

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

Date: January 24, 2019

Meeting #12

Project: Calverton Elementary/Middle School

Phase: Discussion #1

Location: 1100 Whitmore Ave.

PRESENTATION:

John Srygley from JRS Architects provided an extensive analysis of the existing school building, its site challenges including considerable topography, and the urban design of the surrounding neighborhood. This was followed by a presentation of the building massing and urban design investigations and the proposed scheme.

The Panel appreciated the thorough site analysis as well as the presentation of the thought process through the many Options investigated. They did suggest, however, that more specific discussion or graphics that conveyed preliminary ideas on the character of the architecture would be beneficial at this stage, to allow for panel feedback prior to Discussion #2.

The Panel was generally receptive to the Urban Design and Building Massing and had the following suggestions for refinements and further investigations.

- The Elementary playground is currently located in the courtyard on the north side of the building, opposite from the Elementary school classrooms. The panel felt this presented challenges and the relationships and urban design concept would be strengthened by flipping the courtyard to face south, placing it immediately adjacent to the pedestrian esplanade. This would have many urban design benefits and strengthen the scheme – the playground would face south, be in close proximity to the Elementary classrooms, and would become part of a larger set of playgrounds and outdoor learning spaces along the esplanade. This would also create a wonderful set of activities and destinations that would increase the importance and use of the pedestrian esplanade, both for the school community and the broader neighborhood.
- The vestibule that connects to the east side of the pedestrian esplanade could potentially be the used to connect the elementary school and playground in the courtyard; this would amplify the importance of this circulation element and the connection through the building to the pedestrian esplanade.
- The parking along the Braddish Ave. frontage undermines the quality of the building front and the lawn in front of the building. Suggestions to remedy this included:
 - Placing some of the parking on the northern side of the site, which potentially could be shared with the existing Recreation Center and consolidated with service access;
 - Reducing the parking along Braddish Ave. or integrating it with landscape or with the geometry of the curvilinear street;
 - Fragmenting the parking and placing it in multiple locations around the site, including the northern and, potentially southern portions.
- The Panel encouraged coordination with Parks and Recreation with regard to the existing Recreation Center, to maximize the relationship and planning between the two programs.

- The site plan currently suggests a strong idea about extending the grid of the city and connecting to the neighborhood but this is currently represented in diagrammatic fashion on the plans. The panel looks forward to this strategy taken to another level at the next presentation, with more specific landscape improvements, both in tree plantings and landscape design for the many outdoor spaces and nodes at major intersections of the pedestrian movements and streets.
- Mr. Srygley provided preliminary thoughts on the building's architectural character, which included a material distinction between the Elementary School and Middle School to clearly identify the programs. The panel advised that this distinction should be carefully considered; the front façade is currently a long, low two-story volume and separating it in two distinct parts through the materials may result in an excessively horizontal reading. A subtler identification of the Elementary School may be more appropriate to the building massing.

Panel Action:

Discussion Only. Please address the comments above and we look forward to the continued review.

Attending:

John Srygley, Ana Castro – JRS Architects
Joseph Mayzck - MSA

Mr. Anthony, Mses. Ilieva, O'Neill*, Wagner - UDAAP Panel

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Reni Lawal, Lauren Schiszik - Planning