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**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, HENTY HOUSE, 1 CIVIC SQUARE, LAUNCESTON ON 18 JULY 2000.**

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### **RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL - REDEVELOPMENT AND REPLACEMENT OF PARTS OF SCHOOL**

**Mr LYELL CATLIN**, PROJECT OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; **Ms JAN KUZNIARSKI**, PRINCIPAL, RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL; **Mr STEVE YOUNG**, PARENTS REPRESENTATIVE, RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL; AND **Mr JOHN LEWIS** AND **Mr ROBERT VAN DER ELST**, ATTRIO ARCHITECTS WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIRMAN** (Mr Wing) - Thank you very much for the inspection and for showing us the facilities that will be affected and what is proposed and where; that is very helpful to us. Before we begin with the presentation of evidence I would like to say from my point of view, and I haven't discussed this with other members of the committee, but I very much appreciated the format of this submission. It is very direct, it avoids unnecessary repetition and, unlike some of the submissions we have, we have been spared the repetitive guff and padding that we sometimes have. This is very direct, covers all the essentials and is concise, straightforward and helpful and the presentation document is easy to handle.

I don't understand why some presentations are that size rather than having the maps available at the back and folded so it can all be an A4 document, which is much easier to handle than the very long cumbersome one and which wastes a considerable amount of paper apart from anything else. So I am very impressed with the format and content of the submission and I just would like to place that on record and I hope the example will be followed by more. It is not the first presentation we have had but it is refreshing to have one in that form. Who would like to lead the evidence, probably Mr Catlin.

**Mr CATLIN** - I will just speak to the paper - I assume that's what you would like us to do and go from there.

**CHAIRMAN** - Yes, you don't have to deal with the whole of it because we have read that, but you might like to just emphasise any points or highlight any or deal with any that you wish to in more detail.

**Mr CATLIN** - First of all, the history of the place is fairly important because the school was built in the 1950s, as you can see in the documentation. It is kindergarten to grade 6 with more 600 students aged 4 to 12 years enrolled. It feeds a fairly stable area of Legana, Bridgenorth, Grindelwald and Riverside. As we probably know as a group, Riverside and Legana has experienced growth factor in houses attracting younger people to the area so the numbers have been fairly stable over a long period of time and as we go along

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and look at our future predictions you will see that they are fairly stable throughout, so that is a long term gain for the area in terms of stability for this school.

The proposal asks for a removal of the old inadequate terrapin components and that we would be replacing them with modern classrooms that will supply teaching and learning that fits the times of this century. The proposal is to actually increase the area to 900 square metres of primary accommodation in eleven general learning areas throughout the site. There would also be the undertaking of limited refurbishment of six GLAs subject to finances. There is a need for additional female staff and student toilets; the existing ones are very inadequate and need replacement anyway.

There is also a need because they are individual buildings at the moment and we are set with some of those even if we left them as they were, they're a covered way circulation for wet weather and cold, inclement weather - we need a circulation coverage of some sort. As we saw on site, there is also a need for extension for staff room and refurbishment. In the new curriculum guidelines that are required for educational department people, there is substantial PD required where you need whole staff and sometimes part groups working, in an area where they can all meet together and Riverside Primary does not adequately provide for that.

There is a need for redevelopment in our opinion and it's fairly substantial and timely. The old buildings that are there, that we are contemplating taking down, have been there for some time. They were put there at a time when Riverside looked like it was just growing but there wasn't the known factor of whether it was going to be stable or not and over the years they have just become a part of the establishment. Notwithstanding the current situation, I would like to recognise the way the school has been kept over the years and the funds have been put into it to maintain them to a standard and on the surface they are well painted and maintained, even though they are inadequate in area, they are well kept and that is a complement to the people who managed the school. But notwithstanding that, there is a need for replacement.

The strategy for replacement. It is intended to stage the proposed works in such a way as to cause the least disruption to the teaching program of the school. This can be achieved by taking advantage of the holiday periods to carry out demolition work and building work cannot be done while students and staff are in the place. Jan has also spoke at some length about negotiating with the high school during their period of grade 10s where they leave the place, where they will in fact have an orientation for grade 6s into grade 7 and it would be pertinent for that to be extended so that it could be managed in a worthwhile fashion.

If I could just go to enrolment predictions, if we go over to the area of predictions on page two, you'll notice that Riverside Primary School - if you go to the bottom of the predicted enrolments - for 2001, it is 613 and I believe, Jan, that they've crept up even now since this enrolment was done.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Yes, they have.

**Mr CATLIN** - Going to 2002 - 622, right down to 2007 where you have 644.

**CHAIRMAN** - And you now have 652.

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**Mr CATLIN** - And there's 652 now, so these numbers as I have said, they've changed even since we did them in about February or March so there are significant incorrect figures here already.

**Mr KONS** - Just a query there, it's got 'Persons and FTEs' - what's that?

**Mr CATLIN** - Okay, that's a good point. FTEs - full-time equivalents - taking into consideration your kindergartens, 'permanent persons' mean the actual bottoms on seats in the school, but full-time equivalent, you take off one group of your kinder because they share a classroom.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - It's a ten-hour program, too.

**Mr CATLIN** - So the numbers show that it is stable in every way. I've also included in there the predictions for Exeter, just to give you an idea. If you go to page six, you will notice that the numbers are very stable there also, right through the times, and I haven't a current time of whether they've changed this year since February-March or not, but on the whole the numbers are stable so there wouldn't be numbers coming and going between those two sights; they're very stable.

