

“A New House, An Old Tradition”

The Campaign for Creighton-Vail Hall in the 21st Century

Executive Summary - “Save or Demolish the 1995 Addition?”

Conclusions/Recommendation

The detailed assessment that was conducted in January 2011 by the project architect, RWH, along with their consultants and an experienced general contractor, concluded that the 1995 addition could be saved as part of a construction project; however, there is significant cost risk which cannot be determined with precision until the construction is underway. Estimates range from a potential savings of \$240,000 to an actual net additional cost, versus the alternative of demolishing the structure along with the main house. In addition, the layout and design of the new house would be significantly and negatively affected if the addition remains in place.

RWH, their consultants, and the general contractor, strongly recommend demolishing the 1995 addition as part of the project and starting with a completely unhampered design.

The Building Committee has concluded the financial risk and negative design implications involved in trying to save the 1995 addition are too great. Therefore, it is the decision of the Building Committee to move forward into the design and planning phase with the assumption we will demolish the entire structure, including the 1995 addition, and pursue programming for a completely new house to give the best overall and most cost effective design.

Background

The 4065SF addition was built in 1995 with a multi-purpose space/chapter room, bathrooms, laundry, and office space. An overall assessment of the entire chapter house was conducted in March, 2008. At that time it was recommended the entire structure be demolished and a new chapter house be constructed. With hopes of reducing the project cost, many graduates asked whether there might be a way to save the 1995 addition as it was significantly newer than the original part of the chapter house. Therefore, an additional more in-depth assessment was commissioned by the Building Committee in January 2011.

Details/Discussion

RWH, with their consultants, completed a more detailed assessment that included involvement from Gay Construction, a leading Atlanta general contractor, who has

extensive experience in renovations, mixed and new construction. The assessment included three elements:

1. Documenting systems that could be salvaged and reused based on age and current building code compliance.
2. Design and construction costs associated with saving and salvaging these components for reuse.
3. Opportunities for the site, lost or gained, by keeping or removing the addition.

The assessment concluded that very few of the existing mechanical systems could be reused due to design considerations and code requirements. The existing structure would have to be completely gutted, re-wired, re-plumbed, new mechanical systems installed, additional insulation added, new doors and windows, a sprinkler system added, and all new finishes applied. This would include moving the kitchen into the multi-purpose space.

The structural deficiencies would need to be addressed during this time as well, including plans to tie this existing structure into the new structure, on two floor levels and also at the roofline.

A major construction challenge is the intent to build a basement in the new structure to provide adequate facility space. The costs of excavating, shoring and preserving the 1995 addition could prove to be very cost prohibitive while the new structure site is prepared and construction progresses. Carefully detailed construction practices during the existing house demolition and subsequent rebuilding will add further costs due to increased materials, labor and overall construction time. It is estimated to have up to a one month impact on the construction timeline, therefore reducing the savings opportunity even further and perhaps placing the project at risk to any unforeseen site conditions. These can include sand from previous island parties.

The upper floor of the addition would need to be converted to sleeping rooms which would further reduce the available savings. Otherwise, there would need to be a third story added to the new main building in order to provide the specified occupancy of 50; as it is not desirable to put sleeping rooms below grade in a basement level. The specified occupancy of 50 is required to make the project economically viable.

The design of the public spaces would be impacted as well by retaining the existing addition and will not provide optimum flow and utilization through the new house, thus reducing its efficiency and the overall design objectives.

Further details are available in the reports prepared by RWH Architects in January 2011 and March 2008.