

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

Date: May 16, 2019

Meeting #18

Project: 21st Century Schools – Cross Country

Phase: Discussion #2

Location: 6100 Cross Country Blvd, Baltimore MD 21215

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Priya Iyer with ATI started the discussion with a reintroduction of the project. She reviewed the previous UDAAP minutes and discussed the proposed revisions to the plan in response to prior comments. The largest constraint is not being able to move or change the existing outdoor play areas which lead to a more organic landscape design of the courtyard area. The urban edge is being addressed with a shift in the building along the Winner Ave. The team investigated alternative circulation axis arrangements within the building and found that keeping the new hallway in the proposed location served the overall needs in a more meaningful way.

Renderings were used to explore the revised landscape plan and the visual approach to the building addition. The images express the hierarchy of the approach to the new entry point. The new gym mass is treated in masonry with the large volume in a tone different than the existing building and the smaller masses in dark grey brick. The gasket between the old and new is in glass and metal and this theme is repeated in the main entrance updates.

Heidi Thomas with MK Consulting then reviewed the landscape plan in more detail. The edges are treated in a low maintenance meadow planting while the entry points are treated with more decorative native plantings. The stormwater management zones are treated with more specialized planting. The plan looks to create a flex lawn space but also smaller, unique spaces for different outdoor classroom learning experiences. Julie Soss with MK Consulting continued the landscape discussion by reviewing the proposed site furnishings, planters, and more details of the planting environments for the learning experiences. Details of the improvements to the service access area were also reviewed which include modifications to the existing masonry walls to avoid damage and careful planting/modifications that work to retain the existing Pine tree that is on site there.

DISCUSSION:

Site:

- The revisions to the courtyard area are all seen as positive.

- Investigate a more direct connection from the bus drop off area to the front door and refinements to the main entrance along Cross Country. Replicate the buffer planting approach on Winner and Taney and the pedestrian path along the front.
- Continue the investigation of connecting the urban corners to the entry points in a more deliberate way at the ground plane. Look to widen the main sidewalk connections and slight increase to the scale of the access points along Winner and Taney.
- Additional screening of the parking lot would be an improvement.
- Continue refining the plant palette with a sense of seasonal color and interest throughout the site.

Building:

- The continued development is positive.
- The elevation along Winner is not fully resolved. The change in massing but being coplanar is not resolved. The volumes may want to be pushed/pulled for some physical break. Work to define the important volumes and then simplify the design approach. The grey brick may want to be used in the recessive areas and the need for two colors of masonry was questioned in its entirety. Investigate the use of one masonry color and let the detailed banding begin to differentiate the volumes. The addition should read as a one unified element rather than multiple assembled small volumes .
- The tower volume in the gasket needs additional study. The adjacent window in the existing building is an awkward arrangement – reconsider the scale/size/placement of the tower piece to reduce the conflict.
- The clearstory windows in the gym seem to be pushing too far into the top portion of the mass and, perhaps even the detail banding. Continue refining the idea in a more sincere translation- perhaps it is more recessive as a frame in the way the original building does.
- Revisit the entries. The new rear entrance is reading far more important than the main entrance along Cross Country; currently they are competing with one another. Bring some of the additional detailing to the main entrance.
- Revisit the need for a formal tower in the rear in favor of an architectural approach that responds more to the informal garden approach. Investigate a bolder, colorful expression in contrast to a more urban, formal experience. They should both read as interventions to the building volume.

Next Steps:

Discussion Only.

Attending:

Heidi Thomas, Marianne Crampton, Julie Soss, Edy Ruano, Karen Darley – MK Consulting Engineers

Priya Iyer, Ash Bellri – ATI, Inc.

Kate Acker – MSA

Michael McBride – 21st Century Schools

Mssrs. Anthony, Mses. Wagner, Ilieva – UDAAP Panel

Anthony Cataldo*, Christina Hartsfield, Jennifer Leonard, MC Buettner - Planning