

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

Date: October 1, 2015

Meeting # 214

Project: Harbor Point PUD – Wills Wharf

Phase: Final

Location: Intersection of Point and Wills Streets

PRESENTATION:

Michael Beatty of Beatty Development introduced updates on Wills Wharf, a 12-story Office & Hotel Building, part of Harbor Point PUD master plan, and highlighted design response to key comments from August 13, 2015 UDARP Schematic Review. The main areas of intervention include a more flexible North Plaza and simplified access to South Plaza (east of Wills Warf), a redesigned driveway/drop-off at the southwest Hotel Entrance, and a relocated Service Entrance midway along the building’s west façade. Mr. Beatty also shared plans for next phases of the Harbor Point development as they relate to organizing the pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation in the area as well as the relationship to open green space and the waterfront promenade. The scheme offered reshaping the footprint of the building west of Wills Wharf in order to facilitate the extension of green space along the waterfront and the alignment of public and service entry points between the two buildings. A later phase of development also looks to introduce a ‘docklands’ area directly south of the site with a permanent pier that aligns with Wills Street and constructed wetlands/docks that interact with the water’s edge.

Landscape Architect Peng Gu of Mahan Rykiel presented the specific landscape design interventions that included: 1) simplified Upper Plaza that reinforces continuity of space through consistent paving pattern, introduction of interactive and flexible seating, and elevated view of the waterfront framed by the tree canopy; 2) removal of the stair and arcade previously overlooking the South Plaza and a simplified green wall screening the garage; 3) redesigned driveway turn-around and hotel drop-off area that provides less of an interruption to the pedestrian flow along the promenade, except for emergency vehicles, and a more cohesive material palette for all ground surfaces.

Architect Todd Harvey of Beatty, Harvey, Coco Architects introduced the updates to the building that include: 1) revisions to the hotel ground floor plan that maintain public program engaging the waterfront and the addition of administrative spaces along the west façade in order to provide greater separation of the Main Entry and Lobby from the Garage entry and service spaces; 2) simplified massing approach that establishes two clear volumes – the glass tower and the solid office masses, treated with a corresponding clarity of the architectural articulation. The glass tower volume is meant to use a more reflective glass for the upper levels and a more transparent glass for the lower level with accentuated vertical glass supports and clear view into the public areas of the building. The office mass proposes terracotta (possibly fiber-cement panel) rain-screen with horizontal linear panel proportions and steel framed window openings spanning between the structural bays. Various building entries are identified with subtle canopies and clear signage.

Comments from the Panel:

The Panel was highly complimentary of the general attitude and quality of the proposed updates to the Building and Landscape design and discussed the following areas for further consideration:

1. **Driveway and drop-off** – the panel was concerned about the apparent overlap between pedestrian and vehicular movement as well as the reliance on bollards that organize the flow and facilitate emergency vehicle access. Some suggestions included reshaping the corner of the building to the west in order to provide more space for vehicular and pedestrian circulation without ambiguity. A more permanent separation of the vehicles and people may be beneficial with only a small portion that relies on bollards, perhaps.
2. **Building Massing / Hotel Entry** – the panel suggested that the Hotel Entry is celebrated by allowing the transparent glass treatment to wrap further around the corner of the ground level by pushing the solid volume corner to the north in order to reinforce the glass volume as the primary mass that faces the park to the west. Another comment included using a different language/material as the two contrasting volumes reach the ground.
3. **Materiality** – the panel suggested that special attention is paid to the building’s detailing as the two contrasting masses - glass vs. rain-screen intersect.
4. **Green Wall** – Finesse the corner of the green wall to better relate to the building architecture.

Panel Action: The Panel recommended Final approval for building and landscape design by addressing the comments provided.

Attending:

Michael Beatty, Jonathan Flesher, Erica Mechlinski, Chris Mfume, Jody Clark - Beatty Development
Todd Harvey, Esra Martin, Peter G Duke - Beatty, Harvey, Coco Architects
Peng Gu, Joonyon Kim, Anderson Wang - Mahan Rykiel Associates
Klaus Philipsen – ArchPlan
Joe Corson – The Blue Book

Messrs. Bowden, Haresign, and Ms. Ilieva* - UDARP Panel
Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Tamara Woods – Planning Department