I've also added a small section to mine, which you don't have in your book, because I thought it was important to raise here, and that is a consultative process that has been carried out by the school. In February 2001 a consultative group consisting of the principal, staff, parents, community and architect representatives, was set up in the school to consider the design footprint that would be used to support the teaching and learning at Riverside Primary School. This group and subgroups thereof have worked extensively with staff and students to achieve results that will support quality learning outcomes for students. They have reviewed designs and visited other sites to achieve favourable planning that would suit the site and desired outcomes for teaching and learning.

I put a focus on teaching and learning because the classrooms we have on this particular site don't lend themselves clearly to the new curriculum. I think it is important to put that up front and say we need classrooms that will cater for the multifacets of intelligent learning of today rather than fifty years ago which some of these rooms are designed for.

In the nature of technology, it takes up more room, the wet areas that schools need now are significant and none of these classrooms that we've looked at today have that in tact in them and the new classrooms will provide exactly that.

**Mr KONS** - Can I just ask a question of Lyell. Is there a rule of thumb for square metre per child at primary schools?

**Mr CATLIN** - Yes, there is.

**Mr KONS** - What is it?

**Mr CATLIN** - I've got to get this right - I think it is about 7.26 square metres but I'll check that out for you - 7.26 per square metre per child.

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**CHAIRMAN** - The reference to the current enrolment of 652 in the body of the submission, I take it that is 652 persons, using that terminology.

**Mr CATLIN** - That's correct.

**CHAIRMAN** - Any further questions of Mr Catlin at this stage? There will be an opportunity to ask further ones later.

**Mr GREEN** - I was just going to ask a question about the consultative process. We know there are some issues in relation to some parts of the project that they are going to find it pretty difficult based on the funding allocation. Has the consultative process made decisions about prioritising the work for the school?

**Mr CATLIN** - The question is that we have consulted extensively with that group of people and they do know the implications of the funding at this stage. As you know, people would like more money and we would like to meet the needs of the total project but they're realists and they understand we cannot stretch as far as we want to. There'll always be avenues in a school that need to be done. If we looked at any site within Tasmania, we could spend \$3 million to \$4 million on most of our older sites and still not have enough so, to be fair, they are very much the realists.

**Mr GREEN** - I understand that, but have they made the decision about the priority?

**Mr CATLIN** - Oh, I see, the answer is yes to that. They have a priority listing that they could prefer first, down through there so they've got priority one, priority two and so on. Sorry, I misunderstood you.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Mr Chairman, I don't intend to repeat the background that Lyell's provided for you; I thought probably instead that it would be useful to talk about the forward view, moving forward from where we currently are into the future. I see that probably as the most significant challenge we have had to work with as a school community in terms of being able to anticipate the requirements of learning spaces - and I say 'learning spaces' deliberately, as opposed to 'teaching spaces', in view of the changing nature of education globally.

Within the design of the redevelopment, what we've really looked at doing is trying to make it meet the needs of now but to have the flexibility so that in the future, when we're all pushing up daisies, they will still be viable learning spaces for students. We're also very much aware that the nature of learning is changing and is becoming much more inclusive of either end of the spectrum - from early childhood right through to that life-long learning view - and with the capacity to make those rooms suitable for both very young children and older children without locking in and saying, 'That's an early childhood block' or 'That's a grade 6 classroom'. We really have been looking at the requirements that we need and looking to and addressing issues of information and communication technology with the capacity for how we might be able to build in for future requirements, whether it's having conduits that are empty, but that there are spaces there so that it becomes cost-effective when we need to adjust on the way through.

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It's a very interesting community to come into. Riverside ranks well above State average in terms of any literacy and numeracy testing that is done. The fact that they're able to perform so well at a State level in the conditions that they're working under, which are not conducive to current practice - and I was talking to Rene earlier on in relation to looking at the value-added nature of the educational program that we provide for these kids who come to us with a really solid background - I think is probably going to be one of the greatest opportunities as a community that we have to be able to address through the construction of the program.

**Mr KONS** - Jan, just a suggestion with the kids going through a process of rebuilding the school, would you use that building process as part of their educational programs, to tell them how a building gets built?

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Absolutely. There has been a lot of involvement with students - we haven't actually any students on the committee that meets every week, but the SRC have been heavily involved in canvassing and talking to other students about what they see as being important in a learning environment for them. All the way through there have been conversations with kids about 'This is where we're up to, this is what we're doing this for'. The visit to Forth that we went on where we took a lot of photos, the SRC have that as the top item on their agenda for next week. We have tried to make it an inclusive process all the way through, so in terms of twelve months of building there will certainly be a fair bit of class work that will be based around that, and sensibly so. It is on site.

**Mr KONS** - So it will be a good opportunity where you can get your architects to come in and talk to the kids, builders, career paths for them as well.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Absolutely. Pathways, yes, very much so.

**Mr KONS** - Okay, that's great.

**CHAIRMAN** - The covered walkways will be a big advantage. It must be very difficult at the moment on the few occasions when we have inclement weather.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Yes.

**CHAIRMAN** - I notice on the plans for the new section on the northern end that there is a gap between the buildings on the eastern side and the building on the western side. Is that going to be a problem, or is it feasible to have that covered? You see the section that I mean?

**Mr LEWIS** - The original plan - it's probably easier if we put this one up.

**CHAIRMAN** - We will probably, if you like, deal with it after your evidence. I just wanted to ask the principal about the practicality of that and what practical problems there might be from the point of view of being head of the school.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - There will be some issues there for us. One of the things we have had to face is a shrinking budget and to try to maximise and work out where we can best fit the allocated finance. Obviously it would be an absolute advantage to have that connection made there.

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**CHAIRMAN** - Can you see any practical difficulties, not financial, in having that connection made?

