

SUPPORTING YOU TO MANAGE YOUR SCHOOL PROPERTY

Contracting Consultants

To select a suitable consultant to prepare your 10YPP and manage your capital projects, we recommend you contact your Network Facilitator for a list of local consultants or refer to the Consultants Billboard, which is a list of consultants who have done work in the past for the Ministry. It is important to note that the Ministry maintains these lists but cannot endorse any of these individuals or companies. The list can be found by searching the website using the keywords "consultants billboard".

Schools need to be aware that:

- ALL capital works projects funded by the Ministry require a project manager
- ALL projects requiring a building consent must be managed by a professional project manager with professional indemnity insurance.

To select a suitable consultant the Board must follow the procurement and contracting processes described in Section 5 of the Property Management Handbook (search the website using keywords "Property Management Handbook"). A lack of previous experience in school property projects should not be used to stop building professionals or companies from responding to open tenders or to pre-qualify prospective tenderers, as this may unnecessarily limit the market and hamper schools in getting the best tender or price available.

Schools should develop selection criteria to help choose the best person for the role. As well as cost, it's important to consider factors like whether:

- You will be able to build an effective working relationship with the person and how well they listen to your requirements
- They are familiar with the Property Management Handbook, the Ministry's most recent design standards (Search the website using keywords "design requirements"), and have attended the Ministry's consultant training seminars
- They have experience of projects of that type and size and the appropriate professional qualifications
- They have the ability to peer review and critique the school's projects to achieve the best value for money.

It is very important to check references and, wherever possible, it is particularly important to talk to other schools that have used their services.

To make it easier to manage property funding, we encourage:

- All schools to develop a long-term relationship with a consultant. This can be done by contracting one consultant to prepare the 10YPP and manage the capital projects in the 5YA or, alternatively, one consultant to prepare the 10YPP and another to manage the capital projects in the 5YA.
- Neighbouring schools to discuss the options of clustering to select and employ a consultant. This is particularly relevant for rural and smaller schools.

When schools employ a consultant to manage or design their project the consultant reports to the Board. The consultant can complete all paperwork, but the Board needs to be responsible for signing it and forwarding it to the Ministry. In addition, all queries to the Ministry need to come from the Board, not directly from the consultant.

To read more about the requirements for contracting consultants, refer to Sections 4.2.3 and 5 of the Handbook.

Security During the Holidays

It is important to have a checklist for securely locking up your school to minimise damage or loss during the Christmas holidays - traditionally the worst time for damage to schools.

To reduce the likelihood of security issues over the summer break, we recommend:

- Expensive equipment (data projectors, computers, DVD players, musical instruments etc) is locked in a secure place
- All computers are backed up and copies kept offsite
- Teachers' resources and materials are locked away
- All doors are securely locked and staff who visit the school during the holidays know how to lock and alarm the school if required
- Internal lights (eg in classrooms and offices) are off, with external lights left on
- Checking that any security firm monitoring your school has up-to-date details for emergency contacts
- Rubbish bins are emptied and stored inside if possible
- Moveable equipment is stored inside.

It is also sensible to provide neighbours and parent groups with a number to call if they see anything suspicious or if there are any issues so these can be immediately resolved.

More information about security in schools, including information provided by a security consultant on how to keep equipment safe, can be found in Newsletter 8 (June 2006). Electronic copies of past newsletters can be found by searching the website using keywords "Regional Newsletters".

We wish all boards, senior managers, staff and their families a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year.



Successful Administration Upgrades

Good administration block design can deliver a highly functional facility and a striking first impression for visitors. In this article we profile four schools that have recently upgraded their administration blocks to create good looking spaces that are also very practical and easy to work in.

Paparimu School, a small rural school, used 5YA funding for their recent and successful administration upgrade.

The building had primarily been used for the school's library, until it was extended in 1991 to also provide an office area. As the school's needs have changed significantly since this time, it was felt that a fresh look at the entire space was necessary. The school is very pleased with what has been achieved through better utilisation of existing square metres.

