



JERRY SANDERS  
MAYOR

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SAN DIEGO  
COUNTY GRAND JURY

July 13, 2007

Honorable Janis Sammartino  
Presiding Judge  
San Diego County Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
330 West Broadway, Suite 477  
San Diego, CA 92101-3830

Dear Judge Sammartino:

**Subject:** 2006-2007 Grand Jury Report entitled "Proposed San Diego Main Library – One for the books"

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05(a), (b), and (c), the City of San Diego provides the following responses to the findings and recommendations in the above-entitled Grand Jury Report:

**Finding 1:** The current library was designed to accommodate a population of fewer than 500,000, and to accommodate the electrical, electronic, earthquake, parking and storage requirements of the 1950's. It would be impossible to retrofit the current building to satisfy those requirements for 2007 and beyond.

**Partially Agree.** Although the building may be suitable for conversion into another use, it is not physically or financially feasible to achieve the new main library program's intent. More than half the book collection is currently stored in the basement and must be retrieved individually by staff. The power and telecommunication needs of the existing building restrict the Library's ability to provide enough computers, and there is no room for many of the programs that are typical of other main libraries. All of these things combine to make the existing facility expensive to run and provides the public with less than adequate access to the reading materials and programs that are only found at the main library

Remodeling the existing facility was considered when selecting a site and found to be prohibitively expensive. Bringing the building up to current code, expanding the space to fit the program, and dealing with the historical designation of the existing building is impractical. In addition, parking is an issue that would be addressed at the new main library.

**Finding 2:** Following several studies and community inputs a library site was selected at 11<sup>th</sup> and Park Boulevard.

**Agree.**

**Finding 3:** CCDC provided \$80 million; the library received a grant of \$20 million from the State of California and \$3 million from private donors. The 2005 estimate to build a state of the art library was \$150 million.

**Agree.**

**Finding 4:** Op-Ed articles and letters to the San Diego Union Tribune refer to the new library design as ugly. According to these, the dome and other trivial design aspects detract from building utility and add to the costs of construction and on-going maintenance.

**Disagree.** Sorting through a comprehensive collection of the San Diego Union Tribune clippings kept by Rob Quigley Architects from 1997 through 2006, we find that the newspaper ran 22 Op-Ed pieces (including staff editorials, guest editorials, and architectural commentaries) which were in support of the New Main Library - its architecture, its site, and the need for such a facility. Only two editorials opposed the library - one written by a former City Council member, the other the San Diego Taxpayers Association. Both of these guest editorials argued that the library was too expensive and not needed. Neither mentioned the building's design.

It is true that between 1997 and 2007, many people wrote letters to the Union Tribune claiming the New Main Library was unattractive, not useful, wouldn't provide enough parking, or was not needed. From the Quigley clipping collection, we count a total of 30 anti-library letters, four of which were written by the same person. However, in this same time period, 26 people wrote to the editor in support of the New Main Library. These positive voices should also be recorded in the Grand Jury Report.

Furthermore, the design was chosen by a Citizens Design Review Committee from 27 applicants from Europe, Asia and North America before narrowing the field to nine to interview and four to make public presentations. There were also numerous opportunities for library consultants and the general public to give their feedback prior to the selection of the architectural team of Rob Wellington Quigley/Tucker Sadler Architects as well as the multi-year design process that followed.

The early design process was unusual in that the public was directly involved with the architects. A series of interactive workshops involving hundreds of citizens helped determine three concept designs. These were presented back to the public in the form of a 2,000-square-foot exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art in downtown San Diego. The exhibit broke records for attendance and remains to this day one of the museum's best-attended shows. Citizens commented on all three schemes and selected the dome scheme for the architects to develop.

Every aspect of the design features have a purpose and are an integral part of the overall design concept and philosophy. The dome is not only an identifiable design element for the building; it is also a shading device to reduce heat loads inside the building. It is a very low maintenance structure. The same is true for the "louvers" on the east and south exterior façades of the buildings. These serve as shading devices, and provide for the opportunity to incorporate photovoltaics in the future. Photovoltaics will reduce the electrical expenses 10% to 15%. Materials selected for the building are long lasting and durable requiring little maintenance. Many of the wall surfaces are exposed concrete surfaces, with few exceptions. Those exceptions have other durable materials such as a ceramic tile.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**07-60:** Consider a bond issue to completely fund the construction of the proposed main library. This would encourage personal loans to keep library construction on track. The loans could be repaid following the passage of the bond. Should the bond fail, the loans would be considered contributions.

**Response:** The recommendation will not be implemented. There are enough funds in the private sector to meet the fundraising goal and this project should not rely on public financing. I will continue to meet with potential donors, and am confident that the San Diego Public Library Foundation will raise the needed funds.

### **COMMENDATION:**

The Jury commends the entire San Diego Main Library staff for its continued efforts to provide acceptable library services despite multiple shortcomings.

We are proud of our high performing Library staff and share the Grand Jury's appreciation of their work.

Sincerely,



JERRY SANDERS

Mayor

JS/bj

cc: San Diego County Grand Jury  
Chief Operating Officer  
City Council  
Department Director  
City Clerk  
Administration Department Director