

Public Meeting  
Alternative Re-Use  
Bldg 521 Great Lakes  
28 Jan 08

An information meeting was held for the general public on 28 Jan 08 at the Visitor's Center, Bldg 6130, Great Lakes 1600-1800CST.

Purpose – To provide information for re-use alternatives and any new re-use for the building. Questions will be held until the end of the presentation.

Welcome by Cdr. Beth Lin Hartmann, Deputy Regional Engineer, Navy Region Midwest/Executive Officer, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Midwest

Introduction of Captain Schnell, Commanding Officer, NAVSTA Great Lakes, and other Navy representatives.

Introduction of Anne Haaker, Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer.  
Representatives of the Consulting Parties (Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois, National Trust for Historic Preservation, do co mo mo, Mies van der Rohe Society, City of Highland Park)

Cdr. Beth Hartmann presented a slide show for Alternative Re-Use of Bldg 521, Great Lakes. Jason Stanley and Russell Gillchrist of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, (SOM) presented a slide show on the SOM's history on the building.

The floor was opened for questions:

Q -- Why won't a new galley work in Bldg 521?

A -- The Navy hasn't received funding support from Leadership. Great Lakes already has a galley and club. Galleys and clubs are operated differently.

Comment -- The building is recognized by the Navy as a 50-year old building. These buildings are important for future students. We (the public) feel the Navy does not think the building is important.

Q --What kind of master plan exists? Can other operations be consolidated into the building?

A -- Great Lakes does have a master plan. Presently Great Lakes has 43 other major contributing building in the Historic District; some aren't fully utilized and we preserve what we can. Great Lakes is a student-pedestrian campus and Bldg 521 doesn't lend itself to an administration area.

Q -- Are these documents (Master Plan) available to the general public?

A -- No, for security reasons. New construction projects cannot be pre-decisional and Great Lakes must be cautious on what can be released.

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Q -- The Navy should look at a consolidation of spaces into Bldg 521. Why can't you move other departments into Bldg 521?

A -- Consolidation of spaces would be a budget issue. Renovation and new construction are two different funding streams. Planners need to look if this building can serve the Navy mission: is it a cost effective to move other commands and keep/renovate the building? The Navy evaluates all this and whether to build new.

Q -- What if you look at the building as historic first and then look at re-use ideas. How to save a building and change the premise to save.

A -- The purpose of this meeting is to ask the public for new ideas. We are under financial constraints. This meeting is aimed at the general public for new ideas – we've been in formal consultations for 2+ years and already discussed re-use alternatives.

Q -- Have other Federal agencies/DOD been asked to re-use?

A -- We are approached by other government agencies, but not for this space. A major issue is its location within the Great Lakes fenceline (a secure area) and in a student/pedestrian campus.

Q -- What about mothballing the building? Can it be re-used as a cafeteria; doesn't the Navy want one? Can the Navy mothball the building until you find a new re-use?

A -- The Navy & Consulting Parties looked at re-use as a galley. Mothballing the building until a re-use is found would require funds.

Q -- How much money does the Navy spend on the building?

A -- Based on historical data, \$600K was spent on maintenance and utilities when there was a population present. During FY 2007 (vacant), there was \$358K spent on maintenance and utilities.

Q -- Is the building structurally sound?

A -- The building is sound; over the years, movement of the guns caused the windows to shake and glazing fall out. In addition, the building needs a new roof. It would take \$3-5M just to bring the shell up to an acceptable level.

Q -- How long would the Navy need to restore the building?

A -- It depends on what the proposal submitted.

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Q -- What is the master plan use for this site? Originally a galley was planned for re-use; now something different?

A -- Consultations began 2+ years ago and we have a base Master Plan. During consultations the plan changed and is very fluid. The site could still be a galley, but smaller (possibly two galleys). Also Bldg 521 is too large for just one galley.

The master plan is for 10 years. We currently have no plans for the site; but something eventually could be planned for the site.

Q -- Can we force the Navy to use Bldg 521?

A -- It depends on the dollars; this is tax payer dollars. Also, it's within a pedestrian campus (restricting access, driving and parking) and must be built around.

Q -- What are the criteria/limitations on potential developers? Could you explain issues would come up 5-10 years down the line?

A -- The training function here won't change. A lease agreement is a possibility; this works best outside a fenceline; a lease here may be difficult in the middle of the campus. Presently there are no Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) agreements here at Great Lakes. An example of an existing EUL (as a shopping center) is at another Navy base in Hawaii. More information will be provided via email to the Consulting Parties regarding the Navy's EUL program ([www.navyeul.com](http://www.navyeul.com)). Again, we have fenceline limitations with Bldg 521.

Q -- What about offering up the building and locating it somewhere else?

A -- The Navy can analyze moving the building and gifting/donating it to somewhere off base. We need a proposal from someone who is interested in receiving it. It should be on a company's letterhead showing they are interested in following through.

Q -- There are some private entities on the base (McDonalds Restaurants, Forest City Housing). Why can't you release the master plan? Is there a private fitness center that can work with the Navy as a co-operative?

A -- Fitness work-out at Great Lakes can include up to 200 students at a time doing physical training (running, calisthenics, etc), and wouldn't lend itself to a private fitness center. The Navy has a focus on keeping its sailors fit. Locating a Bally's here would be hampered by the lack of access and parking. In addition, Bally's would want to make a profit and there are fitness centers here that active duty, retirees and civilians can use for no cost.

The sailors at Great Lakes focus on training, sleeping, eating and working-out.

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The base is a campus, unlike an outside civilian campus. The sailors lack other amenities such as driving cars and having to wear a uniform. Sailors are processed and trained here. The City of North Chicago approached Great Lakes and asked what institutions sailors would be interested in patronizing (off-base). The Navy responded that North Chicago shouldn't build anything special for them, as the Base has everything they need. On weekends, some sailors tend to leave the Base and go to Gurnee Mills Mall.

We may put a new galley at the site. Bldg 521 is too large for re-use as a galley. One big galley at the North end is not meeting the needs of the Navy. This is a limited amount of money for projects.

Q -- Look at the bottom line with demolition costs and remediation. Can the building be mothballed until there is a need?

A -- The Navy and consulting parties have looked at a costs analysis for re-use and demolition. We're spending \$70M on projects in historical buildings. The Navy is fighting a war and doesn't demolish by neglect. We just don't have the money to do all that we want.

Q -- Are you making the best effort? Investigate other opportunities. Let the building sit until a new mission comes up.

A -- We're not making any decisions today.

Q -- Have you put up historic plaques or signage about this building for students' benefit to show the historic significance of the building?

A -- There are historic plaques throughout the base showing Great Lakes history.

Q -- You are asking the Public for re-use ideas today. Do you ask the sailors what they want at the base?

A -- Sailors are here for a short time; 3-6 months. Their job is to be trained & go to the fleet. They have all they need here. There is a Quality of Life Board that meets here and hears suggestions for wishes of the sailors.

Q -- Are there any environmental issues associated with the building?

A -- There are no major pollution issues at Bldg 521. There maybe some small amounts of lead paint, asbestos and/or oil issues.

Q -- What about the February 13, 2008 deadline for public comment?

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A -- The next step is the review of written public comments (should be sent to Ms. Maria Sus; address/email in handout) by the Navy/SHPO/ACHP and Consulting Parties. All Parties will meet later in February to discuss any new proposals.

Thanks to SOM for their presentation and all attendees.