

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

Date: April 25, 2019

Meeting #17

Project: 21st Century Schools - Harford Heights/ Sharp Leadenhall

Phase: Discussion #2

Location: N. Broadway and North Ave., Baltimore MD

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Todd Vukmanic with Crabtree Rohrbaugh & Assoc. reviewed the site location, context and proposed program for each school program. Construction is to begin this summer with delivery in 2021. Todd reviewed the existing site conditions of the site and the school with existing photos and plans highlighting the portions of the school that will remain and those that will be demolished.

The previous plan proposal was reviewed and the previous panel comments were highlighted. The new plan was presented and included the revision to the axis of the new additions and their connections back to the portions of building to remain. The central diagonal spine still exists but the portions of the building to the west of the main entrance has now been rotated to match the new axial grid so the building fully fronts onto N. Broadway. Modifications to the service and loading area were reviewed within context of the building shift. Main entrance for Sharp Leadenhall was shifted to the pivot point of the new architecture and the old. Plan areas remained where they were and the connections to the field spaces were enhanced. The gym space remains but the cafeteria and core spaces are now located in the new addition to the west of the Harford Heights entrance in the front of the building.

Portions of the landscape were then reviewed at a larger scale to show the intent for play equipment and landscape interventions. The team has been working to embrace the outdoor play area to the rear of the building which has traditionally not been well connected to the school.

Bus drop off and circulation pattern were reviewed within the overall site plan before moving into the proposed floor plans. Kitchen is moved to the rear service core space and the dining spaces were pulled forward and are now adjacent to one another along the front of the building. Detailed review of the proposed floor plan continued.

Elevations were then presented to show the adjustments made from the previous presentation. Cement panel is being used within the window infill areas of the existing building to remain. Pure geometries and volumes within the new additions attempt to nod back to the existing architecture but not replicate it. The gym will be re-clad to become more volumetric and relate to the aesthetic of the new work of the dining space. The entrance design of both schools relate to one another through design but each has a unique color for some individual identity to the school programs. The team reviewed the datum line detail within the elevations and explained the origin of it and how they are working to use it as a detail that ties the multiple volumes together despite the changes within the floor elevations. A strong watertable was established around the building and is expanded to include some of

the new volumes where there are changes of internal floor elevations. The window proportions and arrangement were reviewed to help the panel understand the rationalization of the elevation design.

DISCUSSION:

Site:

- The rotation of the addition is a positive transformation for the new building organization.
- Continue to refine the connection pieces from the new to the old. The area at the gym was discussed - find ways to organize the space to accept the strong axis that is created and expand that out into the landscape. It is currently too restricted, recessive and not visible from the general approach from the landscape. The Panel strongly suggested that the team investigate shifting the axis slightly to the south and flipping it with the program area.
- The Sharp Leadenhall entrance is more successful than that of Harford Heights. The Panel encouraged more work to clarify the Harford Heights entrance. Sharp Leadenhall School entrance should align in geometry to the Sharp school building. This will simplify the overall moves.
- The Cafeteria should read as the object within the plan of the building beyond. Work to align the planes and simplify the moves along the main building frontage. This will also allow the entrance to be more prominent and focused.
- To contrast the existing, simplifying the massing/architectural expression. Pay special attention to the faceted areas. They should not be treated in just materials but need to be resolved within the massing.

Building:

- Introduction of color within the architecture is positive but work to include more elements that would respond to the elementary school program through scale and proportion of elements.
- There is concern with the lack of relief of the volumes within the facades that the materials will all appear applied and not read volumetrically. The increase in the parapet height alone is not sufficient to help the volume read.
- Continue to refine the window patterning and detail to relate to the programmatic pieces throughout the building.
- Continue to refine the connection at the existing gym massing.
- There is concern with the overall strategy of including a datum throughout the architecture when there is not an actual datum within the building. Moving into a more vertical strategy would allow all the site and massing changes to be resolved within the elevations. Openings would be similar to the original but significantly more generous and, therefore, would contrast the existing. The horizontal banding seems too much of a contrast and highlight the problems.
- If using the same tone of masonry, then the design wants to be an extrapolation of the existing. If moving into the horizontal banding, then the material will want to be extremely different.
- Simplify the overall architectural moves and intents within the elevations to let the unique moments shine through. Light brick becomes the datum volume. Special volumes then pick up on the verticality and material accent. More contrast in

tone/reddish hue would perhaps also work better. Rethink using grey in the large volumes.

Next Steps:

Discussion Only.

Attending:

Michael McBride - 21st Century Schools

Todd Vukmanic - Crabtree Rohrbaugh & Associates

Tim Cober - MSA

Messrs. Anthony, Mses. Wagner, O'Neill, and Ilieva* - UDAAP Panel

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Ren Southard, Jen Leonard - Planning