

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

**Date:** January 23, 2020

**Meeting #28**

**Project:** Alta Federal Hill II

**Phase:** Schematic

**Location:** 1900 S. Hanover Street

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Steve Rolls with Wood Partners introduced the project and project team. KaMann Skinner with JDavis Architects then began the presentation with a review of the existing site context. The team reviewed the overall context of retail/commercial uses, visual axis, and entrance/exit points within south Baltimore and towards the site. The proposed development proposes to transition the rowhouse scale of the overall neighborhood with the larger scale of the new multifamily buildings within the Wells Street and S. Hanover corridor. The proposed streetscape of PH I is intended to extend south on S. Hanover. Balconies, materials, scale volumes are being used to transition the 6-story building to the residential rowhouse scale within the facades. Larger format volumes are proposed along the rail and I-95 corridors to respond to the varying urban conditions.

The building façade along S. Hanover St. proposes 3 masses to break down the scale of the building. The vertical corner with ground level retail attempts to respond to the Phase I building and create a strong corner marker. The internal street has a 4-level masonry read to reflect a more residential scale. Street sections were used to discuss the relationship with the elevated I-95 ramp and the adjacent rail line to the west. Program uses within the building place non-view depended uses at the most critical levels aligned with the elevated highway and the rail line sits approximately 7' higher and 20' away from the existing rail. Plans were reviewed for context. Main drop-off occurs within the vehicular court with a secondary access along the internal street. Service access is at the west end of the internal street and there is a utility easement that has access from south of the I-95 overpass and connects at ground level to the utility bank within the building. The internal design of the vehicular court is still being modified but it intends to serve as the only garage access along with temporary pick up, drop off, and parking. The streetscape is extended down S. Hanover as well as the internal drive as a compliment to the Phase I.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Panel asked questions related to previous concerns raised by staff, how the team organized the site with the program pieces, and the use and organization of the private drive. The Panel

and the team had a discussion of the placement of the garage and the team's proposed vehicular access point at Wells and Hanover. The Panel asked about the creation of a rear loop along the rail line to access the garage, additional use of the utility access easement for north bound traffic, the location of the main entrance, and location of the major activity within the building program.

### **Site:**

- The placement of the garage entrance and creation of the additional intersection at Wells and Hanover creates significant concern of pedestrian connectivity in, across, and through this location.
- The proposed design presents a missed opportunity for the more public activity of the building to be externally expressed on the major streets and the private drive, strengthening the urban quality of the area, rather than focused on the internal court. Reconsider the program modifications that can change that.
- The space under and south of the I-95 overpass needs design attention so that it reads as a positive asset to the overall development and not a forgotten space on the rear of the garage.

### **Building:**

- There is significant concern with the placement of the main entry, access, and energy of the building program in an internal auto court rather than at the street where it, in an urban condition, really strives to be. Refine those connections further in order to meet the project's goals of creating a vibrant urban community.
- Seriously consider slight realignment of the western residential bar to allow the access to the garage from the internal drive and eliminate the need for vehicular access from Hanover in keeping with the original approval of the PH I and II plan.
- Continue to refine the façade approach around the building. The large upper level framed glazing elements in the red masonry are taking away from the actual entries. Consider either connecting them to the entries below or modifying the upper framed element in deference to the ground level openings. The two-story drive entry dominates the east façade; explore design that favors hierarchy of the programmed uses along the Hanover St.
- Revisit the proportions of the interior street volumes. Consider creating a base, middle, top within the red masonry volume and then allow the upper two levels to read as a 'penthouse' to the masonry volume in order to further visually reinforce the smaller scaled volume.
- Investigate modifications to the zipper between the corner element and the interior street elevation; tying it to the ground level design in favor of creating a stronger transition between two distinct façade approaches.

### **Next Steps:**

Continue the schematic development of the project addressing the comments above.

**Attending:**

Steve Rolls, Jason Burrell, David Moore – Wood Partners

KaMann Skinner, Mick Mobila, Matt Ausly - JDavis

Melody Simmons - BBJ

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

Anthony Cataldo\*, Matt DeSantis, Brent Flickinger – Planning