As it is a 1930s building, the school was very keen to maintain the character associated with its age and history. This task was made easier as the exterior was generally left unchanged, with the entrance staying in the same place and only one set of wooden windows needing to be replaced with new wooden joinery. The roof was in poor condition and has been programmed to be replaced in 2009.

The internal spaces were reconfigured to improve the layout and extend the administration areas. There is now a spacious front office with a waiting area, and the principal's office is large enough to hold private meetings with parents or staff.

The good-sized library is much easier to heat and is still large enough to hold events such as assemblies and the school's afterschool care programme. The necessity to move the library books provided a good opportunity for the school to cull its book collection.

The staffroom has doubled in size to accommodate the growing number of teacher aides and visiting teachers, while the PTA has benefited by being able to use the large space to prepare for fundraising events. The PTA also now has easy access to their fridges and storage after these were moved to the staffroom from the back of a classroom.

There is plenty of built-in storage, including a storage cupboard for Board records, with use also being made of the high stud in the staffroom ceiling to house large cupboards. Wasted lobby space was converted into a disabled toilet and shower, which is alongside the sickbay.

The entire project went very smoothly and was completed in one term. After using the facility for two years, the school is very pleased with the new layout.

Ararimu School used SPG funding to upgrade and extend their small administration building. As well as creating extra space and storage within the administration facility, the school also wanted to create staff work spaces and to create an entrance so that it was clear where visitors should go upon arrival.

A key part of the design phase involved staff visiting other schools to get ideas for how the new facility could look and function, especially for fitting out the main office. To ensure longevity of the facility a conscious choice was made to ensure that design decisions were made to suit the function and the building rather than just the current staff using the spaces.



Ararimu School — Above: The prominent entrance, with gardens breaking up the large concrete space, makes the administration easy to locate. Below Left: The staff workroom can be easily divided into two spaces with the sound-proofed doors. Below Right: Children's art and furniture make the foyer a nice place for children to wait.



Paparimu School — Above: The exterior showing the door to the staffroom, with the main entrance located on the other side. Below Left: The main office is modern and practical. Below Right: The sympathetic library upgrade preserved the history of the building.



The school office is now very easy to find with its tower-type design, which matches the adjoining community hall, creating an impressive high open space in the foyer. Although building this feature incurred extra costs, the school believes that the outcome justifies the expense.

The foyer has been designed with children in mind, with the walls covered in their art and furniture that they really love. A mailbox has been set into the front counter for children to 'post' items, such as money, to the office.

The extension includes the foyer, main office, principal's office and a deputy principal's office that is utilised by all staff. The school office, which has space for two staff, now has access to plenty of storage including an adjoining lockable storeroom and a wall of cupboards.

Previously staff had no work area so could be found working on the staffroom floor during their release time. The existing area, which was converted to the staff area, is a square shape divided into three separate areas with one fixed wall and two sound-proofed dividing doors. Half of the space has a kitchen and seating for staff, while the other half has photocopier, materials store and work benches with data outlets. Wherever possible throughout the facility, furniture is moveable to allow flexibility within spaces, with the staff space being equipped with two smaller tables rather than one large one.

This area works extremely well for the school's size as they can divide the room in different ways for a variety of uses. The space is large enough so all staff can meet at one time, or the room can be used as two separate spaces so a teacher can work with students while staff use the other space.

The school is very pleased with the project with a display of photos showing a 'before' and 'after' shot of each room in the administration block. The only thing that they would change after eighteen months of use would be choosing heaters that were easily controlled rather than their ones that are on automatic timers.

The administration upgrade at **Belmont Intermediate School** was completed two years ago and was part of a staged plan to progressively upgrade the school's dated facilities with a key focus on providing excellent staff facilities. SPG funding was used for adding new square metres, with 5YA and school funds being used to upgrade the existing spaces.

The upgrade programme had three parts to it: upgrading the staffroom/workroom/resource room, then building the administration block and, finally, building pod spaces at the back of each classroom block.

For a school the size of Belmont Intermediate, there was only a very small old administration block located in the middle of the site. It was decided to build a new administration facility on an unused piece of land near the front of the school. The new location required the entrance of the school to be changed which, although it took some adjustment, is working well and is safer for students as the new entrance has separated cars and pedestrians.

