

New Westminister Secondary School Replacement Project
Memorialization Advisory Committee Meeting # 8

OCTOBER 30, 2019

TIME:
3:55 PM TO 5:40 PM

LOCATION:
NEW WESTMINSTER SCHOOL
DISTRICT OFFICE

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| ATTENDING MEMBERS | <p>Daana Gilpin, Tsilhqot'in National Government Sherry Stump, Tsilhqot'in National Government Erika Mashig, City of New Westminister (4:57 pm) Jessica Schneider, Massey Theatre Society Mark Gifford, Board Chair, Board of Education, NW Schools Maya Russell, Trustee, Board of Education, NW Schools Nadine Nakagawa, Councillor, City of New Westminister Robert McCullough, City of New Westminister</p> |
| PROJECT TEAM | <p>Dave Crowe, New Westminister Schools Grant Lachmuth, Black Wolf Consulting</p> |
| CHAIR | <p>Karim Hachlaf, New Westminister Schools</p> |
| GUESTS | <p>Kelty Mckinnon, Principal, PFS Studio Madoc Hill, Project Designer, PFS Studio</p> |
| MEETING RECORDER | <p>Victoria Cuipka, New Westminister Schools</p> |
| WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Karim Hachlaf greeted the group and acknowledged the Qayqayt First Nation and Coast Salish peoples on whose traditional and unceded territories we live, we learn, we play and we do our work.</i> • <i>Karim said that there were many great ideas which came out of the last committee meeting and that there was a great deal of team dialogue and discussion since June. He commented on the work done by the committee to this point.</i> • <i>Karim asked attendees to introduce themselves and identify their representative affiliation/committee role and responsibility.</i> | |
| RECAP FROM JUNE 5, 2019 MEETING | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kelty McKinnon presented the PFS Studio's PowerPoint giving information on the project's Site Analysis, Historical Context, Previous MAC Meeting, Conceptual Designs and Next Steps.</i> • <i>Kelty provided a brief site analysis and some key considerations in developing the plan for memorialization/memorialized areas (site is and has always been a gateway to the city of New Westminister, bussing, Massey Theatre impact and dispersal of pedestrian traffic/patrons through site).</i> | |

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SUMMARY INFORMATION

- *Kelty reported that the design team had met with city representatives to gain information on roadways through site and site access and exit. A visit to the current school and site gave information on what elements could be used/retained. The outside retaining wall is proposed to be kept in the design plan and the big planter and welcoming pole facing 8th Street would provide a key focal point. There is potential for some large laminated beams to be used for outside benches but, for the most part, the school walls, etc., cannot be used because of contaminants. There may be some incorporation of foundational space.*
- *Kelty spoke to considerations and aspirations as outlined in the PowerPoint:*
 - *Precinct Approach*
 - *Treat the site as a campus or precinct that is highly connected to the new school. Massey Theatre, streetscapes, greenway, bicycle and pedestrian ways.*
 - *Avoid placing parking and recreational field in a manner that splits the site into disconnected pieces. Keep the memorial site as whole as possible.*
 - *Stress visual and physical permeability and universal access to all areas*
 - *Additive Design*
 - *Avoid all excavation over memorial site.*
 - *New landscape treatment and elements will need to be additive on top of existing fill.*
 - *Use areas of existing turf and hardscape as an interim condition.*
 - *Create a framework that allows emergent stories to be added over time.*
 - *Reveal Traces*
 - *Select existing elements on site are proposed to be retained and repurposed (entry circular planter, retaining wall, lawn and trees).*
 - *Recreate historic paths and patterns with defined material treatments (paths, boundaries, column spacing, views).*
 - *Link Experience*
 - *Use design to tie the disparate programs and histories of the site together through material continuity, a continuous pathway and framed or directed views.*
- *Kelty spoke to the difficulty of site development (no excavation) in consideration of consecrated areas and contaminated ground.*
- *The majority of the site is hardscape; landscape can be phased in over time.*
- *Landscape and design has to occur on top of existing areas.*
- *Plan must locate 275-325 parking spaces without disconnecting space.*
- *Aspiration: There must be cohesion and connectivity through multiple spaces – school, green space, memorialized areas, streetscapes, bike and pedestrian paths. Site is very piecemeal both in area usage and in historical context. Clarity can be achieved with cohesive space planning.*
- *Aspiration: Universal access.*

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Thoughtful Approach Considerations

- Desirability to connect to historic location of Qayqayt people along a potential extension of the London Street Greenway, through historic St. George's Square.
- Represent history as developed over time.
- Represent forest ecology with marsh landscape, water waves, recognize ravine system.
- How to recognize differing notions of burial, public vs. private experience, "re-membering", drawing from memory, space of liminal boundaries, putting elements back together.
- History is "open-ended"; stories build up over time.

