



JOHN LUCAS, THE JOURNAL

Architect Shafraaz Kaba, left, and principal Rod Kostek look over blueprints for renovations at Holyrood School.

School makeover blends classic, modern designs

'Green' features enhance Holyrood's 1950s charm

RON CHALMERS
Journal Business Writer
EDMONTON

The 1950s charm of Holyrood School will return in a sweeping renovation that also adds 21st-century environmental enhancements.

Holyrood was built in 1955 in a U-shape with an intriguing interior courtyard.

Soon after, however, that appealing space was paved over and became a staff parking lot. Every day, students walk across the lot or the driveway. And the cars' exhaust fumes can enter the classrooms' open windows.

"That parking lot location was designed by someone who hated children," muses Holyrood principal Rod Kostek.

So Shafraaz Kaba, of Manasc Isaac Architects, has created a new design that honours the original vision.

The courtyard will revert to green space for play and a possible garden.

A new parking lot will be built farther from the school. That lot

will be gently sloped toward planted swales, to filter out contaminants from the runoff water.

A lay-by, or semi-circular drive, will let parents drop off their children without blocking the traffic on 79th Street at 94th Avenue.

The one-storey school will gain a roof-mounted solar panel for water heating. Other environmental features will include high-efficiency heating, waterless urinals and removal of lead solder in water pipes.

Water quality at the drinking fountains will be constantly freshened through recirculation.

The old gymnasium, which is too small for assemblies of the 400 elementary students, will become the new library. The old library will be classroom space. Portable classrooms no longer will be used.

A larger gymnasium will be added. The limits of Alberta Infrastructure funding preclude a permanent stage. But the school has partnered with Holyrood Community League to receive funding from the Alberta Community Facility Enhancement

Program for a portable stage.

The gymnasium will be available for community use in fine arts, fitness and public meetings.

In this \$8-million renovation "we have tried to meet the needs of the school — and the community," Kostek says.

Despite the natural deterioration of its mechanical systems, Holyrood School has some excellent design features. The original windows have been replaced with modern units in the same generous dimensions. "We're retaining those operable windows," Kaba says.

Many materials from the '50s and earlier are regaining popularity, he says, with the Holyrood interior reverting to natural wood rather than epoxy-laden wood products, and linoleum rather than carpeting.

Kaba notes that the Holyrood blueprint also was used for several other Edmonton public schools, including Crestwood, Mount Pleasant, Prince Rupert and Woodcroft.

rchalmers@thejournal.

canwest.com