shear walls would provide the best deflection compatibility with the existing exterior walls. The exterior walls would need to be upgraded to current seismic codes. This would likely require the addition of another layer of shotcrete, as well as strengthening the foundations.

Our professional services have been performed with the intent to meet the degree of care and skill ordinarily exercised by reputable structural engineers practicing in this or similar localities. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice or opinions included in this letter. This study does not address non-structural concerns, such as accessibility, fire & life safety regulations, or MEP systems.

We hope this provides the information needed at this time. We are available to discuss further at your convenience, please call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

BRANDOW & JOHNSTON

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kim Carvalho". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim Carvalho, S.E.  
Vice President