



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: December 3, 2015

PROJECT Benjamin Murch Elementary School Expansion Project Murch Elementary School 4810 36th Street, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7736
SUBMITTED BY District of Columbia Department of General Services	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 10.06(38.00)44268
REVIEW AUTHORITY District Project Outside the Central Area per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of comments on concept design
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve comments as requested
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Consent Calendar

PROJECT SUMMARY

The District of Columbia's Department of General Services (DGS) submitted concept site and building plans for an expansion project for Murch Elementary School in NW Washington, DC. This project consists of a 41,180 square-foot rehabilitation of the existing two-story school and a 65,000 square-foot addition. DGS notes this expansion is necessary because the existing school is overcrowded and students are using temporary classrooms located in trailers on the site. Several classrooms use temporary trailers on the school grounds. Once the renovation and expansion is completed, the school will house 720 students.

The proposed main addition is a two story building with below grade parking. Due to the site's shape and arrangement, the addition is along the south side of the property along Davenport Street. This addition will connect to the existing building on the west side of the south classroom wing. This allows for a connection directly to the existing central corridor of this wing at both floor levels. DGS notes that the addition will enclose an area between the central auditorium and south wings that is currently an open court for additional program space. DGS is proposing a second new structure along the south side of the south wing; this element will be at the parking/basement level and will only be partially visible along Davenport. DGS notes the southeastern portion of the expansion building will be visible by lowering the grade at the corner of 36th and Davenport Street.

DGS notes the District of Columbia constructed the original school between 1929 and 1930. The federal government identified a portion of the Fort Circle Park parkway, called Fort Drive adjacent and north of this site during the same time period. DC and the National Park Service (NPS) exchanged land at this site in 1936. Plans to create Fort Drive were never realized and a triangular piece of land adjacent to the school, a portion of Reservation 515, remained as NPS parkland. In 1994, the Commission approved the transfer of this portion of Reservation 515 from NPS to the District of Columbia for school and/or recreation purposes. There are several existing mature trees on Reservation 515.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Commission approved a land exchange between the National Park Service and the District of Columbia in 1936.
- The Commission approved a transfer of jurisdiction of a triangular parcel of National Park Service land north of the school to DC in 1994. Per the transfer agreement, the land was only to be used for either school or recreation purposes and any temporary buildings on the United States government owned property would be demolished once its useful life was reached.
- The federal government planned to use the National Park Service land north of the school for part of Fort Drive, which was a planned parkway connecting the Fort Circle Parks.
- Benjamin Murch Elementary School is currently overcrowded and the expansion and renovation is necessary to accommodate the future student population.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Comments favorably on the concept site and building plans for the Benjamin Murch Elementary School Expansion project located in 4810 36th Street, NW in Washington, DC.

Notes in January 1994, the Commission approved the transfer of jurisdiction of National Park Service parkland to the District of Columbia with a stipulation that the land be available only for either recreational or school purposes. The underlying ownership of this land is with the United States government.

Notes the Department of General Services is proposing to locate the proposed school building expansion on District of Columbia owned land while relocating a recreational field to National Park Service land in keeping with the restrictions of the transfer of jurisdiction agreement.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	None
Remaining actions (anticipated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Preliminary review of site and building plans- Final review of site and building plans

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Staff evaluated the concept design for the Benjamin Murch Elementary School expansion by determining its consistency with the relevant policies contained within the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and the transfer of jurisdiction agreement approved by the Commission in January 1994. Since staff found the design was consistent with both the Comprehensive Plan and the transfer of jurisdiction agreement and recommending the Commission **comment favorably on the concept site and building plans for the Benjamin Murch Elementary School Expansion project located at 4810 36th Street, NW in Washington, DC.**

Analysis

Staff reviewed the project to determine its consistency with the policies within the Parks and Open Space and the Preservation and Historic Features Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Parks and Open Space Element seeks to “...*conserve and enhance the park and open space system of the National Capital Region...*” balancing “...*open space resources and the built environment.*” The Preservation and Historic Features Element seeks to “...*preserve and enhance the image and identity of the national capital...*” respecting principals of the L’Enfant and McMillan Plans. Staff finds that this concept design supports the relevant policies in the Comprehensive Plan consistent with maintaining parks as open space and preserving historic structures.

