



ARCHITECTURE & ENGINEERING

TO: ARCHULETA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: ARCHULETA COUNTY COURTS PLAN COMPARISON

DATE: 09.17.2019

For the past several months Reynolds Ash + Associates has engaged in a feasibility study with the State of Colorado Fifth Judicial District Administrator, Eric Hogue, and State Architect, John Gossett, in an attempt, to outline the various options for the future of the Archuleta County Courts. The Archuleta County Courts have been without a home for over two years due to health concerns associated with the previous location. The feasibility study has been centered around three various options for the courts, with an evaluation of each option's ability to address the needs outlined by Mr. Hogue as a requirement of the courts in 2020 and in 2040. The study has also included tours of recently completed court buildings in Montezuma, LaPlata and Mineral counties with an outline of features that both work and are preferred to be avoided in the Archuleta County Courts building. Through a number of schematic design reviews, and an ongoing dialogue between all the members of the team, the following are the three development options along with their strengths and weaknesses.

Option 1 – Renovation of Existing Property at 449 San Juan Street

The first option that was explored was the existing structure at 449 San Juan St. that previously housed the Archuleta County Sheriff's Offices along with the Archuleta County jail. The existing structure is a two-story concrete masonry unit structure with a 16,194 square foot footprint. The upper level would house the Archuleta County Courts, clerk's offices, judge's chambers and probation offices. The lower level would serve as the Sally Port for inmate delivery, holding cells for inmates awaiting trial, and secure parking for judicial staff.

The limitations of the existing structure are the boundaries of the exterior bearing walls, the interior structural columns which must remain, and the inability of the existing site to address the required parking for the courts. The evaluation of option 1 began with a structural evaluation of the property which was complete by Reynolds Ash + Assoc. in the winter of 2018. The evaluation confirmed that in addition to the sick building syndrome shown in the structure, the south end of the structure had settled close to 5" over time. In order to address the settling, a number of helical piers would be required on a grid within the existing structure creating a secondary foundation system. It is estimated this would cost around \$900,000.

While, the existing structure is capable of containing most of the 2020 programmatic needs, it does not address them in an ideal manner. For instance, while the square footage requirements for court rooms are met in this option, there is not the space in the building to provide the requested entry vestibules into the court rooms to eliminate sound infiltration from the adjacent corridor. Due to the constraints of the structural grid, public circulation also divides the clerk's offices from the probation offices which creates a need to duplicate program requirements within the building such as staff restrooms, copy rooms and circulation spaces. Duplicating spaces is a less efficient use of space and inevitably adds unneeded cost to the project.

Finally, the renovation of the property on San Juan Street creates long term financial hardships for the taxpayers of Archuleta County by being across town from the holding facility or jail. While the exact numbers of the costs of transporting prisoners is not exactly known it is estimated at over \$100,000 a year for the duration of the arrangement and is a known safety concern for the transporting officers. An ideal arrangement would be to have all correctional, courts and enforcement offices in close vicinity which would also open up riverfront property for commercial development which is ideal for the long term growth of downtown.

Preliminary cost estimates on Options 1 have established an estimated cost of \$297.11/sq. ft. with a total cost of \$5,462,075.75. Due to the limiting factor of the building, the site's inability to consider any future growth considerations, and the inability to address any of the parking requirements of housing the courts, the renovation only of the existing property is the least desirable option.

Option 2 – Renovation of Existing Property at 449 San Juan Street with the purchase of 5th Street properties to the West

The second option that was evaluated was the renovation of the existing structure outlined in Option 1, however with the acquisition of the two properties directly to the west fronting onto San Juan Drive. The two lots combine to provide an additional .86 acres to the project which further improve the existing buildings ability to house the program requirements and address parking concerns. Similar to Option 1 the design of Option 2 is constrained by the interior structural columns within the space, however the acquisition of the property to the west allows expansion outside of the 16,194 sq. ft. footprint. The structural concerns expressed in Option 1 are likewise still present in Option 2. Expanding the building to the west increased the footprint by 2,564 sq. ft. and the incorporation of a Commons Room into the program. A Commons Room was incorporated into the Montezuma County facility and has been used as an instruction / gathering area for those reporting for jury duty, as well as an afterhours meeting room available to community organizations. The security check and public restrooms have all been pulled out of the original footprint to allow for better circulation and additional requirements within the existing building. By pulling the restrooms out of the original footprint, adjacent to the Commons Room, the addition can be closed off from the Courts building and used after hours.

The remaining portion of the acquired property will be used for parking and creating a small hardscaped area at the entry to the courts building. The parking lot will contain 61 parking spaces available to the courts as well as downtown when the courts are not open. Parking will be accessed off of 5th Street while also allowing a right out exit to eastbound San Juan Street. The lower level of the building in option 2 will again be used for a Sally Port, holding cells, and secure parking for court staff.

There were a few modifications from Option 1 to Option 2 that better address the program requirements as well as the requests of court staff. The public corridor has been separated from the court rooms by an entry vestibule which also houses a Secured Room for Victim Witnesses to observe the trial, as well as an attorney client meeting room for each court. While the probation offices are still separated from the clerk's offices, they are now connected by a secure corridor to eliminate cross over with the public.

Preliminary cost estimates on Options 2 have established an estimated cost of \$341.20/sq. ft. with a total cost of \$7,268,008.78. This number has a variable as we are estimating a cost of \$600,000 on the land acquisition and this number has been questioned. While the development of the property to the east has helped with the program and parking requirements of the building, the County is still responsible for transporting prisoners in this scenario. There is also very limited future growth possibility, and any future growth would take away from parking. While Option 2 is a more ideal than Option 1, it is the second most viable option in our opinion.

Option 3 – New Construction at Harman Park adjacent to new Detention Center

The final option that has been evaluated as a potential solution for the Courts is new construction at Harman Park. The proposed facility would be 16,438 sq. ft. of typical stick frame construction. The new facility would be located to the west of the Detention Center with an expansion of the existing proposed parking lot to incorporate all court parking. The facility would then be connected to the Detention Center by a corridor for prisoner transport. As outlined in previous scenarios, the transport corridor eliminates prisoner transportation costs saving tax payers millions of dollars over the lifetime of the structure.

The possibility of new construction for the facility is an ideal scenario due to the fact that there are no parameters dictating the design other than costs. The interior spaces are not dictated by existing structure which has resulted in a much more efficient floor plan with minimal square footage designated to circulation and no duplicated spaces. The entire program has been accommodated into an optimal scenario addressing all the concerns of the

court staff. Probation and Clerks have been located together close to the entrance of the building to ensure minimal foot traffic outside of the courts while they are in session. The Commons Room is again situated in a manner that allows it to be closed off from the rest of the building to be open afterhours for the community. While not under roof, the court staff has been given 9 secure parking stalls at the back of the building that will be behind a fence with a key card entry.

Similar to both Option 1 and Option 2, the facility meets all programmatic requirements for both 2020 and forecasted for 2040. However, Option 3 is configured to allow the extension of the public corridor to the south and the addition of another court room or offices. This flexibility is crucial to the longterm viability of the project as the growth of the community and needs of the courts have been forecast, however are not a known variable. The ability of the Harman Park site to accommodate this growth ensures the County will not be in a predicament in the future.

Preliminary cost estimates for Option 3 are \$317.43/ sq. ft. with a total cost of \$5,886,797.58. Due to the lower cost in comparison to previous options, the ability to accommodate future growth, the elimination of prisoner transport, and the establishment of a campus for all courts, detention, and future law enforcement offices, Option 3 is the most viable development in our opinion.