



## RATIO

Architecture Preservation Interior Design Landscape Architecture Urban Design + Planning Graphic De

06 April 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

We were asked to opine on the potential of renovating the former Idaho Job Service building on Highway 55 into a new McCall Public Library. I was quickly reminded of an article that appeared in *American Libraries* magazine in September 2018 titled “Repurpose with a Purpose- Converting nonlibrary spaces into public libraries”. The article begins with the following thoughts: “When a community needs a new library building, people frequently suggest converting existing—usually vacant structures into a library.” The article further states “In all conversion situations, one of the major problems involves the building shaping the library rather than the library shaping the building. If too many of the basic needs are compromised, the result is at best dysfunction and at worst an amazing waste of money.”

Our firm has been involved in the successful conversion of a variety of existing buildings into libraries. These transformations have included a 20-lane bowling center, a religious chapel, a moving and storage building, a grocery store, a shopping center, and a building supply store to name just a few. We are strong advocates of repurposing abandoned buildings for reuse. However, based upon our initial review of the Idaho Job Service building we are of the opinion remodeling the building into the new McCall Public Library will result in the building shaping the library rather than the library shaping the building, resulting in it being a dysfunctional library.

First, the building’s location is not preferred in terms of reinforcing the synergy of McCall’s Civic Campus and Downtown even though auto access from the highway appears to be convenient with plenty of parking. Our firm completed a study for the City of McCall in 2015 recommending that a library of 12,000 sf- 15,000 sf of space is required to serve the community. Obviously, the former Idaho Jobs Service building at 9,000 sf could accommodate an appropriately sized addition, but that would require more design fees and reduce the amount of parking available.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Page 2

April 8, 2020

More importantly, the building's primary liability of being renovated into a new McCall Public Library is that it was designed as an office building. Building codes require that a library must be designed with a floor loading capacity of 150 lbs/sf to accommodate the weight of the bookstacks. Office buildings are typically designed with a floor loading of 50 lbs/sf or approximately 1/3 the capacity needed as a library. Unfortunately, the building documents for the Idaho Job Service building reflect that it was likely constructed over a crawl space. Significant costs would be required to reinforce the floor to meet this structural requirement. In addition, the floors would also require reinforcing in a specialized manner to accommodate the seismic restraint mandated by today's building codes to prevent the bookstacks from falling. The ceilings in the existing building appear to be limited to approximately 9 ft high. Libraries require taller ceilings to accommodate the book stacks with appropriate lighting levels. And finally, the building appears to have thermal insulation to meet the requirements of the applicable codes at the time of its construction. In contrast, the proposed new McCall Public Library has been designed to utilize approximately 45% of the energy requirement to meet today's more stringent energy codes. Thus, the new library as proposed with design input from Skylar Swinford will save significant dollars in energy usage over time on an annual basis.

The former Idaho Job Service building appears to be a great building to be repurposed—but repurposed as an office building. It has many great attributes that might serve the community for years in that capacity. Attempting to transform that building into a library would severely limit the future of the community's library services and, in our opinion, be an amazing waste of money as previously referenced in the *American Libraries* article.

Dennis Humphries AIA



Principal/Partner