This concept design will provided needed renovation to an existing aging building and needed expansion for an overcrowded school in the District of Columbia. DGS notes it will construct the 64,000 square-foot building expansion aspect of the project on the southwest portion of the District-owned property fronting on Davenport Street, NW. While this is a sizable addition, it is set behind the existing historic school building which fronts along 36th Street, NW. A partially below-grade, dining facility at the corner of Davenport Street and 36th Street, NW visually connects the old and new additions while simultaneously causes the removal of an at-grade parking garage. A new atrium area physically connects the two buildings. DGS relocated the existing parking lots under the new expansion, which allows for the rest of the site to be used for school programming. The project also includes the development of a new recreation field on NPS owned land. Staff finds that the expansion is complementary to the existing historic school structure and addresses the overcrowding issue that caused existing condition of temporary classrooms installed around the school building.

Existing landscaping consists of street trees around the entire site and some small groupings of trees within a parklike setting on the United States government-owned land to the north. While DGS provided a concept landscape plan indicating where it would plant new trees and locate new recreational and outdoor-educational facilities, the landscape program describing the future design should include how it will incorporate stormwater management into the design. DGS also states that an existing recreation field on District owned land west of the existing school will be relocated north onto the United States government owned land. Relocating this recreation field will result in tree removal; DGS is proposing to plant new trees to replace these and transplant existing trees as

well. Staff is supportive of the new landscape design, which will provide additional trees for the site and increase the number of street trees. DGS will have to get a permit from NPS in order for it to plant trees on its land.

Regarding the transfer of jurisdiction, staff **notes the Commission approved the transfer of National Park Service land to the District of Columbia, in January 1994, with a stipulation that the land be available only for either recreational or school purposes.** The staff also **notes the Department of General Services is proposing to locate the proposed school building expansion on District of Columbia owned land while relocating a recreational field to United States government land, in keeping with the restrictions of the transfer of jurisdiction agreement.** Staff finds that the project conforms to the 1994 transfer of jurisdiction language, which only allows recreation or school uses on the triangular-shaped United States government owned parcel north of Murch Elementary School.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

As noted above, this project meets basic goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

National Historic Preservation Act

As this is a District of Columbia project located outside the Central Area, NCPC's authority is advisory and therefore NCPC does not have a responsibility under the National Historic Preservation Act.

National Environmental Policy Act

As this is a District of Columbia project located outside the Central Area, NCPC's authority is advisory and therefore NCPC does not have a responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its November 10, 2015 meeting. The Committee forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that it has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies were: NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, the General Services Administration; the National Park Service and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a concept design at its July and October 2015 meetings. At its October 2015 meeting, CFA noted that DGS had improved the design and it requested DGS provide "...a more comprehensive approach to develop an integrated landscape from the building face to the curb. Specifically, they recommended a less rigid strategy for water management through discrete rain garden elements, suggesting instead that a more unified design solution could address hydrologic issues continuously across the landscape." In addition, it suggested DGS explore the connection of the two buildings as it "...should convey both compatibility and a legible differentiation of the two eras of construction." CFA requested another concept review before submitting the project for final.