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - I would have to go to the architects in terms of the site because there is a fairly significant slope there.

**CHAIRMAN** - Alright. We will deal with that aspect later, but you would find it helpful to have that covered so there is a continuity of the covered area, I imagine.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Absolutely. Yes.

**CHAIRMAN** - Thank you. We will deal with that later on then.

**Mr GREEN** - The middle school agenda that you were thinking about, how does this development assist you in that process?

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - What we are looking at, if you look at where Stage 3 is, there are three classrooms that are situated at one level there. What we are looking at doing is having the capacity to open those three learning areas together so that we have a capacity to run three classes with a number of teachers. Also, you will notice, the high school is over there, there is a clear access path there, so in looking at how we might construct some of the curriculum for that particular area we have looked at building that into the process there.

**CHAIRMAN** - We discussed this on site but I think it would be good to have it on the record, the problems that the school faces with the small staff room, insufficient seating to accommodate all staff and the importance of having that extension made. Would you like to comment on that?

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Yes. From my perspective in terms of providing educational leadership and management within the school, it is critical that we have a space that is conducive to the planning and preparation of the educational program. In terms of an inclusive and consultative approach, which we follow, it is quite common that we would need enough space for at least 40 people at any given time. We also utilise that meeting space for our school association meetings, and we don't have the capacity in there to use whiteboard displays for presentations when we have people who come in to work in the school. It is also an issue for the ancillary staff who need to be able to also have meetings with the executive officer. At the moment there is nowhere we can really go to do that. There is also an issue in relation to access to that staff room, which is a problem where you have 40 people moving in and out of the doorway where you have hot drinks, you have a sink, people trying to get into their mailbox. It is a fairly frustrating time and it is quite a bottleneck there at some fairly key times during the day.

**Mr HIDDING** - On that question, for the record, I have grave concerns about a project of this dimension that seems to have given away, for the sake of student development, which is noble but I am not sure whether it is wise, an opportunity to provide decent staff-room facilities. There is an increase in size but do you believe that increase in size in the grey part on the master plan, while it is better, is a degree of tokenism? It seems to me that while we are spending \$1.67 million, right under our noses there is a quite bad

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issue there as far as staff and management facilities of the school are concerned. Is it going to be good enough as it is currently proposed?

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - The short answer to that, Rene, would be yes. I am fairly confident that will be more than adequate to cover our needs because with the redevelopment it has increased some office space. Up until now no teachers have had office space at all and under this proposed redevelopment all teachers will have their own office space, so they will have the capacity to use that for some of the things that we are currently having to use the general staff room for.

**Mr HIDDING** - So where's this new office space? I can only see two in page 2.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Yes, but if you actually look at the general learning areas, in each of those there are office spaces designated for each teacher. We have looked at having some shared offices to provide some increased space as well.

**CHAIRMAN** - But that development involved in the extension of the staff room is subject to adequate finance being available. But it would seem, and Mr Hidding has made the point, that it is really crucial that this happens.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - I think it is, but this was a decision that was made by the full project committee which has parents involved on it as well and, while we spoke fairly passionately about the need for staff, the general feeling - and I think Steve would support that - was that the learning areas are premium in relation to the size of the classes we have. We are running class sizes between 25 and 28, and I think the committee felt it would be very difficult to justify having a large staff room when the actual teaching conditions and learning conditions were less than satisfactory.

**Mr HIDDING** - But that justification comment only comes about because of a shrinking budget.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Yes.

**Mr HIDDING** - So tell me about the shrinking budget. What's behind that?

**Mr CATLIN** - It is not a matter of shrinking. It's a matter of stretching it far enough, I guess. The fact is it is costing us roughly about \$120 000 per classroom around that new development, or thereabouts, so the money is burned up into that component of it.

**Mr HIDDING** - Sorry, just remind me of the process. The Government just doesn't throw an amount of money at the school based on per capita. It is on a needs basis, isn't it? I mean, somebody somewhere have put up their hand and said, 'We need \$1.67 million'.

**Mr CATLIN** - Yes, they base it on a PIP program where there was an initial plan done and it was done cost but the lag factor between that PIP and the time you get around to doing it there is always a loss in it, simply because the money does not go as far three or four years later. That is always an issue for us.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, which I find very frustrating and because of that projects get completed underdone because of that bureaucratic process of somebody pricing something, not

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being able to foresee how long it is going to take and express it in today's dollars. We consistently are approving projects that, but for the sake of a couple of thousands of dollars extra, would be a complete project. I am not sure whether the Government is being asked or is consciously being as penny pinching as it is made out to be. I don't think anybody has ever said, 'We refuse to give any more money to Riverside Primary project'. It is just that \$1.67 million was put up in the first place and that's what has been approved. Has there been any discussions with the department of saying, 'We've had to go to our overall project committee and they have had to make a very tough decision to cut down on management space simply because we are' - how much are we short, \$100 000?

**Mr GREEN** - That's a bit premature though, isn't it, given that they need to get the tenders in?

**Mr CATLIN** - That's the difficulty because there may not be a shortfall when the tenders come in. Our evidence shows that the tenders have been coming in fairly sharp so we are fairly confident we will get that staff room. It is always hanging over our head until that last minute.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes, except that if you had \$1.87 million now - that's my question - where would that other \$200 000 go? Would you do a bit better than this that is proposed? I mean, you have designed this small extension to the classroom based on a budget constraint.

