

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

Date: June 27, 2019

Meeting #20

Project: Eastern and Bank Redevelopment

Phase: Continued Schematic

Location: 3825 Bank Street

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Chris Mfume, introduced the project – Two main themes: (1) pedestrian experience on Bank Street (de-prioritizing cars); (2) additional ground floor units to tie into neighborhood context, and break down the scale of the building.

Architectural Goals: new housing in Highlandtown with focus on Community Development. 140 units, 120 parking, 5-story multi-family with a few 3- and 4- story. Active-use ground level urban edge and adding a range of unit types and uses. Eastern Ave has opportunity to be a strong commercial boulevard, Bank Street more residential.

Early study explored variations; since last presentation team has investigated location of driveway; chose to consolidate utilities on one side of the site and combine with garage driveway. Access to garage is moved and majority of parking is underground, which allows for ground level parking to be moved to the rear and replaced with ground level DUs and a courtyard that can be used as amenity space connected to lobby. Exploring courtyard in the middle of the block between the north and south volumes but first need to determine use for Eastern Ave ground commercial space. Units on ground floor next to lobby have potential for live-work units (taller ceilings). Angle in the lobby to relate to courtyard screen wall with pivot doors that would let the area open up for events.

Unified approach for the two volumes on Bank Street – same brick on the 3-, 4- and 5- story volumes but wrapped in a softer wood screen at street edge / first floor. Approach is to create “urban village” with different entries, experiences, etc.

Landscape: Highlandtown is dense; does not have a lot of intermediate green spaces. Opportunity for the project to be an intermediate between large industrial and smaller rowhouse. Integrate with the planned Green Network streetscape that will eventually run along Bank Street. Materiality from context can be weaved together in the project. Liner streetscape is ~ 260’ on Bank and ~ 33’ on Eastern. Only one nice Sweet Gum tree on Bank Street, and dismal on the opposite side of the street. Trees planned for 30’ o.c. with tree wells at 4’ x 10’ approx. (existing sidewalk is 12’ wide).

Courtyard designed to negotiate indoor / outdoor program, larger community events, etc. Shading and screening for the units at the west side to accommodate residential program opposite the lobby. Driveway and side yard at the east side with 4' hedge along building – streetscape to wrap the building. Second floor courtyard at the east to become green amenity space. Low cost materials create zones – textures in concrete to blend and segue.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel asked clarifying questions about the alley-side units – **Q:** How do rear units relate to the alley (23' wide)? **A:** *Units on the second floor will look at the back of a brick warehouse building (two stories) across alley. Units have 7' wide patio to be treated w/ vegetation.*

The Panel asked for a further description of how the services operate – trash rooms and transformers at the west side in the alley. Concern for the front residential unit stairs – working to get everything at grade to eliminate ADA concerns.

Comments from Community:

- Project will be an important economic development catalyst for the community
- Bank Street Elevation - reconsider massing by acknowledging the scale of the 2-story residential rows with porches; encourage a stronger pedestrian relationship w/ site
- Consider potential for small scale retail along the street frontage of Bank
- Link cultural heritage and diversity of the community through design; potential for development of artists' studios and incorporation of art work into the project
- Consider preserving/incorporating the historic warehouse signage.

Site:

- Great to get rid of the parking at grade. Introduction of courtyard is a wonderful addition to the neighborhood.
- Ideal place to have non-residential use at ground floor along Bank St – encourage continued investigation.
- Co-living space w/ 3-4 big-bedrooms might be rethought as artist co-living space with addition of a slop-sink. Natural for those to occur on the Eastern Ave side.
- Residential units – no buffer between the sidewalk and windows on the Bank Street side... could there be a community-based use on the corner that is neither purely residential (east edge of Bank Street) or commercial (Eastern Ave.)?
- Landscape can tie the project together - does not need to be up against the curb edge throughout the whole project. Vegetation along the internal driveway can move by the exterior wall to provide buffer for units on that side.

- Can the sidewalk treatment pattern be concentrated at courtyard and lobby and feathered out towards to the edge and ends of the property?

Building:

- Eastern Avenue is successful. Q: do the slatted pieces move? A: No they are fixed.
- The language of the building has changed from extruded to one coherent language. Now the base with different articulations at the corner of the east volume works but the L-shaped piece of the west volume is not as clear. Perhaps there is a way to articulate separation of corner piece of the 5-story volume – opportunity for clarification of the language.
- Where do the “outie” balconies and where do the “innie” balconies occur? Bank façade still severe with regard to the rowhouses across the street and could use 3-dimensional relief - can projection balconies coincide with the brick color or do they remain at the recessed portion of the building.

Next Steps:

Continue into design development addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Doug Schmidt – Work Shop Development

Chris Mfume – CLD Partners

Brian Baksa, KuoPao Lian, Pavlina Ilieva – PI.KL Studio

Mr. Anthony, Ms. O’Neill– UDAAP Panel

Laurie Feinberg, Renata Southard* – Planning