

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

**Date:** January 24, 2019

**Meeting #012**

**Project:** Medfield Heights Elementary School

**Phase:** Discussion #2

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**Location:** 4300 Buchanan Avenue, Baltimore MD

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Mr. Judson Hornfeck and Mr. Brian Reetz representing Design Collective, introduced the project to the Panel. As described, the project proposes a replacement elementary school at the corner of Buchanan and Woodfield Heights Avenues. The new three-story, Pre-K through 5, 80,000 square foot school will serve the Medfield Heights neighborhood with a projected state rated capacity of 491 students.

The team made the following site modifications based on comments from the previous discussion:

- Relocated the pedestrian connection that crossed the parking lot and connected to Roland Heights.
- Added more seating at the main entrance.
- Added a bus drop off area at the front of the school.
- Moved the grades 3-5 play area to a more visible area on the site and engaged it with the organic path.

The team made the following building modifications based on comments from the previous discussion:

- Added a canopy to create more of a sense of entrance.
- Further developed the building materials and fenestration.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Site:**

- The Panel acknowledged the great progress that had been made in the landscape plan that addressed the comments from the previous UDAAP meeting.
- The Panel noted that there is no convenient pedestrian path to reach the main entrance from the parking lot and that this should be developed.
- The organic path works well but could be more successful if the tree locations reinforced the path to create a spatial experience. The trees could engage the play areas and provide shade.
- The learning circles with the organic vocabulary at the main entrance do not feel appropriate for a more formal entry plaza. The circles constrain the space and the team was asked to revise the entrance space to be more of a public plaza/formalized entrance/waiting area for the students and public to approach the building. Study

should be given to the pedestrian circulation between the corner Buchanan and Wood Heights Avenues. The path from the corner to the main entrance is not direct and is interrupted by the learning circles.

- The landscape at the front of the building along Buchanan Avenue seems underdeveloped.

#### Building:

- The panel felt that more study should be given to window placement and the inside/outside connection. More windows could be provided on the west façade to allow for views out at the end of long corridors.
- The white cast stone material is not used consistently throughout the building language. Sometimes the material stops at the datum and other times continues to the top of the parapet. Review the proposed architecture to align the use of the materials in a consistent way.
- The contrast between the field brick and the brick water table should be studied. A darker brick at the base may help to ground the volumes of the building.
- The material change at the administration volume seems arbitrary. It seems to place emphasis on the administration while the classroom bar feels rigid and does not reflect the concepts of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.
- The recessive main entrance feels low and dark. The panel suggested raising the canopy to and align with datums established on the admin volume and investigate the need for a low water table along the one story façades around the building.
- The front elevation needs to be studied further. More energy and thought should be given to the overall façade. The emphasis is placed on the main entrance leaving the rest of the elevation feeling underdeveloped.
- The various entries/exits around the building should have a hierarchy to distinguish between minor and major points of entry.

#### Next Steps:

Discussion #2. Continue to address the above comments with City Agency Staff.

#### Attending:

Brian Reetz, Judson Hornfeck - Design Collective  
Joel Spies, Michael McBride - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools  
Kyle Edmonds, Joseph Mayzck - MSA

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

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Ren Southard, Reni Lawal, MC Buettner, Arriel Humphreys - Planning