**Mr CATLIN** - In fact we would probably not do much more than a staff room at all. Jan is right, we have made up an area that will deal with those 40 people. We have built in storage and staff rooms into the classrooms deliberately to meet the needs of teachers where they spend the bulk of their time, where they do their marking, their preparation and so on. We have built in a provision that they can collaborate in every way and the staff room then becomes a minor proposition in terms of the actual collaborative planning that happens there right now. So we think we have overcome it in the class room - well, not think, we know we have overcome it in the class room organisation.

**Mr HARRISS** - Mr Chairman, can I pick up on this and follow that thread a little bit further. My reading of the documentation is that you are going to have these extended gable roofs out over the entrances but you are missing out on the covered ways. The covered ways at this stage, as we see the project, will not be built and the Chairman has indicated that that is a very important component of the job and he referred to it earlier so there is another part which at this stage is not going to be included in the project.

I hear what has been said by Mr Catlin about the tenders coming in but on site I discussed with Rob, I think, about the potential foundation problems on this site. There is already settlement because of foundation problems in buildings existing on the site. Given that, it is highly likely that when the excavations are undertaken to provide the foundations for the new building, we will find the cost blowing out will be a fairly reasonable guess, or a fairly reasonable expectation even. So we not only talk about the staff room extension being deleted from this project, we are talking about the covered ways being deleted from the project as it currently is coming in on costing. I raise formally that matter of the likely foundation problems and potential, if not likely, extra costs.



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**Mr van der ELST** - There are contingencies built into the existing allowances that have been made to take care of that. There is a structural contingency involved to pay for extra footings and so forth in anticipation of things that we don't know about as yet in the footings that I mentioned this morning. This is but one example. As the design takes on more concrete form as we start documenting it, there will be issues that arise that we need to cost. In the contingency, in the estimating of it, those things are in fact taken into consideration so we don't see us blowing the budget on those sorts of issues. Would you agree with that, John?

**Mr LEWIS** - Yes.

**Mr HARRISS** - Am I right then in looking at appendix 2, the allowance for construction contingencies is only \$40 000? Is that the contingency for the construction process?

**Mr LEWIS** - There is also a design contingency.

**Mr HARRISS** - Yes, so the total contingency is \$85 000?

**Mr LEWIS** - Correct.

**CHAIRMAN** - I think we're moving from the principal's evidence now, so before going into any more detail about the plan that's in order, if we could hear from the architectural group. Mr Lewis, if you would like to do that presentation and then we will have further questions.

**Mr LEWIS** - I think we have all seen the site and we have all seen the existing accommodations so I wouldn't think that I was going to spend too much time talking about the existing buildings. What I propose is to just briefly run through the overall plan and then Rob may tell us in more detail about the class room layout. We have discussed, and it is in the report, we have demolished that building which is four classrooms, two terrapins, three, four terrapins and another permanent building which is the existing class rooms. The new class rooms are proposed to be in basically three blocks with block A housing just the four class rooms, block B which is three class rooms and toilet facilities and block C which is four new class rooms extending on the end of the existing relatively new class room plus the toilet facilities and offices.

It is proposed in this configuration to provide an open courtyard which becomes a centre focus for the whole-of-school activities. Also in that configuration, it blocks out the prevailing northerlies and north-westerly winds so this becomes a sheltered lunch-time and play area for the children. This master plan also indicates some minor refurbishment works to the existing four classrooms and some minor works in the prep, which we did see.

The proposed new resource area, extensions to the staff room and a new office area was also ... The type of construction is following on generally in context with what's on the site with the buildings that were replaced in the fire other than the area above the base brown brick plinth is proposed to be in brick veneer as well so we are reducing maintenance costs and fire hazards in light of recent occurrences with Education department buildings.

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The covered ways are shown on these drawings - if I go back to this one then, your question earlier, Mr Wing, about the links between the covered ways - the original proposal was to have covered ways starting at the door to the girls toilet there which linked right back down through to these buildings and then came off this one at that point. That is still proposed in the future element that could be done at some later date, but the buildings are set up so there is that straight-line access through so it is relatively easy to do in the future when funds become available. Creating a link between these two buildings is somewhat difficult -

**CHAIRMAN** - For the purpose of Hansard, that's the one on the western side and the main new one to the north-east probably.

**Mr LEWIS** - because there is roughly a two-metre difference in floor level between those two buildings to get them to sit properly on the site. So while it is possible, it would be somewhat difficult to get a link between those two at this stage, and I think it would be better because when you get to the southern end of that building you're back almost on grade and so that link could then occur around that way.

**CHAIRMAN** - When the new north-south covered way is eventually constructed.

**Mr LEWIS** - That is correct.

**CHAIRMAN** - When is it anticipated that might occur?

**Mr LEWIS** - There are a couple of ways that it could happen. It could happen as a school project, or it could be done as a future minor works project.

**CHAIRMAN** - It is quite an important matter, I think, that the children be able to move from class room to class room under cover in wet weather because it is a health factor apart from anything else, I think, if they have to move in wet conditions.

**Mr GREEN** - The access between the buildings there, why are you providing that access?

**Mr LEWIS** - That's a major pedestrian route from the high school through to the primary school. If you look on this larger plan, the main footpath runs through there and connects to the high school campus, so rather than close that off there and force them to go around through the oval we've maintained that access through. It seems to be a very popular route for children from both schools to go through.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - There's also an underpass under the West Tamar Highway which runs through about there, and that is a public thoroughfare as well. So while we get a lot of students we also on occasions get other people who are using that facility, and certainly of a weekend. One of the issues for us is to limit the amount of scope for vandalism -

**Mr GREEN** - That's the point I was leading up to.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - and we find by having that set-up and having it open- you could probably, Steve, talk more about the vandalism than I could - it is certainly less than a lot of other schools I have been in.

