

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

**Date:** July 2, 2015

**Meeting No.:** 207

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**Project:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Initiative **Phase:** Discussion #2  
Lyndhurst Elementary School - Renovations and Addition

**Location:** 621 Wildwood Parkway in the Edmonston Village neighborhood , bounded on the west by Wildwood Parkway, to the north by Gelston Drive, to the west by Lyndhurst Street, on the south by neighborhood residential

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**PRESENTATION:**

Anthony Cataldo introduced Kate Acker from City School Partners, who gave a brief introduction of the project status and introduced design team members – managing architect Tony Cortea and design architect Donald Curry, and landscape architect Kristen Gedeon - of STV. The design team provided a brief re-introduction of site context, discussed the team’s response to the first UDARP design discussion on May 14, and subsequent evolution of the project, including the following key points:

1. Site plan organization and building footprint/massing remain fundamentally the same with minor refinements
  - a. The main entry court is broadened for more gracious arrival at Wildwood Parkway
  - b. Planting has been introduced in the South Entry Court
  - c. Planting, fencing and gates screen the loading and service area from the parking, auto drop off, and secondary entrance to lower school functions
  - d. Paving has been eliminated from the area immediately north of the existing 1926 historic school building and replaced with a grass slope
  - e. Total parking count has been reduced
  - f. Outdoor learning garden, active and passive play areas for Pre-K/Kindergarten and lower schools,
  - g. Streetscape Sections show clear vertical and horizontal relationships between the existing and proposed addition, hardscape, planted areas grades and buildings across the street
  - h. Planting palette using low maintenance, drought tolerant and native plant materials
2. Updated building architecture
  - a. Plan
    - i. The architectural features of the existing 1926 school will be restored, with the primary access centered on the original building facing Wildwood Parkway
    - ii. A new entry is provided at a landscaped south entry court, providing building access from the parking and drop off areas

- iii. A first floor north-south corridor against the existing building provides separation between old and new, and access to the east-west corridor in the new wing. A monumental stair at the inside corner of the intersection of the corridors provides vertical circulation.
- iv. Distribution of uses
  - 1. The Pre-K/Kindergarten are located in a separate single story, ground floor wing on the east side of the addition. Approached along a winding path, a stair tower with clock on top signals the entry to the wing.
  - 2. Classrooms
    - a. General classrooms for elementary and middle school are paired on the north side of the east-west corridor
    - b. 1<sup>st</sup> and second grade classrooms are located on the first floor
    - c. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms are tucked into the south grade on the lower level, and fully exposed to the north
    - d. Middle school grades 5 through 8 are located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
  - 3. Other special uses
    - a. The existing building houses visitor, student, faculty and staff entry, administration, a community learning center and a media center.
    - b. In the new wing, ground floor areas that serve the public in off hours face south, with an entry portico and vestibule, the cafeteria/auditorium and gymnasium accessed directly from the south entry court; the kitchen service door is located between entries to the cafeteria/auditorium and gymnasium. Building services and loading area abut the south end of the gymnasium.
    - c. The south side of the east-west corridor includes mostly support uses
    - d. Special areas north of the east-west corridor, located in recesses along the north building face, include collaborative laboratories, a kiln and occasionally classrooms.
- b. Massing and Elevations
  - i. North façade
    - 1. Composed of 3 projecting double classroom bays and one single projecting single classroom bay.
    - 2. Bays are composed of light masonry sidewalls with a large opening at the first floor art room and high strip windows in the classrooms. On the north face, the vertical light masonry is symmetric on the double classroom bays, with a wider vertical masonry pier in the center. There is a dark masonry spandrel and sill, with cast stone sills. Classrooms are predominantly glass above a sill. Red glazed tile corners mark the first floor.
    - 3. The recessed wall between bays are composed of dark masonry with circular windows within a square metal panel, one per floor
    - 4. A glass wall sits within the slot between the existing building and the new wing, and denoting the north-south corridor
  - ii. South façade
    - 1. The glass wall continues to this face between the existing building and the new wing, and denoting the north-south corridor

2. A stepped glass wall under a portico defines the edge of the dining room/auditorium
  3. Single story service areas – both interior and exterior – are screened by a light masonry wall with a yellow glazed masonry patterned within the façade
  4. The gymnasium, clad in a dark panel system and with a mono-slope roof, rises behind the masonry screen wall. It appears that the west face of the gymnasium is clad in translucent panels.
  5. A yellow glazed masonry stair tower with a clock face rises above the second floor classroom roof to mark a recessed entry to the Pre-K/Kindergarten wing.
- iii. The masonry of the existing 1926 building will be repaired, and windows replaced. The replacement windows will match the windows in the new wing. Wall and windows will be exposed to the north-south corridor.

