

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

Date: April 15, 2021

Meeting #45

Project: Canton Overlook

Phase: Schematic II

Location: 1617 Broening Highway, Broening Manor Neighborhood

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Jessica Zuniga from Foundation Development Group began the presentation with a brief statement that the team has focused on addressing the Panel's comments while also taking into consideration concerns of the neighborhood residents and the Baltimore Industrial Group (BIG). Specifically, there was widespread support for keeping a 50' buffer along Broening Highway.

Nancy Liebrecht of Moseley Architects continued the presentation with an overview of how the team explored additional options for the building configuration that would best address the Panel's comments.

Team sought to address the following:

- Addressing the building's presence on Broening Highway
- Re-organizing Brown Ave. and parking to discourage cut-through
- More detailed landscape plan
- Changes to the façade to playdown the maritime industrial theme

DISCUSSION:

The Panel thanked the project team for their presentation. The panel then moved into questions and comments.

- *Is there a regulatory streetscape section that the team is following?* There is a new sidewalk in this location; the team felt DOT would not allow the existing sidewalk to be removed / replaced.
- *Is the team building to the maximum; and what is driving the parking count?* No, this project does not build to the maximum allowed, and the neighborhood is very concerned about parking. Team is providing parking as required by Article 32 Zoning.

- *Undeveloped parcels on Brown – are those planned for development and if so, how will those new buildings engage with the parking lot?* Team has reached out to the owners, but there is not much interest in development at this time.
- *Will the buildings be built at the same time?* Yes.
- *What is the lap siding material?* The lap siding proposed is four separate colors of fiber-cement panel.

Site:

- **In general:**
 - A landscape architect can help with building massing, grading, parking, etc. – these things impact how the site is situated; bringing the landscape architect in sooner as a matter of practice is recommended.
 - Site plan has improved slightly over last time, but first option of the team’s studies would have been preferred if there was not community opposition to moving the building forward on the site (toward Broening Hwy).
 - Passive green spaces are a good way to start, with the understanding these may get programmed later as people start to use them in more specific ways.
- **Circulation:**
 - Pedestrian focused priority is a step forward; despite the fact this sidewalk was just built, DOT would likely agree to allowing some tree pits if the development team absorbed the cost; it is strongly recommended to revise this design.
 - Healthy streets have tree 4x12 tree pits to mitigate and buffer between pedestrians and cars. The buffer does not need to be continuously vegetated on the street side but could still achieve the desired vegetated buffer on the project side with a narrower continuously planted strip and two rows of trees on each side of the sidewalk.
 - Take the space and redistribute to make a right and left side of vegetated buffer.
- **Parking:**
 - The parking has succeeded in deterring cut-through, but it is not optimal from an organizational point.
 - Conflicts remain between parking, Brown Ave. and the pedestrian circulation.
 - Link more clearly to Broening Hwy in the front – more urban and direct. Needs a very clear threshold with a distinct entrance. Use landscape to separate the front and rear, and consider creating a loop back to Broening Hwy.

- Acquiring the lots on Brown Ave. would be a great improvement to the project and allow for a reorganization of the parking that would be much more successful.
 - Fundamental issues with how the buildings have been placed on site; the current configuration creates an issue for Brown Ave. which, as designed, will function as a service drive; building is sitting in a sea of parking.
 - Consider making the parking loop at the front slimmer with parking on one side and widening the landscape buffer.
 - Entrances are a challenge – potential conflicts with the fire station and Royal Farms. Proximities are not working well; the loop is problematic for vehicular circulation and access, as well as for pedestrians.
 - As designed, there are two curb-cuts in front of the building, which is problematic for pedestrians. If the parking strip parallel to Broening Hwy stays, it needs a much more robust planting and be very deliberate through the site.
 - Consider head-in parking along the boulevard to give more buffer on the building side
 - Mount Royal Terrace is a good example to study. Continue to develop the front within the 50' setback given.
- **Massing / Siting:**
 - Consider an L-shaped building to create a continuous street wall, which is badly needed to repair the urban fabric of Broening Highway. Thinking of the building as a continuous element allows for the parking to move the rear and relate better to Brown Ave.
 - Needs additional iteration – building has not changed enough to address the comments from the past UDAAP and parking is still driving the design.
 - Shorten the building in the back and utilizing more of the frontage on Broening Hwy will allow for double-loading the parking in the rear, resulting in a better configuration overall.
 - Revisit the parti and try for a more linear building to address the fragmentation of the site.

Building:

- Façade is improved with less busyness. Now that materiality is established, consider editing down – opportunity for this to become simplified and elegant.
- Corrugated metal is a good way to pay homage to the industrial past of the site.

- Orange accented frames are better as powerful expression as corner volumes, this accent can establish a hierarchy at the corners with the interstitial zones becoming more subdued.
- Massing proportion and use of the frames at the corners is more successful in this iteration.
- Spandrel elements in orange are too oversized, consider eliminating them or playing them down with a color that blends rather than contrasts.
- Overlook room – awning element appears as decorative and not as an intentional piece of the façade. Revisit this element.
- Colors are coming together, but now would be a good time to edit down since there are several different colors /patterns of siding.
- Distinguish the different sides of the building with the simplification of the motifs; powerful corner moves should be reserved for the Broening Hwy side of the building – the rest of the façade could be much more subdued for more clarification and reinforce the front.
- Treating all sides the same is a very suburban gesture and undermines the success of the front of the building.

Next Steps:

Continue project addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Jessica Zuniga – Foundation Development Group

Bob Bathurst– PSG Developers and Engineers Ltd.

Nancy Liebrecht, Michael Blake, Dane Lawrence – Moseley Architects

Carley Milligan, Dane Lawrence, Lee Santos, Michael Pieranunzi – Attendees

Melody Simmons – Baltimore Business Journal

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

Laurie Feinberg*, Ren Southard, Tamara Woods, Martin French, Matt DeSantis, Eric Tiso – Planning