

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE ADVISORY PANEL

MEETING MINUTES

Date: May 12, 2022

Meeting #62

Project: 3700 Boston Street

Phase: Schematic Design

Location: Canton

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Scott Foster introduced the project and grounded the proposal in the context. The site is located in the Canton neighborhood surrounded by recent and ongoing development. Mr. Foster identified the needs for the existing commercial adjacent to the site, which can be challenging to balance with the needs of the proposed residential. Limits to the site include environmental constraints which dictate where residential can be constructed. The proposal includes a 7-story building along Boston and 6-story masses along Toone and Eaton with 1-story courtyards above garage parking. The project brings the urban fabric down to Boston Street, which is currently more suburban in nature with buildings dotting vast surface parking lots.

At Toone Street, the design includes stoops for the residential units to create a connection to the street. Along Eaton Street, the courtyard is visually connected. Significant grade change from Toone Street down to Eaton provides the opportunity for double height spaces.

Ryan Cosgrove continued the presentation with a discussion of the landscape and referenced the Brewer's Hill Design Guidelines. The team identified the different palettes used at various location along the site to address the variety of conditions.

Paul Evenson began building design portion of the presentation by reviewing a number of precedents. The design team used the design to respond to the unique character of the space with a material palate that references the industrial character. The team sought to focus on unique or special materials at entries to help organize the façade and bring interested to the building at grade. The team also used material and color to unite the separate massings and strove to create cohesion of the different parts of the building with this strategy.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel thanked the project team for their presentation and proceeded with clarifications, questions, and comments.

Clarifications:

- *What is the rationale behind using a 6-story garage and a 1-story garage, vs. a continuous 3-story garage?* Wanted to limit the scale of the parking garage facing west, and the commercial space there. Wanted to limit the amount of garage visible on the west side. Studied a podium garage for the entire site that would have been 2 ½ levels of parking that would have limited articulation at the ground floor and massing in general.
- *Is there a series of studies of the garage?* Yes, however due to the limits of excavation the proposed solution was optimal.
- Have there been studies on the various arrangements of parking? Can it be buried in the bowels of the building to become a true wrap around?

Comments:

- Appreciate the proposal and the unique site. It seems that you're extending S. Dean Street through the parcel.
- The building is too big, even along Boston Street. Where you have a suburban development to the south of Boston, and the large buildings are a whole block apart from the south edge. Consider changing the scale of the massing of the building.
- The location of the entrance doesn't make sense, all the wonderful things associated by the entry are being interrupted again by vehicles going into the garage.
- Conflicted by how you approached this, seeing a lack of continuous street wall with a number of spaces at corners, very fragmented. Using landscape and hard scape to connect, but that's asking too much.
- Say you're walking south on Dean, you come upon the transformers, and then trash, and then garage, no pedestrian friendly space on the entire edge. Then get along Boston Street, the building should not follow the curb line, but be straight to give so space to the street. Then turning along Eaton, there is the awkward private courtyard. The only space that seems successful is along Toone Street which addresses the street. One of the challenges, on the west side you're introducing a pool deck at the second story, maybe this should be at a higher level to stack more parking and get the scale of the building down. By taking such a huge bite out of the mass isn't working for the massing. Revisit the massing.
- The vehicle seems to be driving a lot of the design decisions, wind up with a lot of back of house elements facing main approaches to the building including the main entrance. Can the parking be restructured in such a way to create a more elegant sense of arrival that is more in keeping with the architecture, there's a plaza with planting and not just a view of parking. Make it more human centered on all four sides and less vehicle centered.
- The Toone Street side is the most successful, back of house on Eaton creates a hostile environment. Back of House are spread out and creates issues throughout.

- The landscape shouldn't carry the full burden of softening and screening, should be used to augment the design and a deliberate part of the design. Create closer spacing on the street trees to change the character and get to the human scale, specifically along Boston – if at possible a maximum of 30' OC would be ideal. Need to do more to create an experience where people want to sit along the street, need destinations along the street, ground plan planting, closer trees, conversation areas carved out along the street.
- It's important at this stage to design the issues out of the project rather than mitigate them.
- The garage layout seems to be driving the project. Recommend a wrapper project, consider going from the current 4-bay to a 3-bay parking, so that you can wrap it on both the east and west side, eliminating one of the 60' bays and shifting the garage more inward, and allowing for 30' on each side to wrap it. Have it go 3-4 stories, This would be more successful if you make it work and then adorn it. Consider turning the H 90 degrees with the pool facing south, the south elevation is never seen apart from the parking lot to the south, whereas the west elevation and east elevation will be seen from Boston Street. Three-bay 4-story garage that wraps around and stacks to create two parallel volume above at the east and west.
- Minimize the seven-story wall along Boston St. Orient the articulated form toward Boston to create a more eroded urban edge to address the unique site.
- The utility area along Eaton Street is problematic, work on it and remove from the project and connect to the internal parking lot, rather limit it to one curb cut to the garage, away from major pedestrian throughfare. Need more of the treatment at Toone around the building to be more intentional. All the elements to the architecture and landscape are welcome, but the massing and organization needs to be resolved first and not rely solely on aesthetic treatment that tries to mitigate the planning flaws of the project.

Next Steps:

Continue addressing the comments and return to UDAAP.

Attending:

Scot Foster
 Alex Van Hollen
 Caroline Hecker
 Martin Howle
 Paul Evenson
 Ryan Cosgrove
 Ryan Scully
 Adam Chisholm
 Addison Plamer
 Amberlyn Kauffman
 Austen Hesler
 Bryce Turner
 Bob Gehrman
 Charlston Britton
 Christopher Labosky

Ed L
Jake Bolen
Melanie Monaco
Pedro Sales
Peter Smith
Ricardo Guerrero Santos
Rick Diehl
Ryan Geiger
Ryan Rumbaoa
Sally Plunkett
Zack Vacovsky
Ed Gunts
JP
Jeff LaNoue
Lydia
M O'Brien
Melody Simmons
Ta'Kesihia Barnes

Messrs. Anthony, Bradley and Ilieva - UDAAP Panel

Ren Southard, Tamara Woods, Caitlin Audette – Planning