

General Gordon Elementary P.A.C.

Yellow School House

Promita Abraham and myself, Victoria Stephens are Co-Chairs of the General Gordon Elementary P.A.C. We have come to speak to you today in support of the VSB recommendation to demolish the Gordon Yellow Outbuilding otherwise known as the Yellow School House.

As you know, our belief has been that the outbuilding or the space that it occupies should be used to benefit the Gordon community. More than three and half years have passed since the seismic upgrade plan was updated to include demolition of the outbuilding in the summer of 2013, but no acceptable proposal to use the building has been received by the VSB. We feel it is now time to let go of the outbuilding and get on with creating an exciting addition to the play space that will directly benefit the students of Gordon as well as the wider community.

We have noticed in the local media recently that older photographs have been used to depict the schoolhouse. We would like to show you what the building looks like now, unfortunately due to a suitable proponent not being found. It has fallen into disrepair and is a health and safety risk for our children at Gordon.

We believe the Board has done its due diligence in exploring options to salvage the schoolhouse. The Board also committed clearly to proceeding with demolition if salvage or restoration was not deemed possible. Given that salvage and restoration does not appear to be possible due to costs and lack of partnerships, we support the recommendation for demolition.

The PAC sees it more as the creation of a wonderful green area and additional playground space for our children. The school ground is fairly small as compared to other schools. The additional space to run and play would mean a great deal to our children.

The PAC proposed vision for the space includes recreating a much-loved butterfly garden that was lost during the seismic upgrade of the school. Other possibilities for the space are

- An outdoor sitting area/classroom
- Raised vegetable beds
- Meditation garden
- Playground space

It is a sunny spacious corner suitable to the needs of plants. A simple native plant zone like we had before to model and teach pollination and the multiple connections to science will be easy to create and maintain, affordable and incredibly therapeutic in our urban environment. It is surprising what children will eat when they have grown it themselves. It will not only be a wonderful energizing place for our children but also serve the community as well.

The Gordon community has a long history of working with the VSB to improve and maintain our playground including the creation of the large grassy area, the butterfly garden and planting many trees, and that will continue, thanks to the efforts of many parents and teachers. Some features were lost during the seismic upgrade, but the PAC has already raised and spent more than \$80,000 on trees and new playground equipment. We are excited and hopeful at the prospect of contributing to the creation of more playground and green space for our children and many future generations at Gordon.

We thank you for your time and listening on behalf of all our Gordon children and parents. We hope that all parties will realise the benefit of the new space and help us in achieving it.