

MEETING RECORD

Perkins Eastman
Architects DPC

Meeting Date	07/29/2020		
Project Name	Tobin Montessori Vassal Lane Upper Schools	Project Number	79131.00
Subject	Community Meeting – Schematic Design #1		
Meeting Location	Video Conference	Date Prepared	08/04/2020
Prepared By	Carmen Torres	c.torres@perkinseastman.com	T: 617-449-4026
Presenters	City of Cambridge: Louie DePasquale, Lisa Peterson Perkins Eastman (PE): Dan Arons, Omar Calderon, Carolyn Day, Sean O'Donnell Vanesse Hangen Brustlin (VHB): Sean Manning Traverse Landscape Architects: Kris Bradner		
Attendees	City of Cambridge: Brendon Roy, Kate Riley, Meaghan Mulvey, Kathy Watkins, Owen O'Riordan, Iram Farooq, David Kale CPSD: Kenneth Salim, Jim Maloney, Joanne Johnson, Jamie Frost, Daniel Coplon-Newfield DHSP: Ellen Semonoff, Michelle Farnum Perkins Eastman: Caitlin Gilman, Emily Ercolano, Carmen Torres WT Rich: Davida Flynn Community: Attendance not collected		

The following is a record of the conversation following a viewing of the pre-recorded presentation posted on the project website.

COMMENT	RESPONSE
From: Gina LaRoche Has the COVID-19 Pandemic impacted design, school size and/or timing of the development?	Response by: The City Building Project is now projected to open on September 2025. Perkins Eastman: Health and wellness remain the driving principles that came out during our visioning sessions. We have been already thinking about building ventilation, air filtrations and operable windows. We are rethinking bathrooms, sinks and easy access to amenities, while providing a healthy place for students and staff. This will continue to be our goal.
From: Jay Yesselman I see the car entrance ramp option. Will cars exit down the same ramp?	Response by: The City Yes, entry and exit will be on the same ramp.
From: Jay Yesselman How backed up will that [ramp] get in both directions?	Response by: VHB We are maximizing run space below grade for parents to drop off, providing temporary parking and school has staggering arrive and pick up schedules.
From: Jay Yesselman I prefer the Standish option.	Response by: The City Thank you. We will note that and seek to incorporate your comments into our design.

COMMENT	RESPONSE
<p>From: Gina LaRoche Can you show us the walkway that connects Fern through the site all the way to the Bus drop-off/pick up so we can see where the pedestrians walk during Bus drop-off/pick-up.</p>	<p>Response by: Traverse Community path starting point right across Fern St on to the site parallel to basketball court, similar to existing path. There will be crossing points at bus loop area before reaching Vassal lane towards Fresh pond. The ramp option across from Standish would allow us to provide a similar path from Concord Avenue. Community paths are estimated to be about 12 feet in width.</p>
<p>From: Janet Domenitz If it hasn't been reported on, what is happening re: conversations with the Armory to use that space? Honestly, if that is a space that is supposed to be reserved for 'emergency', I haven't seen a soul there in a long time, and I live 1 block away/have been walking a lot every day during pandemic. Thank you.</p>	<p>Response by: The City The City has approach the National Guard and the Department of Public Safety about the Armory site and is still in ongoing negotiation. The formal statements the City has received is that there is no interest on selling the entire site. The City is renegotiating to see if there is interest in selling the Armory site next to the basketball court to square off the site.</p>
<p>From: Jay Yesselman It is impractical to plan that drop off and pickup will be smooth. What will happen when the kid is just not there at that moment?</p>	<p>Response by: VHB Design below grade will need operational management and details will evolve as the design progresses to address those situations.</p>
<p>From: Harry Flamm When cars are exiting, they appear to take a left turn on Vassal. This seems to create trouble with other cars travelling straight on Vassal.</p>	<p>Response by: The City Thank you. We will note that and seek to incorporate your comments into our design.</p>
<p>From: Peggy and Paul Barnes Lenart Thanks for the presentation, and integration of some ideas from the educational and residential community. I had questions regarding the public meeting spaces.</p> <p>1. Auditorium - concern about location at 3rd & 4th levels - Ease of access and exit, under “normal” circumstances and if emergency. Are there ramps, stairs, and elevators? What is the anticipated of ppl who need to use the elevators? What is the capacity of the auditorium? Ventilation for safe air.</p> <p>2. Community meeting spaces - for neighborhood groups, and neighborhood and city staff meetings? If so, capacity for attendees? And adequate acoustic/audio-visual amenities? Over the years, the location of the Tobin has proven convenient for neighborhood participation, but acoustics and audio-visual have been problems for the meetings... imagine those in the city would agree.. Thank you.</p>	<p>Response by: Perkins Eastman Current design has the North Wing housing spaces that can be used for community events; and that wing is zoned for ease of community access. The multilevel building includes stairs in the heart of the school and two elevators that have access to the parking below grade. Auditorium capacity is 600 seats, which will be the largest in Cambridge schools outside of the high school. Another space potentially available for community use is the Professional Development space on Level 2. It is a 2,200 sq. ft. space that can accommodate 100+ people depending on the furniture used and it can be partitioned for smaller events.</p>
<p>From: Janet Domenitz To follow up on the Armory—and I greatly appreciate the work that Councilor Nolan and others are doing to push that forward—I have a specific question. When we say ""we're talking to 'the state' and the National Guard—who is the decision maker in 'the state'? Thank you</p>	<p>Response by: The City The National Guard and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security</p>

