



61 Broadway  
Suite 3300  
New York, NY 10001  
USA  
+1 347.549.4141

1201 Connecticut Ave., N.W.  
Tenth Floor  
Washington, DC 20036-2683  
USA  
+1 202.861.4600

**MEETING MINUTES**

**PROJECT** WILSON SCHOOL - 1601 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA  
**PROJECT #** LAD # 056-10002-001; BIG # 14520 WILS  
**MEETING DATE** 27 May 2015  
**MEETING TIME** Wednesday, 7:00pm - 10:00pm  
**LOCATION** 1601 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA - Gymnasium  
**SUBJECT** BLPC #4 : Siting and Concept Studies

ATTENDEES		
APS DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION	DCS	Scott Prisco, Jennifer Xu, Steve Bernheisel
BUILDING LEVEL PLANNING COMMITTEE	BLPC	Casey Robinson, Karen Gerry, Maggie Wiseman, David Soles, Vanessa Picorossi, Tom Mallan, Bill Podolski, Valerie Budney, Laura Edwards, Danielle Arigoni, Kristen Colston, Richard Layman, Melissa McCracken, Jae Cho, Miles Mason, Stan Karson, Carroll Colley, Paul Mulligan, Dennis Gerrity, Neda Bolurchi, Colleen Koval, Tova Solo, Miranda Baltaxe, Sophie Falkenheim
OTHER ATTENDEES	OTH	Arlova Vohnm, Dennis Sellin,
LEO A DALY	LAD	Jack Chin, Pierre Gendreau
BJARKE INGELS GROUP	BIG	Sean Franklin, Daniel Sundlin, Ji-Young Yoon, Adam Sheridan

**1. Introduction**

1.1. Melissa McCracken has been elected the Chair for the BLPC.

**2. Preliminary Concept Studies by Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) - (Presentation is online.)**

- 2.1. BIG recapped BLPC #3 and presented the agenda and goals for BLPC #4.
- 2.2. Site Organization:
  - 2.2.1. DCS explained the complications behind implementing a Frisbee field on the site and that a green pathway between the Penzance and Wilson School site is preferred by the county.
  - 2.2.2. Regarding the green pathway and the fact that the design team has showed an option that includes a service road for both Penzance and the Wilson School, a question was asked if we are allowed to implement that option.
    - 2.2.2.1. DCS explained that the County does not want loading off of Wilson Blvd but if this is the best scenario for both sites, we can explore with Penzance and the County further.
  - 2.2.3. DCS addressed the idea floating around WRAPs regarding a potential land swap with Penzance to allow for their office building to have more of a Wilson Blvd orientation to allow for a larger open space at the north.
    - 2.2.3.1. The resultant of the deal would create an awkward building shape for the Wilson School because there is less space between the office building and the 7/11.
    - 2.2.3.2. The building shape would not be an efficient nor appropriate plan for an education facility because of deep floor plates and more windowless rooms.
    - 2.2.3.3. It would create a smaller Rosslyn Highlands Park.
  - 2.2.4. DCS asked for the Principals view on the open space issue.
    - 2.2.4.1. Karen Gerry, Principal for Stratford, stated that a green space is important but not more important than the students. Any green space must meet the needs of all students and be accessible to all Stratford students.
    - 2.2.4.2. Casey Robinson, Assistant Principal for HB-Woodlawn, suggested that the emphasis should be shifted away from a Frisbee field in favor of just green or open space. Any open space should be appropriately sized for the school and that a regulation Frisbee field is not a priority.

