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National Trust for Historic Preservation
Mountains/Plains Office
535 16th Street, Suite 750
Denver, CO 80202

April 8, 2008

Dear Ms. Pahl,

Thank you for taking an interest in Louisville Middle School and our proposed renovation plans.

The current renovation plans for Louisville Middle School evolved from a community-based process which began four years ago in 2004. In preparation for the ballot measure 3A which was passed by voters in November 2006, the Boulder Valley Board of Education convened a committee of citizens and district staff to advise the board on current and future facilities needs in the district.

Before finalizing this committee's report of findings, the district engaged in an extensive public process consisting of seven charrettes held at district high schools. Attendees were polled for their opinions of district facilities as well as their priorities and values related to facility management. This public input was used to develop our Educational Facilities Master Plan which was overwhelmingly approved by voters and describes renovation work to be done to each school facility in the district.

To keep the community involved in the bond projects, the district will convene design advisory teams (DAT) at each school. The DATs membership may include school faculty, staff, students, parents and community members. Among the members of the LMS DAT, which included school staff students and parents, there was a Louisville City Councilor and a member of the Louisville Historical Society.

In its design process, the LMS DAT looked at the possibility of preserving the original entryway to the building and possibly the auditorium. The design advisory team gave preservation further consideration when, in response to community feedback, I asked it to reconvene to receive additional information and public input. In both instances, the DAT concluded the best way to fulfill the scope of work approved by voters in the Educational Facilities Master Plan within the allocated budget was with a design that did not preserve the original 1939 structure.

It is true now, and has been from the beginning of the design phase of the project, any attempts to preserve all or part of the original 1939 portion of the Louisville Middle School building will cost significantly more than the current plan for demolition and new construction. While there may be options for preservation that better fulfill the educational and security needs of the school than those already developed by the architect, we believe there is no option that would not incur any additional costs.

At this time, the project design team is completing final construction documents in preparation for an April 15 bid date. We are currently in the midst of a very favorable bid climate and it behooves us to move forward on the established schedule. Delaying the project jeopardizes an already tight budget and risks eroding the limited funding we do have.

We have a low level of confidence funding in the amount needed (\$3-6 million) to make a preservation option possible will materialize in a timeframe that does not put the entire project at risk.

The significance of this building to some members of the Louisville community is understood by the board of education, and we recognize its loss will be felt in the community. Efforts will be made to salvage any historical artifacts currently in the building, as well as the blonde bricks from the exterior. In addition, there have been discussions of ways to memorialize the 1939 building through photos and other exhibits at the school.

The primary mission of the school district is to educate the children of Boulder Valley. This mission drives all decisions and actions of the district. We have been entrusted by the local taxpayers to manage our resources as efficiently as possible to deliver this service.

As a school district we are constantly faced with having to balance the many different but important values of the communities we serve. This balancing act becomes even more difficult and critical when honoring values means spending money from an always limited pot. When faced with these decisions, we must always prioritize our educational mission.

The improvements funded by the bond measure focus on life/safety issues and renovations to support learning. Projects are planned for every school in the district and will be implemented in three phases. We are currently moving into construction for most of the projects in phase I. However, projects in phases II and III have not yet begun design.

Boulder Valley School District believes in fostering collaboration and partnerships. If the National Trust is interested in working with the district to preserve historical schools, there is time to bring funding to the table to support preservation efforts for projects in phases II and III. In particular, the Trust may be interested in providing funding to support renovation work at Whittier Elementary and University Hill Elementary in Boulder and Escuela Bilingue Pioneer in Lafayette.

Through the bond, we have already developed partnerships with several local organizations and have been able to leverage resources to do more for our schools and our students. We would welcome the opportunity to work with you on future projects.

Thank you again for your interest in our school district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher King". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher King, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Boulder Valley School District