The new administration facility contains the main office and lobby, an accounts office, interview room, sickbay and four offices for senior staff. Internal glazing has been cleverly used to give office staff visual access around the building.

The centrally-located staffroom was extended to provide seating for all staff, with an outside deck added to provide views of the playing areas. An adjoining classroom space was converted into a workroom and resource room, with the old administration building being used for extra staff offices and the sports office.

The new facility has weatherboard cladding to match the existing school buildings and has a prominent roof at the front to make it easily identifiable as the office. To further tie in the new building, all of the school's buildings were repainted at the same time.

The school is very pleased with the staging of the construction process and the end result as they feel that the extended and upgraded staff facilities have given staff functional spaces that help make their job easier. If they were undertaking the project again, they would consider providing different sized spaces within the new building.

Howick College had the option of demolishing its rundown 'S68' administration block and rebuilding, but chose the most cost-effective option of extending and remodelling the existing building to accommodate all administration and staff areas. The end result is a light, modern and functional space that feels brand new. Instead of blending in with the other buildings it now makes a statement and is easily found by visitors.

Using 5YA and school funding, the redevelopment included new brick cladding, new joinery and a high stud to accentuate the school's entrance. Where needed, the existing wooden window joinery was replaced, with aluminium joinery being used at the front of the block and on a small extension to one side of the block. The roof needed to be replaced and the exterior of the block required repainting.



Howick College — Above: Exterior of modernised block with the extension on the right, alongside the student entrance to the school. Below Left: The deans' area has a private student work area in the remodelled corridor. Below Right: Staff outdoor area accessed through a large ranch slider in the staffroom.



Belmont Intermediate — Above: The view of the administration facility from the street. Below Left: The photocopy room on the right offers a good view of the foyer, with the sickbay to the left and DP offices at the end of the corridor. Below Right: Looking through from the staffroom to the staff workstation.



Aside from the extension for offices for the school's deputy principals, the building's original footprint has remained untouched, with most of the walls even remaining in their original places. Better use of these spaces, an improved layout, a neutral colour scheme, and increased storage has made a real difference to the working environment.

Opening up small spaces created two separate open plan areas for the main office and the student reception. There is glazing between the two spaces which is a very practical and attractive feature. The foyer has a tiled floor and a sound-absorbing perforated lining on the ceiling which makes for a much quieter environment.

The staffroom was fully modernised and brightened up with the addition of large sliding doors onto an inviting central courtyard which has a covered area, new gardens, paving and outdoor furniture. The school is pleased with its decision not to extend the staffroom to accommodate all staff for the few occasions that all staff are together, as the school is very spread out and individual departments already have adequate staff work and meeting rooms.

In order to inform the architect's brief, the school carefully considered the traffic flows of students, staff and visitors. This analysis led to external entrances being moved to better locations around the block, and a new student entrance with automatic opening doors being created from the student's main thoroughfare.

If repeating the project the school wouldn't paint vanished doors as one year later the paint is already chipping off, otherwise they are very pleased with the resulting facility.

Frequently Asked Questions

Fire Emergency Switch

Q. Sometimes we have problems with students breaking the glass and setting off fire alarms. Is there anything we can do to stop false alarms?

A. There are a couple of reasonably simple options schools can investigate which can act as a deterrent for students.

The first is simply installing mirror glass over the switch instead of regular glass.

Alternatively, a Stopper 2 (pictured) – a clear plastic cover which can be installed over the fire alarm unit – has proved very successful in some schools. When the cover is opened or broken it sets off a localised alarm powered by a 9 volt battery.

This alerts staff without raising the alarm at the local fire station, and means that if staff can quickly get to the alarm box they may be able to catch the student before they break the glass and alert the Fire Service. The lockable cover can be easily shut again without the expense of new glass. It appears that the system works well as the local alarm either scares students off or they don't want to risk being caught.

It is always important to discuss changes to your fire alarms with the Fire Service as they can provide advice especially if you have frequent activations.