PROPOSED DESIGNS OF MEMORIALIZATION SITE

Option 1

- Rectilinear
- Breaking through tyranny of grid desirous for design plan.
- Parking by IT/Maintenance building and outside of memorial area.
- Full-size sports field.
- Pedestrian and bicycle pathways in corridor from forested formal entrance on 8th Street. Retention of circular planter in this area.
- Retain portion of retaining wall.
- Plaza Area on corner of 8th Street and 8th Avenue

Option 2

- Some curvature in pathways.
- Playing field rotated with slightly more overlap with memorialized area.

Option 3

- Design and memorial pathways are more curved.
- Half-size sports field with great lawn.
- Several more Learning Circles.
- Opportunity for successional landscape – students can become engaged in planting greenery arrangements over time.

DISCUSSION

Option 1

- Madoc Hill stated that Option 1 takes cues from the fragmented history of the site. He spoke to the complication of site design and development in respect to the higher slope of the land at Eighth Street moving down to Eighth Avenue. There is a difference of 2 metres in the grade of the land where the current retaining wall is. It would be possible to have a memorial element using the wall with some mounding over part of the wall. There is a significant grade change over the sports field area and there will be some terracing/retaining feature required at Northeast end. This area could be used for seating

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and would soften any effect of the grade difference between the sports pitch and the shared space paved area/road.

- *Option 1 provides an opportunity for a potential plaza in the space at Eighth Street and Eighth Avenue.*
- *Jessica Schneider expressed concern that there was no route from Massey Theatre to the additional parking.*
- *Madoc stated that the area between the sports field and school Northwest from Massey is a pedestrian-oriented space leading to the additional parking at the North end of the site.*
- *Madoc spoke to the significance of the formal site entry off Eighth Street and how this was a strong linkage to the past, creating something at the point where the site first started. The planned Memorial Grove is representative of the cutting through the heavy forest to develop the first cemetery.*
- *Rob McCullough asked if the current NWSS school foundations would be gone.*
- *Kelty replied that the foundations would remain as there were technical challenges around removing foundations without excavation.*
- *Dave Crowe stated that the cost of foundation removal was balanced against development on top of existing foundations.*
- *Rob asked if the designs presented were feasible in respect to drainage considerations, etc.*
- *The IT building location is fixed through all design options.*
- *Bikeway keeps cyclists away from pedestrian traffic.*

Option 2

- *Madoc described sports field as being rotated, almost full-sized and signifying the original process of site clearing, creating open areas within the forest.*
- *Options 2 has more permeability of access, still retaining the Memorial Wall. There is a larger area of parking relative to Massey Theatre and a more generous area of lawn encroaching on the memorialized area.*
- *Rob asked if there was a practical reason for the retention of the wall.*
- *Kelty replied that the wall would be useful in acting as a sound barrier from the street noise.*
- *Rob asked what information there was on the structural integrity of the wall.*
- *Dave said that we do not have that information; Grant Lachmuth said that it would be possible to get a technical assessment.*
- *Kelty said that there was a potential for the development of “landscaped rooms” and additional pathways below the parking area at the top left of the design plan. She also stated that there would be no vehicular traffic through the park.*
- *Madoc stated that there is need to build up area by at least a half-meter. Kelty said that it is assumed that there would be berming where the trees are.*
- *Rob asked about which plan would provide the most canopy cover.*

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- *Kelty replied that this has not yet been examined and that all plans were designed to offer maximum canopy cover/had the potential to increase canopy coverage.*
- *Rob asked about what plans were made for coverage of structures that could not be removed.*
- *Madoc responded that the foundation of the existing school would be covered.*
- *Mark Gifford asked about drainage concerns in consideration of the variance of slope and what the storm water considerations were throughout the site.*
- *Grant stated that the site will have a large absorption area.*
- *Rob said that this option breaks down some of the regimentation of the grid and is a softer design approach.*
- *Option 2 provides opportunities for narratives to be represented and there is potential for voices coming forward.*
- *Option 3*
 - *Plans include the retention of the Memorial Wall, Memorial Grove and the circular planter but there is a more meandering route connecting the historical elements of the site and a soft connection to Eighth Street and the front of school.*
 - *The lawn area is capable of supporting a half-size sports field adjoined by learning circle clearings.*
 - *The parking area at the top left-hand corner is screened from the sports field and lawn areas.*
 - *Key feature is the linear pathways following the original grave sites. There is a Memorial Feature/Focal Point referencing old historical elements.*
 - *Use of crushed granite rock instead of pavement could make the pathways “softer”.*
 - *If stories of the identified buried become known, information could be installed in the main areas.*
 - *Option 3 provides the most Learning Circles.*
 - *Inclusive curvilinear pathway design weaves spaces together with less carving out of defined spaces. Design can address issues of racism.*
 - *Jessica stated that Option 3 is the most contemplative design and questioned the utility of the plaza area included in Option 1.*
 - *Erika Mashig noted that the plaza area would be an “arrival point” offering a pre-explanation of the site before entry. It would also offer a connection to Moody Park, as well.*
 - *Erika also asked if Option 3 was more universally accessible.*
 - *Kelty stated that all options provided multiple opportunities for access throughout all areas.*
 - *Mark stated that Option 3 provided opportunities for reflection on the historical fixed boundaries and the decisions made by some for others. There is appreciation for the free-flowing area.*

