

## **Old Greenwich School Building Committee - Responses to First Selectman Questions**

June 29, 2023

- 1. First, I understand that two issues that are important to the OG parent community are keeping the kids from being bussed during construction, and keeping the facade of the building. I, too, think these are worth pursuing. I know when Cos Cob School was redone over 30 years ago, the outside remained fairly ( not exactly ) close to what it was prior to the fire while a new school was delivered. Am I correct about this?**

The building committee and preceding feasibility committee received consistent feedback that the community would like to avoid busing during construction and fixing, rather than replacing, the iconic building in the heart of Old Greenwich. The OGS Schematic Design incorporates that input, where OGS would be fixed (not replaced) and construction would be done in a phased manner, as is standard, which allows students to remain in their school.

When Cos Cob School was rebuilt, after the 1990 fire that devastated much of the building, Cos Cob students went to school at Parkway for three academic years (a hardship for parents and students), until the fall of 1993 when Cos Cob was reopened. Our understanding is that much of Cos Cob had to be brand new because of significant fire and smoke damage. OGS has no such damage.

- 2. Second, how much is the new school cost going to be (at this time) vs. what the renovation will cost (hearing close to \$50 million or more when all is factored in)? How much (roughly) more would a new school bring us over just a renovation in terms of years?**

The building committee and its project team estimate that a new construction Old Greenwich School would cost \$70-80 million vs. the \$42 million cost of the renovation as per the OGS Schematic Design estimates.

Based on significant diligence to date, no structural issues at OGS have been identified. The building committee believes the renovation will help give OGS another 100 years of life; ongoing maintenance would certainly be required, as with any public building (old or new), but the OGS structure has strong bones and has lasted longer than any other school building in Greenwich to this point.

The building committee's illustrative new construction estimate is attached, which includes input from our owner's representative, architect, and construction manager. The analysis uses standard building costs, contingency, and soft cost allowances. Key drivers of cost include:

- Maintaining the same academic program as current OGS, which would necessitate a building of 70,000-80,000 square feet (Cos Cob is 83,270 square feet, with expected fall 2023 enrollment of ~330 vs. OGS enrollment of 415).
- Preserving OGS's prominent location fronting Sound Beach Avenue, which makes it a key feature of Old Greenwich village. A new school would require demolition and removal of the existing building before building a new OGS on the existing school

footprint, and busing students to an alternate location for two (or more) academic years during construction. Some BET members have suggested building on the existing playing fields while keeping students in the existing school. This would represent a significant alteration of Old Greenwich village that would likely face significant opposition in the Municipal Improvement process; the building committee sees building the school even closer to wetlands as a challenging and perhaps more expensive proposition.

- Construction would start no earlier than January 2026 given the extensive planning required, during which time construction costs are expected to increase by 4-7% annually (or 10%-17.5% relative to current construction costs).
- Significant site work would be required to raise the entire OGS site as per FEMA regulations for new construction.
- Significant hazardous materials abatement of the current building would be required (during demolition) based on diligence the building committee has conducted.
- Significant cost to rent an alternate school location for 2 years during construction (we don't know if such a site even exists) and to transport students to that location.

There has been misinformation coming from BET members on the cost of a new school, with members floating that a 55,000-60,000 square foot building would be more appropriate. One BET member “did research” to decide on this square footage number but did not get any professional input as far as we know. We have asked for copies of this research but nothing has been provided to date. Important to note: ***a 55,000-60,000 square foot building would require a ~30% reduction in programming at OGS.*** It would make a new OGS one of the smallest school buildings in town for a school with the 3rd highest (and growing) enrollment. We have seen zero indications of support on the BOE or in the community for such a proposal.

There has been misinformation coming from the BET on the “true” cost of the OGS renovation, with members citing a “\$50 million” cost. The only item that is not being included in the renovation but will need to get done in the next 10 years is a replacement of certain roof sections. Down the road, additional millwork and windows could be replaced. Note that this is all standard maintenance which we need to do for all buildings, both old and new. Based on our diligence, we don't believe that the full roof replacement needs to happen today (that roof section was replaced in 2007) but we have included it as an alternate in our estimate, at an incremental cost of \$1.96 million. We also don't believe the windows must be replaced in the near term, but have included that as an alternate in our estimate, at an incremental cost of \$1.57 million.

Finally, it is worth noting that pivoting to a new construction school would cost the town significant additional time and money. It would require starting back at step 1, developing new EdSpecs, hiring a new project team, and going back through all approvals received to date. This would involve an increase in costs to the Town and is likely to receive significant opposition from the community and historic building advocates. Lastly, a new construction school would require ongoing maintenance, just as a renovation would.

**3. Third, is the renovation option without modern specs, not addressing coastal resiliency, and lacking energy efficiency?**

Those suggesting the OGS renovation will not have modern specs, address coastal resiliency and lacks energy efficiency likely have not read the design materials distributed to them, which are [posted on our website](#), or attended a building committee meeting (54 of them held to date) where we discuss these topics regularly.