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**Mr YOUNG** - We have good lighting through the school there, and vandalism at night-time has been kept down to fairly minimal damage. Also I think because the amount of public who do through there, and we are talking adult public, they do in their own right keep an eye on the school and the activities, and that path is close to houses. I think that if we started redirecting people around the back of the school that is where we could have a lot of problems.

**Mr GREEN** - Fair enough.

**CHAIRMAN** - So that gap when the walkways are constructed as proposed in this present project, funds as being available, is it not possible, notwithstanding the difference in the levels and the grading there, to have some form of cover, even canvas?

**Mr LEWIS** - It is, yes. Certainly something could be done, but I think it would be better if it wasn't part of the main covered-way construction. Your idea of a canvas awning type thing would be -

**CHAIRMAN** - Yes, could that be looked at?

**Mr LEWIS** - Yes.

**CHAIRMAN** - I think it is important to have the continuity there. If we now pursue the aspect that Mr Harriss raised before about when or if there can be some guarantee that the covered ways will be included in the project. Would you like to pursue that, Mr Harriss?

**Mr HARRISS** - Yes, I guess the question stands, Mr Chairman, as to that part of the project, and then what the costing would be for the provision of those covered ways. There are no costings provided in the documentation because clearly it is shown as a deleted item at this stage.

**Mr LEWIS** - Yes.

**Mr HARRISS** - Is there an indicative cost of the construction of those covered ways?

**Mr LEWIS** - The covered ways attached to the buildings were in the order of \$50 000. It is quite a reasonable sum of money given the situation we find ourselves in.

**Mr HARRISS** - And what about the isolated covered ways?

**Mr van der ELST** - The free-standing ones and the one in front of the girls' toilet that John mentioned earlier on.

**Mr HARRISS** - Yes. Is there an indicative cost of that?

**Mr LEWIS** - It is a similar figure, something slightly more, I would think. \$60 000 is the figure that comes to mind.

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**CHAIRMAN** - So if those covered ways are not constructed the children in wet conditions will have to leave the class rooms and go straight out into the elements, no protection from the weather.

**Mr van der ELST** - If we had no covered ways that are actually on the class rooms themselves, yes, there will just be some cover over the doorways.

**CHAIRMAN** - I would have thought there is a health and safety factor involved here. If any of the children happen to develop pneumonia, I would have thought their parents may well have an action in negligence against the department. It is an unusual situation where new buildings are being constructed with no protection for the children from the weather, notwithstanding the type of weather, once they leave the class rooms. I mean, they have to go out into the open. I would have thought there is a risk of a damages claim. It is as serious as that for the sake of \$50 000. What is the procedure, if necessary, to seek extra funding? We're not talking about a large amount of money.

**Mr CATLIN** - Okay, if I could answer that, the procedure at this stage for us in this case would be to apply for a minor works grant through the district procedure, and then we would have to wait for that to come up as a go-ahead, an agreement from that area. There are a number of schools that fall into this same category throughout the State where they don't have covered ways around their individual buildings, and it is a dilemma, but fortunately at this stage wet weather procedures in schools are such that schools manage. They tend not to send their kids out of class. Teachers stay on duty in there, so they tend not to leave the rooms. I think you would be able to speak to that, Jan, a little bit more. The procedure is they usually supervise in class, so it doesn't sound as bad as it could be.

**Mr HIDDING** - No, it doesn't, but from the general public's point of view they are delighted we are spending all this money on the Riverside Primary School and they see all these wonderful things, and they say, 'But aren't the kids going to get wet?' 'Yes, we were short of \$50 000'. And they know we are going to spend \$50 million on the new prison, for goodness' sake. It is a question of just common sense from the general public's point of view that there's no question that the money is actually available; it's just not available to this project at this point. I think that the project committee has been asked to make Pontius Pilot kind of decisions, to say you've got to make something go away and you've made walkways go away because you can't make a class room go away - it's integral to the process.

**CHAIRMAN** - Certainly you need to spend money on a prison, there's no doubt about that, but there's also a very great need to have the covered walkways. The other schools that don't have them, that's a disadvantage, but we're not considering a development - and this is a totally new development - and in my view it's not complete without covered walkways because, while there may be weather management procedures, the children have to go out presumably at recess time and at lunch time and if it's pouring with rain then it's not in the interests of protecting their health. I mean, we have the rules about wearing hats and caps and then we plan a development which sends the children out into bad weather conditions without the slightest protection to enable them to get from one part of the school to another.

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So the ones who are using these class rooms will be at a distinct disadvantage from that point of view compared with the children who are using class rooms with enclosed passages. I don't find that acceptable, personally, and I doubt if the community would. You've said what the procedure is. In planning it surely is that not regarded as an essential feature?

**Mr CATLIN** - We certainly considered it at the initial stage that it was essential but when it comes down to making decisions about your priorities and, as someone has already said, class rooms become the highest priority and we've got to make hardball decisions. Our only avenue now is to go to the department and say we'd like a minor works following this one up.

**CHAIRMAN** - I don't understand why that didn't happen months ago once it seemed that this would need to be deleted.

**Mr CATLIN** - We can't move until we get our prices fixed and everything's in place at this stage that's really our locking device now because we wouldn't be knowing what we're asking for in dollars and cents, and I think we need to know that. We are really in the laps of this decision-making body here and then the tender process if it goes ahead.

**CHAIRMAN** - So, just remind, without looking back in the pages, when is it proposed that this section of the development will be completed?

