A Community School Renovation for: Celia Clinton Elementary

Education - Community - Place
Acknowledgments:
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Jan Creveling Senior Planner The Tulsa Area Public Schools Initiative
Cindy Taylor, Principal Celia Clinton Elementary School

The University of Oklahoma Urban Design Studio

Project Team:
Shawn Michael Schaefer, AIA, NCARB, OUUDS Director
David R. Beach, AIA - Primary Designer, Briarglen
Travis Eslick, AAIA - Primary Designer Celia Clinton

Resources:
School as Centers of Community: A Citizen’s Guide for Planning and Design
Neighborhood Organizing for Urban School Reform.
  Micheal R. Williams - 1989.
Engaging All Families, Steven M. Constant - 2003

Celia Clinton Elementary

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Celia Clinton Elementary
Existing Site Conditions

Playground equipment provides no shading, is surrounded by railroad ties, which can leak toxic chemicals. The ground is lacking mulch for the proper amount of cushioning, and the equipment is dilapidated.

On-Site Water Retention is currently a problem with drainage of rain water back into the school on the West side. A large rain collects water in rain water retention area (see plan). This creates a water pit for several days on the site.

Currently small gardens are located in the Serendipity Courtyard. Planting beds are surrounded with landscape timbers which are permeated with arsenic and other toxic weather proofing chemicals.

Vehicular Circulation and Parking is congested and needs expansion. It is not as much of a problem in the morning because of a filtering in of students at different times. After school creates a rush of students all getting out at once. The parking lot is small and inefficient. The one way circulation empties onto the corner of Seminole and Harvard without traffic control or proper crossing amenities.

Both Seminole and Queen Streets dead end cutting off circulation around the site. Queen street is used for both high school and middle school bus stops. The dead ends inhibit access for school transportation.

The site is cluttered with inefficient trailers. They cause accessibility and security issues. When students are placed in trailers they become disconnected from the school and its amenities.
Celia Clinton Elementary
Proposed Site Plan and Recommendations

Playground equipment:
New educational playground equipment should be located adjacent to the Community Classroom, Basketball Courts, future park equipment and tennis court additions. Utilizing the adjoining park to create a track for exercise could help facilitate community involvement. Having park exercise equipment along the track will promote the healthy schools initiative.

On-Site Water Retention:
Recommendations: grading should be redirected to on-site retention to create a man-made wetland. The wetland could be used for science classes to see development of tadpoles, small fish, water lilies in a wetlands environment. Retention could also be used for controlled irrigation to the global gardens projects.

Global Gardens recommendations: Relocate the gardens to the south of the building for best sunlight and adjacent the on site water retention for ease of irrigation, public view and accessibility.

Vehicular Circulation and Parking Recommendations: The lot should expand West towards the new wing, tennis courts, and future playgrounds. Moving the access West will allow the lot to empty onto East Seminole Street. This dead end street should connect with East Queen Street on the West side of the Park allowing vehicular circulation to filter out. Moving the existing cross walk and light to the corner of North Harvard Avenue and East Seminole Street will also facilitate vehicular circulation as well as student flow that naturally wants to cross Harvard at that corner.
Celia Clinton Elementary

Existing Floor Plan

The existing floor plan at Celia Clinton is a central corridor plan with double loaded corridors branching off to the South. Issues with the current layout is that it is over crowded. The current population of the school is maxed out with teachers holding classes in closets.

The office is inefficient and dose not meet the needs of the administration. Without a sense of place in the school the office and its administration cannot play its role as an authoritative entity. The office needs an identity to effectively carry on its day to day duty.

The cafeteria is in need of kitchen expansion and storage. It cannot provide healthy choices for student without rethinking the way it is run. New room and support spaces will allow for the preparation of healthier meals. The cafeteria is also being used to hold classes due to the overcrowding in the classrooms.

The classrooms at Celia Clinton are typically to small. They were once adequate classrooms and now they have been divided in half with new walls. This created small inefficient classrooms. Celia Clinton is in need of more square footage to accurately accommodate its student body.

The current library is the only direct access to serendipity center. The existing library would function better as a hub for classes to circulate through and use as a computer lab. Administrative functions would also serve to benefit in the existing libraries central location.

Existing restrooms are poorly laid out and do not provide for adult supervision and user privacy. Typically security problems occur in bathrooms and the existing restroom layouts provide little security.

(Above) Existing Plan - Dashed lines indicate proposed demolition.
Celia Clinton Elementary
Recommended Floor Plan

The Community Wing for Celia Clinton (Phase One) could be done as a separate project as budget allows. The Community Wing’s program requires a separate entry for after hour separation from the unused portion of the school. This separate entrance should also serve as entrance for the clinic, community resource library, and nutrition classroom.

The classroom addition (Phase Two) provides Celia Clinton with much needed square footage. New classes are required for the school’s crowded and growing population. The rooms should incorporate small restrooms and breakout spaces for teachers and students in need of facilities.