The renovation will comply with FEMA and all Town of Greenwich zoning and coastal resiliency requirements. Our civil engineers, Langan, have surveyed and analyzed the site thoroughly to address the 100 year flood event or a 1 in 100 chance of a severe floor occurrence. They have raised the main entry plaza and the new addition to the elevation of 14 feet above sea level and addressed site drainage. The architects, Silver Petrucelli + Associates, have raised the “DIP” classrooms approximately 2 ft to an elevation equal to the existing lower floor to simultaneously address the sewage backup issue and ADA accessibility. Our team will speak to all of these features during the Municipal Improvement process.

The addition is required to comply with energy efficiency as specified by Connecticut’s [High Performance Building Standards](#). The Schematic Design report elaborates on the new HVAC system that will be installed throughout the entire building consisting of energy saving all electric heat pumps and backup efficient gas boilers as well as modern control systems and heat recovery systems. The hot water heaters will be replaced with a high efficiency system. Every effort will be made by the architects to achieve the highest possible degree of sustainability in all areas including building materials. For example, they will use Marmoleum sheet flooring versus Vinyl composite flooring.

The OGS EdSpecs were created by the Board of Education in 2020-2021 and unanimously approved in October 2021. Revisions to those EdSpecs were unanimously approved by both the building committee and the Board of Education on June 21, 2023. It is unfortunate that criticisms of the OGS EdSpecs are only arriving now, when the project is ready to go, rather than being brought up during the past 2-3 years that the EdSpecs have been in place.

The EdSpecs specifically call for an “alteration” project focused on addressing key deficiencies in the building: lack of ADA compliance, lack of a building-wide HVAC or sprinkler system, lack of a single secure entryway, replacing 4 classrooms lost to renovation requirements with a new 4 classroom addition, and addressing the sewage/flooding issue. The approved OGS Schematic Design is consistent with the EdSpecs and with FEMA guidance for such projects. The building envelope and windows are not being addressed in this project as they are not included in the EdSpecs.

There are two other types of major school building projects: “renovate as new” or “new construction”. After debate during the 2020-2021 Feasibility Study, the resulting OGS EdSpecs are neither of those, focusing instead on “must haves” to save on project costs. In a “renovate as new” project, all interior structures would be completely re-done, to include addressing the

building envelope and replacing almost everything inside the building. Based on comparable “renovate as new” examples in the State of Connecticut, such a project would likely cost as much as or more than a new construction school, but it would retain some of the historic features of the building.

Either a “renovate as new” or “new construction” project would likely require raising the entire structure/site as per FEMA guidelines. This will involve significant up front cost to do so.

Either a “renovate as new” or “new construction” project would absolutely result in even greater energy efficiency, but that would also require significant up front costs to address the building envelope, buy and install new windows, conduct additional abatement, and to install geothermal wells and PV solar arrays, etc.

The end result: **a “renovate as new” or “new construction” project would likely cost \$30-40 million more** than the proposed renovation as per the EdSpecs. Town leaders should note that the same will likely apply to other older town buildings that need future renovations such as Town Hall, the Havemeyer Building, the Senior Center, and Riverside School. If OGS is torn down, with the town absorbing an extra \$30-40 million for one project, one could easily envision a domino effect where the town absorbs significantly higher costs for all of them, which could crowd out the town’s ability to execute on its capital plan and retain a lower mill rate.

**Old Greenwich School Renovation - Illustrative New Construction Estimate**

Created by OGS Building Committee in June 2023

Below is an illustrative estimate of what a new construction school would cost if the Board of Education decided to replace the current Old Greenwich School with a new building. Members of the Old Greenwich community and historic building advocates have explicitly and publicly said they want Old Greenwich School to be fixed, not torn down, but this analysis focuses on the numbers based on consultation with the OGS Building Committee's construction manager at risk (Downes Construction Company) and owner's representative (Morganti Group) given their knowledge of the construction market and school projects in

**Assumptions**

Target Start Dates	
Abatement of Existing School	7/1/2025
Initial Site Work (Pre Demo)	7/1/2025
Demolition of Existing School	9/1/2025
Final Site Work (Post Demo)	11/1/2025
Construction Start Date	1/1/2026
Construction Finish Date	7/1/2027
Total Area of Site (square feet)	319,417

2023 CT Priority List - Elementary Schools (All 2023-2024 start)		
School	Budget	\$/Sq Ft
Norton Elementary - Cheshire	\$76,656,200	\$838
North End Elementary - Cheshire	89,942,900	818
Jeffrey Elementary - Madison	61,148,600	779
SoNo Elementary - Norwalk	76,000,000	880
Roxbury Elementary - Stamford	86,000,000	741
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$77,949,540</b>	<b>\$811</b>
Average adjusted to 2025/2026 start	7% annual escalation	929
Average adjusted to 2025/2026 start	4% annual escalation	877

	Start 7/1/2023	Start 7/1/2024	Start 7/1/2025	
Building and Direct Costs / Square Foot (New)	\$502	\$537	\$575	Includes 7% escalation annually
<i>(includes escalation, direct costs, excludes contingency)</i>				

