

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

**Date:** March 31, 2022

**Meeting #60**

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**Project:** Belvedere Place

**Phase:** Design Development

**Location:** Central Park Heights/Pimlico Good Neighbors

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Michael Gaines reintroduced the development team and reshared the masterplan. Azhar Ameen and Mel Thompson of Grimm and Parker Architects then presented the project, grounding the site in the surrounding context. The team reviewed the previous proposal for this twin 9% and 4% LIHTC building. Following the previous presentation to UDAAP the team explored a number of schemes to address the panel's comments.

The massing has been revised to address to comments. The two entrances to the two buildings have been moved to anchor the north and south edges of Palmer Street along with seven units on the ground floor which push the garage to the interior. Some amenity spaces are now at the ground floor and face the park to the south with a patio. The garage and service entrance are no longer accessed from Belvedere, rather are located at a single access point at the southeast corner of the site. Claire Fishman then presented the landscape response which includes three main spaces; the entry plaza, the community park, and the courtyard.

**Discussion**

The Panel thanked the project team and proceeded with clarifications, questions and comments. The Panel commended the team on the evolution of the project and their exploration and resolutions.

**Questions/Clarifications**

- The 9% entry is off Belvedere? Where is the 4% entry? *At the southern end of the project along Palmer.*
- How does the community use the existing community space located on the property? *It's used as a gathering place for small cookouts and includes picnic tables, tables for cards and checkers, and public art.*
- Does the courtyard step up or down with the site? *The lowest area in elevation is the paved area to the north, the courtyard ramps up to the passive space which will be 1-2' higher in elevation.*

- Is there an ADA compliant route from space to space? *Yes, the walkway along the edge would be ADA compliant, not a ramp, just fully compliant walkway.*
- Has the courtyard been programmed to reflect the larger vision of the masterplan? Such as a garden for the nutritional space? *We have considered elevated planters in this area for a community garden purpose. Not yet sure if that is the route to take or not. Also considering a more active workout space.*

**Site:**

- Not yet convinced that the landscape design reinforces the architectural moves.
- The entry plaza is a wonderful move to respond to the church. However, the current geometry of the plaza undermines the architecture reducing the size of the sidewalk and negating the architectural setback.
- To reinforce the connection between the entry plaza and the church consider bumping out the sidewalk to reduce the width of the street. Conceptually you could also raise the table of the street to reinforce the connection. Can also be achieved with art work in the pavement.
- A purpose driven design to the plaza that is consistent with the vocabulary of the architecture itself.
- The terminus of the boulevard massing and interplay of the bays creates a coherent approach. Need a better understanding of the impact at the ground level, will there be crosswalks, how does the building respond?
- What is happening at the yard adjacent to the building at the west side of the Belvedere Street elevation closer to Park Heights? Important to make sure this isn't a blank wall or empty space.
- Need a big picture review of the southern landscaped space. It is supposed to feel like community space, or space that's for residents only? Where is the crosswalk? How does that reinforce how the community moves throughout the space?
- Consider the programming of the outdoor space, does it make sense to program the outdoor space similar to its current use? Is the tot lot the right use, rather than something that continues the existing pattern of use? If you're expecting families in the building, should the tot lot be in the courtyard?
- Don't be afraid to introduce a small-scale fence at the tot lot as necessary to provide necessary safety for children. Won't have a negative impact on the space.
- Would love to see connection between the programming of the landscaped space with the mission of the development.
- The large courtyard is an exciting element to bring light and air into the building, but trouble by the large amount of paving. Currently designed with circulation right in front of windows, which is highly undesirable. Create layering with vegetation and screening to address the condition at the periphery of the courtyard.
- Next level of development creates a softer, quieter transition between the building and the landscape.

**Building:**

- The secondary entrance gives significance to the entire site, which adds value to the community surrounding.
- As you move forward, consider glazing at the setback entry to avoid a blank wall.
- The curve at Palmer is graceful, seems that there is a challenge at the intersection to Spaulding. Is there an opportunity to have the wall recede into the building and give that space to the ground level to provide more privacy to the ground floor units and afford more space to that entrance?
- Can you provide a break in the slab and allow the amenity elements to come down to the ground level which would eliminate the need for ramps and provide further space for exterior space at both the tot lot and entry, providing relief?
- The consolidation of the service space and access to the garage is working well.
- As this moves into the next level (materiality, elevations, etc.) carefully consider what happens in those transitions, between the fixed north and southern “bars” and the curve to materially express the three parts. How can the material help to scale the building back down and respond to the rowhouses in the greater community?

**Next Steps:**

Continue the design and address the comments above. Work with Planning staff to return to UDAAP to address comments and review materials.

**Attending:**

Michael Gaines - BRIDGES Community Development Corporation

Lisa Stachura – Bon Secours

Azhar Ameen, Laura Manville, Lauren Gilmartin, Mel Thompson – Grimm & Parker

Claire Fishman – Landscape Architect at Carroll Engineering

Al Barry, Brandon Brooks, Peter Smith, John Tamburrino - attendees

Carley Milligan - BBJ

Kelly Baccala - DHCD

Mr. Anthony, Mses. Ilieva and Bradley – UDAAP Panel

Tamara Woods, Ren Southard, Caitlin Audette, Mikah Zaslow – Planning