
From: Rachel Orr
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 4:17 PM
To: Peter Gearhart; Michael Watts; Harold Chapdelaine; Reade Milne; John Custer; Sean DeBettencourt; Rita Jeffers; James Rogers
Cc: Christopher Blessen; Matthew Barnhart; Marks, Richard; Opper, Christina; Marni Lipke
Subject: Fw: letter to the school committee 3-8-2020
Attachments: Tisbury School Building Committee 3-8-2020.docx

Hello all,

Henry Stephenson called me last week to let me know he had feedback he wanted to share after reviewing the first concept. I suggested he put his thoughts in writing and include a CV, which he has done. Please see the attached.

Rachel

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Henry Stephenson
To: Rachel Orr
Sent: Sunday, March 8, 2020, 10:55:50 PM EDT
Subject: letter to the school committee 3-8-2020

Hi Rachel,

Attached is a letter to the building committee along with a diagrammatic sketch suggesting a way that we could create a "Central Courtyard" where we now have a service yard. The Courtyard would tie the disparate wings of the school to a unified "common ground" directly accessible from all sides of the building. The courtyard could also provide a link to an adjacent public plaza on Spring Street - creating opportunities for a variety of informal school and town interactions.

I don't think I need to present this to the committee unless they want me to. It's probably best if it were first reviewed by the architects to see if it has any fatal flaws, But I do hope some kind of centralizing space can be incorporated into the plans.

Thanks so much for helping me out with this.
Henry

Henry Stephenson
Vineyard Haven, MA

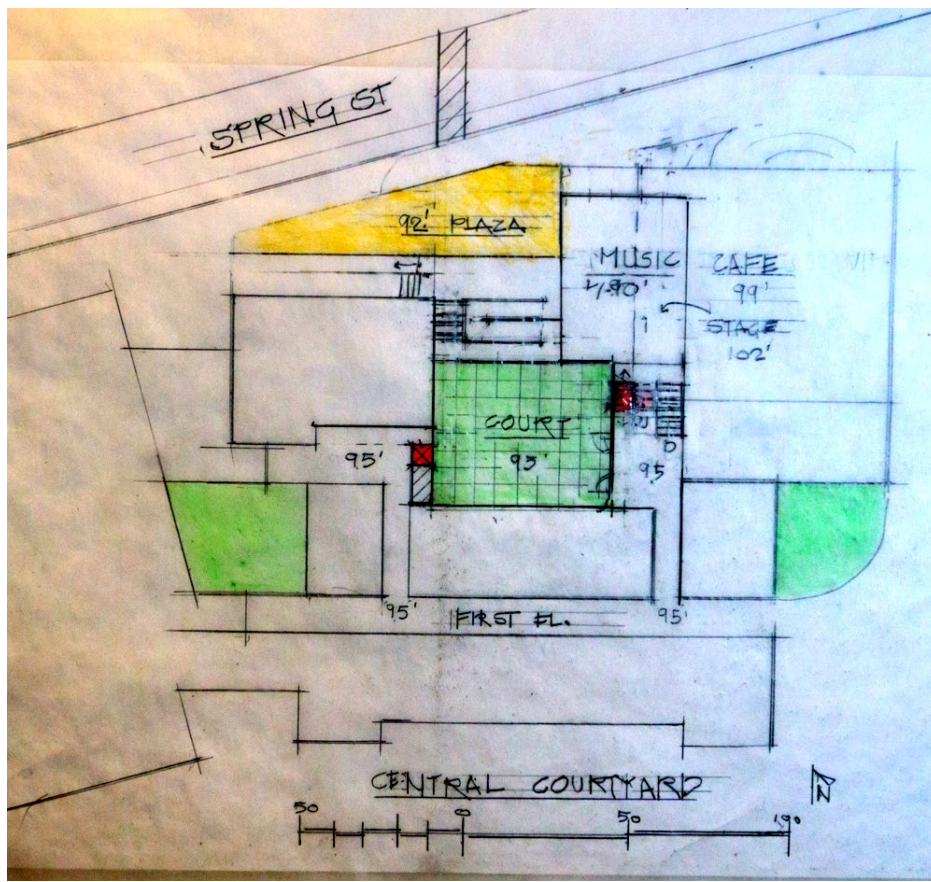
To the Tisbury School Building Committee:

Re: Comments and suggestions regarding the recent school plans

I really like the direction that the committee is taking with this project and I hope I can contribute something to its success.

Attached is a sketch concerning the recent plans for the new school. I've also included a short bio referencing my own interests and qualifications in this subject.

