

## **DESIGN REVIEW MEETING No. 2**

### **Main Library Expansion Project**

The second Design Advisory Committee meeting was held at the O'Neil Branch Library, 70 Rindge Avenue on the evening of July 23, 2002. It opened at 6:10 pm.

Members present were Eric Bird, Roger Boothe, Ruth Butler, Ted Carpenter, Alex Duval, Beth Gibb, John Gintell, Arlyne Jackson, Emily Norris, Hugh Russel, Victoria Solomon, Carole Sousa, Charles Sullivan, and co-chairs Rich Rossi and Alan Burne.

Alan started with housekeeping tasks that included distributing the notes taken from the last meeting. He indicated a preference for publishing less formal notes instead of meeting "minutes". Also handed out was the current member list with addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for confirmation, correction, and/or notation of (missing) information. Preliminary notice was given for the next meeting as Thursday, the 12th of September, at 6:00pm, with a tentative location as the Senior Center across from City Hall. (Please note that the location will be in Sakey Hall at the Main Library, not the Senior Center as previously stated. Separate public notification will also be made.)

We scheduled another "Behind the Scenes" tour at the Main Library for Wednesday evening, the 8th of August at 6:00pm, and asked that anyone interested RSVP by calling 617.349.4032.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation of some baseline information about the design approach for the expansion project. Speaking first was the Director of Libraries, Susan Flannery who, after distributing a "Space Needs Summary" handout, described the just completed updating of our architectural programming effort. She touched on meeting the needs for handicapped accessibility, that we were planning for a program that would carry us through the next twenty years, and briefly summarized the areas that were focused upon in the program.

Cliff Gayley, from William Rawn Associates, Scott Aquilina, from Ann Beha Architects, and Kendra Taylor, from Michael Van Valkenburg Associates all presented information relating to the history of the existing building, the evolution of the overall site, and the design constraints and opportunities of each of the areas involved in the project.

After the presentations, Cliff facilitated a discussion about the "Goals and Objectives" of our project as perceived by the members of the Committee. He solicited thoughts and feelings from the members about the Library Building, the Site, and the School, and Parking.

His summary of the comments made:

#### **Design Objectives**

#### **THE BUILDING:**

- Destination (Pride)
- Functional - serves staff and public well
- Vibrant place inside and out
- Recapture special parts of old building

- New and old parts flow together
  - balance: don't overwhelm the old parts with the new
  - make the old parts shine again
- A place of Surprise and pleasure- a "wow-er"
- Cambridge history, shows Cambridge is special and important place --Plymouth)
- Interaction with information, education -about significant residents /history
- Ecological concern/education --park/library/school
- Paths between library and park - for those passing through - w/o the library (page 2) as a destination
- Attract new users, welcoming
- Experience the park from inside the building
- Balance between civic and openness qualities -be extremely inviting - w/o intimidation
- Pleasant for staff
- Importance of entry as the first impression
  - Chicago is an example of what not to do
  - Visibility
- Recapture old spaces and old building's feeling
- Different kinds of spaces
  - new, open to landscape
- Café - with bakery
  - connect to CRLS culinary arts program
- Clarity of circulation
- Children's room improved - and important
- Quality Materials—rich and sensuous
- Public art inside and outside
- Alcoves
  - variety
  - interior and exterior
- Landscape—return to original intent as done at City Hall - prominent building not dominated with large trees

- Sensitive connection between old and new w/o upstaging old

## THE SITE:

- Preserve and enhance flow ..re-look at landscape history and character, and bring back some of the old design
- Historic Character of site -- trees, etc.
- Daunting backdrop of concrete
  - should be covered with trees (trees currently obscure wrong building)
- There needs to be a long-term master landscaping plan for the site
  - instead of planting whenever you need a memorial
- Identify the “Front door” - meaningfully
- Cambridge St. -- shouldn’t just see back of library.
- Encourage use of park, including J.L. park
- Dog area
- Student use - should have a nice place to eat and meet
- More seating
- How to relate to teenagers and the High School, get them to participate.
- Heavy use at entry
- Urban area needs variety of spaces
- Library and J.L. park too different:
  - J.L. too stark
  - Library too shady
- Historic walk
- Outdoor park
  - The ‘diagonal path’ should be a wonderful experience ; an opportunity; perhaps meandering
- Lighting extensions
- How to avoid graffiti (page 3)
- Tables
  - to eat, write, play chess
- Functional: trash cans

- Tot lot
  - shade, Hancock St., community center - connection to the Library?
- Variety -- rich, diverse, mix the generations

SCHOOL:

- Spaces
  - inviting, not saying "no"
- Respect, welcoming to teenagers
- Teen input for inside and out

PARKING:

- Tennis Court, weak edge
- Bike
- Joan L.
- Garage -- above or below? - consolidation of Library and School ? - revisit?
- Sheltered access
- Cambridge St. bus
- Enough spaces -- particularly concerning Ellery St.; and safe and well lit.

Because of time, we ended this part of the meeting and Alan asked that if there were other thoughts to please forward them to him and he would channel them to the architects.

At the next meeting, in September, the designers will incorporate the above comments, along with others, into three project schemes that will be presented, discussed and developed so as to formulate a "basic concept" that, as we move forward, will serve as the project's basis for design.

Alan asked for evaluation and feedback for the conducting of the meeting, so that subsequently we can make each one be better and more productive than the last. (to be continued next time..)

The Public was invited to speak.

- . There should be maximum flexibility built into the design and to the process of developing interim space for use during the construction period to minimize disruption to the public and library staff.
- . There should be another library entrance from Cambridge Street.
- . Safety is an essential concern for any parking facility.
- . Interior space must be flexible for electronic media.

The meeting finished at approximately 945 pm.