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## A Green Feather for East Hampton's Cap

By Kate Maier

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While discussions on the possibility of a crisis between East Hampton and its feeder districts continued on the home front,



Beatty, Harvey and Associates

The use of filtered natural light will provide more than energy savings for East Hampton High School's modern food court. Architects and state officials predict it will also elevate the health and mood of the students who spend time there.

Raymond Gualtieri, the superintendent of East Hampton schools, was in Albany last Thursday, where he spoke at a press conference regarding the soon-to-be-renovated high school's impending status as the "first green school in the state."

Under newly defined guidelines announced that day by State Education Department officials, East Hampton has been the first district to submit an application for a building project that will be certified by the New York State Collaborative for High Performance Schools.

Although the State Education Department has earmarked \$1.7 billion dollars for statewide building aid this year alone, so far there is no direct monetary benefit for schools that choose to "go green" under the new, voluntary guidelines.

"There's no monetary incentive for East Hampton to do it," admitted John Tanzi, of Beatty, Harvey, and Associates, the architectural firm the board has hired to work on the project. "But I commend certainly the board and the superintendent on their vision. It would be very easy to say, nah, let's do it like everybody else."

Mr. Tanzi said that while there are no dollars set aside at the state level specifically for green building projects, "not everything's in place yet. We would hope being the first one, that we would set the standard."

The concept of green building in the district-wide expansion project, approved by voters in a \$79 million bond referendum in May of 2006, was brought to the table by Mr. Tanzi's firm, which boasts a long track record of green building practices in municipal projects, including schools and libraries. Fifty-eight million of those dollars are slated to go toward the high school project, which will be expanded by 90,000 square feet and undergo a massive renovation.

When the referendum was passed, it was anticipated that students from Montauk, Springs, Amagansett, Wainscott, and Sagaponack would be part



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of the school population, and that they would help to foot the bill through a tuition formula that includes construction costs in its calculation. With the possible threat of Springs pulling out of the high school, school board members and administrators have warned that the project would be scaled back accordingly.

Dr. Gualtieri suggested that alternate plans have been discussed, such as eliminating between three and nine classrooms “in different sections based on the number of students.” According to the superintendent, the architects have alternate plans waiting in the wings should any of the feeder districts opt to pull out before the renovation project starts.

Should the project be scaled back, Mr. Gualtieri said architects have estimated savings of approximately \$250,000 per classroom. If nine classrooms were omitted from construction plans because Springs was able to find an alternative solution for some of its high school students, the cost of the project would drop from \$58 million to \$55.75 million.

While Mr. Tanzi said the green project is “marginally more expensive” than traditional building, savings gained over time from energy conserved by features such as extra insulation and strategic natural light absorption and deflection would outweigh the initial investment. Unlike a business, which may change hands in a relatively short period of time, schools are excellent candidates for reaping the benefits of energy conservation, he said. “In 5, 10, or 15 years, you’re looking at that savings.”

Energy conservation and providing a healthy building are two of the main components of the state’s new guidelines, Mr. Tanzi explained. Recycled materials will be used for many aspects of the renovation, such as a thicker envelope of insulation. In the proposed high-ceilinged cafeteria, and in the rest of the school, an estimated 80 percent of the glass will be translucent. “It lets in a lot of light, but it filters out the direct rays, and minimizes the heat gain in a space,” said Mr. Tanzi.

But for New York State, the health of the students who occupy the building is also a primary concern. A new ductwork system will have “highly efficient and tightly woven filters,” and something as simple as walk-off mats will reduce the volume of allergens in the building.

As one of the first members of the United States Green Building Council, Mr. Tanzi’s firm has worked on countless sustainable projects. “We make sure the glues, paints, and adhesives have low V.O.C.s [volatile organic compounds], which means they don’t give off hazardous gases so that stuff doesn’t get trapped and give off gas in the school.”

Despite its long-held association with energy conservation, Mr. Tanzi said that solar energy would likely not be in the school’s future. “There have not been any plans to employ any photovoltaic panels,” he said. Even with rebates, “the cost of doing that versus the benefits” is not advantageous. “In a project like a school,” he added, “the nature of public bidding sometimes makes it a little bit more difficult.”

