

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

Date: March 25, 2021

Meeting #44

Project: Harbor Point, Parcel 4

Phase: Design Development

Location: 1000 Wills Street, Fells Point

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Michael Beatty began the presentation with a brief overview of key comments from the previous UDAAP meeting and an explanation of how the team has addressed them. Todd Harvey of BHC continued the presentation and noted that the hotel will come back as a separate review.

Tarek Saleh of Ayers Saint Gross gave a more detailed look at the building, along with a description of materiality. The team arrived at the design after revising the parking garage; the team was encouraged to wrap the garage with residential units, which changed the form of the building and lowered the height of the tower slightly. In refining the units, the team sought to unify the base and top through materiality and use the various unit types to differentiate the façade.

Main changes include:

- The hotel shape has been refined a little and pulls back from the mixed-use building on the west to give more privacy between residential units and hotel rooms.
- Mixed use building has wrapped the parking with units as suggested by the panel.
- Linear park has been added, but current design is a placeholder (this piece will return with the hotel).

DISCUSSION:

The Panel thanked the team for their presentation and congratulated the team on moving the project forward. The Panel then continued with clarifications and questions before giving comments.

Clarifications:

- *How is the hotel serviced?* The hotel is very small and will have limited service. The loading dock location is across from the loading dock of the mixed-use building.

- *Please clarify the strategy for the linear park façade:* There are two-story units on this façade and those are emphasized with a special 2-story glazing. Local Baltimore art will be integrated into the space, but the “park” or plaza area is yet to be designed.
- *Do the 2-story units have something to do with reducing the amount of corridor created by the single loading?* Yes.
- *Is the façade material carried through to the base?* Brick is not finalized, but the team felt a similar materiality of podium and tower read elegantly. The granite at the base will ground the building and help absorb the grade change.
- *Explain the thinking about the stairs in the liner park:* What is shown is diagrammatic and yet to be designed, but the idea is that this element will blend and feather into the rest of the landscape. Landscape architect (Mahan Rykiel) will work out the details for the return of this piece and the hotel (future date).
- *Will the streetscape also be forthcoming?* Some of the streetscape is existing, while other portions are designed but not yet built.
- *What is the dimension of the landing of the stair and the loading dock; what is that proximity?* It’s about 30’ – this is now very visible and becomes a special point.
- *Is the new plan to put units on the north side all the way to the ground?* Yes, the garage will be set back behind the units.

Building:

- Very refreshing to see a project that doesn’t break the façade up too much while still creating beautiful spaces with a simplified palette.
- Idea of marrying the podium and tower is quite elegant.
- Utilizing the same architectural language for the base and the tower works well for the reading but can appear heavy. Heaviness can be remedied with the proper glazing choice to lighten it up.
- Emphatic moves are not yet grounded – the tower floats but does not reach the ground. To elevate the dialog between the two elements, use more differentiation.
- Break between the tower and the podium is successful, and should be treated like a subtraction, like a cut through the granite. Take a sculptural monolithic, subtractive approach – not just a simple “base and podium” approach and apply that to the vertical separations of the base as well (garage and two-story residences). There are three monolithic pieces that fit together, separating the horizontal elements. Opportunity to use this approach to organize all formal elements.
- The deviations in the basic grid of the facades do not yet have a strong enough rationale, particularly at the corner. Differentiation in the grid needs more study: the pieces at the corner, the two-story units, etc.

- Very deliberate moves – two story reading where there are two-story units, etc. will help to organize the façade and make sense of the grid configuration.
- Subtle differentiation of the grid – does it become tighter as it goes up – sameness is unsettling because there is so much more of it above in the tower portion.
- The building is very large and fills up the lot, negotiating the various facades will be difficult, but the 2-story read can help unify the base.
- Use the breaks to help proportion the building and allow it to pause at key moments. A point to end the sentence and begin a new one.
- 2-Story motif really enlivens the linear park – opportunity to continue this around and wrap on to Dock Street.
- Moving the tower down onto Dock Street is a wonderful move.
- Balconies at the corner seem small and do not support the overall concept for the building. They are not quite working yet, and the team is encouraged to explore a more robust design.
- Hotel building – the Panel realizes this is a future project but begin to look at the change of scale and grain across the street as an opportunity. Important to be very careful with the proportions of the openings and to allow the building to mitigate the edge of the site (new buildings) within the context of the existing (historic) urban fabric of the Harbor. This building can be a wonderful example of how old and new meet, and how to transition scale. Possible to introduce a bit more solidity here.
- The details and execution of the simpler palette are going to be very important to make this project successful.

Next Steps:

Continue design addressing comments above.

Attending:

Todd Harvey – BHC Architects

Tarek Saleh – Ayers Saint Gross

Michael Beatty, Max Beatty, Alex Beatty – Beatty Development

Melody Simmons – BBJ

Ryan Ahn, Ryan Potter, Matthew Clever, Donaghvan Brown, Jarrell Rice, Chris Seiler, Peter Duke – Attendees

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

Laurie Feinberg*, Chris Ryer, Ren Southard, Tamara Woods – Planning