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The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of a request from St Albans Edu-care Centre for funding to upgrade their premises in Thames Street.

BACKGROUND

In 1998 the centre was granted \$7,500 being half the cost of providing staff room/storage area. The centre intended to site a relocatable building on the site to replace the present garage used as a staff room and store. This money has been carried forward to the current year.

Since then the Education Review Office and Crown Public Health have required the centre to undertake other upgrades to meet Ministry regulations and Health and Safety requirements.

The centre was advised by Council staff to put their funding to the Ministry upgrades including the Board's Project Fund grant of \$7,500 and to put the staff room/storage building on hold meantime. This would allow the centre to continue its operations.

FUTURE OF BUILDING

The current building has undergone many changes to accommodate the needs of the Centre and to meet Ministry and Health regulations, over the last ten years.

It has been suggested that it is timely to look at the long-term needs of the centre and whether a new site/building should be considered; or major redevelopment of the present site. A needs analysis is to be commenced shortly to identify needs and possible options. Funding priority for any major redevelopment or new premises will have to go through the Council's Capital Projects prioritising for inclusion in the 5 Year Programme.

PRESENT REQUEST FROM CENTRE

The Centre has forwarded the following letter for consideration by the Board:

"Reference your letters dated 15 July and 7 September 1999, it is imperative to renovate the building and we wish to do this over the Christmas break when the Pre-school is closed, from 18 December to 27 January.

We have struggled to find builders willing to complete the work and have decided to use Armitage Williams and their plumber for the job. Please see the enclosed quote for details.

We are now seeking funding to complete this. We have applied to the Ministry of Education and the Community Trust for grants and await their replies, which will probably be late November.

Fundraising has been a priority for our committee this year; we can contribute \$5,000 ourselves but require \$5,000 from the Shirley/Papanui Community Board.

Management Committee, Parents and Staff ask the following:

- That at the next Shirley/Papanui Board meeting you discuss meeting any shortfall in costs that we are unable to raise to pay \$17,529.00 to renovate the building.*
- That the Board also discusses providing us with the \$7,500 to complete our staff room/store room as the storage area is imperative now that the preschool building is being altered and we are removing some storage to make alterations possible.*
- We need your assurances of funds to enable us to engage Armitage Williams and Skyline Garages, as soon as possible, so they can book the work in over the period we are closed at Christmas. Armitage Williams tell us the work will take three weeks and they are committed with the Y2K so may have staffing problems so would like to start our job prior to Christmas.*
- We must inform our parents if we are going to be closed any longer than the dates previously mentioned.*
- The building restrictions of our current preschool being too small prompt our plea for an immediate needs analysis, so another site and building can be a priority for the Council and our Committee.*

Committee representatives and our Supervisor Heather Alderton are happy to attend the next meeting of the Shirley/Papanui Community Board, if necessary. We welcome a visit from the Board or any members to discuss this application further.”

CONCLUSION

The work proposed at a cost of \$17,529 would bring the building up to a standard to comply with the standards and regulations required by the Ministry and Crown Public Health. However, this cost does not include the relocatable garage for use as a storage/staff room unit.

The lack of staffroom and storage space is understood, however the value of spending additional funds on further piecemeal additions needs careful consideration. Provision of the relocatable garage, would still leave the Centre with a building and grounds which fall short of a good childcare facility.

It should be noted when discussing this matter that it is the physical building and outdoor area which is below standard. The Education Review Office report is extremely positive and complimentary in regard to staff, management and educational care provided by the Centre, and concludes:

“The centre provides a warm, homely environment, and good standard of care and education. A well organised programme that provides an appropriate balance between free play and adult-initiated activities enhances the children’s learning opportunities. The high quality interactions between the staff and the children promote their social competencies. Effective management systems have been established and are supported by comprehensive documentation. The strong leadership of the chairperson of the management committee and the committee members contributes to the success of the centre.”

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Board re-allocate its Project Funds grant of \$7,500 towards upgrading St Albans Edu-care Centre to meet the Ministry of Education and Crown Public Health standards at a cost of \$17,529 and that a further \$5,000 be provided from 1999/2000 Discretionary Funds if required to meet this cost.
 2. That the provision of a relocatable building for staffroom/storage be reconsidered following completion of the needs analysis.

Chairperson’s

Recommendation: That the Board approve the reallocation of the grant of \$7,500 towards the required upgrading at St Albans Edu-care Centre and that a Committee comprising the Chairperson, Anne Carroll and Sally Thompson be established to consider further funding requests.