



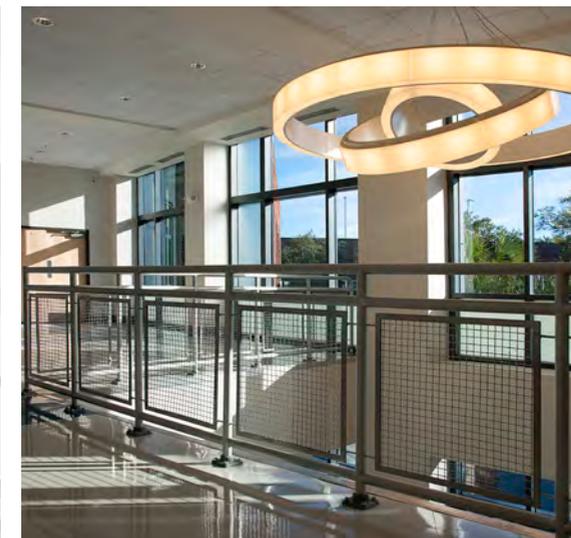
**A Penny Well Spent
Memminger Elementary School**

What's a penny worth these days?

Turns out it's worth a lot, if it comes in the form of the One Cent Sales Tax implemented by Charleston County in 2010. Those pennies have added up to a \$450 million, 5-year building program funding a number of public projects, starting with the recapitalization of 4 historic Charleston school campuses. Historic Memminger Elementary is among these 4.

The new 77,000 SF Memminger School replaced an outdated and seismically unsafe 1950's facility on Beaufain Street in the heart of Charleston's historic downtown. Accommodating 500 students in grades K-6, the new building opened just in time for the start of the 2013 school year. Administrators, staff, and students are all giving the building high marks. "LS3P has done an outstanding job designing the school to support its instructional mission in a way that pays homage to the historical schools that formerly occupied the campus," states Bill Lewis, Chief Operating Officer for Capital Programs for Charleston County's School District. "Memminger is now a point of pride in the community and the whole City of Charleston. "

Memminger Elementary provided a unique set of design challenges due to its historic downtown site on a school yard dating back to the 1800's. LS3P conducted extensive site analysis, researched the unique character of the school, and held numerous public meetings to gather community input. Key design decisions included keeping the scale of the building compatible with its surroundings, taking advantage of significant views, and carefully selecting forward-looking materials which also complement the neighborhood context.



Central to the design concept was the treatment of a curved historic wall surrounding the property. Originally built to "protect" the former girls' school site from the historically "port" city, the wall had become an isolating factor. The design team researched the wall's history and construction, then removed significant portions which were much later additions and re-constructed historic gate entries to better connect the schoolyard to the community.

The result? An enlivened, re-energized school which provides leading-edge educational spaces for its students. A new entry serves as the public face of the school, welcoming students and transforming the streetscape with a building which honors the past and looks toward the future. The design responds to the historic garden and large oak trees of the original school yard, mirroring the curved garden wall with a curved façade at the site's prominent corner. Lively common areas such as the cafeteria and multipurpose room are aligned with Beaufain Street, while quieter educational spaces are clustered in a classroom wing with abundant natural light. This wing and its cupola pay homage to the former school building and its orientation on the site.

In addition to being safer, more accessible, and more efficient than its predecessor, the new building is also designed for sustainability. High-performance mechanical systems, orientation for daylighting and passive solar strategies, low-emitting materials, and enhanced acoustics all help to make the school a greener, brighter, more cost-effective, and more enjoyable place in which to learn.

And that...is a penny well spent.



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