

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

**Date:** January 24, 2019

**Meeting #12**

**Project:** Harford Heights / Sharp Leadenhall Elementary

**Phase:** Discussion #1

**Location:** N. Broadway and North Avenue, Baltimore

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Todd J. Vukmanic, Architect with Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates presented the project parameters, existing site context and concept design for the additions and renovations to Harford Heights Elementary School a 12.6-acre site in northeast Baltimore City. The project seeks to collocate Sharp Leadenhall Elementary School with share kitchen and building services but separate entries and educational facilities. The proposed design included renovation of the east wing of the existing building and new addition on the west part of the site with two separate bus drop-off driveways and separate entries. An alternate scheme was also presented in seeking to align the Harford Heights entry to Broadway Ave instead of North Ave.

Cherisse Otis, Landscape Architect with Mahan Rykiel Associates discussed the landscape design proposal, which focused on organizing all building entries, site access and existing sloped terrain.

The design team also discussed difficulties associated with the site's limited access to Broadway Ave, potential development of the lot separating the site with North Ave and its ability to block visibility to the site as well as the architectural style of the existing building and related structured outdoor spaces.

**DISCUSSION:**

The panel welcomed the initial concept development for the project in its efforts to bring a clear site and building organization, while maximizing outdoor space and improving overall accessibility of the site. The discussion focused on the following items for further development:

**Building:**

- Formal Organization - The Panel found the overall organization of programmatic spaces clear and thoughtful but urged the design team to seek greater clarity in the overall massing organization by avoiding multiple scattered volumes that simply result

from programmatic clusters and allow for some formal building organization to inform the configuration of individual rooms inside.

- Exterior Articulation - The Panel discussed the difficulty of working with the existing brutalist style architecture that remains on the site and urged the design team to seek a contemporary language of expression rather than blending the existing and new architecture while seeking specific material or spatial vocabulary elements that can tie old and new. The Panel also commented on the successful and clear organization of the existing building's volumes and façade and recommended that the design team uses that as point of departure when introducing sequencing and proportions for the added volumes and all related openings. Investigate ways to pull the entrance towards Broadway.

**Site:**

- The Panel suggested that while the building and site design have a clear strategy of intervention with respect to approach, topography and overall massing, the design team would benefit from developing and presenting the overall concept in three-dimensional form and using actual view angles that reference the context (main roads and surrounding buildings in order to find an integrative solution to this very challenging site. The Panel appreciated the presented sectional and enlarged studies of the landscape design with the all proposed improvements but was not able to comment on how those relate to the proposed building volume overall.
- After discussing the two options presented of orienting the Harford Heights building entry towards North Ave versus Broadway Ave, the Panel expressed concerns that, from an urban design perspective, since North Ave does not present any meaningful frontage opportunities with the existing parking lot and possible future development separating the main artery from the site, the additions of the proposed building and both school entries should be oriented towards Broadway Ave in a manner that offers a welcoming civic expression.
- Another important point of discussion involved the school bus access to the site. The Panel expressed concerns about busses approaching the site from an un-signalized intersection on North Ave and recommended that all bus drop-off circulation be routed through Broadway Ave instead.

**Next Steps:**

Discussion Only. Continue developing the project addressing the comments above.

**Attending:**

Elysia Mikkelsen, Rick LeBlanc, Todd Vulkmanic - Crabtree Rohrbaugh Assoc.

Cherisse Otis - Mahan Rykiel Assoc.

Tim Cober - MSA

Michael McBride - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools

Doris Minor-Termil - Broadway East Communiy

Mr. Anthony, Mses. Wagner, O'Donnell and Ilieva\* - UDAAP Panel

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Matthew DeSantis, Jennifer Leonard, Chad Hayes,

Marshella Wallace - Planning