

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

**Date:** May 21, 2020

**Meeting #34**

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**Project:** Woodland Gardens

**Phase:** Schematic

**Location:** 4701 Park Heights Ave.

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Ellen Jarrett from CHAI introduced the project very briefly and noted the project is will be part of a twinning deal. Judi Miller of Architecture By Design continued the presentation with an overview of the design and neighborhood context. The building is multi-family senior housing located on a large irregular parcel and is Phase II of the project, with Phase I proposed for a later date. All 75 units of Phase II are 1-BR and range from 500-600 SF (approx.) – Phase I will be a 75-unit family building. Project falls within the MRA footprint and will be the first shovel in ground project in the footprint. Specifics to note:

- Zoned R-10 along Park Heights Ave, and R-4 at Woodland and Delaware Ave.
- Sanitary sewer in existing alley between Park Heights and Delaware Ave. will remain – building setback is 30' min.

Questions from the community were not addressed by panelists, but have been included here:

- Concern about side entrance being the main entrance vs. front entrance on Park Heights Avenue; is there a way to add entrance on Park Heights Ave?
- Is there a possibility for attractive fence? Community has concern about crime and trash around the green space/parking lot; noted that SWM will be fenced.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Panel thanked the project team for giving a clear succinct presentation and asked clarifying questions with regard to:

- Street parking on Park Heights Ave. – no designated lane is planned at this time and there will not be street parking provided.
- Edge of the site on Delaware Ave. – will have public sidewalk and passive green space to connect site with the neighborhood; no specific program currently.
- Scale: width of linear park between buildings is 30' or so; courtyard is approximately 40' wide by 20' deep on Park Heights Ave., rear courtyard is approximately 40' x 60'
- Adjacent building in later phase will be family housing, not senior housing.

- Pedestrian circulation will likely be people traveling back and forth from the south toward C.C. Jackson Recreation center.
- Massing decisions – driven both by precedents and by need to organize 75 units in an efficient way.
- Parking lot and internal road – curves toward building to shorten distance for ADA parking and allow for stormwater collection, but curve is not directly in response to specific site constraints.

**Site:**

- Eastern edge of site on Delaware needs additional consideration. Programmed elements are there, but do not yet correspond. Needs more work to relate elements to each other and to context of the site. Pedestrian paths would benefit from purposeful organization, as well as destination at the end. Much stronger concept is needed.
- Linear garden space between buildings is a nice idea, but scale needs another look – too narrow to be welcoming or allow sunlight in. Will feel too much like a dark corridor if constructed as currently designed.
- Proximity of trash corral and vegetable gardens is too close – incompatible adjacency, especially during the summer months.
- Important to understand immediate context of the site. Provide more views of surrounding communities that offer scale and context to support analysis of the site, as well as additional site sections at side streets and between buildings. Whole block function is important for future development. Did the team study what the effect would be if the buildings were rotated 90 degrees to create a large protected garden area?
- Entries on Park Heights Ave. do not relate to the urban context, leaving the corners inert. Opportunity to aggregate the open space toward the middle of the site with smaller courtyards and corner entrances.
- Porch is a fine idea, but there is an opportunity to attract people to sit outside with more space and proper landscaping to shield from sun and wind. Consider moving steps to face of building for a more generous outdoor area.
- Edges – along courtyard are not clear and defined; what landscaping buffer exists between private apartments and sidewalks? Meaningful edge is needed between parking lot and drive aisle, as well as along street edge.
- Urban boulevard (Park Heights Ave.) needs a much stronger edge with line of trees; does not necessarily need grass strip – may benefit from wider sidewalk. Edge needs to respond to the project planned for across the street.
- Relationship of parking lot to rear of building has suburban tone. Relationship needs more clarity and separation – would benefit from understanding of where one zone ends, and another begins.

### **Building:**

- Strongly consider rotating the buildings to eliminate the fragmented frontage along Park Heights Ave., in favor of a more continuous and defined urban edge. This move creates complimentary courtyards that reflect a graciously scaled internal outdoor space framed by program and appropriate the massing of each building, while improving urban relations between the proposed buildings, access and open spaces for the entire block.
- Size of front courtyard seems tight in relation to the height of the building.
- Precedent courtyard buildings have ornate, highly detailed, permanent materiality. Verticality and monumentality are not yet visible here; need to be analyzed and translated to avoid appearance of pastiche.
- Elegant, classically inspired building requires more reservation with materials – less mixing will give a better read. Panelized materials help with appearance of verticality but get lost with too much mixing of material.
- Brick base of 1-story that turns corner and raises up to 3-stories in the middle is very successful, as are the panelized system and light-colored siding. Brown siding is successful if used selectively - as it turns into the courtyard its use on multiple stories competes with clarity of other materials. To give appearance of “bottom, middle, top” appropriate to building typology, limit the palette.
- Corners need to have more activation – engage more with the community.
- Be careful with additive elements – canopies reach out of street side but do not have consistency of application. Consider opportunity to have canopies turn the corner. Flat arch above Park Heights Ave. entrance seems arbitrary and should be reconsidered in a language of simplicity and consistency with other elements.`

### **Next Steps:**

Continue design addressing comments above.

### **Attending:**

Bob Rosenfelt, Aliza Hertzmark – CMR Engineers

Ellen Jarrett – CHAI

Melanie Voelker, Devin Leary – Human and Rohde, Inc.

Judi Miller, Austin Bruns – Architecture By Design

Roderick Durant, Del Henson, Alice Enz, Cherring Spence, Steven Stern – Attendees

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

Kelly Baccala – DHCD

Laurie Feinberg\*, Ren Southard, Tamara Woods, James Ashford, Martin French, Chris Ryer – Planning