

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

**Date:** July 23, 2020

**Meeting #35**

**Project:** Highlandtown Elementary Middle School

**Phase:** Schematic

**Location:** 231 S. Eaton Street, Highlandtown

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

John Srygley of JRS Architects introduced the project. This school renovation is part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools initiative and will add roughly 40,000 SF to the existing 1920s building. The building had an extensive renovation and addition in 2007; this project will be the addition only and does not include renovation of existing building beyond areas that abut the project scope.

The site is located in a residential neighborhood east of Patterson Park, with most students living to the north and east of the school. A majority of students (grades K – 8) walk to school.

**Project Overview:**

- The 70s-era addition at the northeast corner will be demolished and a new, more appropriately scaled addition will replace it.
- A second large addition would be placed to the rear (east) of the existing building and will occupy a portion of the play field.
- A new play area will be located between the existing gymnasium and the new addition on the north side of the building.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Panel thanked the team for their presentation and proceeded with clarifying questions and comments.

**Clarifications:**

- *Traffic circulation – is this a school that has bus and parent drop off? Most children walk to this school either alone or with their parents.*
- *Is the northern service drive necessary? Softening the interstitial areas would make that area more student-friendly – this could be accomplished with better organization and pervious surface. Also helps with stormwater management requirements.*

- *Path hierarchy* – sidewalks will be 8' – 10' at the front of the site.
- *Can the ramp in the play court be repositioned to open up the courtyard area?* The team will study whether or not they even need the ramp; potential for the whole area to be regraded eliminating the need for a ramp.

### **Site:**

- Forest conservation plan has not been completed; opportunity to add additional trees for shading especially in the play courtyard to make it feel less sterile.
- Opportunity to screen the service areas with plant materials.
- Opportunity to enhance the play area – more joyful, fun expression (aside from playground equipment). Focus on ways to make the play area more transparent and visually connected from the inside of the building.
- Next UDAAP – provide a landscape plan that addresses the flow of pedestrian traffic / programming and hardscaping of new green space at the NW corner.

### **Building:**

- Materiality needs to be carefully considered as the team moves forward, since there is already an existing addition (2007) – massing is very straightforward and seems to work with existing building. Note: intent is to match the 2007 addition to restore the symmetry of the building (team is working with the same contractor of the 2007 addition, so they are confident the quality and language will be similar).
- At rear of building - there is more freedom / opportunity to distinguish what is happening on the inside and relate it to the façade. For instance, if the door near the south service area will not be a main entrance, it should be downplayed more.
- Language of the rear addition should speak to the fact that its use is secondary.
- Great that windows are abundant but needs to be more hierarchy – study existing building and addition for tasteful treatment of new façade to blend with exiting rhythm and hierarchy.
- Since this is an elementary and middle school, opportunity to bring some joy – could be more playful language, element of surprise.
- Use and access to the outdoor space – not necessarily design issue, but a programming issue; address how outdoor spaces will be used by students and community members. Use the design to respond to programming elements.
- Reconfigure ramp leading to secondary entry so it does not wall of the playground and provides more direct access to the building entry.

### **Next Steps:**

Continue design addressing comments above.

**Attending:**

John Srygley, Alex Elmore – JRS Architects

Renee Stainrod, Michael McBride - BCS

Tim Cober – MSA

Mr. Anthony, Mses., Ilieva, Bradley – UDAAP Panel

Dinora Mendoza, Larry Flynn, Molly McCullagh, Kari Snyder, Karen DeCamp

Laurie Feinberg\*, Ren Southard, Tamara Woods, Matthew DeSantis, Martin French, MC Beuttner, Jen Leonard – Planning