**Mr LEWIS** - October 2002.

**CHAIRMAN** - So you have quite a few months to seek that extra \$50 000?

**Mr CATLIN** - Yes, we have. It would certainly be our aim to do just that.

**CHAIRMAN** - Is there an alternative to re-include this in the program and take the necessary funding from the allocation for furniture and apply under the small projects funding for furniture or is that only for construction?

**Mr CATLIN** - No, that's up to the school to make that decision in totality. They can certainly do that process and they have that totally in their control.

**Mr KONS** - I've just got a bit of the problem with the issue that someone mentioned about the fault line through there and the pricing of a project like this, bearing in mind that there is a little bit of concern about the ground's stability there, to you do a geo-technical survey of the area beforehand so the variations don't blow out?

**Mr van der ELST** - That has already been done.

**Mr LEWIS** - Actually the area of the proposed building seems to be the best part of the site. The bad area is pretty well limited to where the kindergarten is.

**Mr KONS** - So in essence there shouldn't be too many variations.

**Mr van der ELST** - No, we're told by our structural consultants that they are aware of the situation. There may be a few spots that are a bit shaky in terms of the quality of the

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foundation material that we find, and hence my comment to Peter this morning. There is an allowance in there to allow some piers to go in, but basically the geo-technical report mentions that they do not anticipate any major problems.

**Mr HARRISS** - I understand the desire to build buildings which are low maintenance, this being of brick construction, it raises the question as to why we wouldn't build the new buildings out of timber, which then become much more flexible in case there is some foundation problem either in the construction stage or down the track. The buildings become much more flexible if in timber and then I understand the maintenance difficulty down the track, has that been a consideration of the project team?

**Mr van der ELST** - Not from a structural point of view. I guess where we've come from with the nature of the construction is twofold: one is the flammability of the materials given recent events in the State and, secondly, is the maintenance of painting and keeping those sort of services good.

In terms of the cost comparison - and that rather surprised us a little bit - there's not really that much of a difference in cost between brick veneer and a timber building that has lining on it, some sort of external lining. The cost differential is quite negligible.

**Mr HIDDING** - I have a question which follows on from that about the proposed look of the buildings. I know they're going to be brick - and this gets a little bit architectural integrity I suppose and we could argue about that all day - I haven't been on site there for probably fifteen years or something or twenty years since my children went to kindergarten there but the new building that we walked into, the first building that we walked into, I think is an ugly building. Somebody's decided to use a monochrome looking brick colour there, it doesn't work in its context, and then you look at the other buildings and they're a bit of a hodgepodge of this and that and then you see the new building that was built after the fire and that is, I have to say, a pretty building. It tends to stand out from the others because it has brick up to the halfway height and then bullnose weatherboard and it looks really nice.

Then when we look at the drawings here - and the drawings have been around for some time - one would imagine that's how these new buildings are going to look. It seems to me that whoever designed the current building, the pretty building, was looking to find some context from all the other buildings so therefore it's gone for a composite construction look with brick halfway and weatherboard the rest and now, because weatherboard burns, we're going for what could quaintly be called a pseudo composition look. You're going for a composite look but it's actually all brick and so the whole design's turning back on itself. Why can't we design something that looks good in brick. A pseudo composite seems to me to be just a box full of ideas and I'm not at all convinced that the end look is going to be that flash using a light coloured brick above a red coloured brick just because it looked good with the timber in the composite thing. I'd be interested in your comments on that.

**Mr van der ELST** - There's no question that's the rationale that's behind it but perhaps John would like to -

**Mr LEWIS** - You go.

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**Mr van der ELST** - You're quite right about the building that was constructed after the fire setting the tone for the rest of the building and I think initially that's where we were coming from. Taking the fact of the two issues that I've raised, the flammability and maintenance, that's really the best thing that we could come up with in terms of holding on to the basic look and, as far as designing in brickwork is concerned, actually creating some sort of a banding situation is not going to affect the integrity of the brickwork as such. That is basically the rationale that we're using for it.

**Mr HIDDING** - If you can't match the pretty building that is there now, why wouldn't you consider a very contemporary look building? You can't match it any case, so why wouldn't you do a counterpoint and go for a very contemporary, glass-metal, very smart-looking, brand-new style look?

**Mr van der ELST** - Well, okay, that certainly would have been an option for us, but keep in mind that the materials that are used in the building that you've mentioned, the issue of weatherboard is only one issue; the rest are the proportions of the building, the nature of the roofing and so forth and what we decided to hold onto. Once we made that decision, one thing more or less leads on to another and that created the banding situation with the brickwork. And then you say, 'Okay, that's where we're headed to. What can we do to break up the brickwork so it's not just the same colour all the way through, because that will look rather bland'.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - And there was a strong feeling amongst the community that we would like to try to maintain the integrity of the design, to try to keep it as much like that new building as possible.

**Mr HIDDING** - I have to tell you, I have grave doubts as to whether it's going to work and when it's all over they'll stand there and look it and say, 'Well, that was a pretty building and we seem to have lost it in the translation because we've gone to all-brick and we've tried to make something look like something that wasn't an amalgamation of everything else'. I commented when I walked on site that that bullnose weatherboard looked really nice, but then when I heard post-Reece High School - and I understand you have a different circumstance to work with and a differing set of issues - I wonder if you didn't give this to a room full of architects who come from different perspectives, you wouldn't come up with some different ideas.

**Mr LEWIS** - In the consultative processes, we have looked at various materials and talked in depth about it and there's been a strong direction from the school community, I think, to go the way that we are going. The other problem is that there is an existing class room which we're extending on to which is constructed out of weatherboard and red brick so if, all of a sudden, we start off with a totally contemporary building, it is going to look a little bit out of place.

