

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

Date: October 4, 2018

Meeting #8

Project: Walter P. Carter & Lois T. Murray Elementary/Middle School

Phase: Discussion #2

Location: 820 E. 43rd Street, Baltimore MD

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

As described by the design team, the new school will combine the Lois T. Murray ES/MS, and Walter P. Carter ES/MS. The Lois T. Murray ES/MS is dedicated to special needs students and will essentially operate separately from the Walter P. Carter ES/MS. The combined school will have an 868 seat capacity. The existing site is currently home to Walter P. Carter ES/MS, a recreation center, and a pool. The site has topographic challenges, as well as a large underground stormwater line with a surrounding easement that cannot be moved or built on.

The design team engaged landscape architect Zolna Russell of Floura Teeter to further develop the outdoor spaces. The bus drop-off was relocated to provide a curb drop-off along E. 43rd St. and separated from the parking. The large entrance plaza was developed to provide a main axis to the corner of E. 43rd and St. Georges Streets where the crosswalks are located. Lawn and tree canopy areas were developed with paved paths leading to the entrances to each of the schools. A walking path was incorporated around the north side of the site around the perimeter of the proposed space for a future replacement pool. Three play areas were also developed for the students.

DISCUSSION:

Site:

- The design of the plaza was significantly more advanced from the previous presentation. The panel was, however, concerned with the amount of lawn/tree canopy in the front entrance plaza. There does not appear to be enough gathering space at the front of the building to accommodate the students and truly connect the public entrances and program spaces. The design of the plaza was described as “collegiate”. It was suggested that less formal options with more gathering space for the students be investigated with stronger connections to the building architecture, public spaces, and amenities. Additionally, it was suggested that the design team talk to the principal to determine how this space will be used.
- The panel noted that due to the geometry and size of the footprint of the building, the different areas of the site do not flow well and don’t appear to have a strong connection to each other. Strong design and public access must be considered to the proposed pool which is not evident in the current site plan.
- Begin to develop a concept for the ground plane as the building mass meets it. Currently there does not seem to be a relationship between the two.

Building:

- The panel was disappointed that comments related to the building plan geometry and massing were not addressed. The same comments were reiterated from the last discussion and it was noted that there are serious concerns with the footprint and site layout of the building.
- The panel also noted that more study should be given to the location of the large expanses of glass. These areas should be more purposeful.
- The material selection was generally thought to be sober and did not reflect the importance and energy that this building should bring to the community. The team was encouraged to investigate a more playful landscape and architecture for the entire project.
- The Panel was not convinced that a more elegant solution using the challenging grades that exist on the site, rather than avoiding them, were explored and would have resulted in a superior overall site plan and design that would have addressed many of the outstanding issues.

Community Concerns:

- The concerns of the community were addressed by Councilman Bill Henry. He stated that at the beginning of the design process the community had expressed some relevant requests of the redevelopment; most of these requests were not addressed by the current design:
 - Keep the pool and stand-alone recreation center.
 - Preserve green space on the site. The current school site is used as a park for the neighborhood.
 - Provide more staff parking. The existing staff parking is insufficient, and the school size is being increased.
 - Willow Avenue should not be used for vehicular access to the school site.

Next Steps:

Discussion only.

Attending:

Zolna Russell, Matt Ellingson - Floura Teeter

Steven Orlandsky - Newman Architects

Kya Kennett, Laurie Dickeson - Penza Bailey Architects

Michael McBride - 21st Century Schools

Mia Curan, Councilman Bill Henry - Councilman Bill Henry's Office

Adam Boarman - Recreation and Parks

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

Anthony Cataldo, Laurie Feinberg, Matthew DeSantis, Jennifer Leonard, Christina Hartsfield, Arriel Humphrey - Planning