Fire Extinguishers

Q. We are upgrading our technology classrooms and want information on fire extinguishers. Where do we go?

A. Different parts of your school require a different type of fire extinguisher depending on the nature of the potential fire. You should check with your current supplier for recommendations on the appropriate fire extinguisher to use or refer to the 'Commercial' section of Wormald's website "www.wormald.co.nz". Your current supplier can then carry out the required scoping and installation work.

Fire Alarms

Q. If fire alarms in our school stop working what should we do?

A. You need to contact someone from Argest (0800 ARGEST) immediately. Argest are contracted by the Ministry to carry out "Warrant of Fitness" checks and will be able to inform you if the work is covered under their contract with the Ministry. If it is not covered under the contract, you can contact your own consultant (or use Argest) to scope the work.

1:18 Growth

Q. How are schools using the square metres provided by the Ministry for 1:18 growth?

A. Schools are encouraged to think creatively about how to use the funding, as long as it is spent on school buildings to support the introduction of the lower teacher:student ratio. Examples include:

- creating extra space by extending existing classroom blocks, sometimes in conjunction with other construction projects (eg roll growth)
- modifying teaching spaces in existing classroom blocks
- purchasing board/community-owned buildings
- purchasing relocatable classrooms and transporting onto the school site.

Fire Design – Doors (correction to Handbook)

Doorways on Escape Routes

In Section 6.6.3 of the Handbook, FAQ number 2 is incorrect. It says that 'one egress way is required if the door opens outward in the direction of travel, and two are required if both doors open inward'. This is contrary to the Ministry's Fire Safety and Design Guidelines 2.10, and the Building Code Acceptable Solution 3.17.3.

The Guidelines are correct as follows:

2.10 Means of escape

Doorways on escape routes:

- For rooms with up to 20 occupants provide a minimum of one 810mm width inward or outward opening door.
- For rooms with more than 20 occupants (other than as specified below), doorways must open outwards.

(Acceptable solution 3.17.3)

Therefore one door is all that is required (providing the occupant load is less than 50) but if there are more than 20 occupants then at least one of the doors must open in the direction of travel. This door then becomes the designated escape route.

Wiring in Schools – Fire Risk Identified

A potential fire risk has recently been identified at a school due to the way some wiring has been installed. It involves a classroom built in the 1980's. It was common practice to lay a foundation of tar as a water sealant base, before laying the concrete foundation of the classroom on top. (Today, building paper or polythene lining is used instead of the tar.) It was also common to run electrical circuits in the concrete floor.

Over the years the black tar has expanded and contracted with the heat and became a problem – it has crept up the walls of the room and eventually overflowed onto the edges of the lino and carpet. Various methods of stopping the tar advancing had been attempted, without success.

About a year after two shallow channels were cut for new cabling, tar entered them from underneath in soft liquid form. This short-circuited the unprotected wiring lying in the channels and on two occasions small fires have ignited. The problem with the wiring was repaired by redirecting the power supply from the ceiling.

Schools with similar age buildings should be mindful of the dangers of possible fire risk if similar methods are used to run electrical circuits in the concrete floor where tar is the base sealant.

What to Look Out For

Year One Students and Property Entitlement – The teacher: student ratio for year one students will reduce to 1:15 in term one 2009. Each school's property entitlement will be assessed based on the provisional staffing roll for 2009. Schools eligible for funding for an increased entitlement have been notified.

Release of the SPG Deficiencies Programme – Schools included in the programme this year have been notified. For more details about the programme, search the website using keywords "SPG".

Fire Safety and Design Guidelines – A summary of these guidelines was published in August 2008. The guidelines are found in the supporting documents for Section 6 of the Handbook (search the website using keywords "fire guidelines").

Property Maintenance Grant – An indicative property maintenance grant is sent to schools in term 4.

5YA budgets – Indicative 5YA budgets will be released in term 1 next year for schools resigning their 5YA in 2009.

Further Information or Suggestions

If you have any suggestions for articles or information you would like covered in an upcoming newsletter, or more detail on anything contained in this newsletter, please contact your Network Facilitator.