**PANEL COMMENTS:**

The panel was very disappointed with the revised proposal and noted the following specific comments and suggestions related to the site and building design:

1. Site Plan
  - a. The formality of the main entry is a vast improvement
  - b. The pick up and drop off area design south of the building seems to provide many opportunities for conflicts, and a potential safety issue for pedestrians in the lot. The panel suggests careful further study.
  - c. Though the screening of service areas is an improvement, the cross-functional traffic between the day-to-day school functions, access and visibility of the Pre-K/Kindergarten entrance, and off hours public entry to the dining room/auditorium, kitchen service and gymnasium are not resolved. The current configuration could present both safety and maintenance issues.
  - d. Elimination of paving north of the existing school is an improvement.
  - e. The retaining wall and gated walkway immediately north of the existing 1926 historic school building seems both brutal and expensive. The panel recommends further study.
  - f. There is a lack of rigor defining the exterior special use spaces, including outdoor learning garden, active and passive play areas for Pre-K/Kindergarten and lower schools. The panel suggests that this deserves further development. The purpose of the spaces can be better defined through use of material - plant, hardscape, wall and accessories. Thoughtful application can enhance the learning experience.
2. Updated building architecture
  - a. Plan
    - i. The panel believes that the modifications to the building plan and exterior design are unresponsive to the initial comments. The panel questioned if the plan as presented is, in fact, representative of a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment, feeling more like a 1960's organizational approach.
    - ii. The interior planning has some impact on the public's experience with the building, and greatly impacts the exterior expression. Currently the plan of the

new wing has some unresolved character, especially related to the classrooms and special spaces created by the bay organization north of the east-west corridor.

- iii. The south entry experience could be strengthened with a stronger identity, e.g. a south facing entrance and canopy in lieu of the side entry through the portico.
  - iv. Resolve the circulation conflict between exterior public access to the gymnasium crossing over service access to the kitchen that shares a common vestibule.
  - v. The monumental stair at the inside corner of the intersection of the corridors needs additional study and development.
  - vi. The Pre-K/Kindergarten “village” seems too remote from the drop-off and circulation areas
  - vii. The stair tower with clock also seems removed from the perimeter, and buried in the center of the complex – will it be the visible marker that the design team intends?
- b. Massing and Elevations
- i. North façade
    1. The composition of the north façade appears jumbled and lacks rigor as the bays vary in width (3 doubles and 1 single) and the residual spaces between the bays vary as well.
    2. The bays have a very 1960’s character. Reconsider the relationship of north-south end caps and north facing window and spandrel. Consider differentiating heights of east-west walls and north façade. Consider alternatives to the masonry spandrels.
    3. Reconsider design of recessed wall between bays. Circular windows as designed imply a special and/or consistent use; there are currently a wide variety of uses that occur.
    4. The glass wall within the slot between the existing building and the new wing is a positive mitigating element between old and new. Great care will be required at the connection detail, particularly at the eave of the 1926 building.
  - ii. South façade
    1. Consider allowing the glass wall adjacent to the existing building to become the main entrance to clearly denote the north-south corridor. Provide a canopy.
    2. Re-evaluate the stepped glass wall under the portico is it one move too many?
    3. Consider relocating the school signage to the service area masonry wall.
    4. The yellow glazed masonry stair/clock tower seems to recessed and buried within the complex to be effective.
    5. The entry into the Pre-K/Kindergarten wing is not visible, and seems placed in indefensible space.
  - iii. Existing Building

1. Consider replacing the windows of the existing 1926 building with an in-kind version similar in profile to original window to clearly differentiate old from the new addition.
  2. Exposing wall and windows within the north-south corridor is very positive.
  3. Connection between old and new is critical and should be carefully considered.
- iv. General
1. Consider creating a dialogue between the new addition and the 1926 building, i.e. use similar masonry as a base element and then stacking a more contemporary materials palette and expression above the base. The base would include the lower level and its exposed walls. Other elements, such as stair towers inside and out and other site walls, could also use these materials.

**PANEL ACTION:**

This is a discussion-only. The panel recommends further careful study and development of the items noted.

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**Attending:**

Kate Acker – CSP

Tony Cortea, Donald Currie, Kristen Gedeon, Susan Williams, Semaj Tucker – STV

Brandon Stanfield, Tiara Moorman, Dawn Sanders – MSA

Larry Flynn – City Schools

UDARP Panel Members – Ms. \_\_\_ Pavelina, Messrs. Gary Bowden, Rich Burns, David Haresign\*, and David Rubin

Planning Department - Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Kyle Leggs