I've been looking at the latest draft that the architects presented at the last meeting and I think it has a lot of great possibilities especially the decision to transform the gym to a cafeteria (cafetorium). But I think the space reserved for a children's play area would be much better used as a great Central Courtyard - a common ground joining the activities of the school from every side and providing an interface between the school and the rest of the community.



But first we have to find a better location for the Music Department. This sketch suggests one way that we might do that. It takes advantage of three critical points of reference:

1. The level of the gym floor (cafetorium) is 99'

2. The level of the school's main floor is 95'
3. The floor level of the stage is 102'

Consequently, a possible location for the Music Department would include a portion under the stage but at a lower level than exists today, i.e. 90' or lower.

From there, a stairway and a short double-sided elevator would deliver people to the Main Floor at 95' and to the Cafetorium at 99' (we would remove the ramp and replace it with this stair/elevator system). This would also allow us to directly access the Courtyard from the Main Floor level (95') from every side of the school.

The Music Department classrooms would be oriented toward the Courtyard on the west side with sufficient clearances for windows and ventilation.

The Courtyard could serve multiple purposes – as an outdoor classroom and activity space, an eating area adjacent to the cafeteria, a connecting link between disparate segments of the school, an informal meeting area, and importantly, could, on occasion, be opened up to a more public plaza on Spring Street.

The enclosed sketch concentrates on the Central Courtyard and how it would create a focus for the school's activities (as a reference, I'm thinking of the Cloisters in New York which have roughly the same scale). The plans for the Public Plaza facing Spring Street are also important but that can wait.

I want to thank you all for taking the time to look this over. It is meant to be just a suggestion and would need a closer look but it is the Central Courtyard that I think is most needed.

Henry

Following Rachel's advice, I've added a short biography of my experience over the last fifty years that may or may not help to explain my interests and qualifications here.

Henry Stephenson

Vineyard Haven, MA

Short Bio

1965 – Graduated with honors from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Architecture degree.

1965 to 1967 - Served in the Peace Corps in Iran, working in a regional office that provided housing, schools and other services for the city of Mashhad.

1968 – Graduated with a Master's degree in Urban Design from Columbia University.

1968 – '69 – Worked on the Harlem Model Cities program; a project to help restore abandoned buildings in Harlem. I also worked on the design of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation Building in Brooklyn.

1969 - Was one of three principal designers for a New Town north of Daytona Florida (Palm Coast).

1971 to 1979 – I Worked as an Urban Designer with the NY City Planning Department. serving as a director for a number of planning initiatives; these included: a waterfront redevelopment plan for the North Shore of Staten Island, and a Special Zoning District for the southern half of Staten Island (an area about half the size of Martha's Vineyard),

Projects also included working on a computer-based land use mapping system and the writing of computer programs that used the NY City Assessor's data to do land use and zoning analyses.

1976 - I entered a competition to design low-cost housing for a site in Manila. The proposal received a citation and was published in Architectural Record.

1978 – In a departure from planning and architecture, my wife Holly and I applied our experience with computer systems and our interest in the new personal computers to start our own business - developing the playing schedules for major league sports (Stephenson Systems). The work began with scheduling the National Basketball Association seasons from 1979 through 1984. In 1981 we began constructing the schedules for the American and National Leagues of Baseball. Over time, Baseball became our primary clients and we continued doing their schedules until 2004 when Boston finally won the World Series. We ultimately completed working with them in 2006.

From time to time. we also did schedules for other leagues including the Major Indoor Soccer League, the North American Soccer League, and the Ivy League Men's and Women's Basketball

teams. This last project was a twelve-year coordinated chart for the twelve Ivy League teams – six men's and six women's.

Throughout this period, I maintained a small architectural practice doing residential designs and renovations.

I also became involved in a number of issues affecting the Staten Island community where we lived. I joined the local Community Planning Board and became chairman of their Waterfront Committee. I also became a co-founder of the National Lighthouse Museum, an organization that worked to restore a complex of Nineteenth Century buildings on the Staten Island waterfront that had once been the main depot of the US Lighthouse Service.

In September of 2001, Holly and I moved to Martha's Vineyard where, for the previous eight years we had been spending our summers.

In 2003 I joined the Tisbury Planning Board and served as a member, and later co-chair, of the Board. I retired from the Board in 2015

Throughout this time, I have stayed active in community affairs; serving on the Emergency Services Building Committee, the Drawbridge Committee and the Tashmoo Spring Park Committee. From time to time I have provided plans and graphics for park improvements, including plans for a redesigned overlook at State Road, Lake Street Park, Owen Little Way, the Dog Park and others.

I am currently a member of the newly formed Open Space and Recreation committee, and a member of the board of Tisbury Waterways.

I have been a member of the Committee to Renovate the Tashmoo Spring Building since its inception in 2004 and remain involved in future plans for its improvement.