ONLINE REFERENCE

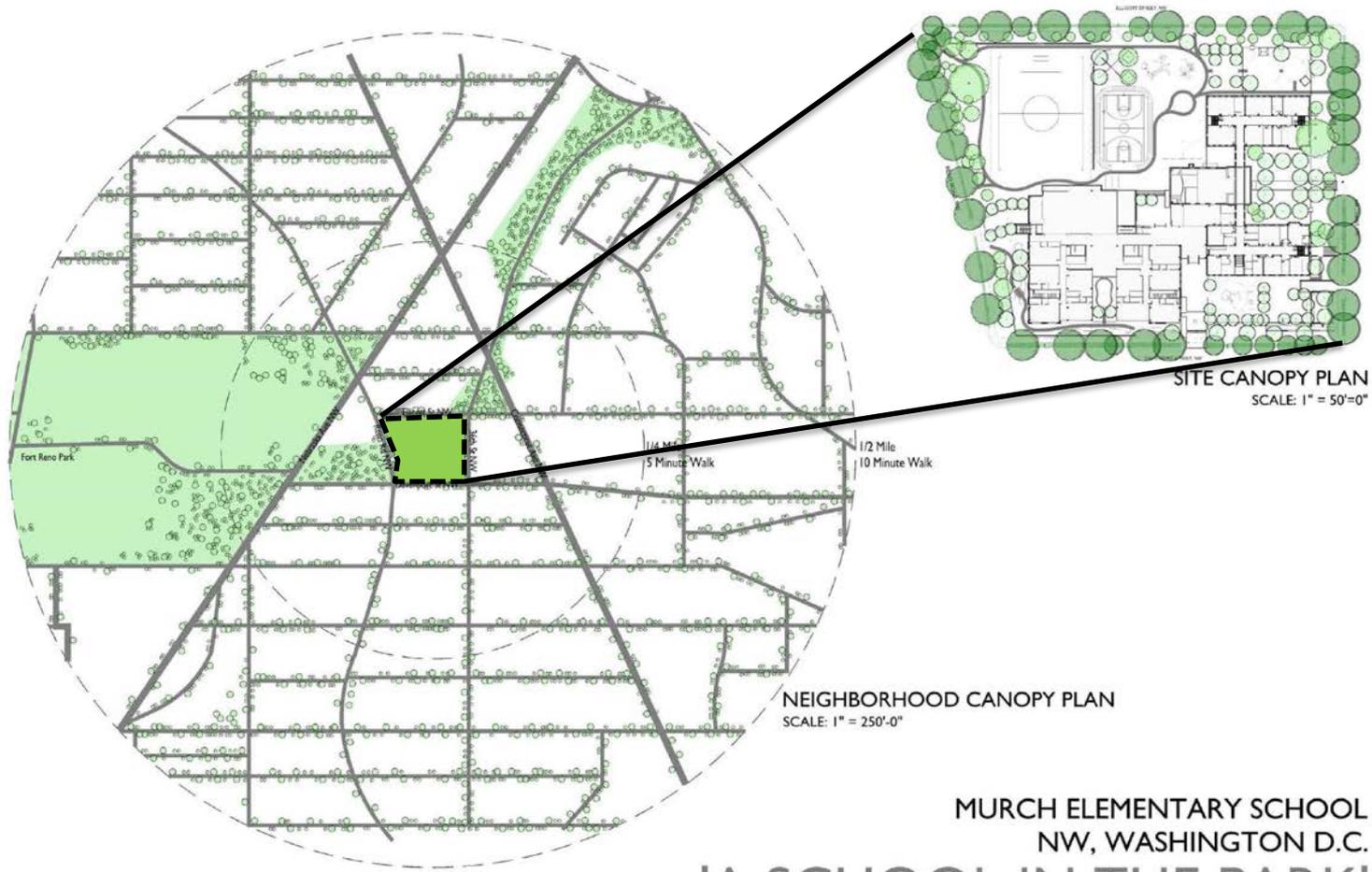
The following supporting documents for this project are available online:

- Submission Package

Prepared by Carlton Hart
11/24/15

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

MURCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NCPC - Concept Design Submission

