



MEETING NOTES

Faneuil Branch Library Renovations

Community Meeting #3

June 22, 2020

Attendees

Oudens Ello Architecture: Conrad Ello, Noel Murphy

Boston Public Library: David Leonard, Michael Colford, Alison Ford, Priscilla Foley, Eamon Shelton, Laura Irmscher, Lissa Schwab

City of Boston Public Facilities Department: Mary Silveria, Paul Donnelly, Alistair Lucks

35+ community members

Agenda

- Project Team
- Project Goals
- Community Meeting #2 Recap and Feedback
- Design Update
- Discussion
- Schedule

Discussion Q&A

Q: Is the 'light intervention' option from the Feasibility Study possible?

A: The decision was made at the conclusion of the Feasibility Study to move forward with the 'major intervention' option. The basis for this decision was the need to add enough space to provide a dedicated community meeting room and avoid sharing and/or continually rearranging other library spaces to accommodate meeting activities.

Q: What is the design of the new fence around the library?

A: The new fence will be a post-and-chain barrier to demarcate the library property from the public sidewalk. The post-and-chain barrier is lighter in appearance than the existing fence and will improve visibility of the historic facades.

Q: What are the size and species of the new ornamental trees at the corner of the building?

A: The proposed trees are Black Tupelos and will grow to 40'-50' when mature. They are intended as canopy trees and will need to be limbed up (the large, low branches removed) 5-10 years after planting and be maintained thereafter to preserve sightlines to the building.

Q: Could one Tupelo tree also be included to the left of the front facade instead of leaving it barren?

A: The proposed landscape plan is meant to strengthen visual connections between Oak Square and the new entrance pavilion rather than emphasize or provide a 'frame' for the original entrance as the existing magnolias do. The area to the left of the front façade incorporates new paving and seating which also limits the area available for a new tree. The landscape plan and tree locations are still being designed and will continue to be developed over the coming months.

Q: Can the existing circulation desk be retained?

A: With the new relocated entrance it is challenging to reuse the existing desk given that its size, design and shape are all very specific to the current location in the main reading room. A new borrower's service desk, oriented to the new entrance, will be added to greet visitors as they arrive. Original chairs from the 1932 library are easier to retain and will be refurbished and reused in the renovated building.

Q: Will pieces that you are retaining be refurbished and cleaned.

A: Yes, existing wall existing surfaces, ornamentation and furniture to remain will be refurbished and cleaned.

Q: On historic preservation: will the iconic Art Deco ornamentation on walls adjacent to the fireplace be maintained? On historic hardwood furniture, what happens to the other hardwood chairs? Leather fireplace chair? Comfy couch financed by FOFL?

A: Yes, all of the ornamentation in the main reading room, including around the fireplace, will be maintained. Original chairs from the 1932 library that remain will be refurbished and reused throughout the library. Furniture selections are still in progress, but the intent is to provide comfortable seating around the fireplace as suggested.

Q: Where is the handicap entrance and will bathrooms be handicap accessible as well?

A: The new entrance pavilion is handicap accessible and will serve as the main entrance for all patrons. An accessible unisex restroom is provided on the main level of the building with additional restroom facilities on the lower level accessible by stair or elevator. The entire building, including entrances, restrooms, and other public spaces is required to be accessible by code.

Q: Is there a private space for classes that won't distract from the comings and goings, for meetings and lectures that are smaller. Like a writing classes, ESL, etc.

A: Yes, there is a dedicated Community Room space for classes and activities of this kind.

Q: What will storage be like in the Community Room?

A: The Community Room has direct access to a sizable storage room for tables, chairs, AV and other equipment.

Q: Will the Community Room be set up for audio and video, drop-down projection screen, microphones, shades at windows?

A: Yes, the Community Room will be fit-out with AV equipment including a lectern and microphone, a projector and drop-down projection screen, acoustic treatment on the ceiling and room darkening shades at the windows.

Q: How many people can the Community Room accommodate?

A: In seated format, the meeting room can comfortably accommodate 65 chairs with clear aisles around the perimeter of the room. A tighter arrangement with additional chairs is possible depending on the needs of the meeting or event. Note that the size of the new Community Room is identical to the current Children's Room so any layouts or furniture arrangements used in the past can be accommodated in the renovated space.

Q: Can you say more about the features in the future Community Room that will be redeployed?

A: The majority of the existing space and art deco detailing will remain with the exception of the stage platform which will be removed. The following features will be refurbished as part of the renovation: the painted art deco frieze and coffered ceiling, wall ornamentation above and to the left and right of the stage opening, the fluted pilasters framing the stage and the fluted pilasters at the corners of the room.

Q: The Children's Room looks large, do we lose the backyard? Could it be a bit smaller and one of the corners at an angle in order to make a connection with the outside?

A: The size and shape of the Children's Room addition are determined by the square footage required to accommodate the Children's book collection, tables and seating, and staff service desk. The addition is located in the only area available for expansion and will occupy a good portion of the existing backyard space. To address this, large windows and a new viewing garden are provided to create a strong visual connection between the interior spaces and outdoor landscape.

Q: Could you walk us through the traffic flow of a large event, our auction, for instance? Will we be able to easily move from room to room, inside and outside, as we currently do?

A: Every effort has been made to maximize connections between spaces while honoring the layout of the original library building. The use of doors has been limited to facilitate traffic flow and the only truly enclosed space with doors is the Community Room as this is required for acoustics. The Community Room, however, has doors connecting it to both the main reading room and Children's Room so that visitors can move freely between these spaces via the Community Room.

Q: Is there comfortable furniture for people to hangout and read, reading chairs with good backs, cushioned benches in the Children's Room?

A: Welcoming, comfortable and durable furniture will be provided throughout the library to encourage patrons to relax, hangout and read. All benches and window seats will be cushioned.

Q: Could fabric or flooring or the color scheme reflect the art deco era? What will the flooring be?

A: Color and fabric choices are still in progress, but it is welcome suggestion to make reference to the art deco era. Some information about color and floor patterns is documented in the original building blueprints and historical photographs. The flooring in most public spaces will be commercial grade rubber flooring which is durable and has a wide range of pattern and color options.

Q: Can you explain how the Friend's Room is used?

A: The Friend's Room is approximately 100 sf and will be used to sort and shelf book donations.

Q: Where is the adult computer area?

A: Adult computers are located in the central portion of the adult reading room.

END OF MEETING NOTES