**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING**

**URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE ADVISORY PANEL**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** March 31, 2020 **Meeting** #31

**Project:** Sojourner Place **Phase:** Schematic

**Location:** Preston and Harford Road in Oliver Neighborhood

**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Martina Reilly of Moseley Architects gave a quick introduction to the project. This is a joint venture between Episcopal and Healthcare for the Homeless in the Oliver neighborhood. Martina then turned to the neighborhood context, which is mostly made up of 2- and 3- story rowhouses to the east and low-rise multifamily structures across Harford Rd to the west.

The project is affordable housing; building is combination of 3- and 4- stories with 1-, 2- and 3-BR units. The massing follows prominent edges of the site along Preston and Harford with the entrance at that corner. Parking is located in the internal courtyard of the building with access from Central St. The building is pulled away from the Hoffman edge of the site due to railroad ROW below (cannot build on this portion of the site). Proposed use for this area is fenced outdoor space for residents - a loop walkway with peripheral planting, stormwater facility, lawn and outdoor seating. Building steps down from 4 levels along Harford Rd. to 3 levels to reflect the lower neighborhood scale on the east. Amenity spaces are stacked above the entrance, which allows for distinct glassy corner. Building is clad in brick, lap siding, and fiber cement with larger windows at the Harford Road elevation and more punched openings along Preston to reflect the smaller neighborhood scale.

Project priorities:

* Scale the building appropriately both to the width of Harford road and to the residential neighborhood
* Respond to the irregular shape of the site
* Highlight the main entrance and amenity spaces above
* Break up the long façade with a woven expression of volumes and materials while keeping the rhythm of the windows

**DISCUSSION:**

The Panel thanked the project team for their succinct presentation and asked clarifying questions related to the site, rooftop terrace, and how the building and massing were organized on the site, how the planar elements work with materials.

**Site:**

* Clarification of how the open outdoor area above the railroad ROW can interact more with the neighborhood. Can this space be programmed and designed in a way that helps promote synergy with the surrounding community?
* Landscape is appropriate to the site and scale of the building, but there are concerns about how the parking bumps up so closely to the rear of the building (on the Central site) – this could be adjusted to give a bit more relief
* Along Harford Road, double row of trees is nice; diversity of façade can influence diversity of the landscape
* East of Harford is tightly knit rowhouses, west is much more eroded. How does the proposed building massing and organization relate to the urban fabric? Should the massing of the building shift to Preston Street and away from the railroad tracks since it is the more active street. Also engaging the remaining rowhouse as part of the development and creating a continuous street wall is a stronger urban design.
* Take analysis from the larger context of the site –strong urban edges really occur at the south and east of the site, while the north and west really have a much more open feel
* Does the courtyard really want to be a parking? Could the parking occur above the ROW and the activated outdoor space be in the protected area?
* Consider the option of pulling more of the units onto Central to allow more parking at the north edge; with this also consider moving the trash room to the north edge as well.
* What are the outdoor space needs for the diverse population of residents and how does that outdoor space get programmed to reflect that?

**Building:**

* Consider other configurations of the building on site and relate it to the adjacent blocks; try for a more consistent frontage along Preston and Central Streets, which would allow for the relocation of the stormwater area
* Brick material is used both in volume and as planar element – creates a conflict within the project; opportunity to resolve the middle piece with a different material (either a different color brick or another material, or match the lower heights of the smaller 3-story height) Given diversity of the massing, such strong material and color differentiations may not be needed.
* There are many “breaks” in the façade with vertical elements. Many of these seem more powerful that the corner entry feature. Editing of these elements is needed to Simplify the façade and create a clearer hierarchy and reinforce the importance of the corner element.
* Next presentation, include a section through the building and the street scape will be helpful in understanding how the building relates to the sidewalk on all sides
* Zones should be defined around the periphery of the project to address the inside-outside approach of the building considering both the residents on the inside and the pedestrian experience on the urban edge
* Utilize modern language throughout the ribbon piece to connect the pavilion-type elements that poke out from behind the brick massing
* Consider making the overhang more pronounced to emphasize the entrance

**Next Steps:**

Continue design addressing comments above.

**Attending:**

Martina Reilly, Magda Westerhout – Moseley Architects

Kevin Lindamood, Melanie Voelker

Mark Tsiklik, Kevin Anderson, Shannon Snow

Mr. Anthony, Mses. O’Neill, Ilieva, Bradley – UDAAP Panel

Laurie Feinberg\*, Ren Southard, Chris Ryer, Chad Hayes, Tamara Woods, Marshella Wallace – Planning