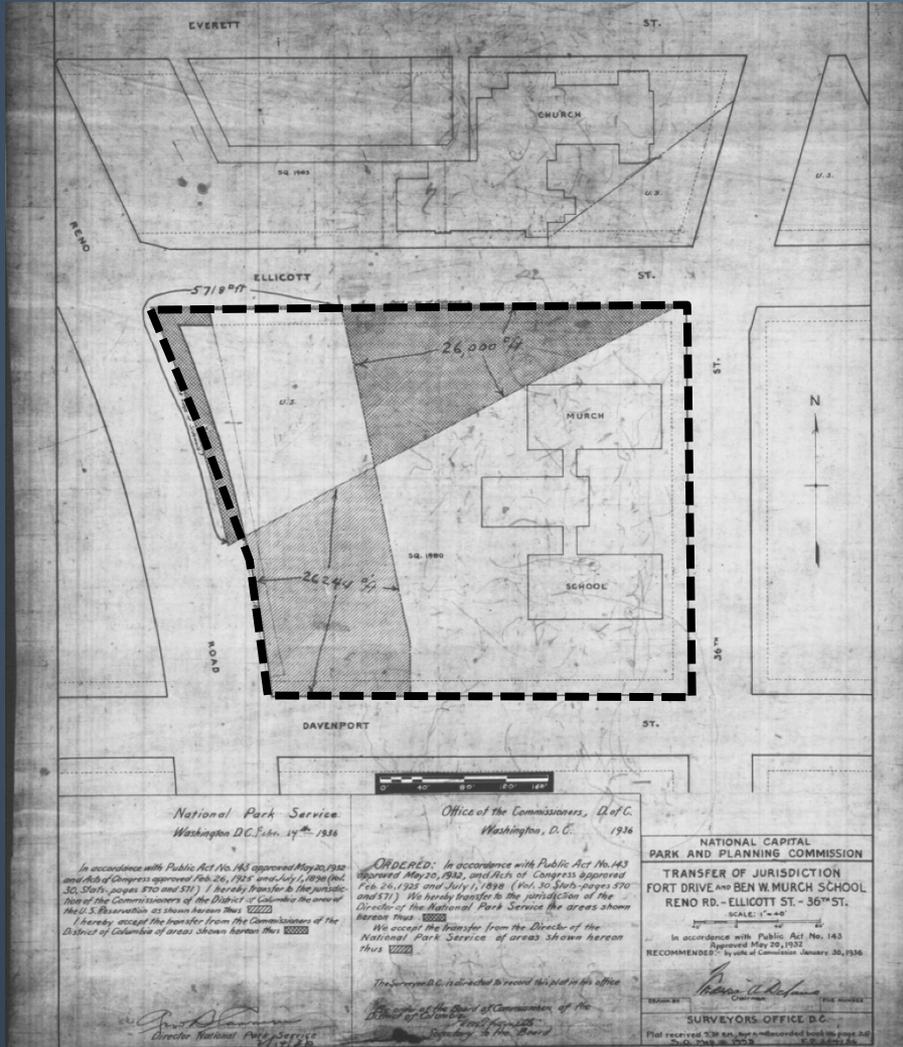


NEIGHBORHOOD CANOPY PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 250'-0"

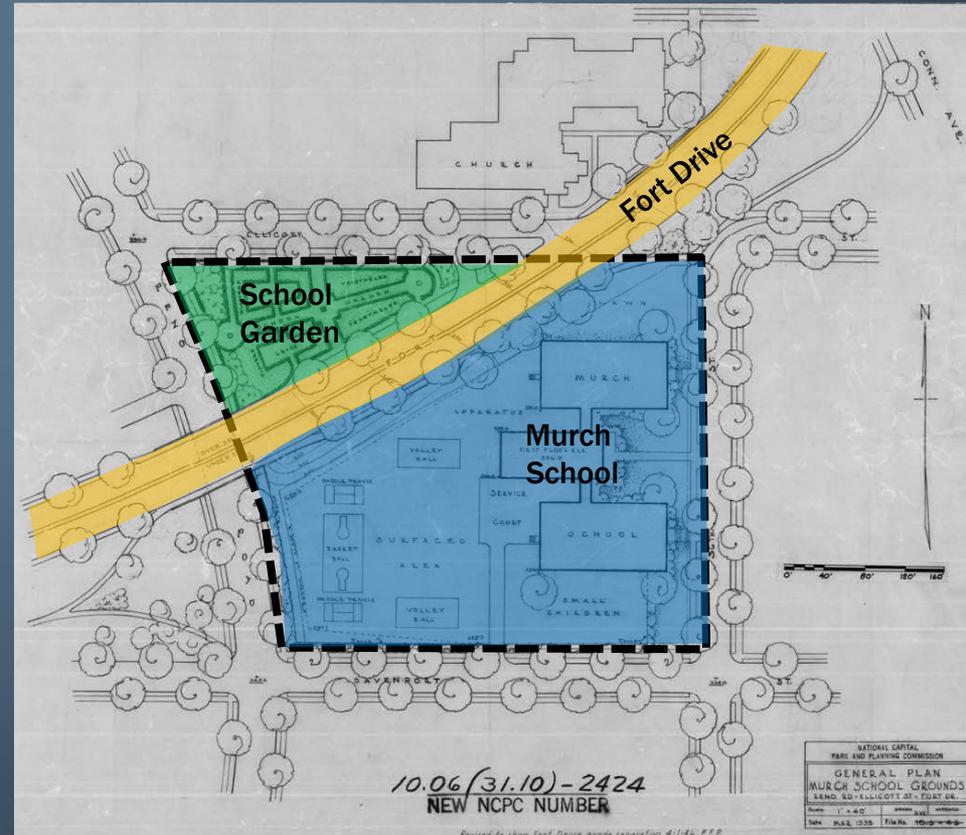
SITE CANOPY PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 50'-0"

MURCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
NW, WASHINGTON D.C.
'A SCHOOL IN THE PARK'

Transfer of Jurisdiction from NPS to District of Columbia (1936)



Murch School with Fort Drive (1946)



This transfer of jurisdiction was approved by the National Capital Planning Commission at its meeting on _____, 19____ pursuant to D.C. Code, Section 8-111.

Secretary _____, 19____

The National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior agrees to transfer jurisdiction of the area shown thus ~~XXXX~~ to the District of Columbia for school purposes, and thus ~~XXXX~~ for Recreational purposes, pursuant to D.C. Code Section 8-111.

Robert D. [Signature]
Regional Director
National Park Service
National Capital Region

August 25, 1993

In accordance with D.C. Code, Section 8-111 and Resolution No. _____ adopted _____, 19____ by the Council of the District of Columbia, these transfers of jurisdiction are approved.

OFFICE OF THE SURVEYOR, D.C.
_____, 19____

I certify that this plot is approved and recorded.

Surveyor

SURVEYOR'S OFFICE, D.C.
Made for: Office of Administrative Services
Drawn by: P.A. Rollins, S.O. 4748
Recorded at: _____
Recorded in Book: _____ Page: _____
Scale: 1 inch = _____ feet. File No. 92-101

TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION

U.S. RESERVATION 515

ELLICOTT STREET, N.W.

RENO ROAD

36TH STREET

SQUARE 1980

SEP. MINUTES OF N. C. P. C. MEETING 1-6-974

NCPC MAP FILE # 72-00 (63.003)-30930

NCPC approved the transfer of jurisdiction from NPS to the District of Columbia at its January 6, 1994 meeting.

Transfer of Jurisdiction over a Portion of U.S. Reservation 515, S.O. 92-101, Resolution of 1994: *“Pursuant to Resolution 10-449, effective November 18, 1994, the Council approved the transfer of jurisdiction, **for school and recreational purposes**, from the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior to the District of Columbia over a portion of U.S. Reservation 515, located adjacent to Murch Elementary School at Reno Road, N.W., and Ellicott Street, N.W., in Ward 3.”*



②



④



⑦









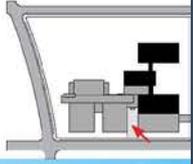
Perspective Rendering – View looking Northwest