- 2.2.5. Melissa McCracken commented:
  - 2.2.5.1. We should consider the green space as an athletic field for exercise and be available to the community.
  - 2.2.5.2. We need to have input about the use of the space from other entities such as the rest of the community and its citizens.
  - 2.2.5.3. Is not in favor of asking Penzance for a land swap. The construction schedule does not allow for the delay a land swap would entail.
  - 2.2.5.4. Similarly, we cannot count on the 7/11 site being available.
  - 2.2.5.5. Was disappointed in the County Parks & Recreation presentation during BLCP #3 regarding Rosslyn Highlands Park. It implied that it would lose space if a combined Wilson School / County land open space would be implemented.
- 2.2.6. DCS reiterated the schedule and the fact that any possible delay may force the school to be opened later than scheduled.
- 2.2.7. Stan Karson commented on some key points:
  - 2.2.7.1. The community has almost no playgrounds and so needs as much open space as possible.
  - 2.2.7.2. We have to be mindful of all users for after (school) hours uses, in particular, this area has the largest amount of affordable housing in the County and those residents need athletic and play fields.
- 2.2.8. Laura Edwards commented that it is important to know the solar issues for each scheme and building location.
- 2.2.9. David Soles commented that the Frisbee field boundaries should be adjusted to what the open space allows.
  - 2.2.9.1. BIG reiterated that a continuous open space would be flexible for all uses.
- 2.2.10. Kristen Colston pointed out that the open space be as large as possible but does not have to be a full size Frisbee field.
- 2.2.11. A question was asked about the field material. Will it be grass or artificial turf?
  - 2.2.11.1. DCS responded by saying artificial turf would be better because it has less maintenance requirements and is less costly in the long run although there is an initial premium to the material. Artificial turf is also more forgiving to the Stratford students.
- 2.2.12. Questions were asked if the open space would be lit at night and have a fence?
  - 2.2.12.1. DCS responded that it would be logical to have it lit and any perimeter around the open space would be studied and designed to be integrated to the overall aesthetic of the facility.
- 2.2.13. A member commented that an artificial turf is not "green" space.
  - 2.2.13.1. DCS responded by saying we should refer to the field as an "open space". More appropriately, the design team may refer to it as the "athletic field".
- 2.2.14. A question was asked what the PFRC preference is for building siting?
  - 2.2.14.1. The PFRC has shown a preference for Wilson Blvd. However, the ultimate decision is by the design team, APS and the BLPC / PFRC process.
- 2.2.15. Stan Karson reiterated that, in his opinion, the clear vote would be for a Wilson Blvd location.
- 2.2.16. Stan Karson explained why the PFRC prefers a Wilson Blvd orientation.
  - 2.2.16.1. A field adjacent to Wilson is dangerous with potential balls flying.
  - 2.2.16.2. There is a plan to make 18<sup>th</sup> street a pedestrian zone.
  - 2.2.16.3. We need to be proud of the school, not place it in the "back".
- 2.2.17. Bill Podolski commented on site positioning:
  - 2.2.17.1. He is in favor of the Wilson Blvd orientation.
  - 2.2.17.2. He is concerned for the Stratford student's safety.
  - 2.2.17.3. Community space is important. He sees it in the Ziggurat scheme more than the Fanning Bars scheme.
- 2.2.18. DCS asked that the siting decision be held until the next BLPC meeting when the design team can bring further information.
- 2.2.19. Stan Karson expressed that he believes a decision can be made tonight and does not want any delays.
- 2.2.20. DCS reiterated that the siting issue is not controlled by WRAPs. It is a BLPC and PFRC issue.
- 2.2.21. Richard Layman explained that it was odd to choose a scheme without a site location and that we should choose a site and then concentrate on a scheme.
- 2.3. Transportation
  - 2.3.1. DCS pointed out that we will not discuss parking at this BLPC because the team is still working with the County for an interpretation of the parking criteria for our project.
  - 2.3.2. A question was asked regarding the location of the parking garage.
  - 2.3.3. The preference is to place the parking garage under the open space. It will be easier to construct and have a cost discount relative to building structured parking under the school building.
- 2.4. General Building Comments
  - 2.4.1. A question was asked if there would be additional setbacks required if the field were to be placed along Wilson Blvd?
    - 2.4.1.1. DCS answered that no additional setbacks would be required but a higher barrier may be needed.

