

Tuesday March 20, 2012

Sarasota Architectural Foundation Sarasota County School Board Meeting

1980 Landings Boulevard, Sarasota, FL

SAF member Sally Katt, presented a 3-minute statement to the School Board voicing SAF's concerns about the Board's renovation plans for Paul Rudolph's iconic Sarasota High School Addition building 4 classrooms and building 5 gym. SAF members also in attendance were Michael Kalman, Jim Keaton, Janet Minker, Sandy Motto and Dan Snyder.

"Good afternoon, I'm Sally Katt, a resident of Osprey, an ex high school teacher, classroom materials developer and a member of the Sarasota Architectural Foundation.

SAF is a not-for-profit group of volunteers, mostly NOT architects, but citizens interested in the Sarasota School of Architecture with its recognized collection of internationally known modernist buildings.

Which brings us to the proposed renovation of Sarasota High School's Paul Rudolph Addition. SAF members recognize the urgent need to renovate. We toured the campus on March 14, and are highly supportive of the Board's efforts to make this a first-class campus for our students and teachers.

- SAF applauds the Board's commitment to preserve the Paul Rudolph designed buildings
- We support the need for a new gymnasium
- We understand the importance of, in this competitive world, a state-of-the-art facility to prepare our students
- We also share the Board's concerns about keeping our students safe and secure
- And, as taxpayers, we appreciate the Board's careful stewardship of ever dwindling dollars

SAF believes that the Board's objectives for SHS can be met. Indeed we think that the Board can widely exceed its goals by carefully preserving the Rudolph-designed classrooms and repurposing, rather than destroying, the Rudolph-designed gym.

We are, however, very concerned regarding the "current" plan that calls for the demolition of the Rudolph-designed gym and destroying the architectural importance of the Rudolph Addition by glassing in the breezeways.

In order to find a solution, we have proposed, and the School Board's staff has accepted, the opportunity for SAF to sponsor a Preservation Workshop in May 2012, where experts will help the Board, the selected architectural team and us explore options to the current plan.

I would like to thank Scott Lempe and his staff for the tours, information and his ongoing dialogue with SAF, and his willingness to consider options that would save the Rudolph gym and the architectural integrity of the Rudolph Addition.

SAF looks forward to meeting the Board individually and we offer our support to help you make this the world-class facility it is begging to become.

Finally, anyone of us who has ever worked in an unpleasant space knows how much our buildings shape us.

We believe that working together can shape a building that kids, teachers, as well as those interested in the preservation of Sarasota's architectural treasures, can be proud of."

