

Dranesville Elementary School Renovation and Addition



Meeting Date: May 31, 2022
Time: 4:30 pm
Location: Dranesville ES & via Microsoft Teams

MEETING NOTES – 05
Project #22016

Issue/Revision Date: June 02, 2022

Purpose: Design Committee Meeting #1

These notes represent a summary and the substance of discussions and decisions reached at the meeting. Please contact the MTF Architecture at once if additions or corrections should be made. Otherwise, they will stand as an accurate record of the meeting.

Attendees:

Holli McKinley, FCPS Design and Construction
Paul Parkinson, FCPS Design and Construction
Braden Field, MTF Architecture
Elizabeth Parry, MTF Architecture
Michael Foster, MTF Architecture
Jamie Gadley, FCPS DES Principal
Allison Hoak, FCPS DES Assistant Principal
Alyssa Desir, FCPS DES Parent
Elizabeth Dubuque, FCPS DES Parent
Anne/Kurt Raucher, FCPS DES Parent
Eric Rigling, FCPS DES Parent
Carrie Hester, FCPS DES Staff
Lisa Rita, FCPS DES Parent
Yahaira Hanon, FCPS DES Family Liaison

Purpose:

The purpose of the meeting was to present the goals, process, and design progress for the renovation and addition project at Dranesville Elementary to the school design committee and receive feedback on the school's needs and concerns.

Meeting Notes:

- FCPS opened the meeting with introductions, an overview of the purpose of the meeting, the design committee's role in the process, and the project timeline.
- MTF presented an overview of the existing school and site. MTF presented three concept design schemes of potential project solutions focusing on the variations and pros and cons of each option. The three options were given names to be able to easily refer to each one: Extended Axis, Flipped Axis, and Café Courtyard. The three design options were all generally well-received.
- MTF/FCPS received questions, comments, and feedback from the design committee. The following are a summary of comments and topics that were discussed:
 - There is a desire for the ballfields and the playgrounds to be in close proximity to each other. It was noted that the ballfields are also used for community activities and being able to supervise younger siblings on the playgrounds while sports are

taking place on the fields would be ideal. In the Flipped Axis scheme, concerns were noted for children having to cross the parking lot and main site traffic to access the ball fields. Overall visual supervision between the playground and ball fields for teachers is also desired.

- It was noted that some parents choose to drop off children at the cul-de-sac end of Hawks Nest Ct to walk through the trail to the east through the trees instead of using the kiss and ride because of the backup that kiss and ride currently creates. They inquired if that connection has been considered when studying the approach of the school. This pedestrian access is also often used by walking students from the neighborhood. It was also noted that many students use the path cut through from the nearby pool to the south to access school. The principal noted that they ask parents not to use this access point as it is difficult for teachers to have full supervision of this route.
- MTFA inquired about how the children currently enter/exit the school.
 - The principal noted that the current flow of children entering and exiting the building is K-2nd access through door number 5 (the east entry). Grades 3rd -6th use doors 1 (main west entrance) & 3 (north stair access). This allows teachers to have full supervision of children before being handed off to parents. The principal noted that safety and supervision is of utmost importance, especially during drop off and pick up times.
- The library location on the second floor was discussed. Questions included whether it will be easily accessible for younger grades or those with special needs. It was noted that it is desirable for children to be able to see books easily to inspire them. MTFA responded with some benefits and explanation for placing a library on the second floor:
 - MTFA noted that all spaces within the building will be ADA accessible and the library being on the second floor will not limit anyone's ability to access the space.
 - MTFA noted that by placing the library on the second floor, ceiling heights are not limited as they would be on the first floor, thus allowing more opportunities to let more light in, provide higher ceilings, and create a more welcoming, open library.
 - MTFA noted that there are three main community spaces in a school: the gym, cafeteria, and library. Due to the needs of the kitchen, cafeterias should be located on the 1st floor. Due to the noise levels and egress requirements for a gym, it should also be placed on the 1st floor. This leaves the library as a great opportunity to give the upper grades a community space on their level.
 - MTFA also noted that while seeing books from the interior is important, placing the library on the second floor and providing a lot of glass allows the library to be a prominent element in view from the exterior, allowing the library to serve as an icon of school in the community and learning is seen from the outside as well as inside. It was also noted that the 45 degree building relationship to Powell's Tavern provides high visibility to this orientation in the building on the approach from the road, where it can provide a strong architectural identity for the school.
- Safety and security of the children and the school during construction was discussed.
 - FCPS and MTFA reassured the members that safety is a top priority. All construction workers are badged, are required not to interact with children, and all construction areas are partitioned off from the occupied spaces of the school. FCPS also provides a safety inspector that makes regular visits to the site to ensure enforcement.
- Many members expressed strong support for the courtyards.

- Currently the school is trying to incorporate outside learning more and having an enclosed outdoor area for the kids to ensure safety and supervision would be ideal.
- Principal loves the idea of gardens and outdoor space to inspire children
- The courtyard space adjacent to the cafeteria provides a great opportunity for students to eat outside in a secure environment.
- FCPS also noted that an outdoor classroom is a requirement of the ed specification now and it will be provided.
- The principal noted that currently their family liaison staff is located in the admin office, but they are in need of a designated room for this function. The school envisions the room functioning as a family resource center, almost like a classroom, where they can gather as well have conversations in private.
 - FCPS noted that this function is not currently in the ed spec, but they have heard requests for this function from other schools and will review.
- A parent raised attention to design features and how they might impact students with sensory sensitivities. A few examples discussed were:
 - Automatic flush sensors on toilets can startle or upset them
 - Loud noise of hand dryers
 - Florescent lights
 - FCPS and MTFA noted that all lights will be LED and all classrooms will have natural daylight. The team will continue to review these needs and strive for the best design as a whole.
- Attendees inquired about the difference between small circulation stair cases and grand staircases as seen between the options.
 - MTFA explained that a grand feature stair can be incorporated into any of the options. The benefits of a central stair includes high visibility to aid with ease of wayfinding in the building, as well as more efficient circulation than having multiple small ones. It was also noted that the building will likely include more staircases than required by code for ease of circulation between levels.
- The principal noted that she really appreciates the flow, organization, and thoughtfulness of all the schemes. Isolating the music and the gym from the learning areas is of high importance. The new admin suite location was appreciated. The revised rectilinear classroom spaces are effective.
- A teacher noted that the cherry trees in front on Powells Tavern are important to the school and community and should be preserved. They bring joy with the changing of the seasons being seen from the classrooms. MTFA noted that the design team will strive to preserve as many trees as possible and a tree preservation plan will be developed in review with the county urban forester as the site design evolves.
- FCPS and MTFA concluded the meeting by reviewing the next steps in the process. During the development of the design the team will continue to review and comments and concerns and address them where feasible. At the next design committee meeting, the design team will present a more developed proposed design and expects to be able to share updated 3D views for the committee to better understand the spaces.

Meeting Notes By,
Elizabeth Parry, AIA
Project Architect
MTFA Architecture