

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

**Date:** October 15, 2020

**Meeting #38**

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**Project:** LifeBridge Center for Hope

**Phase:** Concept Review

**Location:** Park Heights, Baltimore MD

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Scott Robinson of HGA gave a brief overview of the program, which offers services for victims of child abuse. The facility will not be an in-patient facility; services will be provided during regular business hours. The center will act as an intersection for mental health services, social work, and police to engage and serve survivors of abuse.

The site is located in northwest Baltimore in Park Heights; it is part of the larger Pimlico redevelopment plan. The new track alignment and parking needs have driven the project team's site design. Parking for employees and the Preakness are required.

Mr. Robinson continued the presentation with neighborhood context. The site is located in a low-density residential area, adjacent to the large hospital campus. Streetscaping will be preserved along Belvedere Ave at the back of the building.

Patrick Whealton continued the presentation with a description of the landscape plans. There will be some afforestation plantings on this site, and existing mature trees in good health will be maintained. There will also be benches or tables located around the front of the building to give people a place to pause.

The layout and resulting form of the building are driven by the programming needs, including safety, privacy, daylighting and required separate entrances for police, staff and public. Some color on the façade has been included with the idea it lends itself to more playfulness.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Panel thanked the team for the presentation and began the discussion by asking clarifying questions:

- *What is driving the master plan; what are the key factors?* Desire to close down Preakness Way at the north of the site and create an inward-facing campus with consolidated parking. Future buildings on the site will be medical office and administrative.
- *On the new master plan, what is proposed for the other side of Pimlico Road?* The track will be located on the other side. The track, which is only used for Preakness, will be part of a larger sports field complex, which will be more activated than the current racetrack site.
- *Why is the transformer located on Belvedere Ave.?* The power lines are located along Belvedere, which is the most convenient and the shortest distance. The location is also the least intrusive from the interior views, as it blocks the fewest windows.
- *Clarification on the police entrance:* Suspects will be transported through the police entrance. The building's windows are tinted, and a tall fence is planned for the play area to protect privacy.
- *Intent of pathway from Belvedere along the eastern edge of the building:* Intent of path is to be operational during business hours – a secured gate would be open / unlocked when the center is open.

#### **Discussion:**

- Treatment of the site – important to establish a set of goals that help to further communicate the two very separate programs that will be contained within the building. The landscaping needs to react differently to the different program elements.
- Define the green buffer. South side of the building can be lush and more planted – does not need to be the same as the north (more public) edge. All sides of the building do not need to be the same; not as successful to have too much similarity. Opportunity to create more hierarchy using the same kit of parts, but using differing deployment of the pieces.
- Shifting the parking and the vegetated buffer at the front of the building closer to the parking will improve the plaza space in front – opportunity to have the one-story volume, the playground and the landscaped plaza read as a unified element, while the two-story element recedes back. This will help it feel more secondary and draw less attention to it.
- Master plan could inform entrance location – it would have been good to see other options based on the goals of the master plan. Entrance may want to move to the east a bit.
- Pimlico Road seems like it will be important street in the future – this will impact the front of the building and the whole complex. Treat the edge appropriately; there will likely be a sidewalk there in the future; think about whether this edge will need to be secure; whether that is the correct spot for parking.

- Overall master plan needs another look – there is an opportunity for a quad area that will be a welcome space for all using this part of the campus.
- A building can contribute to the therapeutic process. Balance of safety, security and recovery of patients – the environment within the building will impact these elements. Currently, the building layout is very institutional, very separate from the outdoors. Access to more outdoor spaces, internal courtyards, etc. can help improve the healing process.
- Wood feature to define the entrance does not have desired effect. The one-story piece could be more powerful and act as a loggia with its own attitude; this can help clarify and announce the entrance.
- Brick on the lower level perhaps wants to be a warmer tone – dark color can be a bit stark. Proportion of the brick is too similar to the upper level and gives the buildings a squat appearance. The full story of brick is unnecessary; bringing brick down to the first-floor windowsills or headers will help make it feel more like a base and allow the lighter portion to float more.
- Application of the windows and colors all over the building have the effect of being both busy and monotonous. Subdued architecture on Belvedere and more playful architecture at the entrance is more appropriate.

**Next Steps:**

Continue design addressing the comments above.

**Attending:**

Scott Robinson, Harper Kudler, Maurice Spielman -  
James Roberge, Adam Rosenberg - LifeBridge  
Patrick Whealton, Julie Higgins – HCM Landscape

Hallie Miller, Elizabeth Wiseman, Shary Adams, Martha Nathanson, Ed Gunts - Attendees

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

Laurie Feinberg\*, Ren Southard, James Ashford, Tamara Woods, Eric Tiso – Planning