The new office will create an identity for the administration. With a sense of place in the school the office and its administration can establish its role as an authoritative entity. The new office will help with securing the main public entrance to the building. Opening up the office will also help the administration to oversee its day to day operations.

The cafeteria should have access to the nutrition classroom to share preparation area and storage. The new kitchen classroom could promote healthy choices for student by rethinking how the kitchen operates. Students could prepare healthy nutritious lunches. The nutrition class should be used as a hub for students to develop healthy eating habits, knowledge of kitchens, and food preparation.

The new Bathroom Classrooms were developed on a module (See Page 12). This module should be used to remodel the existing inefficient restrooms that cannot be monitored. The Module consists of an open room with banks of toilets and urinal rooms that allow users privacy without loss of control from teachers. With this layout teachers will be able to monitor students for misbehavior, hygiene, and speed of progress. Speeding up the process of restroom breaks will allow teachers more time to teach.

(Above) Existing Plan with Future Wing showing new conditions, amenities, and surrounding context.
Celia Clinton Elementary
Community Schools:

Education is the entryway to opportunity. Using architecture to create the best possible scenario to enhance learning preparedness is crucial. The architecture of a community school should perform several key tasks, defined by the National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities Knowledgeworks Foundation, by:

- Effectively using all of the available resources to improve and enhance education.
- Creating a learning environment that serves as the center of the community.
- Enhancing the capability to teach, and accommodate the needs of all learners.
- Creating architecture that engages and involves the community and its interests.
- Promoting a sense of health, safety, and security is imperative to increase educational potential.
- Remaining adaptable for future demands of both education and community.

(Above) Proposed New Entrance, Community Classroom, and New Wing Addition for Celia Clinton Elementary.

(Above) Proposed entrance canopy and covered waiting areas.

(Above) Proposed separate entrance for Community Classroom Addition. This entrance should be accessible separately for after hour functions.
Celia Clinton Elementary

Resources:

The public school system can benefit from utilizing its available resources, as well as becoming a resource for its local community. As a community school, Celia Clinton can provide opportunities, leverage its location within the community, and create a positive example for the conservation of natural resources.

Resources that Celia Clinton might expand upon:
• Global gardens.
• Creation of a stronger tie to the community by available local resources to help with improving the playground, deferred maintenance, learning opportunities.

Resources Celia Clinton has opportunities to create:
• Kitchen – learning opportunities.
• English learning classes.
• Envelope design.
• Reduction of waste, recycling center.
• Life cycle based design.
• Natural Resource Conservation:
  • Conservation site design with new construction.
  • On-site water retention / Man-made Wetlands science classes.
  • Renovation of Playground equipment.

When people can take ownership in a project they will inherently become more involved. Clinton Park should be used as a starting point for community involvement. Resources from the city, school, neighbors, and sponsors, should facilitate projects and provide community involvement for projects.

(Above) Workout Areas at Celia Clinton (School & Park) could provide the community with new amenities. These opportunities for new development should draw on community resources.

(Above) Clinton Park with Celia Clinton Elementary in the foreground.

(Above) Clinton Park Pavilion is used as high school bus stop.
Celia Clinton Elementary Center:

“Educational problems reflect community and family problems in all of their complexity, diversity, and intractability.” —Decker and Decker (2000) Engaging Families and Communities

An educational facility should fully embrace its context, and its community. It is necessary to do this to create a sense of belonging, and attachment to a facility that is involved with a major portion of the development of our youth.

Celia Clinton can embrace its community by:

• Not assuming all communities are the same, but molding itself with the attributes of its context.
• Understanding its significance as an urban landmark
• Providing a place of connection between parents, staff, and children.
• Helping fulfill the needs of the community.

There are several items specific to Celia Clinton that can help the school become a center for the community:

• Help to transform the playground into a community park.
• Providing meeting locations and educational opportunities for adults in the school district.
• Improving the front entry to become a focal point.
• Improve the safety of the drop off and pick-up locations.
• Provide locations for continuing education.

(Above) The entry has been reworked to allow vestibule doors to be added to the exterior porch. The office is recommended to front the entire lobby. Opening up the floor plan allows office attendants to securely manage visitors coming in and out.

(Above) The office entrance is addressing the school for ease of circulation of daily needs.

(Above) The existing office with little space to work. Doorways block views and communication through the office.
Learning is not a passive process, it is an active process. As a result, the classroom that enhances education needs to be a space that is flexible, adaptable, and can provide the opportunities for interactive education. When looking at a renovation project like Celia Clinton, it is important to evaluate the existing facility, demographic composition of the community, and the educational methods the faculty implements.

The design changes to the classrooms at Celia Clinton are:
- Providing natural light where possible.
- Provide adequate square footage for classrooms.
- Add wash areas and breakout spaces for teacher and students.
- Add bathrooms in shared areas.

