

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

Date: April 11, 2019

Meeting #16

Project: Port Covington Residential (E-5B and E-6)

Phase: Design Development

Location: Port Covington, Baltimore MD

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Jeff Baker of Weller Development reviewed the overall site organization context.

Sean Kefferstan with Hord Coplan Macht, then introduced the site for both residential buildings and the urban design goals for the residential projects. He then moved directly into images that show the adjustments to address the comments from the last meeting, including:

- E-5B - worked to accentuate the horizontal lines on the building exterior.
- Metal panel reveal was added to the upper-levels across the balconies. It connects around the building but is broken by the main building frame.
- Frame has been made larger and the retail base material was reduced at the top to not compete with the overall frame.
- The amenity space was also stepped down 2 feet and brought to the front with a glass rail.
- The retail canopy was also reduced in scale and color in order to not be as heavy as previously expressed.
- The Townhouse volumes were then lightened to be more in keeping with the retail volume detail but still have a residential feel.
- Balcony rails include a subtle wood accent with a metal mesh screen between units.
- The hyphen between the floating mass and the base was accentuated by adjusting the glazing at the first residential level to float the upper mass.
- Improvements to the parklet include adding private space for the individual units and a tightening of the sidewalk to promote passage through but not designed as a large gathering area.
- Elevations were then reviewed to recap the changes made and discussed with the updates plans.
- Sean then reviewed the lighting plan for the overall building identifying the areas controlled by the building (amenity space and the uprights on the bottom side of the balconies) and those controlled by the individual tenants (sconces). The concept signage approach was also reviewed in keeping with the industrial heritage theme of the district. There will be no signage on the north façade of the building or above the base around the balance of the building.
- Material choices were then reviewed - Trespa panel for the frame with metal panel for the unit accents with Longboard on the underside of the soffits. The masonry will be in the lighter tones and not the more traditional red brick. Canopies will be aluminum with glass top covers.

Colleen Vacelet with Intreegue Design then walked through the landscape plan for the site surrounding E-5B. The plan moved away from a 'parklet' and moved more into an urban streetscape design. Unit terraces will be gated and depressed to separate from the streetscape with a small retaining wall. Public side includes benches and sculptor within the trees and landscaped area. Site sections were used to illustrate the concept. Paving at the entrance lobby transitions from the exterior and then interior.

DISCUSSION:

Site:

- Plaza design has been improved with the layering degrees of privacy of the proposed spaces.
- Entry from Atlas Street to the private spaces - panel recommended shifting this access from Atlas closer to the street corner. Is that pathway needed at all? Consider the stoops extending directly to the main sidewalk.
- Investigate how the gate/fence can be incorporated within the landscape/retaining wall so it's not so pronounced.
- The sculptural pieces seem misplaced in the overall concept - can they be used in a more meaningful place/way? Panel recommended incorporating the ornamental tree quad within the entrance sequence with sculpture.

Building:

- The panel found the clarity of the moves very positive and the push into the contemporary extrapolation of the historical language is very encouraging.
- Canopy - can Traspa Panel be introduced into the canopy to recall the use above? Doesn't need to be darker but the materiality should relate. Control should be exercised by the owner on the canopy design and then let the retailers express themselves within the canopy design (through Signage?). The material change would help balance the future retailer's expression.
- Tonal relationship of the residential mass at the base v. the lighter tone presented. Perhaps it's not the color, perhaps it's the detail of them - they are reading more like residential/office rather than 'townhouse residential'? Suggest some of the upper detail here - more horizontal window expression similar to above? Can something special happen with the individual unit door? Investigate how the door can play a more distinctive element in that space. The outdoor terrace space above this residential volume can be more differentiated from the amenity space detailing.
- Retail mass expression has a more minimalist aesthetic which works very well with the overall concept. Once you layer in the individual retail expressions, how do you balance the 'chaos' of the retail expression. Is there a secondary character that can be created beyond the white masonry frame of the retail volume? Can that secondary layer, beyond the mass' plane (12-18") frame everything the retailer will do within the storefront and help separate it from the white mass?
- Service area immediately adjacent to lobby space - continue to refine the design to minimize the impact it would have on your urban plaza space and the lobby access. Shift the bump out to the north to allow the lobby paving to have some breathing room and separation from the loading area. Can the wall of the loading area be somehow activated to participate with the plaza? Some more sculptural element within the wall that relates to the landscape moves. Investigate some relief in the

corner of the loading bay to push in. Can the entry doors be shifted to the north to push some of that pedestrian access away from the service wall?

