

The sixth Design Advisory Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, November 20, 2002 at the Morse School, 40 Granite Street, Cambridge, MA. In attendance were: Janet Axelrod, Roger Boothe, Carla Bosco, Ruth Butler, Ted Carpenter, Alex Duval, Fred Fantini, Beth Gibb, John Gintell, Arlyne Jackson, Hugh Russel, Victoria Solomon, Carole Sousa, Charlie Sullivan, and new member, Lynn Shirey. Also participating in the process were School Committee member, Nancy Walser, and CRLS Assistant Principal, Caroline Hunter.

Alan Burne opened the meeting by outlining a new structure for the meeting:

- Opening remarks will be made by a John Gintell.
- There will be a presentation of 3 Schemes.
- Public Comment will be in the middle portion of the meeting, with comments limited to 3 min.
- The DAC will follow the Public Comment with a discussion of the presentation.
- AB will be available for questions after the close of the meeting.

Richard Rossi stated that the goal of the meeting will be to determine which alternative is preferred by the DAC.

John Gintel made opening remarks on behalf of the DAC. He stated that some of the membership got together to get to know each other and to discuss the structure of their future meetings. They wanted to try out a different format - which will be done this evening, and wanted to nominate a chair of the Committee proper.

The membership unanimously elected Ruth Butler as Chair and Elizabeth Gibb as Co-Chair of the DAC.

Cliff Gayley began the presentation by reviewing the previous versions of Schemes 4, 6, and 7. He then presented updated versions of those three schemes, which were prepared in response to comments made at the previous DAC meeting.

The models for revised Schemes 4 and 7 were reviewed and potential parking/drop-off options were discussed. In revised Scheme 4, there will be two parking garages; one below grade in front of the library to replace what is currently below the elevated tennis courts, and the other being the parking currently below the field house, which will remain. In the revised Scheme 4, Trowbridge Street will not be used for automobile access. Currently there are 2 ramps on Ellery Street. In Scheme 4, one ramp would remain and the other would be relocated in combination with the new Library parking ramp to east the side of the school off of Broadway. Locating parking below grade, will lead to the removal or relocation of some trees. The Landscape Architect stated that large shade trees could be supported on the parking structure. Four feet is sufficient planting depth for large trees.

The main building entrance will likely be in the new library for security as well as programmatic considerations.

The architects explained that the ramp would be approximately 25-28' across and about 100' long. The architects have found this to be a good place to put a ramp as the desired pedestrian paths miss the area almost entirely. There is an estimate of approximately two cars per minute crossing the ramp during busiest times. Traffic calming along Broadway would be investigated as part of Scheme 4, with the intent of improving a currently unsafe condition for the High School students.

A DAC member stated that the open space created by Scheme 4 could be a place for high school graduations. Many of the DAC members have walked the site and seen that Scheme 4 would work well.

Alan Burne said that he was planning to mark the area with spray paint and/or flags, to enable people to walk the site and the places that we refer to in the schemes.

The location of the garbage dumpsters has not been determined, and the team will be looking at creative solutions, such as inside the underground parking garage.

Alan Burne said that the team also plans to talk to people at Harvard and other people so that the amount of on-site parking might be reduced. The upper limit that we are looking at is a total of 200 parking spaces for both the Library and for those relocated from below the existing tennis courts. If we can find a way to cooperate with others we may only require 100 or so.

Richard Rossi said that he would consider that and appreciates comments and suggestions like that. We are looking to find ways to work together.

The architects responded to a question about the size of the new library by stating that the current program calls for 94,000 GSF. This figure corresponds with the findings of Library 21 as well as the guidelines proposed in 1995. The 94,000 SF includes room for future growth.

