

2012 Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Papago School

Location: **Phoenix, Arizona**

Category of Entry: **Elementary School**

Award Type: **New Construction**

Firm Name: **Orcutt | Winslow**

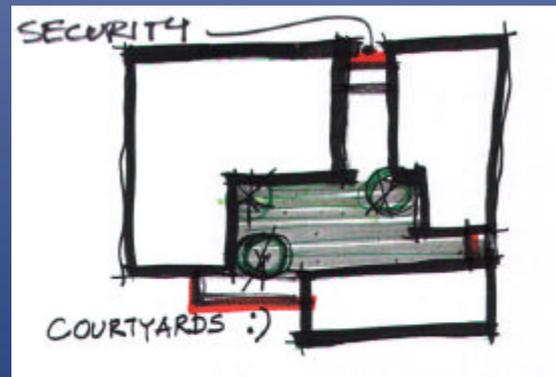
Papago School



Theory:

The original Papago School, built in 1953 was deeply rooted in the community, but had become structurally obsolete. Building new structures was an opportunity to revitalize the educational culture and the community. **Although the new buildings and site design followed the plan and site traces of the previous, they were thought of as shiny new forms rising from the ashes of the old – analogous to the bird from which the city was named.**

Following that theme, the lower floor of the building was grey block but all portions that rose above were conceived of a shiny material that would appear almost factory made like the smooth skin of a melon. At each location, the the protective “melon” skin was penetrated, or opened up, the bright interior fruit shown through. This is evident at the exterior education spaces where each is finished in variations of primary colors that contrast with the metal skin depending on the building or “melon” in which they appear. This concept is a great metaphor for the idea of school rising up from the earth encased in new structures that allow it to flourish.



Process:

The School District requested an **aesthetic that would be seen as a learning environment for the future**. Architectural metal provided a modern look that contrasted with the brick and shingles of the school it replaced. In a climate where paint is often the walls weather barrier and the sun oxidizes the paint quickly, the choice of building finish has long term maintenance cost implications. Foreseeing a future lack of building renewal funds, the School District requested an exterior finish material that would be maintenance free. Architectural metal cladding was the only material that was felt to meet both of the above requirements.

It was important that the new buildings be seen as a chance to start anew rather than just replacement space. Along those lines, this was a chance to implement new ideas in education. **Papago School was designed to be the first school in the District that would integrate subjects, learn through doing, and collaborate internally and with the community.**

For that reason, the community of teachers, students, parents, and neighbors was brought in and helped brainstorm on layout ideas, both theoretical, spatial and practical. During multiple community programming sessions, ideas were recorded and members broke into groups and designed, presented and critiqued their “ideal” school.



“Ideal” School Brainstorm:

- Garden area – Tranquil
- Celebrate kids work
- Safe place for families
- Public access
- 21st century school
- Flexible
- Celebrates culture
- Celebrates diversity
- Celebrates learning
- Papago Sports Team
- Transparent
- Stimulating
- Engaging
- Tells a story about what’s happening in the school
- Connected to outdoors
- Papago World
- Teacher as a facilitator
- Access to content
- Caters to individual’s learning style
- Good human being
- Life skills
- Personal, social space
- Cohesive
- Serendipitous



Access and Gathering Spaces: The Community Court

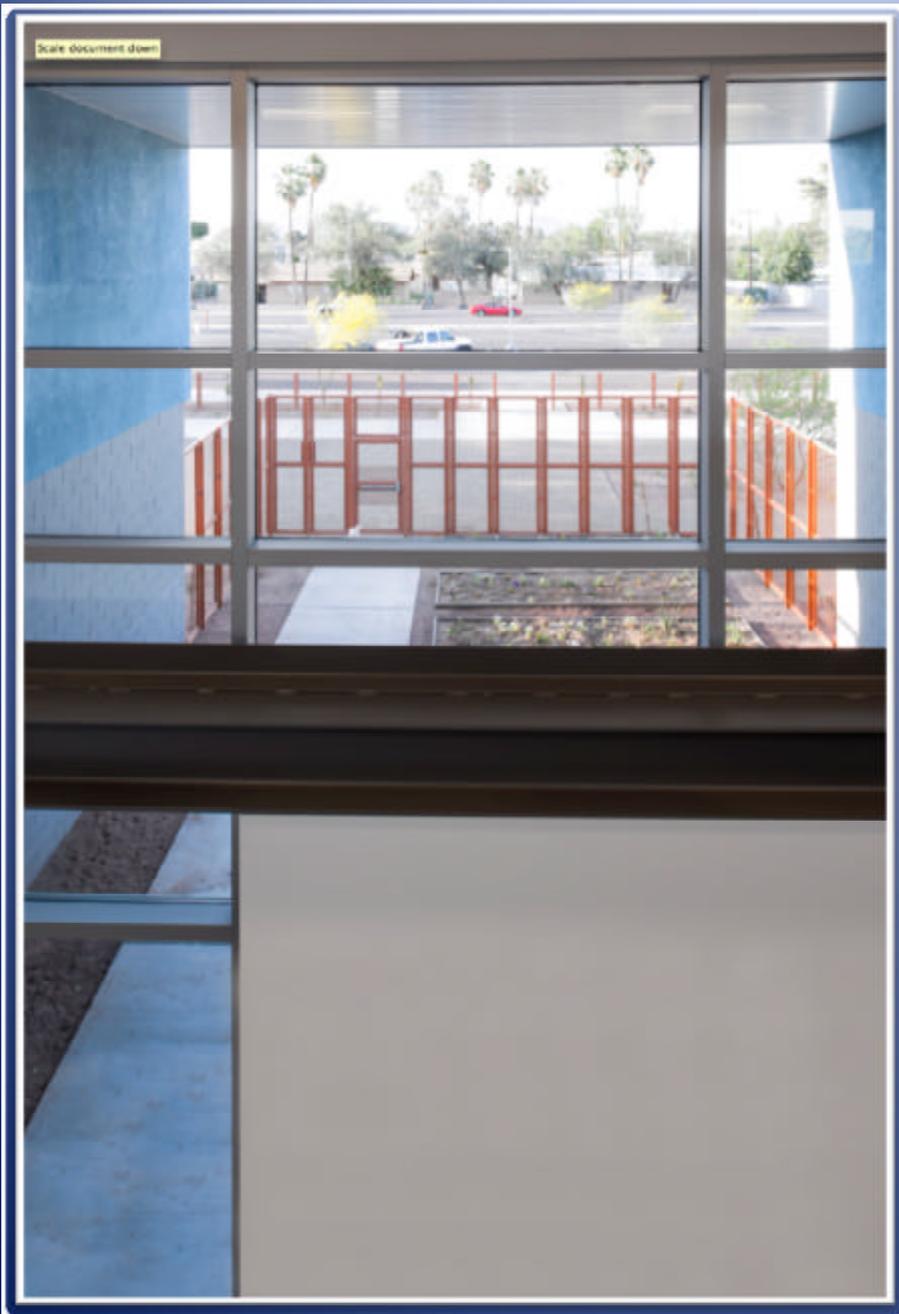
- Designed in a tight-knit community, most students walk to the campus.
- Pedestrian access was paramount
- Gathering spaces before school and at the end of the day was emphasized.
- **The canopy became a symbolic entrance and wayfinding device as well as as defining a functional shaded gathering area.**
- The memorial tree was preserved from the original campus and become the center piece of an exterior common where the soccer ball is often passed around before class.