**Mr HIDDING** - But that's hardly a challenge using glass or whatever. Those things are overcome every day in an architectural sense, aren't they? But if you are saying that the strong drive for the current proposal came from the school community, well that's one thing, but does the school community understand that the rules have changed and it is not going to look like the way they thought it was going to look; it's actually going to be a brick building purporting to look like this other building? Are they aware of that?

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**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - It's my understanding that they are, Rene. I was away for the bulk of the consultation process and Steve has been there through the whole issue and he might like to comment on that.

**Mr HIDDING** - Do you think they really understand that it isn't going to look like the weatherboard building?

**Mr YOUNG** - Yes, I think so, Rene, but I also think they realise that the architects have laid out the plan which is very similar to what is existing, and they understand because of the fire at Reece, that they're not going to get exactly the same as what is already there. I think this fire issue is a really big issue in the community because we've lost class rooms before and we don't want it to happen again, so if brick is going to be the safest option, then that's the way it'll be. But it's been laid out and the architects have drawn it so that it is compatible with the existing four new rooms.

**CHAIRMAN** - I'm not opposed to the use of brick, but this discussions just reminds me of a comment that Mr Brendan Lyons made in the aftermath of the Hobart bushfires in the 1960s when he was then chief executive of the Tasmanian Timber Association. He was pointing out that weatherboard homes were less affected by the bushfires than brick ones. He said that the greatest damage to weatherboard homes during those bushfires was being hit by bricks flying from brick buildings exploding.

*Laughter.*

**Mr HIDDING** - There is no question in my mind of the policy of reducing the flammability - you couldn't do anything else after Reece High School; you've got to do it. But I think that has inserted a major change into something that the school community has proposed and I'm not sure if they understand that now they basically going to get bricks, and not a composite.

**Mr GREEN** - That bottom building looks okay, though - the new class room down the bottom.

**Mr YOUNG** - Which one?

**Mr HIDDING** - The little one?

**Mr GREEN** - Yes.

**CHAIRMAN** - With the temporary wall?

**Mr GREEN** - It's sort of 'in the eye of the beholder', but I thought that looked quite good.

**Mr YOUNG** - I think, too, that costing does come into the maintenance side of it - we've looked at that. To have contractors coming in every ten years or so to repaint and patch up the timber is an ongoing cost to the school.

**Mr HIDDING** - I'm not arguing with timber. For the record, what I'm saying is that if the community now were to understand at the very first point that they couldn't use timber at



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all, would they have plumped for something that is pseudo-composite and I'm not sure whether that would.

**CHAIRMAN** - Mr Young, I think you hadn't quite finished?

**Mr YOUNG** - Alongside the maintenance thing, I think that whatever happens, if you take the brickwork out of it, it is going to be just an ongoing cost to the school which is, if you want to look at it, cover ways over a period of time or other developments that we can put back into our grounds, our gardens, IT, or other parts of the school. If we can eliminate maintenance and keep with the brickwork that our architects have done, I think it is going to be good for the long-term costing of the school.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - What I wanted to add to that was that there has been a very strong feeling from the whole community about this notion of a school being a village. That has been developed well before my time and the view of being able to have a set of buildings that are going to match, I think - it was a shock to everyone to find that having got to this stage when the original planning had been done after the fire, that we weren't going to be able to use weatherboard was certainly a shock and there were a lot of questions asked. I pushed the issue as hard as I could with the department but, understandably, after the Reece incident, that wasn't going to happen.

Looking at the integrity of the design, Rene, there was never any suggestion that we should do anything other than try to get something that looked as though it was going to fit with what we had. The view of constructing something with a lot of steel and glass was never something, I think, that was countenanced by anybody.

**CHAIRMAN** - Any further questions on this or allied subjects?

**Mr KONS** - One of my concerns, Lyell, is we spoke about the non-existence of balustrading around those rooms there, which I think is probably one of the most serious things.

**Mr CATLIN** - That has already been flagged to the department, that it is a major work that needs doing - not a major work in this sense, but a work that needs doing - and that's already come up with the department on one of our visits. We have flagged it already and it is up for a job to be done so it is in the pipeline, I suppose you would say. You are quite right, it is an issue, particularly on the higher end, even though it meets all the safety standards, it is still dangerous to a lot of people so it is to be done.

**Mr HIDDING** - Does the resulting courtyard area - does the project allow for any works in that at all or is it just basically making good?

**Mr LEWIS** - Basically making good at this stage.

**Mr HIDDING** - And then, to the principal, where do you have school assemblies now?

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - We have it in the large general purpose room, which is up where we came in the main entrance.

**Mr HIDDING** - Can you fit them in there?

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**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Very squashy.

**Mr HIDDING** - So on a reasonable day like today if you had had an eleven o'clock general assembly and what have you, that would be a nice area to have it.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Absolutely.

**Mr HIDDING** - You wouldn't want that cluttered with plants and play furniture and things like that, you would want to retain a general gathering area, wouldn't you, for a school?

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Yes, the planning of how that might look is still left fairly much in abeyance at this stage in terms of looking at - with the early childhood part of the school at the moment, there is not a lot of play area for them. You would have noticed as we were walking in then, so that is a bit of an issue in terms of having some areas for play and also some passive areas. The view of the committee when they were looking at that court yard were looking at it as having a capacity to be outside learning areas as well.

**Mr HIDDING** - Well, that is what I was going to raise. While we are under construction having machines in there, could I just ask what would be the fall across the lateral there?

**Mr van der ELST** - It is about three metres.

**Mr LEWIS** - Three metres from the existing building, the one which you describe is the pretty one and the one down the bottom.

