

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

**Date:** October 30, 2008

**Meeting No.:** 90

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**Project:** Morrell Park Recreation Center

**Phase:** Discussion

**Location:** Morrell Park Community

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**PRESENTATION:**

Mary Porter, Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks, and David Lopez of Hord Coplan Macht Architects presented a proposal for a new recreation center building in Morrell Park for discussion. Sited across the street from a garden apartment complex, the building is set mid-way between the neighborhood elementary school and the park's ball fields. The small building, which is designed as a sustainable structure and set into a slope, is two-stories in height, but reads as one story on the street (entry) side and two stories to the rear. It will serve as a meeting place for recreation center activities, and holds a meeting space, a gymnasium, a small catering kitchen, restrooms, and other service spaces. The building is simple in presentation and will be constructed with a brick façade and a double-angled (warped) green roof. A small parking lot, to be sited on a geo-thermal field, is proposed at the side of the building. The windows, some of which will be glazed with fritted glass are set horizontally in a band at the roof line and then open into a large expanse at the rear to allow a full view of the adjacent woods that comprise the majority of the park.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:**

The Panel members were generally pleased with the design. The basic direction was good. The building's massing and fenestration (especially the fritted glass) seems an appropriate response for a small building on the edge of a wooded park. The Panel particularly liked the siting into the slope, which resulted in a minimization of the building's mass within the wooded setting. It was also impressed that Recreation & Parks was taking sustainability into account in the design of this new facility.

Recommendations included placing more emphasis on the entrance, adding interest to the design through color, signage, and art, and eliminating the parking lot.

1) The entrance should be marked at the street, preferably by prohibiting parking on the street directly in front of the door. Signage, which was not presented, is needed. It should be carefully designed to add to the building's interest.

2) The simplicity of the design seemed too severe for the building's purpose and the Panel encourages the architect to introduce some elements that would add a degree of playfulness appropriate for a park recreation center. Color, interesting signage, and art would help the building and the site appear more friendly, as well as add to its attractiveness.

3) The Panel recommends against the parking lot. It looks too large and unnecessary in a park where there appeared to be adequate parking along the street. The parking lot's location failed to assist with ADA access, and it was suggested that further study of the siting might result in the elimination of a need for an access ramp. If a parking lot was determined to be necessary, then it should be relocated to the other side of the building where a temporary structure is already in place, and it should be constructed of pervious materials, in keeping with the sustainability goals for the project.

The panel requested that if the project were to return for further review it should include a simple massing model to allow better understanding of the form of roof and a more developed site plan with landscaping.

**PANEL ACTION:**

Discussion only, with recommendations.

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**Attending:**

Gennedy Schwartz, Mary Porter – Department of Recreation and Parks  
David Hunter, David Lopez – Hord Coplan Macht

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Schack, Britt and Cameron – Panel  
Gary Cole, Kyle Leggs, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter – Planning