

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

**Date:** January 28, 2021

**Meeting #42**

**Project:** Parcel M

**Phase:** Schematic

**Location:** 1101 N. Wolfe Street, Baltimore MD 21213

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Ronald Lipscomb introduced the project and reviewed changes in the program, which were driven by external challenges. LeAnn Hanfied continued the presentation with an explanation of why preservation of the school was not feasible. The number of units needed to make the project financially solvent is 150 units, but Maryland State historic preservation policy does not allow for new buildings to be larger than the historic school building. This limitation greatly reduces the number of units below the required 150.

Peter Fillat continued the presentation with an overview of the larger context, a review of the design and an explanation of what has changed from the past presentation. Key aspects of the project include:

- Demolition of the existing vacant school building
- Site will still hold two buildings framing the west and south sides of the site, parking on the northeast corner and a green space tucked into the center
- Entrance will remain on the southwest corner
- Market has moved north off the corner and been pulled slightly forward
- South- and west-facing units will have a small garden area accompanied by a stoop for direct access outdoors to reflect the surrounding rowhouse community
- South building is 5-stories; west building is 6-stories and faces Eager Park

**DISCUSSION:**

The Panel thanked the project team for sharing the project and expressed sincere disappointment that the proposal no longer includes preservation of the school. The Panel began with questions and clarification, then continued with a discussion.

**Clarification:**

- *Along Washington, is the parking elevated?* – No, there is no change in grade, but the parking is screened by hedges.

- *The breezeway is open air correct?* – Yes
- *Do the ground floor patios allow for direct access to the exterior from the units?* – Yes, they are direct entrances to the outward facing units on Wolfe Street.
- *What is the reason for having two separate buildings?* – This is for financing reasons, but the buildings will be owned and operated as one single entity.
- *Has the team considered a lighter remodel option for the school and remodeling it without the historic tax credit?* – The project cost would be too high, unfortunately.
- *It's difficult to get a sense of scale of the play spaces in the rear; what are the dimensions of these circles, what are the materials?* These spaces are approximately 60' in diameter. Regarding the materiality – team has just started to think about this aspect and is in the working stages.

**Site:**

- It is very disappointing to have lost the school; it would be wonderful if the team could look at alternatives to the program to utilize the building as an adaptive reuse (potential office/education use).
- Scale of the buildings are more appropriate, but pavilion elements are not quite resolved. International style of the old school building was more appropriate for fronting on to the park.
- Outside of the block is public realm and the interior of the site needs to feel like the private realm. The exterior perimeter is successful along Wolfe and Chase Streets, but the interior privacy needs more consideration, and also begs the question of the necessity of the breezeway. Access points are critical; the visual relationship between community space, lobby and green space are interrupted, which makes them feel detached from the building. From a security perspective views and access points are important – engaging the public spaces on the courtyard spaces with the interior community space will also help these areas be used more by the residents.
- Hierarchy of circulation in the open space needs to be studied. Consider how people will use the paths on site. Provide direct access to entrances instead of forcing people through programmed spaces. Separation of the circulation and gathering areas needs to be considered, the organization needs to be based on how people will be using the spaces and trying to navigate to- and from- the building.
- Layout of courtyard needs to begin with a diagram of how circulation works and program elements, then the design can be resolved in a more meaningful way.
- Articulation of the different garden rooms is a strong idea, but scale needs to be considered carefully, with regard to program and greening articulation. Strike a balance between over-programming and vast, sterile, open space. 60' is a good size for play lot, for instance.
- Labyrinths are often not used for that purpose but can be canvas for other uses – consider these other uses to be layered on top of the labyrinth idea.

- Rooftop planting would be nicer with a more heavily planted appearance to soften the edge and spill over the edge – could be a nod to the market’s fresh produce.
- Site is still underdeveloped – large parking lot, large un-programmed open space. Is the project and program the right use/density for the site? There are two other edges that could be developed, and the green space could be reduced, especially considering there is a park across the street. There is an opportunity to distribute some of the program along the north edge of the site; the 6-story building could become 5-stories and turn the corner.
- The parking lot on the corner is not a good use of the space; consider reorienting the parking along the building with the short edge of the lot on Washington Street and away from the urban corner.
- There needs to be more of a green buffer between the public sidewalk and the parking.

### **Building:**

- The entrance on the corner may not be as successful as the previous iteration, needs to be considered at the street level as well as with regard to what’s happening inside the building.
- Not immediately clear that the southwest entrance is the main entrance with all of the individual entrances and the access point from the breezeway.
- The breezeway will function better with the removal of the stair, and visually it will be more cohesive. Sloping the breezeway can help transition the space will help to define and complete the corner.
- Do the buildings need to be detached? While it is understood these will be two individual projects for the twinning deal, this could be achieved by separating them with a fire-rated wall. It would help to unite the project if the corner were closed rather than open – consider other ways of achieving this while still meeting the project’s needs for separation.
- Corner could become more contrasted to announce itself. This would also allow the building parts to read as A, B, and C, respectively. Since the heights are similar, there is an opportunity to differentiate the parts of the building though a variation in tone.
- Chase and Wolfe streets vary greatly in architecture, scale and use. Chase is a smaller community street and Wolfe is a wider arterial street bordered by a park. This building isn’t yet addressing the differences – both the south and west have similar façades. Consider treating the south façade less as a group of pavilions and more as a plane to relate better to the lower, continuous rowhouse fabric of the existing street.

### **Next Steps:**

Continue design addressing comments above.

**Attending:**

Peter Fillat, Kevin Roycroft – Fillat + Architects

Ben Phillips, LeAnn Hanfield, Ronald Lipscomb – Beacon Communities

Kristen Gedeon – MK Consulting Engineers

Councilman Stokes – City Council District 12

Anthony Cortea Jr., Al Barney, J. Perry, Cheryl Washington, Karen Johnson, Jed Weeks, Antonia Daniels – Attendees

Mr. Anthony, Mses. O’Neill, Ilieva, Bradley – UDAAP Panel

Laurie Feinberg\*, Ren Southard, Tamara Woods, Marshella Wallace – Planning