Rendering – Bird’s Eye View Looking Northwest

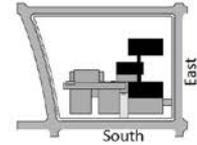


Perspective Rendering – Main Entrance @ Davenport

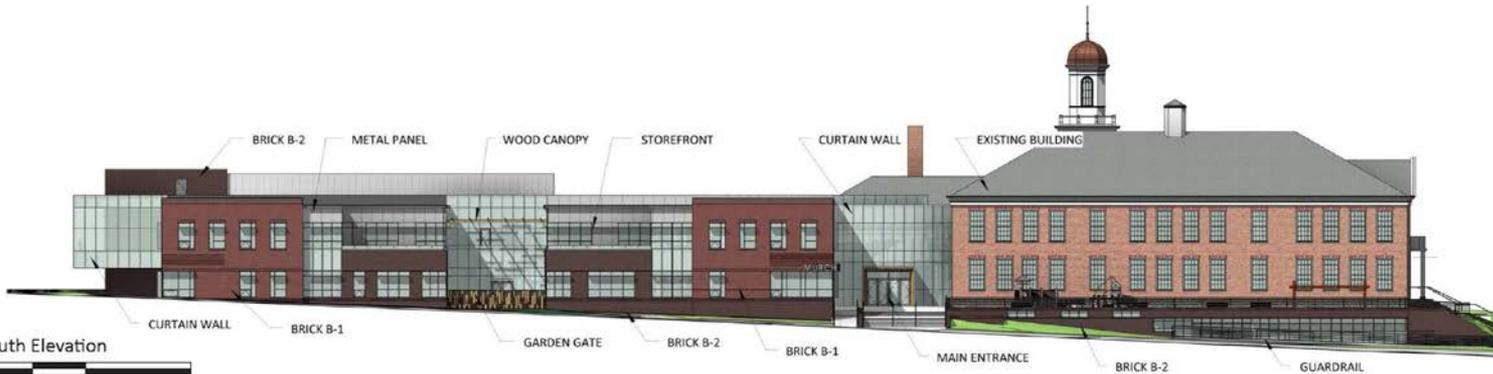


Proposed Elevations – East and South

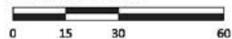
MURCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NCPC - Concept Design Submission



East Elevation

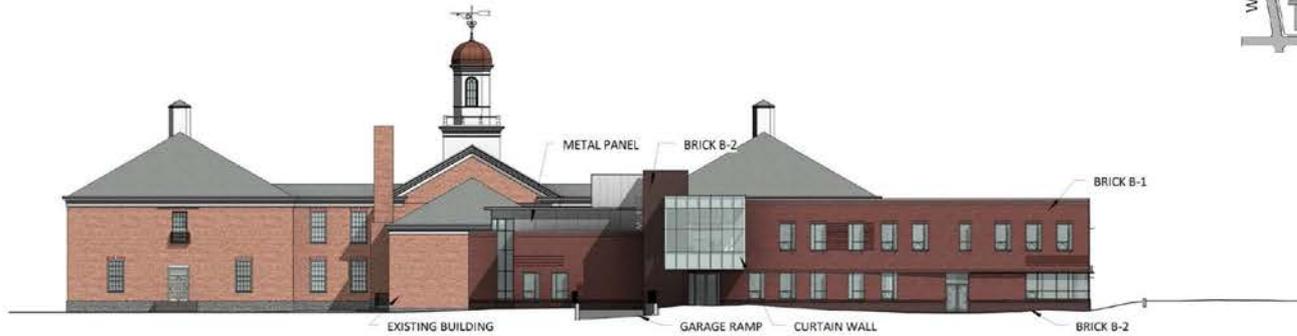
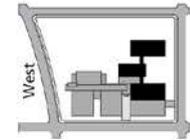


South Elevation

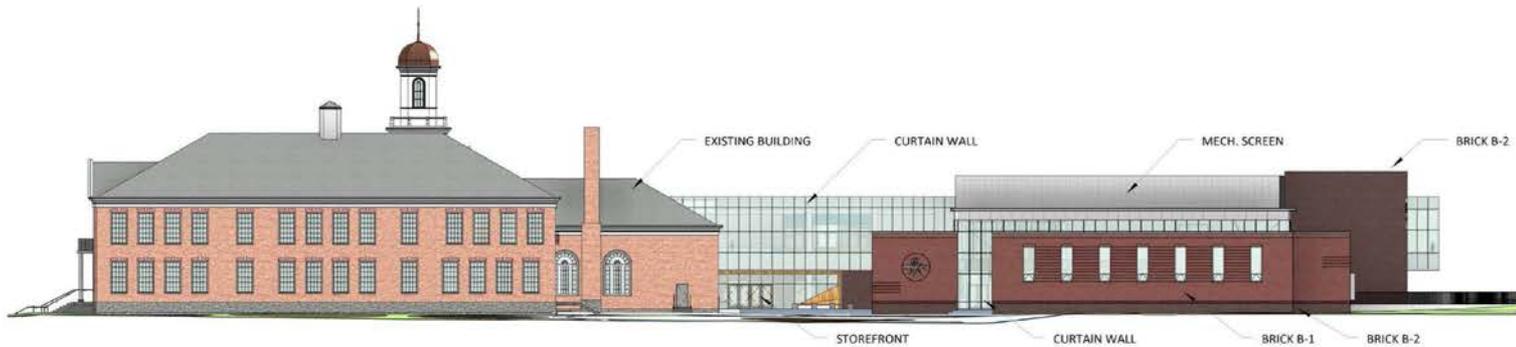


Elevations

MURCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NCPC - Concept Design Submission