- 2.4.2. Miranda Baltaxe asked about the stairs for the new building and explained that the existing school has 2 stairs at either end and a larger one in the middle. Will the next design have enough stairs?
  - 2.4.2.1. BIG explained that there will be enough stairs to comply with code.
- 2.4.3. Dennis Gerrity asked how tall the building is.
  - 2.4.3.1. BIG explained that the building could be anywhere from 5 to 7 stories but that will be determined with further development.
- 2.4.4. Richard Laymen asked what is the budget? Which one is the most expensive?
  - 2.4.4.1. The design team is conscious of the budget for all schemes and appropriate estimates will be made at each milestone.
- 2.4.5. DCS requested that the committee narrow down the schemes to the design team can get to a more detailed level of development.
- 2.4.6. A vote was taken and the Jenga scheme was eliminated.
- 2.4.7. Karen Gerry asked how the handicap were going to get down in case of a fire?
  - 2.4.7.1. DCS explained that we will provide "areas of refuge" with the stairs where occupants will be safe until the fire department responds.
- 2.4.8. Tom Mallan expressed that, in his opinion, the school is not interested in the reform movement and that we aren't interested in large open spaces. Smaller spaces are more valuable.
- 2.4.9. Bill Podolsky commented in reference to a lot of glass and ability to see into spaces, he explained that sometimes it is not desirable to be able to "peer" into another space. Current teachers often put paper on their windows.
  - 2.4.9.1.1. DCS responded by saying the trends all indicate the use of transparency promotes interaction, a sense of connection and are overall positives towards education.
- 2.5. BIG continued the presentation and presented the 3 schemes, Jenga, Ziggurat and Fanning Bars.
- 2.6. Jenga scheme (eliminated)
  - 2.6.1. How is the solar and shading issues affected by this scheme?
    - 2.6.1.1. Solar and shading are not affected too differently compared to the other schemes. Some of the classroom bars may have better exposure than others.
- 2.7. Ziggurat Scheme
  - 2.7.1. Danielle Arigoni is interested in the Ziggurat scheme and requested the committee to talk more about it.
- 2.8. Fanning Bars scheme
  - 2.8.1. Can you walk down the outdoor terraces?
    - 2.8.1.1. Yes, that's possible but perhaps not all the way down.
  - 2.8.2. What are the fire escape plans for the building?
    - 2.8.2.1. DCS explained that every one of these schemes, if moved forward, will be built to conform to current building codes including proper egress.
  - 2.8.3. What are the spaces between the fans? Are they usable?
    - 2.8.3.1. Yes, they present tiny opportunities for space similar to pocket parks.
  - 2.8.4. Valerie Budney commented that the Fanning Bars scheme is a good design and to please look into Clemyjontri Park in Fairfax County as a precedent for a play area for the Stratford students.
  - 2.8.5. Bill Podolski is concerned about the "boxing" of the design concept. He was concerned about the continuity of interior spaces.
  - 2.8.6. Karen Gerry thought the Fanning Bars scheme is a good design but wanted the design team to be cognizant on the possibility of Stratford students running out of the building and into traffic or other harmful environments.
  - 2.8.7. Paul Mulligan commented that the design should address safety in the air (terraces).
    - 2.8.7.1. The building will comply with all codes and have the necessary barriers to prevent objects from endangering people below.
  - 2.8.8. A comment was made regarding the form of the building. The spaces have great potential but there is some concern about the urban form along Wilson Blvd.
  - 2.8.9. Danielle Arigoni suggested that the Ziggurat scheme works better because of how it addressed the urban fabric, tall building to low building and that the "heart of the building" in the Fanning Bars scheme is hard to grasp.
  - 2.8.10. David Soles made the following comments:
    - 2.8.10.1. Concerned that the spaces seem too spread out and that there are long distances between spaces at either ends of the bars. The "sense of community" may be lost as a result and perhaps something more vertical would work better.
  - 2.8.11. BLCF member made the following comments:
    - 2.8.11.1. It is a good design.
    - 2.8.11.2. The existing building is linear but still has a sense of community.
    - 2.8.11.3. What is the entrance/ground floor strategy?

- 2.8.11.3.1. BIG explained that the building design and form will help tell the story and that the entrances will be articulated and made obvious.
- 2.8.12. Miles Mason commented:
  - 2.8.12.1. Likes the design and it's an efficient use of space and has a larger open space.
  - 2.8.12.2. There is more opportunity for light.
  - 2.8.12.3. Is the area the same for all schemes?
    - 2.8.12.3.1. BIG explained that all schemes are based on the program approved by APS.
  - 2.8.12.4. How does each building location option affect storm sewer access?
    - 2.8.12.4.1. LAD explained that, based on preliminary information, we have storm sewers on Wilson Blvd, Quinn St as well as 18<sup>th</sup> Streets.
    - 2.8.12.4.2. DCS added that the design team will be aware of any cost premiums as the design develops.
- 2.8.13. Tom Mallan commented that the view from Wilson looks choppy and is also concerned about the amount of transparency versus security.
- 2.8.14. Richard Layman commented that the Wilson Blvd elevation is not providing the "wow" factor as it's a one-way street. You will not see the terracing effect from the main façade.

### **3. Conclusion.**

- 3.1. The open space will be as big as possible but it will not be a dedicated Frisbee field. The open space will remain within the site boundaries.
- 3.2. The design team will present in more detail 2 schemes, the Ziggurat and Fanning Bars schemes.
- 3.3. The design team will further develop the design to address the issue of siting the school on either Wilson Blvd or 18<sup>th</sup> Street to help the BLPC members make a determination on final building placement.
- 3.4. Next BLPC meeting on June 10,2015

The above represents our understanding of the topics discussed, and the decisions reached. Should any recipient notice significant omissions or errors, please notify Jack Chin at [jchin@leoadaly.com](mailto:jchin@leoadaly.com) within seven days of receipt.

Submitted by: Jack Chin  
Date: 3 June, 2015