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SUCCESS STORIES

HISTORIC SCHOOLS

CORNERSTONE ELEMENTARY WOOSTER, OHIO

In the spring of 1994, the Wooster City School Board voted to tear down Wooster High School. Built in 1908, the school lacked size enough to house the district's growing 9-12 student population. Upon the old school's site, the board intended to build a new elementary school. However, a financial analysis concluded that an elementary school could not be constructed on the district's \$4.5 million budget. Furthermore, a community group opposed to demolition, labeled 'The Corner Preservation Committee' soon organized.

The renovation of Cornerstone has provided the community of Wooster with an exceptional educational facility. Classrooms are spacious at 1000-1200 sq feet. Additionally, students have access to oversized art and music rooms, special educational facilities, a media center, and state-of-the-art technology. While the renovation has provided an outstanding educational facility, it has also provided for the preservation of an important community landmark.



CONTACT INFORMATION AND PROJECT DETAILS

ARCHITECT/BUILDER

Ricciuti Balog and Partners

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SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

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Superintendent

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Cornerstone Elementary

101 W. Bowman Street
Wooster, Ohio 44691

Size: 140,140 sq ft.

Average Classroom: 1,000-1,200 sq ft.

Enrollment: 435

Student/Teacher Ratio: 15.5

HISTORIC/RENOVATION RECORD

Date of Construction: 1908

Date of Previous Additions: 1922, 1959, 1975

Date of Renovation: 1996

Previous Renovations/Additions: Additional classrooms and an auditorium were constructed in 1922. A gymnasium and field house were added in 1959. Finally, the gymnasium was enlarged in 1975.

LOCATION

Historic District: No

Position within Community: Cornerstone is within walking distance of downtown Wooster. Moderate-income housing surrounds the school.

Busing: Though many students are capable of walking, busing is available to all students.

COST

Total Cost: \$4.5 million (1996 dollars)

Estimate for New School: William Sturgeon, Director of Services for the school district at the time of renovation, estimated construction of a new school on the same site for the same amount of dollars would have resulted in a school half the size of Cornerstone. Of note, the district had obtained the services of an architectural firm prior to hiring Ricciuti, Balog and Partners. That firm had insisted that a new building could not be constructed on a \$4.5 million budget.

Funding: 100% local

RENOVATION DESCRIPTION

State of School Prior to Renovation: The now renovated section of the building had deteriorating plumbing, heating, and electrical systems along with various structural failures.

Description of Renovation Process: Students previously housed within the school were transferred to the districts newly completed high school. The building sat vacant through the 10-month renovation process. Following completion, two of the districts elementary schools were consolidated into the Cornerstone building. Prior to opening, the district provided soon-to-be students an opportunity to vote and choose their school's name using official Board of Elections voting booths as a learning experience. The students choose 'Cornerstone'.

RENOVATION SUCCESSSES

Mechanical/HVAC: The renovation included new heating and cooling systems.

Electrical: The building was outfitted with an entirely new electrical system.

Disability Act compliance: Handicap access is provided through a centrally located elevator. Bathrooms are also handicap accessible.

Technology: The entirety of the school is wired for Internet access and each classroom possesses several computers. Furthermore, the school provides students with a media center and computer lab.

Adaptation to Educational Needs: The renovation included a major classroom reconfiguration. Every three rooms were combined to produce two elementary classrooms with three classrooms created for each grade (1-6). Art, music, special education, and teacher planning rooms were also added. Movable walls for team teaching were provided as well.

Safety compliance: The renovation included the removal of a great deal of asbestos. A new fire alarm system was installed as well.

Other/unique renovation successes: The building's auditorium had an excess of space as it was designed for a larger high school student population. The architects creatively divided this area into three separate spaces: a cafeteria, an assembly room and a media center.