West Elevation

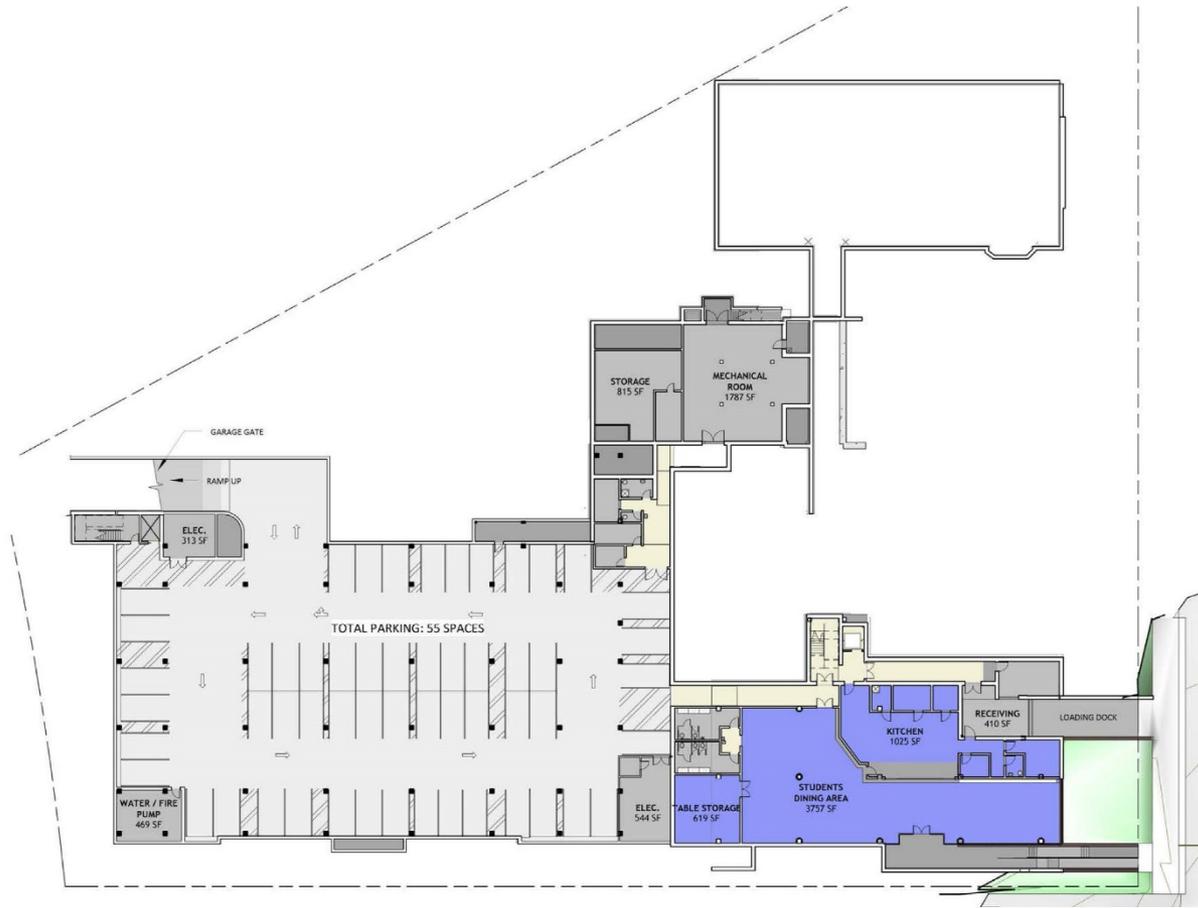


North Elevation

Elevations

MURCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NCPC - Concept Design Submission

- Pre -K/K
- Core Educational
- Special Ed
- Visual/Performing Arts
- Administration
- Media Center
- Physical Education
- Dining/Food Service
- Circulation
- Service Areas



Basement Floor Plan

- Pre -K/K
- Core Educational
- Special Ed
- Visual/Performing Arts
- Administration
- Media Center
- Physical Education
- Dining/Food Service
- Circulation
- Service Areas



Second Floor Plan