Teachers need efficiency in their workplace and classroom to meet the demands of their curriculum. In particular to Celia Clinton:
- The faculty needs storage – many of the rooms have none.
- A dedicated conference or meeting location.
- Smaller meetings rooms for faculty or parent meetings.

For the students to learn, the parents need to be engaged in the school. To enhance the education process, the school must be accommodating and inviting to parents. To achieve this, Celia Clinton needs:
- An improved and clear entry sequence.
- Adequate signage, in both English and Spanish.
- Improved circulation at the pick-up drop off points.
- An arrangement and security system that promotes safety.
- A parent reception area.
Celia Clinton Elementary

Involve:

A public school has the opportunity to embrace and create a feeling of inclusion throughout its community. The feeling of inclusion reinforces the idea that both schools and parents share in the responsibility of the education of children. The involvement with the school becomes increasingly important in an urban area, like Celia Clinton, where student rollover happens at an extremely high rate. As teachers have little time to build relationships with students, a connection to family and community becomes increasingly important to create a sense of comfort, well being, and an atmosphere to learn.

Needs specific to Celia Clinton:

- Creating a community center with a safe friendly atmosphere.
- Creating better locations for parents and teachers to meet.
- Creating a location for a therapist office.
- Expanding the kitchen area (or creating a new kitchen) to allow for health and cooking community classes.
- Providing “flex” space for the community.
- Other continuing education classes for: Computers, Health, English, Library Skills.

“...when teachers make parent involvement part of their regular teaching practice, parents increase their interactions with their children at home, feel more positive about their abilities to help their children in the elementary grades, and rate the teachers as better teachers overall...”

- Joyce Epstein, School, Family and Community Partnerships
Celia Clinton Elementary
Health Safety and Security:

A child and their family must be physically and mentally healthy to be prepared to learn. Necessary services need to be provided within the community school to aid in both aspects of well being. At times a nurse and counselor are not enough...the community school may actually need to provide a medical clinic, and a therapist to help with the health of both the students, and their family.

A sense of safety within the community school is imperative to create trust with both the students and their parents. Safety accommodates protection of children and staff from environmental factors, ensures building codes and workplace standards are met, and adequately creates and promotes a sense that the spaces, class rooms, hallways, are well lit, well marked, and have an open feeling throughout.

Security within schools has become a focus of national attention, and has largely changed how schools are designed, occupied and staffed. To improve security, the primary system must be rooted in design and reinforced by the practices of the school. Site lines and entry sequence convey a control point without becoming intimidating, or overbearing, and achieve better results than simply relying on electronic surveillance. Breaking down classes into the smallest possible sizes, along with having “schools within schools” improve the teacher’s direct connection with the children and their parents improving interaction, understanding, and providing foresight. Increased community use through after school programs directly improves security as well. “Since most school violence happens between the hours of three and six p.m., after-school programs have become key components of violence prevention plans.”
- Schools as Community Centers.

At Celia Clinton, several specific concerns need to be addressed:
• Upon entry of the building people should find themselves surrounded by administration to guide, protect, and secure the school.
• A therapist office coordinated with the administration, school counselor, and nurse of offices to provide support for students and parents.
• Clear entry sequence providing security point for visitors.
• Additional class rooms to help minimize crowding, and maximize student teacher interaction.
• Increased community use in the evening.
• Isolate the “Community School Wing” for security within the building after hours.

(Above) An open room with banks of toilets and urinal rooms will allow users privacy without loss of control from teachers. Classroom Bathrooms should be utilized to prevent security problems as well as facilitate good hygiene. Teachers would be able to be in the classroom bathrooms with both male and female students without invading their privacy, to speed the process, and insure washing of hands.

(Left) Enlarged Plan of Classroom Bathroom Bathrooms usually are where most security problems occur. When these areas are left open for supervision they naturally become safer for the occupants.
Celia Clinton Elementary
Adapt:

While several of the needs at Celia Clinton are immediate, and most design strategies are regarding current issues, the concept of making the building adaptable for the future is crucial for the success of a community school. As the school evolves over time, the facility must adapt to new methods in education, changes to the community, and fluctuations in student population.

Principles for Celia Clinton to adopt:
• All new spaces should be built with a flexible “shell” type of structure to allow easy interior renovations.
• “Flex” spaces should accommodate school activities, as well as social and educational activities for the community.
• Classroom should be adaptable to a variety of teaching styles, classes, and methods.
• The kitchen should function as both a class space, and a functioning work space for food preparation.

(Above) New classroom kitchen seating with large mirror for visibility to rear seating. Work space opens up to existing kitchen to allow kitchen staff to utilize extra space and equipment.

(Above) Existing Kitchen with old equipment and little storage.

(Above) Existing Kitchen exterior facade. New wing addition should locate kitchen classroom along existing facade.