

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** January 10, 2013

**Meeting No.:** 160

**Project:** 400 E. Pratt Street Addition

**Phase:** Schematic

**Location:** Downtown Baltimore – Inner Harbor

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**PRESENTATION:**

Peter Fillat of Peter Fillat Architects, on behalf of client The Peter D. Leibowits Company, presented drawings showing a 22,600 sq.ft. two story addition to the Inner Harbor’s Pratt Street facade of the existing 10 story, precast concrete and glass building. The addition, envisioned by the 2008 Pratt Street redesign proposal by Ayers Saint Gross Architects, seeks to provide continuous retail opportunities in an urban context.

Representatives of the Downtown Partnership described aspects of a broadly worded design guideline document but admitted that there were not specific architectural guidelines included within the document to evaluate the individual infill proposals. Peter Fillat shared with the Panel several preliminary schemes which explored differing heights and design elements, all within a similar design vernacular, before determining the current scheme, described as a 2 story steel and glass “jewel box” with a landscaped terrace at the third floor level of the existing building. A glass rail provided the parapet around the upper terrace. The addition extends along the entire Pratt Street property line, expanding further than the building itself at its western terminus at Commerce Street. The images shown did not show canopies, awnings or projections and suggested that signing would be located at the tenant’s discretion.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL:**

The Panel felt, overall, that the addition, as the first building to take advantage of this new opportunity, raises a number of architectural and urban design issues that should be addressed in light of the absence of definitive guidelines. Specifically, the issues brought up by the Panel, in discussion, were as follows:

**Urban Design**

- a. What should be the role of the corner outdoor spaces in this new context?  
Should the corners be celebrated?
- b. Should the corners be transitional and responsive to accommodate differing conditions across the intersecting streets?( As in the condition across Gay Street)
- c. Should the main building’s entrance have priority presence and identity?
- d. Should any such additions be limited to the existing building’s Pratt St. façade?
- e. Should there be a single treatment of paving, street furniture, lighting standards, amenity and landscape all along the new Pratt Street? Who provides?
- f. What public or civic role, if any should the overview terrace provide?

### **Architectural Context**

- g.** What should be the relationship of the addition to the original building? Or to an updated treatment of the existing building?
- h.** Should there be elements of consistency of materials or structural cadence, solid/void between the original and the addition?
- i.** Should individual tenant expression dominate the building's intrinsic order and identity?
- j.** Should the main building's entrance be recessed or have priority treatment and identity, a projecting canopy?
- k.** When there is an upper terrace how can it contribute more fully, through its elevated location and view, to the vitality of the Pratt Street experience?
- l.** When the design intent of the addition is to be radically different from the existing building, what devices and considerations should be given to the total composition to avoid design chaos?

Being the first, this project undoubtedly raised a healthy discussion about the role and intent of this and the future build-outs along Pratt Street. The Panel requested that the above issues/concerns be addressed in a subsequent presentation. With the focus of the conversation on overall intent of the previous plan, there were a few directive comments offered regarding the specific proposal:

- The addition should, in some way, relate more to the existing building context. Creating more order in the addition may provide a means to better connect the two buildings.
- Entrance plays a key role in these additions and the entrance. Connection to, and presence of, a main entrance along Pratt Street was viewed as an important consideration.
- The addition should include more “architecture” and “frame” or else depart entirely and become more “folly-like” and playful.
- Attention should be paid to the corners as a place and the addition should create and reinforce that place.

### **PANEL ACTION:**

Due to the larger discussion, the Panel did not make a recommendation on the specific proposal and looks forward to a future presentation which attempt to relate the addition more directly to its existing building context.

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### **Attending:**

Peter Fillat – Peter Fillat Architects  
Kirby Fowler, Nan Rohrer – The Downtown Partnership  
Myron Feaster – Cushman Wakefield  
Addison Palmer – STV  
Kerry DeVilbiss - BDC

Ms Eig, Messrs. Bowden\*and Burns - UDARP Panel  
Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon –Planning Department