

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

Date: October 27, 2011

Meeting No.: 138

Project: East Baltimore Community School Campus

Phase: Schematic

Location: Ashland and Collington Avenues

PRESENTATION:

Vince Lee, of Rogers Marvel Architects, presented revised plans to those that were first presented in September. Some of the changes included retaining the 5 rowhouses at the NW corner of Ashland and Patterson Park Avenue (these are not part of the school and their use to be determined) and flipping the location of the gym and auditorium. He also presented in more detail the various elevations and how the team derived these from the adjacent rowhouse vernacular. Aaron Teeter, or Floura Teeter Landscape Architects, presented the landscape plans, including the various private interior open spaces and the public open spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel again complimented the design team with their thoughtful analysis of the site and thorough presentation. The Panel has the following recommendations for the design team to consider:

Elevations:

The Panel generally favored using the rowhouse vernacular as a way of ordering the various facades. However, concern was expressed as to the treatment of the cornice element as a unifying element, it appeared weak and underwhelming. Also, there was some concern about the translation of the rowhouse window and wall pattern into a series of “strips” that looked at times monotonous and possibly harsh in their treatment. It was noted that the Collington Commons elevations were more successful than the elevations along Chester or those overlooking the playfields. More attention to the rhythm, variation, and pattern of windows, as well as the materials for the exterior walls, is needed.

Iconic element / portal:

Given the general scale of the school, several Panel members felt that an iconic element, portal, or other vertical and distinguishing element was needed at the Ashland entry to denote the “front door” of the school and give it a presence from the surrounding neighborhood and complement the various glowing cluster common elements.

Outdoor spaces:

More detailed site plans, to match the interior spaces, is needed for the spaces outside of the school building perimeter, in particular the garden/play spaces adjacent to the parking areas and the park spaces along Patterson Park Avenue. The park spaces along Patterson Park Avenue and on the north edge of the campus seem still seem unresolved. Additionally, more trees are recommended in the parking areas to screen them (treating them as courts rather than simply paved areas). The large rain garden on the northeast corner of the site was questioned as to why it was located there and how would it function; rain gardens are encouraged but they should be better connected to the school's drainage and to the parking lots. The Eager Street pedestrian connection needs additional study; it seems to be compromised by the school spaces and their geometry and does not create either a good community space or connector to the public park. The exterior space behind the 5 retained rowhouses needs to be further developed, as well as the connection that leads behind them from Ashland north. Finally, a more playful and malleable space for the pre-schoolers was recommended.

Fencing:

Fencing needs to be considered, not just from a security measure but as a way to give spaces definition.

Campus image:

Views of the school, at Ashland and Chester, Ashland and Patterson Park, and south along the Eager side, are needed.

There were several community comments. Bernard "Jack" Young, Baltimore City Council President and longtime resident of East Baltimore, spoke in favor of the school and encouraged the Panel to approve the project. Donald Gresham, of the Housing Relocation Work Group, asked questions regarding class size and the size of the classrooms. Joan Floyd, also of the Housing Relocation Work Group, expressed concern with what the public park area would look like from the residents across the street (Patterson Park Avenue) and encouraged the design team to not make the area look like the back end of the project.

PANEL ACTION:

Schematic Approval with comments.

Attending:

Christopher Shea, Cynthia Swisher, Dennis Miller, Donna Creedon – EBDI
Vince Lee, Kip Katich – RMA
Aaron Teeter, Joe McGinley – Floura Teeter
Councilman Bernard "Jack" Young – City Council President
Erin Galloway – Johns Hopkins
Joan Floyd, Lisa Francis, Lawrence Brown, Donald Gresham – CHRWG

Sylvia Chappell, Gloria Peterson – Reclaiming Our Community Association
Susan Williams – STV
Lorraine Mirabella – The Sun
Melody Simmons – The Daily Record
Terrance Hancock - BDC

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden, Britt and Cameron – Panel
Gary Cole, Natasha Becker, Tamara Woods, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter - Planning