Campus Neighborhoods

The Administrative offices continue the ideas from the **larger community of openness**. The storefront on the courtyard is another piece of the campus community village while providing views to the interior commons and “eyes on” supervision. Each neighborhood on the campus is subtly identifiable inside and out by finish palette, glazing and the era from which the quotations are taken





Transparency

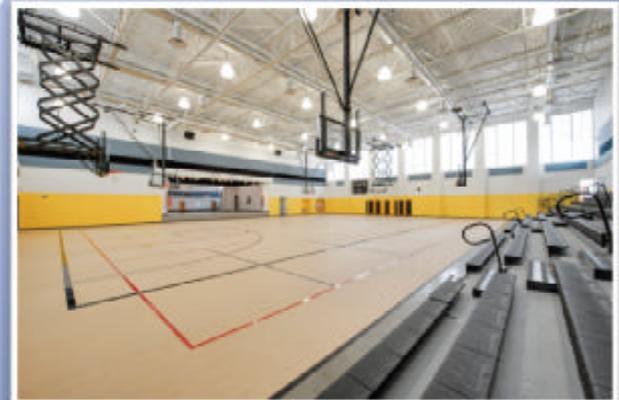
The idea of the carved “melon” allows the inside to spill out. Learning spaces turn to the exterior where, although they are still secured inside the campus, hands on activities can take place and simultaneously put those activities on view to the community.



Transparency and Serendipitous Learning

Transparency not only to the exterior but between formal learning spaces, common areas and impromptu learning spaces was deliberate. It was found that **impromptu spaces were more likely to be used if they were visually connected or integral to common space** and that teachers were more likely to break out of their comfort zone and try new ideas if their classrooms were visually open. Additionally, seventh and eighth grade students are exposed to elective classes that may be available to them in coming semesters.







Courtyard as “Commons”:

The interior courtyard serves as the traditional town commons. A combination of learning space, assembly space, practice space and impromptu collaboration space, the **courtyard is activated by its functional purpose as a central circulation space**



Enhancing the Life of the Commons:

Circulation elements were designed and arranged to enhance activities in the courtyard and support the ideas of serendipitous learning



Learning & Transparency in the Details:

The stair spaces were seen as design opportunities, rather than void spaces. Motivational signs, architectural details, and continued use of transparency were integrated into the stair spaces.



Media Center:

Current trends in media science do away with the circulation desk and bring the librarian out into the stacks

Project Data

Submitting Firm :	Orcutt Winslow
Project Role	Architect of Record
Project Contact	David Schmidt
Title	Project Architect/Manager
Address	3003 North Central Avenue, 16 th Floor
City, State or Province, Country	Phoenix, Arizona 85012, USA
Phone	602-257-1764

Joint Partner Firm:	N/A
Project Role	N/A
Project Contact	N/A
Title	N/A
Address	N/A
City, State or Province, Country	N/A
Phone	N/A

Other Firm:	N/A
Project Role	N/A
Project Contact	N/A
Title	N/A
Address	N/A
City, State or Province, Country	N/A
Phone	N/A

Construction Firm:	D. L. Withers Construction
Project Role	General Contractor
Project Contact	Brad Walker
Title	Senior Project Manager
Address	3220 East Harbour Drive
City, State or Province, Country	Phoenix, Arizona 85034, USA
Phone	602-438-9500

Project Details

Project Name	Papago School
City	Phoenix
State	Arizona
District Name	Creighton Elementary School District
Supt/President	Dr. Charlotte Boyle
Occupancy Date	1/04/2012
Grades Housed	K-8 and preschool
Capacity (Students)	1000 students
Site Size (acres)	14 acres
Gross Area (sq. ft.)	104,397 SF
Per Occupant(pupil)	104.40 SF/student
gross/net please indicate	gross
Design and Build?	No
If yes, Total Cost:	
Includes:	
Demolition	\$ 259,500
Site Development:	\$ 1,404,000
Building Construction:	\$14,740,500
Fixed Equipment:	Equipment costs not available
Other:	Soft costs not available
Total:	\$16,404,000