

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

Date: May 18, 2017

Meeting No.: 240

Project: 3400 Boston Street Apartments

Phase: Final

Location: Canton/ Brewer' Hill Neighborhoods

Presentation:

Jonathan Wehri of LSC Design Architects began the presentation with a brief review including earlier Panel comments before introducing Landscape Architect Peng Gu of Mahan Rykiel who described changes and further development of the site/landscape design. The revised landscape design featured: changes and simplification of the Boston Street setback area, eliminating the previous eight automobile parking spaces and fortifying its street edge with a double row of trees; a more regular and consistent cadence of street trees in a continuous planter strip were presented along Baylis Street, eliminating the prior curbcut; and because of limitations imposed by existing overhead utility lines, no trees were recommended along the Highland Avenue frontage although a six foot sidewalk with a five foot planting area against the building's edge were proposed.

Architect Wehri continued the presentation by discussing the design evolution of the building itself. Changes included the elimination of the small retail units along the Boston Street frontage; the elimination of most of the balconies except on the two corner "head house" elements; the elimination of the exposed steel trellis along the upper fourth floor courtyard; and the further development of the façade treatments along Baylis Street and Highland Avenue.

Comments from the Panel:

The Panel generally shared great expectations for the project and welcomed many of the changes since the initial schematic presentation, although it also expressed some disappointment in the evolution of others. Concerns were voiced regarding certain elements of the design as follows:

1. **Massing/Program Changes** – The Panel members suggested that an opportunity may be lost along the main Boston Street façade to create very special units with private outdoor spaces and perhaps separate outdoor entrances (see "The Mews" in the nearby Hanover Brewer's Hill project) which would animate and activate this very important façade. Additionally, suggestions were made that the overall form and importance of the "head houses" were diminished by the overly strong continuous masonry base. Consider the possibility of recessing further the middle courtyard section to strengthen the expression of the Baylis Street "head house" element.
2. **Landscape** – The current landscaping zone along most of the Boston Street frontage, directly adjacent to the brick façade, requires additional focus and attention. Suggestions outlined above would create the chance for a stronger expression. Along Highland Avenue, questions were raised whether elimination of the overhead utility lines had been explored sufficiently since it would be desirable to explore other landscaping solutions here. Some questions regarding proper auto drop-off in front of the building were raised.

3. **Main Entrance/Canopy** – The actual location of the lobby entrance to the building was questioned including the role of its canopy in complementing and clarifying the massing concept and the entrance plaza development. Suggestions were offered which included moving the entrance element to the inside corner of the Highland “head house” or having it instead, skirt that element entirely and enter the building at the edge of the center mass below the raised courtyard. Because of the distance to the building’s entry resulting from the setback, it was also suggested that a lower canopy running perpendicular from the street to the entry might be studied.
4. **Façade** – Considerable concern was voiced regarding the development of the facades along Baylis and Highland and particularly at situations where the brick and the corrugated metal panel material come together at window locations. Consider “framing” the windows consistently with the metal panel material and also creating some relief, if possible, on these facades.

The idea of “stitching” together the glass and steel head house architecture and the masonry components appear unclear and inconsistent with the prevailing concepts. Also, the expression of “stacked” cargo containers seemed to have been a great start but appears to have been abandoned. Please clarify the design intent on both of these issues.

The previous treatment of the parking garage entrance along Baylis was viewed as preferable to the current proposal.

Panel Action: Recommend continued study, addressing the above Panel comments.

Attendees: Jonathan Wehri, Craig Campbell - LSC Design Architects
Peng Gu, Elaine Ku - Mahan Rykiel
Richard Manekin, Doug Schmidt, Neil Tucker - Workshop Development, Inc.
Sarah Gantz – Baltimore Sun
Aliza Hertzmark – CMR, Inc.
David Bookhout, Martin Howle – Avalon Bay

Bowden*, Burns, Haresign, Ilieva, O’Neill - UDARP Panel
Tom Stosur, Christina Hartsfield, Jaleesa Tate, Wolde Ararsa, Laurie Feinberg –
Planning Department