

2012 Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Crockett Elementary School

Houston
Renovation
Lee J Brockway Award
Natex Architects

Crockett Elementary School



Crockett Elementary School

Learning Environment:

Situated in less than 2 acres, Crockett Elementary School, originally built in the 60's with its first major addition in the 80's, had outgrown the increase in enrollment forecasted due to the tremendous rebirth of the area. Surrounded by new high density construction, Crockett Elementary School drew in additional students from many other areas of Houston due to its fame for a Magnet Fine Arts Elementary School. The District recognized the potential of this great school, its community and in particular the incredible staff that dedicated additional time and effort to produce some of the national award winning art, music and performance productions. Being in a tight urban site, the School also suffered from lack of on-site parking, appropriate playgrounds and exterior covered multi use facilities. The District purchased adjacent land that had several old polluted and dilapidated structures that posed a health and welfare threat to the community.



Adjacent polluted site before



New face of the site

Crockett Elementary School

Learning Environment:

By redeveloping this blighted area, the community has greatly benefited from the additions to Crockett Elementary School. Furthermore, it allowed the school to not only add the much needed education and administrative spaces, but it gave the school a better and more significant presence in the community. The design of the addition of the school verbalizes to the surrounding community the great achievements of the school in the Fine Arts area.



Old Main Entry



New Main Entry

Crockett Elementary School

Learning Environment:

As one moves inside the building the expression of music, the arts and performance continue to be reflected in the materials used and an element of surprise and vibrancy is introduced as one walks down the main hallway. Cleverly designed furr downs depict major entrances and/or key transition points with those incorporating instructional elements such as geometric shapes in each one, whereby kids can be taught about shapes, colors, music, rhythm, and movement, all in the main hallway. All these architectural features were designed in order to provide the kids a vibrant, inspirational and engaging environment, much different from the drab and dark interiors before.

Natural daylight is also a key design feature of the new addition whereby corridors and rooms are filled with natural northern daylight primarily with protected southern exposures and sloped ceilings to maximize light coming into the main spaces.



Crockett Elementary School

Learning Environment:

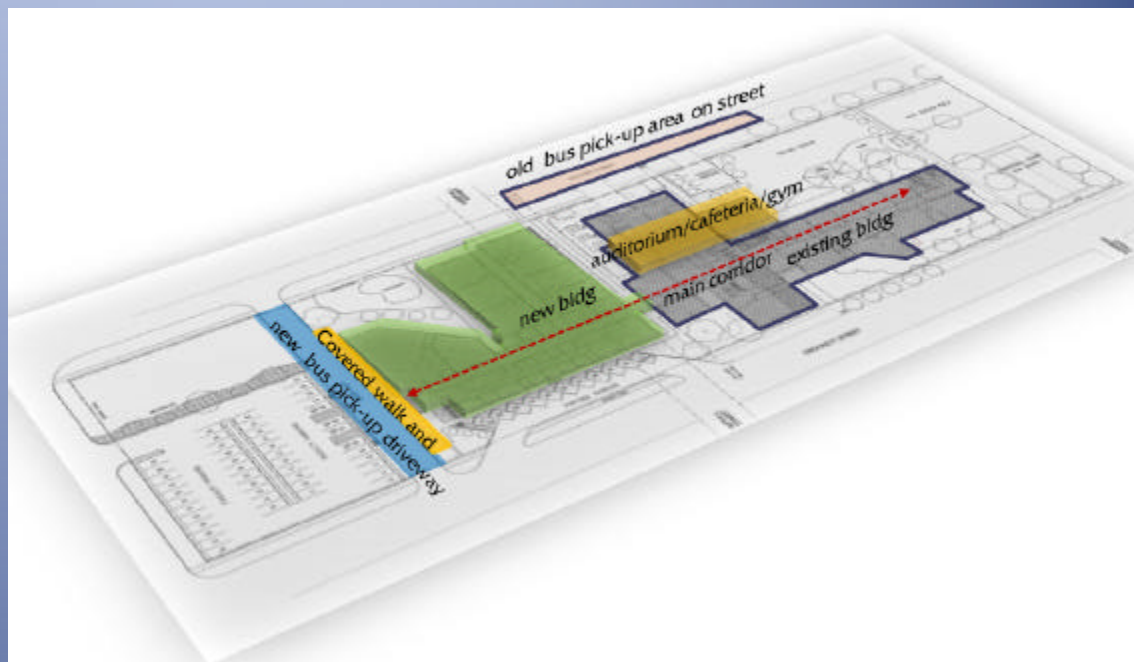
In the existing building, several spaces were reconfigured or added to in order to satisfy the needs of the fine arts school. Additions to the existing Orchestra and Piano Recital areas allowed for much needed individual and ensemble practice rooms. The existing library which was housed on an oversized classroom was moved to the new building allowing for a much more ample multi media center, library and computer room. The old library space was converted to a new Dance studio and Choir practice rooms. The existing cafeteria was not large enough to house the large crowds gathered to see the exceptional performance of the Nutcracker and several other functions, therefore an addition to the cafeteria also allowed us to not only provide the needed additional viewing space for the stage but a much needed interior conditioned gym for Houston's hot and humid weather!



