

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE ADVISORY PANEL

MEETING MINUTES

Date: August 25, 2022

Meeting #66

Project: Armistead Gardens Elementary School

Phase: Design Development

Location: 5001 E Eager Street, Baltimore MD 21205

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Scott McGovern, the project architect with Design Collective, reoriented the panel to the project site and proposal which is a phased occupied renovation and addition to the PK-8 school. He shared how the design has shifted due to the needs of the school as well as in response to the panel's comments. PJ Benenati from GGLO walked the panel through the landscape and changes to the overall site design.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel requested that the team return to the architecture portion of the presentation to provide more information on what the changes were to the design of the building and provide more detail regarding the materials.

Following the further clarification of the design the panel thanked the presentation team and began with questions before continuing with the general discussion and comments.

- *Is that a baseball field at the play field?* A softball field that will be used for recreation.
- *The service area on the south side next to the main entry sequence, how robust is the screening?* The topography change acts as a natural break and landscape will assist with that.
- *Are there doors to the dining area at the south entry? And if so, where do they lead?* Yes, those doors will exit to the south entry plaza.
- *The seat wall at the south entry is great, have you considered other options for seating at either entry plaza?* At the south entry plaza, there is no additional seating. At the north entry there are seat walls facing the bus drop off area.
- *Can you highlight the pieces of the building that are new construction?* The portions to the north and east of the courtyard are existing and will be re-skinned. The portions to the west and south are new construction

- *Can you provide more information on the courtyard?* The courtyard includes hardscape area for education as well as landscape buffering the windows from the music room. The courtyard helps to address the change in grade on the site.
- *Has the team explored shifting the visitor parking to the south side of the building with the rest of the parking?* Due to the location of the main entry, it was important to keep some limited parking at the north side of the building.
- *Who uses the buses?* The school is served by 3-4 buses that are generally for the youngest students. Most students walk to the school.
- *What is the accessible route from the buses?* Students can walk down to the student entry at the eastern wing of the building, or up to the main entry.
- *How is the amphitheater accessible?* You can enter the amphitheater from the building at either the top or the bottom of the amphitheater. There is no easily accessible path once a student is outside.

Site & Circulation:

- The visitor parking is still not resolved, and as designed it creates a disconnect between the main entry and Eager Street. Additionally, there are still two driveways for six visitor parking spaces. If you must have visitor parking, does it need to be the main focus, does it need two driveways.
- As a school, universal accessibility is critical. The amphitheater needs to be able to allow anyone who is wheelchair bound to access it? Consider utilizing a landing at the existing ramp to help create this.
- Is the fence at the retaining wall along the eastern edge of the site needed? Consider a smaller fence that can be integrated into a landscape border to meet the safety needs.
- At the Wright Street entry, consider a pedestrian access point, that strays from the vehicular path. Broad stairs that break the retaining wall will create a sense of arrival that will help the entry sequence.
- The connecting north and south entries and corridor could create a main street the connects through the building creating a contiguous narrative tying the interior and exterior together. Consider allowing the surface material to be maintained throughout, creating continuity that can continue all the way to Eager Street – starting that sequence right as you enter the campus.
- Treat the entry plazas as destinations rather than as pass through spaces - use furnishings at both plazas to create the destination.
- Consider placing a shade tree or two between the play fields and the play areas at the western exterior space that will be in direct sun in the afternoon.
- How the building meets the site at the western edge near the basketball courts is harsh, and needs attention to humanize the entry and soften the elevation.
- At the western playing fields consider introducing plantings to clearly demarcate the playfield from the intermediate play area.
- Consider an art program at the wall adjacent to the playing fields and basketball court.

- Adding a path around the western edge will to create a loop and allow students to move through the campus.
- Provide a large landing space at the corner of Wright and Eager where many students will be crossing the street.

Integration of Site & Building:

- This is a challenging site and you've taken an approach that organizes the massing of the building around the spine that is anchored by the larger spaces. This begins to break up and lend intimacy to the entries.
- How the materials have been deployed is very successful create clear hierarchy.
- Look to the building materials to highlight the lower entry to signify that that is an entry.
- Find a way to differentiate the north and south entries from one another, clearly identify where the user is.

Next Steps:

Continue the project by addressing the comments above before returning to UDAAP.

Attending:

Scott McGovern, Andrew Persons – Design Collective

PJ Benenati - GGLO

Maurice Gaskins, Cyndi Smith – City Schools

LJ Thompson, Ashley Dunkwu- Attendees

Osbourne Anthony, Sharon Bradly, Pavlina Ilieva - UDAAP Panel

Tamara Woods, Ren Southard, Caitlin Audette- Planning