

Historic Alameda High School Frequently Asked Questions

On August 8, 2019, the Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony for Historic Alameda High School (HAHS) at 2200 Central Avenue. We are excited to celebrate the re-opening of this 100,000 square foot complex, which is a registered Historical Landmark. Please read the FAQs below to learn more about the history, scope, and details of the project.



What is the history of these buildings?

The Central Building (comprised of two wings of classrooms and the Kofman Auditorium building) was built in 1924 in the Neoclassical style. The Science Building (at Central Avenue and Oak Street), also designed as a Neoclassical structure, was added in 1934. The “West Wing” building (at Central Avenue and Walnut Street) was built in 1957.

Concerns about the earthquake safety of HAHS

date back to 1935, shortly after the state passed the Field Act, which mandates that school facilities be able to resist an earthquake. AUSD considered and then abandoned plans to either shore up or demolish the buildings repeatedly over the next four decades, and in 1978 much of the high school was moved to a new, safer building on Encinal Avenue. HAHS was subsequently used by the Alameda Adult School, the Alameda Free Library, and AUSD’s district office. But after [a 2012 report](#) found that the complex could collapse in the event of a major earthquake, the buildings were shuttered and fenced off.



The following year, the Board of Education conducted a series of meetings to gather community input on possible options for HAHS. Jeff Cambra and Alice Lai-Bitker, both community leaders and mediation specialists, managed the community engagement process. The [final report \(PDF\)](#) noted stakeholder “interest in seeing the buildings rehabilitated and returned to school use.”

Following the creation of a district-wide Facility Master Plan in 2014, voters approved the \$179.5 million Measure I facilities bond, which prioritized renovating both Alameda High School and Encinal High School (along with providing crucial upgrades to all other schools). Work began on HAHS in 2017.

What will the buildings be used for?

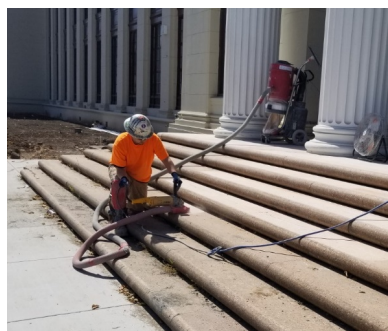
The buildings will once again be a part of Alameda High School and will provide the staff and students with 37 regular classrooms, 11 science labs, AHS administrative offices, upgraded and accessible toilet rooms, a faculty lounge, and a half dozen meeting rooms of various sizes. "The goal of the project was to restore and preserve the 1920s architecture while creating 21st century learning environments," says Mark Quattrocchi, who led the design team.



How much money was spent on this project?

The project cost about \$60 million. \$44 million of the funds came from the Measure I facilities bond that voters approved in 2014. The rest of the money came from state matching grants for seismic improvements, AUSD's deferred maintenance fund, and Proposition 39 allocations for energy efficiency improvements.

Who were the builders and designers?



AUSD's master architect, Quattrocchi Kwok Architects, designed the retrofit and restoration. Lathrop Construction Associates led the demolition and re-building. AUSD Senior Director of Construction Robbie Lyng and his staff oversaw and managed the project, including hiring the architect, structural engineer, and construction company, managing the state funding, and serving as the liaison between the construction team and the district.

Between 40 and 160 skilled laborers worked on the site per day, including carpenters, steel workers, electricians, plumbers, window restoration specialists, bronze metal workers, terrazzo restorers, painters, concrete specialists, and others. More than 600 workers were involved in the project altogether.

What exactly was done to the buildings?

A good portion of the work focused on seismic retrofits. The 2012 report had found the buildings were at significant risk of collapse in the event of an earthquake, due to a) the sandy, liquefiable soil on the site and b) structural issues with the buildings including weak concrete and poor structural connections. To stabilize (or "densify") the soil, engineers injected grout in 6,000 drilled holes under and around the buildings. (This took 1200 cubic yards of the grout – enough to fill a classroom that is 34 feet tall!). They also drilled helical piles (which look like corkscrews) 30 feet into the ground to anchor the structure to more stable soil.



To shore up the buildings, workers took off the roof and used a crane to place enormous steel braces along the walls on all three



floors; each of these braces, in turn, was bolted to new concrete foundations. These created a “building within a building” that will be able to better resist a strong earthquake. Steel piers are also now supplementing many of the original concrete columns in the building. Those columns had been built to withstand 1,000 pounds and less per square inch of force (the current standard is 3,000 pounds per square inch), and many had begun to crumble from age, making them even weaker than when they were constructed. In addition, “expansion joints” were positioned between the buildings so that they can independently move with the force of an earthquake without crashing into each other.

In total, workers removed from HAHS:

- 1200 tons of concrete (2.4 million pounds)
- 450 tons of wood (900,000 pounds)

Workers installed:

- 600 tons of steel (1.2 million pounds)
- 19 miles worth of conduit and wiring – the equivalent of running wire back and forth across Alameda more than three times
- 5 miles of copper and steel piping
- 1500 cubic yards of concrete

About 350 historic wood windows were renovated, along with 6000 panes of glass. As per an agreement with the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, the original wooden sills and sashes were also preserved. Laborers also repaired the columns, terrazzo stairs, and bronze and copper detailing outside the building, and the entire building was painted to match the original colors. New landscaping — including drought-tolerant plants, a line of trees to match others on Central Avenue, and a bioswale to help absorb storm water runoff — was also installed, along with an outdoor learning space and seating along the front of the building.



According to the contractors, between 1200 and 1500 donuts were purchased for all the construction meetings held during the project.

What was done to the interior?

The front lobby of the central building has been completely restored. After removing many interior walls and some floors, construction workers built classrooms that meet current size requirements and also both preserve the original trim and cabinetry and provide up-to-date technology, acoustic panels, and furniture. (The

project included its own millwork department, which repaired and restored the original trim and also built custom trim to match the original where needed.) The 11 new science classrooms include space for both teaching and laboratory work.

Skylights on the third floor corridors have also been restored and can now let in much-needed light. In addition, the buildings will benefit from new electrical, mechanical, and fire sprinkler systems and upgraded accessibility so that all of our stakeholders can enter and exit the building safely.

What happened to the time capsules in front of Kofman Auditorium?

The time capsules were dug up, cleaned, and then replaced. The plaques for each year were also restored; in fact QKA hired a signage specialist to recreate the font on the plaques that had been damaged. Room has also been made for future time capsules and plaques.



When will Kofman Auditorium open?

The theater likely won't open until sometime in 2020. This is because the building hasn't been used in nearly three years, and we want to be sure that all the theater rigging — as well as the lights, heating system, and fire alarms and sprinklers — are working properly.

What was done to the West Wing building?

The West Wing building was seismically retrofitted and modernized in 1994. The current project does not involve the West Wing

What about Encinal Jr. & Sr. High School? Is it being modernized as well?

Work began this summer on what will also be a radical transformation of the Encinal Jr. & Sr. High School. The \$42 million project will include:

- A new two-story, 12- classroom building with a maker space
- A complete redesign of the area in front of the school (including a relocation of the parking lot, removal of the old portables, and new landscaping)
- A new central student gathering area
- Outdoor learning spaces
- Complete modernization of the 200 wing (the primary front building), including new walls, windows, ceilings, restrooms, and floors
- Upgrades to critical infrastructure and safety/security systems (including fire alarms, the PA system, and door locks)



The Encinal project is expected to be completed in two to three years.