

DESIGN REVIEW MEETING No. 4

Meeting Notes / ARBurne

Main Library Expansion Project

The fourth Design Advisory Committee meeting was held on **Thursday** evening, **September 19, 2002** at the Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Avenue. It opened at 6:15 pm.

Members present were Roger Boothe, Carla Bosco, Ruth Butler, Ted Carpenter, Beth Gibb, John Gintell, Arlyne Jackson, Emily Norris, Jim Roosevelt, Jr., Charles Sullivan, and co-chairs Rich Rossi and Alan Burne.

Alan started with an explanation of how the night's meeting would run, and that there would be a longer public comment period than at the last meeting. It was repeated that the project was only at its very beginning stages of development, and that there would be many opportunities for public comment from now until the design process is completed - about 18 to 20 months from now. He again stated that the space program has been completed, approved, and posted to the Library's web site (<http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us>). Also, that a project summary booklet has been started, the first copies of which were furnished to the City Council for their review last week, and that the booklet would be updated periodically and would be posted to the web with hard copies being available at the Main Library and all the Branches.

The next Committee meeting was announced to be on Tuesday, the 22nd of October, at 6:00pm, here at the Senior Center, across from City Hall. Also, there will be a meeting exclusively for public comment on Wednesday, the 16th of October. It will be held in Council Chambers at City Hall and will begin at 6:00pm.

Next, Cliff Gayley from William Rawn Associates, summarized the last meeting (September 12th), and introduced Pamela Hawkes from Ann Beha Architects, and Laura Solano from Michael Van Valkenburg Associates for presentation, respectively, of the Committee's response matrix and an introduction to the site's landscaping opportunities. Pamela discussed each of the four scheme's advantages and disadvantages as seen by the committee. Laura went on to present comparative information of the east (#3) and far east (#4) scheme with the current existing conditions of the site, partially as an introduction to the landscape design process and partially as a result of an abutter's request.

Reaction and comment from each committee member was again solicited by Cliff, and once again the preponderance of positive feedback favored the far east scheme (#4).

. the two east plans offer much more opportunity for great design; far surpass the others; #4

builds on the positive elements of #3.

. people in Mid-Cambridge feel strongly that JLPark is a neighborhood space.

. both schemes 3 and 4 are sited in 'scarred' spaces...which is good.

. overlays (good that they were done) indicates no significant loss of green space w/ schemes

#3 and #4; appear to have as much green space as existing conditions.

. the Ellery Street edge is important and needs to stay in focus.

- . 'Irving Walk' opens new public space; not a straight shot; is a strong concept and will be softened by existing trees; a useful and pleasant substitution for existing diagonal path.
- . the four stories of scheme 3 seems to dwarf the existing building; not operationally desirable, but may need to fall back toward it if technical problems arise w/garage.
- . preference to scheme 4 - but not with tot-lot close to tennis courts.
- . the park belongs to the City, not just to the neighborhood.
- . 3 and 4 have potential for great high school entry.
- . comparison of some lost neighborhood spaces for development of new planetarium in NYC, but overall gain was a wonderful addition to the City. (*continues*)
- . 'canyon' is a challenge for creation of interesting space.
- . would it be possible to put parking under building? (structural grid for stacks conflict w/ that typically used for parking.)
- . an exterior courtyard connecting HS and Library would be very positive; will need a variety of spaces for large and small groups (paved space can be good also); existing pathways are a hodge-podge; we need to look at other projects' good images and analogous spaces.
- . it's very important to make as much information as possible available to the public.

At roughly 8:00pm, the Design Advisory Committee portion of the meeting was closed and the rest of the evening was devoted to public comment. Alan requested that those who had spoken previously wait until others had the opportunity to express their opinions before speaking again.

Additionally, he explained that several email messages had been received that reported completely incorrect information regarding the various schemes: one said we were reinstating Irving as a street; another said we were taking down the bridge between the high school buildings; and, that we were cutting down all the oaks near that bridge. It was underscored that we had no such plans and that we were at this point only trying to find the best location to place the addition - that the design process itself had not rally begun - this is about "the concept".

Summarized public comment:

- . the 'canyon' space between the school and the addition should be more like an arcade or semi-museum space; it should be rich and inviting and a real part -an extension- of the library itself.
- . (we are) moving too fast and need more study and analysis before locking into a schem.
- . what's the big deal about Irving walk?
- . Mid-Cambridge neighborhood, historically, as a concession to the building of the high school, accepted the JLPark as a local amenity, and as such will be 'hung on to'; wants park-school-library as a complex, not simply the park being the "front -yard" of the library.

. struck by how proposal is to demolish (67) addition and tennis courts which are not that old...when will we propose tearing down what we are building now? / will this solution last 40 years?; and why is proposed new library so large?

. seems everyone likes 3 &4, but they will have the greatest negative impact on the nearest residential neighbors - Ellery street; traffic, noise and light pollution is being concentrated by moving all the vehicular movement to that side of the site.

. could more of the massing be placed underground? - in an environmentally-friendly approach?

. this is a 'library project' not a 'park and library project'; opposed to placing parking under the park - feel that the 'neighborhood park' should not be touched; need to address long-term maintenance.

. in future meetings, wants to see (photos) of trees that will be removed.

. would it be possible to do away with Trowbridge and bring in traffic from Ellery?

. concern for oak trees on Cambridge St. side of CRLS "bridge"; need to keep balance between civic open space and neighborhood space; concern about being able to plant over the garage; likes scheme #3; alley in #4 becomes dead space.

. school administration, staff, kids should be solicited for their feelings - specifically about 'Irving Way', and other 'footprint' relationships; concern for Tot Lot moving far away and onto street (for traffic and safety).

. would like to see new building reflect qualities of the old...meandering pathways, soft lines, etc.

. could the 67 wing be preserved and modified so as to have a smaller east footprint?

. how is project budget affected by these different schemes?

. "specimen trees" require special attention; there should be a goal of minimizing pavement; doesn't want to see any reduction in tennis court area;

The meeting finished at around 9:30 pm.