E-6 - Sean walked through the comments and the updates made to the building including the following:

- Atlas Street façade was seen as most successful so they used that as a basis for the continued work on the design.
- The south façade 'tower' element is now brought to the ground and no longer floats on the retail volume and is proud of the other building moves. Tower was enlarged slightly.
- Painted signage was removed.
- Retail base mass was pushed in to allow the building to come down to the ground.
- Interior courtyard architecture was edited and simplified to respond more to Atlas façade.
- Improved clarity to the residential entrance in relationship to the retail bays.
- Balconies on Cromwell were deemed too fussy and were removed.
- Bridge was edited to accentuate the design as a connection between two masonry buildings. Presents opportunity for signage of the building with applied graphic and lighting to add interest.
- Retail volume pushes through both masonry masses along the NS streets but allows Cromwell to have both masonry masses fully expressed.
- Introduction of projecting balconies along Anthem Street.
- Retail mass at the base was combined with the double-height residential units along the street (previously expressed as two masses).

Liling Tien from PELA then presented the landscape plan from the site. The private street is designed to discourage through traffic and is a flush shared space for the pedestrians and vehicles. It uses a mix of Belgian block or imprinted concrete within the street and concrete pavers within the pedestrian sidewalk zones. Luminaires strung across the street from the buildings layers the space and creates a ceiling between the bridges. Columnar trees are set within a continuous planter but there is a paver grate being used overtop to allow the shared space to read more strongly. The plant palette was then reviewed for this private street area. The design team is still working on the design of the 3-foot planting areas proposed adjacent to the individual units at the ground level.

Sean reviewed the lighting and signage concepts for the overall building. The blade sign along Atlas is a prominent feature for the building. All the other signage for the building and tenants occurs at the base level around the building. The materials proposed for the building include the majority of the building being red brick with dark metal accents. Longboard is then used on the underside of the balconies and using a grey and taupe colored brick to highlight the retail and the residential pieces at the base.

DISCUSSION:

Site:

The Panel had questions regarding the details of the connection points between the private shared street and the curbsless public Cromwell Street. How and who will be activating this space was discussed.

- The zone between the retail areas before the open-air bridge should relate to either Cromwell OR needs to be distinct from both Cromwell and the shared pedestrian/private street in terms of the street and the sidewalk zones. The current detailing of the sidewalks in front of the retail spaces along Cromwell is very awkward. The same is true of the condition along Atlas Street. Investigate bringing the concrete pavers from Cromwell into this area within the pedestrian only zone and evaluate the tree placement at the intersection of Cromwell.
- Evaluate the plant material for additional variety and interest throughout the year. The palette can be used to better activate the space through all the seasons.
- As presented, the design intent of the street does not read very clearly. Work on simplifying the interventions and tying them into the overall Port Covington Plan.

Building:

- Overall improvements are positive but the building now feels very heavy. Investigate ways to bring some of the lightness/liveliness back into the building.
- The horizontal elements within the windows details is pushing too horizontal - find ways to bring back some of the subtle vertical read.
- Clarity to the overall concepts needs to be more expressed through some slight refinements.
- Bring back the more pronounced horizontal band at the 4th level.
- The balconies recessed within the masonry mass will add the level of finesse that the building mass needs with some additional verticality.
- Investigate ways that the 'headhouse' at Cromwell and Anthem can have a stronger vertical read.
- Retail brick mass along Anthem Street seems less elegant than the other retail refinements - perhaps it needs to slide back to help the vertical read of the headhouse?
- Carved recess at Cromwell still seems a little less resolved. Can some of the east elevation break with material at the top level breaking the headhouse be brought to this area to resolve the difference between the masses.
- Find ways to recess the trash area so that it's more removed from the activation of the pedestrian environment.
- Does the lighting need to highlight each pier of the residential building? Evaluate some editing of the lighting scheme to simplify and not compete with the glowing tower. Adjust the light placement so the light source can be placed at break/transition on the elevations rather than applied on the facades.

Next Steps:

Continue the design development addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Sean Kefferstan, Keith Kobin, Sofia Weller, Sarah Narron, Hannah Rosenberg, Sharon Pula - HCM

Alex Laurens, Jeff Baker, Matt Crandell - Weller Development

Colleen Vacelet - Intreegue Design

Liling Tien - PELA Design Inc.

Messrs. Anthony, Mses. Wagner, O'Neill, and Ilieva - UDAAP Panel

Anthony Cataldo*, Christina Hartfield, Tamara Woods, Matthew DeSantis - Planning