**Cost Estimate**

Size of School (gsf)	65,000	70,000	75,000	80,000
Comparison School	Glenville	OGS Current		OGS Post-Reno
Projected 2023 Enrollment at Comparison	377	415		415
Pre-K sections at Comparison	0	2		2

Assumptions	
\$/Sq Foot or %	Square Feet

**Building and Sitework**

New Building (includes escalation, direct costs, excludes contingency)	\$37,375,000	\$40,250,000	\$43,125,000	\$46,000,000
Site Work - Excavation & Backfill, Foundations	2,093,000	2,254,000	2,415,000	2,576,000
Site Work - Site Improvements	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
<b>Subtotal Building and Sitework</b>	<b>\$42,468,000</b>	<b>\$45,504,000</b>	<b>\$48,540,000</b>	<b>\$51,576,000</b>
<i>Building and Sitework \$/Square Foot</i>	<i>\$653</i>	<i>\$650</i>	<i>\$647</i>	<i>\$645</i>

Significant site work to raise entire site per FEMA	\$575	
	32	72,500
	15	200,000
	\$622	272,500

**Demolition and Abatement**

Abatement of Existing School	3,240,000	3,240,000	3,240,000	3,240,000
Demolition of Existing School	1,224,000	1,224,000	1,224,000	1,224,000
<b>Subtotal Demolition and Abatement</b>	<b>\$4,464,000</b>	<b>\$4,464,000</b>	<b>\$4,464,000</b>	<b>\$4,464,000</b>
<i>Demolition and Abatement \$/Square Foot</i>	<i>\$62</i>	<i>\$62</i>	<i>\$62</i>	<i>\$62</i>

Significant abatement required based on diligence	45	72,000
	17	72,000

<b>Total Construction Cost Estimate</b>	<b>\$46,932,000</b>	<b>\$49,968,000</b>	<b>\$53,004,000</b>	<b>\$56,040,000</b>
<i>Total Construction Cost \$/Square Foot</i>	<i>\$722</i>	<i>\$714</i>	<i>\$707</i>	<i>\$701</i>

Contingency (Design + CM + Owners)	4,693,200	4,996,800	5,300,400	5,604,000
Soft Cost Allowance	8,125,000	8,750,000	9,375,000	10,000,000
<i>% of Hard Costs</i>	<i>17.3%</i>	<i>17.5%</i>	<i>17.7%</i>	<i>17.8%</i>

10.0%	Standard for new
125	OR and CM rec

<b>Total Project Cost Estimate</b>	<b>\$59,750,200</b>	<b>\$63,714,800</b>	<b>\$67,679,400</b>	<b>\$71,644,000</b>
<i>Total Project Cost \$/Square Foot</i>	<i>\$919</i>	<i>\$910</i>	<i>\$902</i>	<i>\$896</i>

Within range of 2023 Priority List + Escalation

**Other Required Costs**

Rent Alternate School Location for 2 years <sup>1</sup>	4,600,000	4,600,000	4,600,000	4,600,000
Transportation Cost for 2 years <sup>2</sup>	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
<b>Subtotal Other Required Costs</b>	<b>\$6,600,000</b>	<b>\$6,600,000</b>	<b>\$6,600,000</b>	<b>\$6,600,000</b>

\$200k/month for 23 months (NMS)
\$100k/month for 20 months (NMS)

<b>Total Project Cost + Other Required Costs</b>	<b>\$66,350,200</b>	<b>\$70,314,800</b>	<b>\$74,279,400</b>	<b>\$78,244,000</b>
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**Alternate**

Net Zero - Geothermal and PV Solar Array	4,940,000	5,320,000	5,700,000	6,080,000
<b>Total Project Cost + Required Costs + Net Zero</b>	<b>\$71,290,200</b>	<b>\$75,634,800</b>	<b>\$79,979,400</b>	<b>\$84,324,000</b>

76	CMS Quote
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State Reimbursement - Base Project	4,644,514	4,922,036	5,199,558	5,477,080
Extra Reimbursement for Net Zero	494,000	532,000	570,000	608,000

7.0%
10.0%

<b>Net Cost to Town</b>	<b>\$66,151,686</b>	<b>\$70,180,764</b>	<b>\$74,209,842</b>	<b>\$78,238,920</b>
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**Footnotes**

- As of June 2023, no alternate school location has been determined to be available. Figures assume that an alternate location does become available to house 400+ OGS students for 2 years. Assumes similar costs as those incurred when Grades 3, 4, and 5 at North Mianus School rented out space at the old Trinity Catholic School in Fall 2021 (that space is no longer available). Costs would likely be greater in 2025-2027 due to a larger number of students to be housed (Grades K-5) plus inflation between 2021 and 2025.
- Assumes similar costs as those incurred when Grades 3, 4, and 5 at North Mianus School were bused from North Mianus School (one pick-up spot) to the old Trinity Catholic School in Fall 2021. Costs would likely be greater in 2025-2027 due to a more complex busing plan and a greater number of students to be bused plus inflation between 2021 and 2025.