COMMENT	RESPONSE
<p>From: Jay Yesselman How has COVID effected projections for enrollment that were made pre-COVID?</p>	<p>Response by: School Representative Currently it is too early to reflect on that. What we know up to this point is that schools are stressed for space, particularly middle and upper schools. For this project, the existing building is not a suitable learning environment to accommodate the current school program needs. We do not predict any change at this time.</p>
<p>From: Harry Flamm A Stop sign is not sufficient to prevent accidents with pedestrian kids on the sidewalk -- especially since drivers tend to only look one-way on a one-way street -- which will be to the right in this situation. An audio signal of car 'exiting' won't be appropriate in this neighborhood. Won't you require an actual stop-light?</p>	<p>Response by: VHB A traffic study will be conducted including most streets surrounding the school and the cross streets to try to understand that area. There are specific technical requirements that need to be met to consider the implementation of traffic signals and we will look at all the options. Safety is a big part of our solution and we will come back in the coming months to report back to the community.</p>
<p>From: Betsy Damian In terms of ramp options, preference is the entry at Standish. It is an existing entry to the site currently and saving trees in Vassal Lane is important. Can a building shadow study be conducted to show the sunlight effects of the building design? Lastly, can you share your opinion about the distances of walking to the auditorium from a classroom?</p>	<p>Response by: The City Thank you, we will note your preference. Perkins Eastman: We are sensitive to daylight access, which is the main reason why we reduced the building massing closer to Alpine Street. PV trellis is under study.</p>
<p>From: Wendy Zens Southwest ramp option results in students who walk along Vassal from Alpine must cross 2 lanes. Safety is a concern and at the very least a crossing guard would be necessary. Tree loss is two trees too many.</p>	<p>Response by: The City Thank you. We will note that and seek to incorporate your comments into our design.</p>
<p>From: Jodie Siege Will you be addressing the questions that were emailed earlier?</p>	<p><i>Questions emailed prior to the meeting that were not answered by the presentation are addressed at the beginning and towards the end of the Q&A session. Other written comments will be answered in writing on the project web page.</i></p>
<p>From: Jay Yesselman Streets are narrow and snow narrows them even further. Buses have significant coming down Vassal</p>	<p>Response by: The City Thank you. We will note that and seek to incorporate your comments into our design.</p>
<p>From: Wendy Zens Any thoughts about the safety of a new curb cut for southeast off Vassal? Standish option best.</p>	<p>Response by: VHB We are not sure where the curve cut will be, but wherever the final location is, a full study will be conducted to explore safety heavily. Assessing appropriate traffic control will be an important part of that assessment.</p>
<p>From: Jay Yesselman Since as it stands now cars turn up Vassal the wrong way off of Alpine to get to the school putting the ramp further from Alpine would discourage such behavior. Thus Standish makes more sense.</p>	<p>Response by: The City Thank you. We will note that and seek to incorporate your comments into our design.</p>
<p>From: Jay Yesselman I think I heard Omar say modular building methods are a design goal? Can he talk more about that?</p>	<p>Response by: Perkins Eastman Not suggesting modular building technologies, more of a reference to the buildings that were previously on the site that had a modularity to them. The idea is to make reference to them in the design.</p>

