

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

Date: March 4, 2021

Meeting #43

Project: 2800 Joplea

Phase: Schematic

Location: 2800 Joplea Ave. & 2807 Joseph Ave., Cherry Hill Neighborhood

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

MJ Wojewodzki of Quinn Evans began the presentation with an overview of the site context and an analysis of the challenges, including the inconsistency of sidewalks around the site, which makes for a discontinuous pedestrian experience. Existing buildings around the site include single family detached, rowhouses and multi-family. There is also a brand-new elementary school near the site.

Main considerations:

- Team strove to design buildings to fit with neighborhood context
- Achieve correct unit mix and parking requirements on difficult site
- Continue the sidewalks and create a more connected urban fabric
- Promote a better pedestrian experience

Brandon Schultz of Quinn Evans continued the presentation with a review of the plan and the changes the team has made based on comments from the Panel.

Changes include:

- Moving the parking at the multi-family to the south end of the site.
- The playground area has moved closer to the multi-family building.
- Reconfigured the parking and lawns of the sticks of rowhouses / stacked flats to more closely blend with the existing neighborhood fabric.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel thanked the project team for their presentation and for the team's thoughtful considerations of the Panel's comments. The panel then moved into questions and comments.

- *Is there going to be additional parking since this does not meet the requirement of 1 to 1? The Department will support a variance because there is ample street parking. The ADA parking is located nearest the on-grade entrances.*
- *Can the building be pushed over toward Joseph Ave. to allow for more parking or a green buffer? No, setbacks do not allow for this, but there might be some additional opportunity to turn units or study other opportunities to give some breathing room.*
- *Will the parking lot be at the proper elevation when it meets the street? The team is showing the ideal condition, but they have also prepared for additional grading.*

Site:

- Much improved site design – more consistent with what is happening in the neighborhood, as well as configuration of green spaces on the site. Great to see such a difficult site improved so significantly.
- Sight-line clearance at the Joseph / Joplea intersection may impact the protected feel of the play area. Team should study planting heights to strike the proper balance between visibility and park-like setting to protect from the intersection.
- Play area is more of a tot-lot; there are schools nearby with play area and there is not enough flat grade to accommodate a larger area in this location.
- ADA parking has a nice buffer between the building; Panel assumes the entrance will be designed in such away it has clear presence on the site.
- Passive green spaces are opportunities to be lightly articulated with tree canopy and pleasant character; the space on Joplea Ave. in front of the building could be a nice passive space to read or picnic if designed with these considerations in mind.
- Picnic area is on ADA route – consider holding the elevation of the pathway and picnic area at street level, creating a tree house / elevated deck with the ground falling away; this would allow the team to provide the amenity without a lot of earthwork and a retaining wall, while preserving existing trees.
- Building alignments seem to be generated from the lot line and not the streets; opportunity to align the building more to Round Road and to the new stacked flats on Joseph Ave. Stacked flats should align with the existing rowhouses – minor shifts are less perceptible on paper, but these subtle moves can make a big difference when the project is built and help it to fit better into the neighborhood fabric.
- Consistency of the pedestrian path – currently the path jogs around the parking; Panel understands parking and topography are challenging, but worth the time to study ways of minimizing jogs and creating a more consistent / direct path.
- Is the gap in the stacked flats in the correct place? Is the plaza in the right place? Opportunity for these features to align with what is across the street and link them more powerfully to the adjacent sites.

- Plaza space is not yet developed enough to be convincing as a place – currently just a wider sidewalk. Moving it into the site more and centering it on the patio will improve the reading a series of episodes on a string.

Building:

- Use the architecture as extension and continuity of the surrounding neighborhood fabric – there is an opportunity to add something new, as well. New site configuration will allow the team a strong foundation to continue studying vertical surfaces.

Next Steps:

Continue project addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Shawn Cooper, Steve Moore – CRP Development

Brandon Schultz, MJ Wojewodzki, Jean Vieth – Quinn Evans Architects

Ethan McLeod, Sarah Eikrem, Michael Middleton – Attendees

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

Laurie Feinberg*, Ren Southard, Tamara Woods, Chris Ryer, Brent Flickinger, Martin French – Planning