

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

Date: February 18, 2016

Meeting #221

Project: 3232 Eastern Ave

Phase: Final

Location: Haussners Redevelopment - Highlandtown Neighborhood

PRESENTATION:

Architect Charles Alexander of Alexander Design Studio, presented updated proposal for 3232 Eastern Ave on the site previously occupied by the two-storied Haussner's Restaurant in the Highlandtown area. The presentation included overview of site context and the following changes to the building floor layout and façade articulation.

1. First Floor Retail – Reconfiguration of Retail space along Eastern Ave including accessibility ramp and steps at entries to accommodate parking structure height clearance below;
2. Upper Levels – Slight modification of apartment unit level layouts;
3. South Façade – Significant changes to the South Elevation ground level Retail and fenestration pattern for apartments above;
4. East Façade – substitution of punched openings at the ground level with storefront glass and introduction of mosaic surface material at main building entry; significant modifications to the exterior articulation of the building mass at the corner of Eastern and S. Clinton Streets.
5. Materiality – combination of dark brown brick, dark grey metal panel and cement board in addition to tan stucco and blue-tone mosaic.

Comments from the Panel:

The Panel highlighted the following areas of concern:

1. **Exterior facades** – the latest iteration of the exterior articulation of the building seems to have departed from the previously presented approach - vertical pavilions on a horizontal base. The design team presented a scheme that introduces horizontality to the upper levels and significant 'erosion' to the ground level exterior through the use of volume and surface variations that lack visual clarity. The Panel encouraged the team to edit, condense and clarify the overall strategy and visual language of the South and East Elevations as to have entry proportions, window patterns and choice of materials contribute to a coherent visual composition. More specifically, areas of the facades that need revision include:
 - Retail façade for issues with unrefined street access sequence, ambiguous proportions, potential opportunity to have glass reach the floor to unify the façade and more clear signage;
 - Apartments above retail with issues of proportion (previously three narrower bays), implied horizontality (narrow horizontal bands);
 - Main entry for issues with signage and visibility, choice of materials (mosaic or other) as implied decoration;
 - Top level apartment unit at southeast corner needing more glazing and stronger articulation as most visible element of the building;
 - Building volumes appear severed or disconnected as they meet the base or the ground on the south and east facades. Further study is needed to refine those transitions.

2. **Materiality** – the panel found the material selections to be very dark and discouraged their use without adequate visualization and simulation of their eventual appearance on the building. Further, the panel found the exterior appearance overdone through the use of brick, stucco, metal panel, Hardie board and mosaic, encouraging the designers to omit cement board and rethink the material use at the entries in exchange for something deliberate and authentic.
3. **Construction Details** – the panel had concerns regarding the constructability of various building conditions and requested building design details and wall sections that illustrate the main exterior wall assemblies and key material transitions.

Panel Action:

The Panel recommended continued development addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Peter Garver – Garver Development Group
Charles Alexander, Eric Lewis – Alexander Design Studio
Scott Huot - RSLA

Messrs. Bowden, Haresign, Burns, Rubin and Ms. Ilieva* - UDARP Panel

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield - Planning