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- *In response to a question regarding some of the linear qualities of some pathways moving through the grid, Kelty stated that there was value in retaining some original markings of the site.*
- *Mark noted that pedestrians will form their own pathways and create their own way through the site.*

Other

- *Mark asked where the possible location of Chief Ahan's remains was situated on the site (on the lower right area adjacent to Eighth Street).*
- *Kelty said that there could be a look at bringing back the original native ecology to assert the historical landscape rather than having a more formal design adhering to the extracted grid. Students could be involved in planting on site and having a successional landscape.*
- *Daana Gilpin stated that on design Options 2 and 3, the left-hand side of the memorialized area was very blocked off. She also said that she could speak to the Tsilhqot'in Elders about bringing down some plants indigenous to the Tsilhqot'in.*
- *Maya said that the grove could be softened to provide greater access.*
- *Kelty said that there could be a larger open area of mixed plants.*
- *Erika said that there could be more balance at the opening, without putting in hard edges and defining passage and space.*
- *Kelty stated that there could be trees with ground cover moving outward.*
- *Karim Hachlaf asked when the commemoration events in recognition of Chief Ahan's executive were scheduled.*
- *Daana said the July was the anniversary month and that the berries on the plants native to the Tsilhqot'in Nation would be ready to be picked.*
- *Rob stated that the original area of the cemetery has a rough correspondence to the possible location of Chief Ahan's remains.*
- *Mark mentioned that there were other landscape features that could represent/honour Chief Ahan:*
 - *Grassland*
 - *River stone from the Tsilhqot'in area.*
- *Kelty said that perhaps the river stone could be used for the pathways.*
- *Recap of key ideas:*
 - *There are hundreds and hundreds of stories to be told; once the memorialization process begins/memorialized area is developed, people may come forward with information.*
 - *Providing a facing for the retaining wall can make it a Memorial Wall and give opportunity for the display of messages/stories/memories.*

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- *Introduction of the new with recognition of the old in the use of storm water features and representation of the first clearing in the woods.*
- *Simplicity in design, careful selection of palette of materials used to achieve strong messaging in consideration of budget.*

NEXT STEPS

- *Kelty said that PFS would take the ideas presented through the various conversations and see what could be included for further development/refinement of the design plan.*
- *Rob asked if all plans offered the same amount of parking spaces; Kelty said that the range throughout all options was from 275-325 parking slots and that this was a significant decrease from the current 525 spots.*
- *Mark asked if it was possible to get some idea of the notional budgets for the project. He said that, as we move forward with the conceptual plan, with the small budget allocated for site redevelopment, it is necessary to have a strong provincial commitment to the plan. He also stated that it would be better to start working with the city to plan for a provincial approach sooner rather than later.*
- *Erika asked for information on the areas allocated for soft and hard scape. She said that there had to be provision for special elements, i.e., lighting, etc., irrespective of the civic contribution.*
- *Karim stated that it was time to advance to better positioning for advocacy work for provincial and federal support. He mentioned that he had been approached by Denise Tambellini, Manager Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the City of New Westminster, in respect to attending a MAC committee meeting. Denise suggested meeting to discuss a strategy for helping to secure funding for this project.*
- *Karim stated that there were differing conversations on concepts for the design projects and that the ideal plan would be one that honoured the diverse history of the site and the story of the land. He said that there is less than one year before the opening of the new school and that a timeline is a reality.*
- *Rob asked what the committee can do to move things forward in advance of the next meeting.*
- *Kelty stated that First Nations' input in the design was crucial and it would be most advantageous to receive input before the next meeting. She said the PFS Design Team had reached out over the summer months to the Chinese, Indo-Canadian and Japanese communities but there had been little resultant feedback. Kelty said that there is great concern to ensure functionality of the site. She asked committee members to please forward comments and/or questions.*
- *Karim said that there would be follow-up with committee members.*
- *Jessica said that it would be useful to revisit the Committee Aspirations and Guidelines in order for committee members to give critical thought to the design process.*

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- *Karim said that the review of the Aspirations and Guidelines could be the committee's homework and that these documents would be sent out in advance of the next meeting.*
- *Kelty gave thanks to the committee for the discussion and feedback.*

CLOSING

- *Meeting ended at 5:40 pm.*
- *Next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, December 4 from 3:30-5:30 pm at the School Board Office, 811 Ontario Street.***
- *Questions or comments should be directed to Karim Hachlaf (khachlaf@sd40.bc.ca) and copied to Victoria Cuipka (vcuipka@sd40.bc.ca).*