

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

Date: October 25, 2018

Meeting #9

Project: Merritt Office Building

Phase: Design Development

Location: 3401 Boston Street/Canton Crossing PUD

PRESENTATION:

Brian Blazejak of Hord, Coplan, Macht gave a brief project update, confirming no changes to the scope of the project or program, followed by Chan Byum with a presentation of the revised building design and response to panel comments, and Josh Kilrain with streetscape design investigations and updates.

Highlight's are as follows:

Building Design

- Parking
 - Investigations were presented exploring panel recommendations to enlarge the site and parking floorplate to reduce the number of parking levels. They demonstrated the inefficiency of this approach, and the better efficiency and viability of the existing parking layout and building massing.
- Façade
 - A revised façade design with a streamlined, vertical composition responded to panel comments to eliminate the “belt” course and gridded façade along Boston Street;
 - A revised monochromatic color palette was presented in response to panel comments questioning the earlier orange terracotta;
 - The depth of the ground level piers was increased to one foot from the typical 6” depth in the upper levels.
- Screen
 - Additional detail of the parking screen as well as the various façade materials was presented.
- Canopy
 - Studies were presented looking at raising or enlarging the ground level canopy resulting in the decision to confine it to within the piers at the building entrance.
- Roof
 - Alterations to the location and size of the roof terraces was presented; the uppermost terrace is now located along both the eastern and western portions of the roof.
- Signage
 - The Signage strategy and locations were presented.

Landscape Design

Studies looking at registering the striped paving with the building structure of the parking screen were shown and ultimately rejected because the pattern became too complicated. The color of the pavers was changed to grey in response to the building's monochromatic color palette. Two tones

of pavers were used to heighten the building entrance, in response to panel comments. Details of the curved seating and plantings were also presented.

Comments from the Panel:

The panel generally approved of the proposed design but had the following comments and recommendations:

- **Building Color Palette/Terracotta**
The panel strongly disagreed with the shift to a monochromatic material color palette, feeling that the building concept, based on a major contrast between the gravity-based building volume along Boston Street and the draped screen on the two side elevations, was undermined. In recognizing the primacy of Boston Street and its differentiation from the two side streets, the concept is strongly rooted in and reinforces the building's relationship to the site, as was so well presented at the first panel discussion. The panel maintained that a strong color/value contrast between the two was essential to realizing the concept, and so reacted strongly against the monochromatic color palette. Suggestions included replacing the light grey terracotta with a deep orange-hue or a deeper grey terracotta or adjusting other building elements in the Boston Street facade, such as the curtain wall components, to create a palette that strongly contrasted with the draped screen.
- **Facades**
The panel generally supported the shift to a vertically composed façade but still had some reservations about how the sloped parking levels were incorporated, and particularly about the joint between the screen/parking levels and the curtain wall/office levels. The suggestion was made to register the entire volume of the uppermost parking level on the façade to create a broader wedge between the two systems, eliminating the collision/pinch point that currently occurs between the bottom horizontal of the curtain wall and the slope of the uppermost parking level. The panel also looks forward to a presentation of the details of the joint between the screen and curtain wall systems at the next presentation.
- **Canopy**
The panel agrees with the decision to neither heighten nor extend the entrance canopy across the entire ground level facade. They did suggest however a return to the earlier scheme where it extended beyond the piers on either side of the entry, reducing their scale and increasing its spatial impact.
- **Signage**
The panel strongly reacted against the signage introduced at the middle of the draped screen on the short facades, feeling it both unnecessary and undermining the integrity of that element. They supported the building signage at the roof, and the building and retail signage at ground level. They felt the signage for the adjacent gym potentially confusing when mounted on the building and would be more appropriate detached from the building as a monument sign incorporated in the landscape design.
- **Landscape**
The panel approved of the curved seating elements but emphasized the need for substantial portions to be horizontal along both fronts or sides to be more than decorative and used for sitting or leaning.

Next Steps:

Review and address the comments above with a Continued Design Development review with the Panel.

Attending:

Andrew Beres, Chan Byun, Josh Kilrain, Brian Blazejak – HCM
Patrick Huhra, Noelle Hewitt, alex Mawry, Josh Asbury - Merritt

Mr. Anthony, Mses. Ilieva, O'Neill,* Wagner - UDAAP Panel

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Ren Southard, Marshella Wallace - Planning