

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES

Date: October 22, 2015 **Meeting No.:** 215

Project: 21st Century Schools Initiative- Arundel Elem. School **Phase:** Discussion #2
Pre-Kindergarten – Second Grade

Location: Round Road and Veronica Avenue – Cherry Hill

PRESENTATION:

Anthony Cataldo introduced the project team. GWWO Partner Paul Hume noted that the team had stepped back and re-evaluated the design with a fresh look at contextual considerations that inform the programmatic, site and building solutions. The presentation included:

1. Restatement of consensus project goal: provide the community of Cherry Hill with a school that provides a “home away from home” through learning concepts of 21st century learning in the built environment.
2. Site context and characteristics of Cherry Hill as a suburban tract with a meandering road network; other public and private elementary and middle schools in the immediate neighborhood; significant greenspace and parks; proximity within a 10-minute walk for over 50% of the residents; vehicular site circulation, including one way traffic along Round Road.
3. Site constraints include retention and operation of the existing Arundel Elementary School while the new building is under construction; approximately 26 feet of topographic change from a high point at the northern corner to low points on the south and west property corners; public roads (Giles and a perpendicular spur, Joseph Avenue, to Round Road at the east corner of the property) end approximately 200’ from Veronica and Round Roads. The remaining buildable site area was identified.
4. 6 site options were explored. Option 1 is the preferred alternative, with a car drop off from Round Road, parking access from Joseph Avenue, loading access from the Giles Road spur, pedestrian access from the south, east and west property corners, and an outdoor learning area between the vehicular drop off and the new elementary school.
5. The design team identified three “Comfort Zones,” or public, semi-public and private exterior spatial zones progressing from Veronica Avenue and Round Road to the new school building. The team also identified two additional “Comfort Zones” within the building – more public areas including public health, art/media, assembly/dining/athletic spaces and early childhood development, and the two story classroom wing that nestles into the dropping grade..
6. The design team presented a preliminary site distribution outlining special landscape teaching and activity zones, including outdoor gathering (civic,) rain gardens, other special gardens and planters using primarily native plant materials, discovery zones, hard and soft surface play areas, and storm water management (SWM) facilities.

7. The design team presented the proposed progression from site to building entrance, and then through the building. This was followed by space usage plan and section diagrams, concept plans and massing, and alternate approaches to exterior materials.

PANEL COMMENTS:

The panel appreciated the team's willingness to re-evaluate original project assumptions, sharing the progression of conceptual thought, and general improvement over the initial presentation.

The panel noted the following:

1. General
 - a. The analysis is thoughtful and comprehensive. The initial concepts appear to grow logically from this analysis.
2. Site
 - a. Understands the challenges associated with drop off on Round Road as a result of the one way traffic.
 - b. Appreciated the general site organization, and conceptual circulation and distribution of program areas.
 - c. Suggested development of formal spatial relationships, particularly related to a primary entry path and to the formal gathering court between the drop off and primary school entrance, and to critical intersections of circulation nodes
 - d. Encouraged continuity and connections of edge circulation paths.
 - e. Enthused about the use of topography to create the amphitheater.
 - f. Concerned about adequacy of on-site parking, and integration of bus drop off if required.
3. Building Design
 - a. Generally appreciated the proposed 2nd alternate massing and material scheme.
 - b. The proposed architecture in Scheme 2 is somber. Suggested that some playful and joyful design attitudes could be introduced in special areas.
 - c. Suggested establishing a more clear masonry base relationship to grade and to the rain screen panel.
 - d. Massing diagrams need further development to establish clarity of purpose.

PANEL ACTION:

Discussion only. The panel looks forward to further development of the design for the project.

Attending:

Brian Minnich, Paul Hume, Kate Scurlock – GWWO
Grace Fielder – GEF
Todd Niefeld – CSP
Nick Wilson – MKC
Jerryn McCray – JJM Arch
Michael McBride - BCPS

UDARP Panel Members – Ms. Pavelina Ilieva, Messrs. Gary Bowden and David Haresign*

Planning Department- Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Reni Lewal