Crockett Elementary School

Physical Environment :

One of the key elements of the addition/ renovation project was to improve the physical conditions of the existing school which due to its limited site, urban setting and design, did not properly allow for safe, secure and functional operations of the school. Being mostly a magnet school, children come from all areas and therefore parent drop/off and pick up was huge. This was accomplished by use of the public narrow open ditch streets that run parallel to the school and posed a great safety concern. The new design created a new double width one way pick up drive with a long covered canopy to allow for children's safe and secure drop off and pick up. This also allowed us to re-orient and give a new face to the front of the school, facing the newly redeveloped areas, where before it was almost undetected and had no presence in the community.



Crockett Elementary School

Physical Environment :

The building, having been designed to LEED certified standards, also presented the students with a healthier and more user friendly environment in which to learn. Opportunities for instruction in sustainable design were also implemented in several areas such as a water collection system for irrigation of their gardens, a study of paving materials to show students the different absorption rates of concrete, asphalt, grass and gravel, a new Nature garden with indigenous plantings and a Bioswale to also demonstrate water runoff and absorption.



Crockett Elementary School

Planning Process:

Knowing of the tight budget constraints of the school, we looked for way to maximize the use of the construction dollar to greatly enhance the school and to act as a beacon of Fine Arts for the entire neighborhood. We cleverly disguised structural elements, such as the exterior column, into a sculptural homage to the string instruments frequently played by the students at the school- "The design was morphed from several string instruments such as the guitar, cello, bass, violin, etc". We took great care in the design of every component in order to provide added value to the school- from the geometric furr downs, the letters on the walls, to the beautiful piano keyboard and performance elements on the floor.



Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Project Data

Submitting Firm :	Natex Architects
Project Role	Project Architect
Project Contact	Carolina Weitzman
Title	President / Principal in Charge
Address	2500 Wilcrest
City, State or Province, Country	Houston, TX 77042
Phone	713-975-9525

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

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

Construction Firm:	Comex Corporation
Project Role	Contractor
Project Contact	David Walker
Title	Vice President
Address	9841 Spencer Highway
City, State or Province, Country	LaPort, TX 77571
Phone	281-479-2322

Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Project Details

Project Name	Crockett Elementary School Add. & Reno.
City	Houston
State	TX
District Name	Houston Independent School District
Supt/President	Terry Grier
Occupancy Date	May 3 2011
Grades Housed	Pre-K-5
Capacity(Students)	640
Site Size (acres)	3.5 Acres
Gross Area (sq. ft.)	62450
Per Occupant(pupil)	97 sf/student
gross/net please indicate	
Design and Build?	No
If yes, Total Cost:	
Includes:	
If no,	
Site Development:	\$850,000
Building Construction:	\$180,000
Fixed Equipment:	
Other:	
Total:	\$5,830,000

Crockett Elementary School



We ran a capital campaign among local Houston Arts patrons to raise an additional \$35,000 in funds to commission the artwork composition found in the main entry lobby. We hired Floyd Newsum, a local artist and professor of art at UH Downtown, to work collaboratively with the children of the school to develop the art glass that decorates the front of the building. "Engaging the students in the design of the art glass was truly inspirational and really allowed their creative minds to manifest themselves into this major component of the building" stated Newsum. All aspects of the Fine Arts are represented in this cleverly designed piece and although only enough funds were raised to do the front, the full piece is already designed and the design of the storefront has allowed for the pieces to be replaced with the art work as funds continue to be raised in the future.

