



new jersey
i n c o r p o r a t e d

September 23, 2009

Dwayne C. Mosley, Director
Facilities Construction Department
Trenton Public Schools
108 North Clinton Avenue
Trenton, New Jersey 08609

Re: Proposed Plans
Trenton Central High School
Trenton, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Mosely,

Preservation New Jersey, the statewide non-profit historic preservation advocacy organization, does not support the SDA's plans to demolish and replace the landmark Trenton Central High School. Instead, we endorse the modernization of historic school buildings, both for the maximum benefit of our students and in accordance with Governor Jon Corzine's stated assertion that "the future of our economy lies in our ability to be more energy-efficient and to create the jobs of the future today."

New Jersey's students deserve only the best educational facilities: those that provide both unparalleled academics AND environment. Surrounding states have adopted this theory and taken it to heart: Pennsylvania, for example, has sponsored an entire publication encouraging historic school modernization. There are numerous examples throughout Pennsylvania that demonstrate the superiority of this approach. Many New Jersey communities, such as Princeton and Teaneck, have also seen their historic schools retained and modernized. These and other examples have demonstrated time and time again that state-of-the-art technology and facilities can be successfully and cost-effectively blended with the irreproducible architecture of the past.

The design of historic school buildings has the intrinsic power to enlighten and engage students. Vern McKissik, a Pennsylvania school architect who has overseen some of our neighboring state's outstanding historic school modernizations, may have put it best when he said that a historic school is, "a learning tool itself – illustrating its role in history, demonstrating old style craftsmanship and detailing,

Executive Committee

John D. S. Hatch, AIA
President

Hon. Mary-Anna Holden
Vice President

Lawrence H. Plevy
Treasurer

David H. Knights
Secretary

Megan E. Thomas, Esq.
Immediate Past President

Board of Directors

Dennis N. Bertland

David J. Frizell, Esq.

William L. Hoffman, Esq.

Betty Demy Hutcheon

Taneshia Nash Laird

Scot D. Pannepacker

Frederick C. Raffetto, Esq.

Carlos Rodrigues, PP, AICP

John R. Seitter

Brent W. Schopfel

Janet L. Sheridan

Richard W. Southwick, FAIA

Mary Lou Strong

Lawrence Tarantino, AIA

Hon. Jose "joey" Torres

Penelope S. Watson, AIA

Ron Emrich
Executive Director

and imparting awareness and appreciation for all of the various types of structures that make up the fabric of a community."

In addition, what better way to tangibly demonstrate one of today's most important lessons, that of environmental responsibility, than by example, using a building that directly affects students' lives? New construction involves producing new materials, transporting them to the construction site, and assembling them, in addition to demolishing old materials and transporting them to a landfill. This process embodies waste: wasted energy, wasted time, and wasted materials. Imagine instead the once-in-a-lifetime interactive lesson in "going green" and recycling that modernization of the existing TCHS facility could present! To pass up this opportunity would be the ultimate waste and an immeasurable disservice to our students and future leaders.

New Jersey's urban communities have long been served by substandard, second-rate educational facilities. Trenton Central High School can be the beginning of an era in which New Jersey finally gives these students and their communities the "best of all worlds:" a school that is as outstanding environmentally as it is academically.

Sincerely,



Ron Emrich
Executive Director
Preservation New Jersey

Cc: The Honorable Jon S. Corzine, Governor
Rep. Rush Holt
Asm. Reed Gusciora
Aswm. Bonnie Watson Coleman
N.J. Sen. Shirley K. Turner
The Honorable Douglas J. Palmer; Mayor, City of Trenton
Councilwoman Ann Lartigue, City of Trenton
Kris Kolluri, Chief Executive Officer, New Jersey Schools Development Authority
Lucille Davy, Commissioner, N.J. Department of Education
Dr. L. Diane Campbell; President, Trenton Board of Education
Alexander Brown; Vice President, Trenton Board of Education