**Mr HIDDING** - Well, with a three metre fall, I would have thought with machines on site, you could at least do the preliminary work for a natural amphitheatre, to have an area where you could actually have all the children around there rather than just sitting flat on an area and being able to address them all, and good for outside plays and things like that - the small amphitheatre thing. Terrific for outdoor learning, especially for outdoor productions or drama and what have you. I just wonder whether there would be any capacity to do any preliminary site work there which the school community could develop it later.

**Mr van der ELST** - Well, certainly the way that the natural contour of the site runs it will certainly be level by the time we take all the buildings out that are there - it is going to look pretty awful and there is an allowance to level all that out so, as you say, basically create an amphitheatre up to the north-west corner.

**Mr HIDDING** - Is possible?

**Mr van der ELST** - Is possible.

**Mr HIDDING** - Getting machines in there later to do it, they will say you will disturb the foundations. It seems to me that if you were able to shape it now, use it as a play area and over the next five years or so you might have working bees or whatever -

**Mr van der ELST** - To create all the various infrastructure.

**Mr HIDDING** - Yes.

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**Mr van der ELST** - But certainly as far as the contouring there and the seating of that area is concerned, that will happen during the project. You are quite right, we certainly don't want to get the equipment in there again.

**Mr LEWIS** - You also may have noticed an area of brick paving which is adjacent to the existing playground. Within the contract we are getting a contractor to lift that paving and stack it for re-use by the school and they could use it in that area. There is quite a substantial area of pavers there.

**Mr HIDDING** - Well, could I flag that I would be interested in watching the development of this project and just how we can prepare it for future use.

**CHAIRMAN** - Mr van der Elst, did you want to give any further evidence additional to Mr Lewis'?

**Mr van der ELST** - Yes, I can take you for a quick walk through the typical class room arrangements as they stand. The existing class room as it stands basically has a wet area, a small office area and a bag area. Those three elements are repeated in all of the classrooms in various forms and in some cases we have a shared office. We are also exploring the possibility of a sliding partition between class rooms, as Jan has already mentioned, to create situations where you can open two class rooms or sometimes even three class rooms into one overall space. That is happening here and possibly here as well once we get down to a little bit more detail. There is a limit to how far we can go with that of course because the buildings are stepped, say, in the case of the bottom three learning areas we can only actually share those two because we need to come down - the site demands that we come down another half metre to hold the contours.

Another reason for following those contours of course is to get ramps into those areas so that we don't end up with huge, high platforms which present problems of their own, so that the spacing of the classrooms pretty much takes that into account. For the four that we have here, there will need to be a platform because the actual site runs away from there so we are starting off at a lower point here where you can get into it at ground level and then there will be a platform that will be constructed here with steps going down and initially we had a covered walkway that actually stepped down with that course.

Again with the four class rooms at the moment, each two class rooms has the capacity to open up to create one large area and again the shared-office arrangements. One of the things we are exploring at the moment is to rearrange the wet area somewhat so that all the rooms aren't absolutely identical to create a bit of variation within the rooms but that is something that we are still working on in a bit more detail but in essence each one of the rooms will have the elements in there.

Beyond the general learning areas we have a boys toilet block which incorporates an access toilet for disabled people and a girls block with also a ... element. one of the reasons why we don't have mixed boys and girls is because we would have to have two lots of air locks and we are very conscious of trying to save as much money in the project as we can, that is why we have broken it up into two sections. One section here and one section there and they also incorporate staff toilets. That is about all I can tell

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you as far as the internal planning of it is concerned at this stage unless you have any further questions.

**Mr GREEN** - The IT stations that you talked about, how are you facilitating those?

**Mr van der ELST** - At the moment we are basically spreading them fairly widely through each class room. Rather than having a dedicated IT area we have five IT outlets in each room and they are spread evenly throughout the room.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - We are also looking at the capacity whether or not it is feasible to have some of those recessed into the floor so that you don't have to have your computers always against the walls. That is an issue that we are exploring. It gives us a bit more flexibility.

**Mr GREEN** - Are there other examples of that that you are aware of.

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - We actually did it when we refurbished a principal's residence for a year 11 and 12 program at St Helens. We were able to have little trap doors with things in so you could actually plug them in flat and that really did give us quite a bit of flexibility.

**Mr CATLIN** - We are also investigating for Reece, which is a spin-off here, a wireless system - I haven't even had a chance to speak to Jan about that - so that may be quite feasible rather than in the floor stuff. We have been to a number of sites and investigated that and getting prices now, so that may be a feasibility of this site also.

**Mr GREEN** - It won't make much difference, I suppose, with the radio technology but five is the future?

**Ms KUZNIARSKI** - Well, it is as much of the future as we can predict. If you have five computers and you are looking at 25 kids, that is a ratio of one to five, which is about right. Who knows what is going to happen? There wireless technology means that we could have a number of different sorts of work stations.

**Mr GREEN** - That access past the offices there - the width of that - to me it looks quite narrow.

**Mr van der ELST** - It is about two metres.

**Mr LEWIS** - 2.1.

**Mr van der ELST** - 2.1 - and then it winds out to where the actual entries are and into that new class room block.

**Mr GREEN** - But there are exits via, I take it, adjacent to that wet area, there are exits -

**Mr van der ELST** - You are talking about this area here, aren't you?

**Mr GREEN** - Yes.

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**Mr van der ELST** - There is a single door exit at each end so in terms of fire there is alternative means of egress from the building and we have immediate access into those two teachers' offices there.

**Mr GREEN** - Right.

**CHAIRMAN** - Thank you very much for the very helpful presentation and we will give consideration to that.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**