

April 18, 2002
Park Elementary School Vision
Hutchinson, Minnesota

1. Historic Building Status: Michael Koop at the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office has agreed to do a preliminary staff review to determine if the original 1937 building could be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The later additions would not meet the 50-year old rule used as a threshold for National Register eligibility.

2. School Site Property:

2.1. The Hutchinson school district holds the deed to about 2.5 acres of land on which most of the present school building is located. It appears that the first two school buildings in the district were built on the school district land. Later school buildings were built on the Park block outside of the school district property. The 1937 building was constructed on the school district property except where it extended west of the school district property to connect with the then existing Merrill Building that was built entirely outside of the school district property. When the 1956 addition was built, the school district land boundaries were ignored and portions of the addition extend over the north school district property line. The site plan from that addition does not acknowledge the school district property lines.

2.2. If portions of Park Elementary School complex were to be used for anything other than public school use, the issue of property ownership and the intent of the original 1855 town plat for the use of the "Park" block would have to be resolved.

- A. Resolution of the land use would go away for now if portions of the school complex that were outside of the school district property were removed, and all parking construction for a new use was within the school district property. This alternative would require demolition of the 1956 addition and the portion of the original 1937 building that extends beyond the west property line.
- B. If all portions of the existing Park Elementary School complex were to remain, the "Park" land issue would have to be resolved.
- C. The "Park" land issue will have to be resolved at some point. The question is now or later.

3. School Building Condition:

- 3.1. The Park Elementary School complex has been very well maintained and is in very good condition. Some of the recent maintenance work includes new roofs, window lintel replacement, masonry repointing, reupholstered auditorium seats, and updated electrical, data, communication and alarm systems. The 1997 multipurpose gymnasium addition was constructed its own heating and ventilating system.
- 3.2. An elevator has been installed to provide an accessible entry and access to the primary floor levels of the complex.
- 3.3. The school complex is remarkable in that each of the building additions were carefully designed with matching exterior brick, detailing and building scale so that the complex has a unified appearance.
- 3.4. The interior corridor materials and detailing of the 1956 addition closely match the original 1937 building interior.

4. Park Elementary School Vision:

- 4.1. **Ownership:** The Hutchinson School District should retain ownership and management of the building.
- 4.2. **Performing Arts Center:** The beautiful school auditorium has strong community identity and should be renovated to be a first class performance space for the entire school district and the community. The gymnasium/stage would be remodeled for performance use only. There is sufficient space in this portion of the building to develop the required support spaces for a performing arts center. The existing band and choir rooms below the auditorium could be used for practice and small productions. The performing arts center would retain the Park Elementary School as a vital part of the community and be an anchor for the building. Participation of other community arts groups would expand the use of the building and fund raising capabilities for running and maintaining the building.
- 4.3. **School District Offices:** The Hutchinson School District should sell their existing office building and relocate their administrative offices to the center section of the main floor of the school. This move would insure continued school district presence in the building.
- 4.4. **Other Educational Programs:** Consolidate other school district programs not housed in the existing and new school buildings to this building complex. Consolidation could be over time as existing leases expire and space needs grow beyond existing capacity. Other community education programs for pre-school children, adults and seniors should consider relocating to this complex.
- 4.5. **Charter School:** A charter school would be a natural fit for a school building complex and could take advantage of the performing arts and gymnasium spaces. Continued educational use would require the least amount of alterations to the building.

- 4.6. **Multipurpose Gymnasium:** This addition can function independently of the rest of the complex with its own restroom facilities, and heating and ventilating system. Its entry is accessible without the use of the elevator. This space could be available to community recreational programs and/or leased out to private dance or workout studios.
- 4.7. **Community Functions:** The existing school cafeteria and kitchen facilities could be used for a variety of community events including those related to those in the performing arts center.
- 4.8. **Senior Center:** The dining facilities and adjacent building spaces would make a very good senior center, and this should be considered when the current location of the senior center is no longer available.
- 4.9. **Senior Housing:** If the 1956 addition were retained, it could be renovated as a separate senior housing facility. Separation of the housing use from the other portions of the building would require an elevator to serve all floors of the housing.
- 4.10. **City Use:** The City of Hutchinson should consider locating functions not housed in City Hall to this building. Relocated on the police training facility to this building should be considered.

5. Useable Building Area:

- 5.1. **1937 Building:**
 - 14,248 net sf Main Floor
 - 8,758 net sf Main Floor Auditorium/Gymnasium
 - 3,552 net sf Auditorium Balcony
 - 20,483 net sf Lower Floor
 - 13,394 net sf Second Floor
 - 60,435 net sf Total Floor Area
- 5.2. **1956 Addition:**
 - 5,801 net sf Main Floor
 - 11,523 net sf Lower Floor
 - 5,738 net sf Second Floor
 - 23,062 net sf Total Floor Area
- 5.3. **1997 Gymnasium:** 2,740 net sf Main and Total Floor Area
- 5.4. **Total Usable Area:** 86,237 net sf Floor Area

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File: pes-recommend-041802.