COMMENT	RESPONSE
<p>From: Harry Flamm Can you use a battery-backup system powered by the PV's in lieu of a diesel fueled life-safety backup generator? Saving emissions.</p>	<p>Response by: Perkins Eastman The emergency generator for the building will be also servicing the underground storm water tank. The current option is to use biodiesel, we may be able to look at PV battery backup, but have not investigated this yet.</p>
<p>From: Wendy Zens Trellis ideas very nice...could the eastern height be reduced to 2 stories with trellis? Agree that sun light effects should be studied.</p>	<p>Response by: Perkins Eastman If the building goes down in stories, then it grows horizontally and footprint grows. -Trellis height is controllable, illustration is a first glance, we will look at ways for it to lower -Reason for trellis is creating a surface with minimal shade on the panels from the different roof heights</p>
<p>From: Ena Valenzuela Piggybacking on the spoken question about the young children going to the auditorium, what would the time be for 8th graders going from the 4th floor to the cafeteria and then back up? They have the most transitions (are penalized when late) compared to the younger children. They barely have time to eat before they are yelled at to leave the cafeteria in the recent past. So one can imagine the time stress they will be under in this new building. And where is the nurse's office/rooms?</p>	<p>Response by: Perkins Eastman -We have done a lot of vertical campuses and schools as school designers, and we are drawing on that experience to enhance access and movement through the building. -We have been thinking carefully of how to make spaces convenient to children of varied ages. For example, the youngest children are on the first floor, and they typically only have to travel one floor up to get to specials like the library. The library also has an adjacent staircase to make this access even easier. Likewise, having upper school music and the large gym on an upper floor provides easy access for older students And, with our compact the floor plans even the distance that an 8th grader would have to travel to the dining room is relatively short. -The nurse's suite is on the first floor, convenient to building entrance and all wings School Representative: We will have to look at scheduling, like we currently do for the existing building, which will need more time than others for transitions. These details will become more apparent once the design progresses.</p>
<p>From: Jodie Siegel Stairways are the bottlenecks in schools. How do you address that?</p>	<p>Response by: Perkins Eastman We have considerable experience in designing of vertical schools and that concern does come up. Current design has academic neighborhoods that have access to two stairs each with limited access to students within each neighborhood. The existing building's stairs are currently too tight, therefore the new stairs are designed to be generously wide. We are also providing alternative routes through the building; for example within the heart of the school there is a monumental stair. School Representative: As we schedule the new building we can address accordingly. In the existing building we currently have much smaller staircases that dedicate certain stairs to grade levels and stagger class schedules accordingly.</p>
<p>From: Amy Stein Currently and historically, cars making a left on to Vassal from Alpine or Chilton, often look only to their</p>	<p>Response by: The City Thank you. We will note that and seek to incorporate your comments into our design.</p>

COMMENT	RESPONSE
<p>right to check for cars. I have witnessed many close calls with pedestrians walking toward the school, I would want the placement of a ramp to consider the safety of kids walking to and from school.</p>	
<p>From: Guillemette Simmers If you are able to acquire a portion of the Armory site, how can it effect the design of the building? You seem to assume that the design is fixed. The added area could help lower the scale of the building as it abuts the neighborhood.</p>	<p>Response by: The City As previously discussed, armory negotiations are ongoing but we are not optimistic. The building footprint is set, only small modifications moving forward. The advantages if we acquire the Armory site would be increasing open space and more robust community path, stormwater management, and green space.</p>
<p>From: Harry Flamm Very good planning and design work so far, overall. Thanks.</p>	<p>Response by: The City Thank you.</p>
<p>From: Betsy Damian Do you have any estimate about how much traffic will be flowing through the heart of the school?</p>	<p>Response by: Perkins Eastman With respect of the number of students travelling through the heart, almost everyone will move towards spaces like dining, but we are trying to organize the building to minimize cross-school traffic.</p>
<p>From: Peggy and Paul Barnes Lenart Regarding healthy air... what measures are in the design for this? (Perhaps you've addressed this..) With COVID and the projection for future such communicable viruses, I understand outdoor air exchange important for health. how addressing with also trying to maximize energy efficiency? are there operational windows,</p>	<p>Response by: Perkins Eastman We are thinking about the ventilation in two modes - healthy building mode (non-pandemic) and pandemic mode. For healthy building mode, considerations around filtration, operable windows and directionality of flow to not mix air are applied. Pandemic mode, will increase the ventilation capacity of the whole system to add more air and ventilation during a pandemic type or just flu season. The hope is to end up with a more energy efficient building during normal times while addressing the pandemic times. Further studies on how to balance this approach are still underway.</p>
<p>From: Email topic send before meeting Focus groups for the project - who are the participants and when would there be more in the future?</p>	<p>Response by: Perkins Eastman Perkins Eastman: We have been meeting with educators, stakeholders, throughout the course of the FS, and have a couple more in the Schematic Design phase. We have not yet had a public focus group, we are open to the idea of having smaller focus groups which target specific topics in the future. The City: There was a strong preference during the first Community Meeting to not break up in small groups, but we can set them up if this has changed.</p>
<p>From: Ena Valenzuela Have MLK/PAUS and King Open/CSUS population provided feedback to your company? I do know complaints exist about storage in/out of classrooms, providing community rooms, same-size classrooms which were too small to begin with, after-thought offices of special educators, etc.</p>	<p>Response by: Perkins Eastman Good opportunity to learn from other schools and it is an ongoing process, examples include: -On going post occupancy of MLK from staff who are using the building -King Open has come online and we have had significant conversations about the size of the spaces and amount of spaces -Work from the beginning to discuss and be attentive to storage, spaces</p>

Tobin Montessori and Vassal Lane Upper Schools

Meeting Date: 7/29/2020

Meeting Purpose: Community Meeting – Schematic Design #1



COMMENT	RESPONSE
	-Some MLK issues that are raised were derived from lack of upper school, as this was a new idea at the time.
From: Ena Valenzuela Will you be creating a Google form or other to gather feedback about the curb cut, a vote of sorts?	Response by: The City Please email the City for ramp preferences.
From: Email topic send before meeting Has COVID-19 influence the funding in this school project?	Response by: The City We are monitoring this carefully and are currently in a place to move forward with the project.

Attachments: PDF of presentation slides, recorded version at <https://youtu.be/Y4cseSgFZWY>.