Scheme 7 was discussed. The architects clarified that Scheme 7 is based on moving the historic building forward toward Broadway. Cost estimates for doing that vary greatly. The lower estimate ranges from \$1.8 – \$2.4 M. That price does not include anything other than moving the building in a straight path. The design team anticipates the need to move the building around large specimen trees. In 1995, there was an estimate of \$7-8 million. When there is such a large difference between quotes, the number usually is somewhere in the middle, so it would be more accurate to expect it to be around \$5 million. The architects stated that as this is a national historic site, moving the building may prove especially problematic. One criterion for a historic landmark is integrity, and the team needs to find out if moving the building would affect its National Register status and State Historic Registration status. The team will be meeting with the Massachusetts Historic Commission regarding this. In addition, adding to the regulatory and financial hurdles, we may not be able to insure the building through a move. Of particular concern is the confidence level in being able to move the building while completely protecting the delicate woodwork and murals inside. At this time, Scheme 7 is not precluded, although it is not a straightforward option and will need to be examined further, with factors such as cost and insurability taken into account.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

- There were several comments offering an appreciation for the efforts of the Design team to refine the designs since the October 16th meeting.
- The DAC received minutes of the last MCNC meeting, which reflect a particular concern with narrowing the impact on the site as it affects the quality and preservation of the open space. Placement of parks, size of the ramps, what happens to the site, the amount of parking and what happens to the trees – it is important to keep all of that in mind.
- The cost of moving the building in Scheme 7 is of concern, as expressed by several members of the community. Scheme 7 also was of concern as it blocks the entrance of the High School from the park.
- Scheme 4: Unifies the opens spaces and minimizes the vehicular infrastructure on site by putting a short ramp on a busy street. Balance has been achieved between old and new. The view from the library itself will be beautiful and though some of the details of the old building may be lost, we will come to love it. It solves many problems.
- The question of how the new building will attach to the existing historic structure is a major concern, and will need careful study. Scheme 7 appears to be most respectful of the historic structure, but loses a balance with the new addition by placing it entirely in back.

SUMMARY OF DAC COMMENT

Ruth Butler began by stating that there would be open discussion about each of the 3 options and every DAC member should have a chance should speak. The DAC should come to as close a consensus as possible. Over half of the DAC members have been visited the site.

The existing High School library is overcrowded and kids are turned away. Interest was expressed in seeing an overpass that connects the High School to the Library so that students can technically not leave the campus and still have access to CPL.

Scheme 7

- Several comments were made in which suggested that the massing of Scheme 7 was disrespectful of the High school, due to its close proximity to the main entrance, and to the way it cuts off the school from the park.
- The appropriateness of altering the existing building's historic relationship with Broadway and the park was questioned.
- The atrium of light and air is appealing, but we can get that in other schemes as well.
- Several DAC members expressed concern about being able to justify the cost of moving the building, and of obtaining proper insurance that no damage would be done to the historic structure.
- Scheme 7 blocks the new addition, which denies the City an opportunity to appropriately present what should be an exciting new landmark.
- Concern was also expressed in regard to the additional time required to move the existing building.

Scheme 7 needs to be kept on the table till the Mass Historical Society has had a chance to look at it, regarding the integrity of the site and its historic status.

Scheme 6

- Concern was expressed that Scheme 6 divided the park into two, both through the massing of the building, and by the placement of the vehicular access.
- The new forecourt between the library and the High School, which re-exposes the original Irving Street façade was praised, though the identical opportunity is also provided in Scheme 4.
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- There was a general consensus that Scheme 6 doesn't add anything architecturally. It disrupts space and flow.
- One advantage is that the parking can work in other areas increasing the flexibility of the design.

Scheme 4

- There was general consensus that Scheme 4 created a nice balance between onld and new. "A wonderful design".
- The new forecourt between the Library and High School entrance, which re-exposes the original Irving Street façade was praised.
- The creation of a large uninterrupted park was seen as a major benefit.
- The ramp location will need to be carefully studied and approved by the School Committee.
- Concern was expressed regarding the costs of replacing the tennis courts, but the consensus was that the benefits to the Park, and to Ellery Street, made this a justifiable expense.
- Alan Burne to place markers on the site so that the DAC can gain a better understanding of how the Scheme's will sit on the site.
- this Scheme provides more opportunity than problems. Open spaces and integration with the neighborhood are all present here.

- Some of the historic exterior wall can be beautifully integrated within the interior spaces. The Quincy and Natick Libraries are examples where this has been done.
- Access for the handicapped is also important. Most people driving will park in the garage and walk in. As it is now, people drive in; discover there is no parking, and drive out.
- The Design team really has listened to the response of the neighbors.

CONCLUSION:

The DAC unanimously voted to support the revised version of Massing Option 4. (13 yes votes), with the Fred Fantini abstaining pending review with the School Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.