

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PROPERTY

*Superior Court – Building 220
495 Main Street
Placerville*

Reason for the Report

The Grand Jury selected the Superior Court Building as one of its general reviews for 2002/2003.

Scope of the Investigation

The members of the Grand Jury:

- Made an unannounced visit to the Superior Court on November 21, 2002;
- Received an extensive facilities and grounds tour by the Court Operations Supervisor;
- Were briefed on the various judicial operations of the facility;
- Inspected the building and grounds;
- Spoke informally with various staff members;
- Reviewed previous Grand Jury reports.

Background

The Superior Court Building was built in 1912. Over the years the building has undergone renovations while still trying to maintain the historic construction of the original building.

The current condition of the building exterior is in need of maintenance and repair. While some exterior wall tiles are damaged, the roofline corbel brackets and tiles are loose, missing or in poor repair. Walls and windows on the shaded side of the building have mold and mildew growing and the window and doorframes are rusting. The metal fire escape structure is rusting and its landings are dirty. The plastered-wall area around basement windows is deteriorating. The awning over the rear door entry is damaged.

Parking is very limited and inadequate. Several parking spaces have been removed from use, due to the danger of falling corbel brackets and tiles which further complicates the parking situation.

The premises' interior appear clean but far from adequate for its usage. The security checkpoint is inadequate for the heavy traffic situations. The lobby areas are too small. They are used as waiting area for the courts, conference area for clients/attorneys, juries, and the public. In addition, office areas are extremely cramped and lack storage space. Air circulation is inconsistent and makeshift throughout the building. The heating and cooling system (HVAC) is inadequate during heavy usage. In addition to the HVAC, window heating/cooling units, personal fans and space heaters are also used throughout the building. These conditions,

combined with asbestos in the walls, result in some employees believing the working environment is unhealthy. However, environmental tests have not substantiated these beliefs. Employees are concerned because they believe the restroom configuration results in vandalism by the public and is an inconvenience for them.

Findings

- F1. The roofline corbel brackets and tiles are loose, missing, and/or in poor repair.
- F2. Valuable parking space has been lost, due to the danger of falling corbel brackets and tiles.
- F3. The parking lot is inadequate.
- F4. Mold and mildew are growing on the shaded exterior side of the building walls and windows.
- F5. The door and window frames on the exterior shaded side of the building are rusting.
- F6. The fire escape metal structure is rusting and the landings are dirty.
- F7. The exterior plaster area around basement windows is deteriorating.
- F8. Some exterior wall tiles are damaged.
- F9. The awning over the rear door entry is damaged.
- F10. The handicap sign on the front wall near the sidewalk is bent outward and is a potential liability.
- F11. The security checkpoint is inadequate room for heavy traffic situations.
- F12. The space in the three lobbies is inadequate for current use.
- F13. The office areas are extremely cramped and lack storage space.
- F14. No fire protection sprinkler systems or smoke detectors exist throughout the building.
- F15. Some fire extinguisher locations are not clearly marked.
- F16. No fire drills are held.
- F17. The light diffusers on some lighting fixtures are sagging and ill fitted. In addition, one diffuser is missing in the CASA children's room.

- F18. Air circulation is inconsistent and makeshift throughout the building.
- F19. Several employees are concerned about the perceived unhealthy working environment in the building.
- F20. Employees are concerned that the restroom configuration results in vandalism by the public and inconvenient for them.

Recommendations

- R1. Roofline corbel brackets and tiles should be replaced or repaired.
- R2. Adequate parking should be provided
- R3. Mold and mildew should be removed from the exterior building walls and windows.
- R4. Rusted exterior door and window frames should be properly repaired and maintained.
- R5. Rusted fire escape metal structures should be properly repaired and maintained.
- R6. The exterior plaster area around windows should be properly repaired.
- R7. Damaged exterior tiles should be replaced.
- R8. The rear door awning should be repaired.
- R9. The bent handicap sign on the front wall near the sidewalk should be replaced.
- R10. Fire extinguisher locations should be clearly marked.
- R 11. Fire drills should be periodically conducted.
- R12. The lighting fixtures diffusers should be properly installed and/or replaced as necessary.
- R13. Air circulation should be reviewed to ensure a healthy working environment.
- R14. When juvenile cares are on calendar, restrooms should be monitored.

Responses Required for Findings

F1 through F20

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
El Dorado County Department of General Services
Chief Executive Officer for Superior Court

Responses Required for Recommendations

R1 through R14

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