

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

Date: December 19, 2019

Meeting #27

Project: 2434 Greenmount Ave

Phase: Schematic

Location: 2434 Greenmount Ave

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Tom Liebel with Moseley Architects introduced the team. Aziz Housseini with Fortis introduced the development team and perspective on the project. The existing building would be razed and, due to the poor existing soils, underground parking would infill the site with a new mixed-use project above. There is a commercial and training partner that is already on board with the project and excited to bring this project to fruition.

Tom Liebel then continued the presentation with a discussion of the physical redevelopment. The existing alley between the two lots will be closed to reconstruct one new building. Aaron Zephir led the presentation of the existing site with photos of the existing building. The lower level will contain parking and the first level contains the commercial space along Greenmount with a small residential entrance. The main residential entrance is located along Brentwood where the community space is also located. Along Greenmount, the façade is divided into 3 main bays. The two bays on the ends are masonry volumes to transition to the existing context with the center bay proposing a large frame element with parapet to screen the mechanical units. There is proposed to be cementitious panel and lap siding with glazing within the larger frame. Along Brentwood, the masonry mass is dominant with a center entrance using grey cementitious panel. Street trees are incorporated into the streetscape along Brentwood and a passive green roof is proposed for stormwater management.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel asked questions related to proposed materials, the existing alley, Zoning compliance, public entrances, the proposed green roof, and the organization of the parking ramps.

Site:

- Continue investigating the opportunity to pair the garage access lanes to one side.
- There is concern about the dead ends created by spanning the alley with the new building. Investigate the opportunity to create a pedestrian connection at the terminus of the alley along the new project to exit onto Brentwood.

- Continue designing the small green parcels that are left within the site plan so they are purposeful and do not deteriorate over time.

Building:

- Is there an opportunity to split the building into two lots and build a taller mass along Greenmount that allows the alley to continue through and pair the parking lanes to one side? The carving down into the site on both sides of the building forces the isolation of this building from the rest of the block.
- Continue exploring the opportunity to allow the Brentwood massing and design to be more grounded in the existing context of Brentwood. References to the rhythm of the bays of the existing homes need to show more continuity, a more clearly identified watertable may be more successful within this context. The projection of the center element seems overwhelming. The detached, symmetrical Brentwood façade, together with the large, solid stair/ramp, exhibits a formal character, more common to institutional structures. Develop further with greater attention to the scale and character of the surrounding context as intended originally.
- Investigate a way to pull the ramp closer to Brentwood to create an outdoor area at ground level at the terminus of the alley for the residents' use that would visually connect to the alley and the residential hallway access from Greenmount.
- Consider bridging above the garage access point to create a framed opening and minimize the read of an 'alley' at the sides of the building on Brentwood.
- Pursue additional opportunities to create more of a space at the main entrance along Brentwood. Conversely, investigate creating the entrance at grade with an internal elevator that can negotiate the ½ level up into the rest of the building. This would place the lobby and, perhaps, community spaces expression at grade.
- The Greenmount Ave. façade is the more successful façade. Consider bringing that contemporary language on the Brentwood façade as well as an alternative to the current rowhouse reference design strategy.

Next Steps:

Continue schematic design addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Tom Liebel, Aaron Zephir – Moseley Architects

Bret Griffith, Aziz Housseini – Fortis

Hallie Miller – Baltimore Sun

Peter Duval – Strong City Baltimore City

Mr. Anthony, Ms. Ilieva, O'Neill and Bradley – UDAAP Panel

Anthony Cataldo*, Renata Southard, Matt DeSantis, Reni Lewal – Planning