

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

**Date:** February 14, 2019

**Meeting #13**

**Project:** Rye Street Residential Buildings -E6/ E5B

**Phase:** Schematic

**Location:** 10 Rye Street and 2200 Anthem Street, Port Covington

**PRESENTATION:**

Jeff Baker from Weller Development provided a brief overview of Chapter 1 of the Port Covington development, followed by Keith Kobin and Sean Kefferstan from Hord, Coplan, Macht with a detailed presentation of the architecture of the first two vertical developments, Blocks 6 and 5B. The goal of the two mixed-use buildings is to create a walkable, urban environment with an architecture that is founded in the history of the formerly industrial area. Maximizing views and proximity to the water are also important.

- Block E6 will be an eight-story, mixed-use apartment building with 242 residential units and approximately 15,000 sf of ground floor retail and amenity space. The building is separated in two wings with a private street between them, and an elevated, enclosed bridge connection on the Atlas Street side of the site. All loading and drop-off activity will take place on the private street, which is also envisioned as an active place with features such as a farmer's market. An inner block sequence through the two lobbies will connect the buildings to the adjacent Rye Street Market. A tower on the corner of the eastern wing relates to the existing Water tower. The ground level retail along Cromwell Street is placed at the street front while the upper level residential floors are recessed from it. The terrace above the retail will contain additional outdoor amenity space for the residential units.
- Block E5B will be an eight-story, mixed-use building with 124 residential units and 21,000 sf of ground level retail. Similar to Block E6, the ground level retail fronts directly on Cromwell Street with upper level amenity terraces above and the upper level residential floors recessed from it. A notch in the building plan creates an elongated public open space on the western side of the building.

**Panel Comments:**

The Panel was generally receptive to the development of the two buildings, and the architectural ideas presented and explored. They appreciated the thorough presentation, including the exploration of different massing schemes for both buildings. They had the following specific comments and suggestions for further refinement.

**Urban Design**

**Retail Articulation:**

The panel questioned the articulation of the ground level retail along Cromwell Street as a single story with the residential levels recessed above. Some members felt this single-story articulation would give the street a more suburban expression, and the massing on Atlas Street with a continuous street wall was a more appropriate urban response. They encouraged investigations to bring more of the upper levels of the

building to the Cromwell street front, which would also help the building's currently top-heavy appearance. They also felt the massing undermined the power of the tower on Block E6. In order to read as a real tower and relate to the existing Water tower, the panel felt the tower needed to come to the ground.

#### Public Spaces:

Both buildings create a number of new public and semi-public open spaces including the upper level amenity terraces and mid-block lobby sequence through both buildings, the elongated park/open space at E5B, and the private street at E6. The panel questioned whether the amount of this new open space was detracting from Cromwell Street, the primary public space of the neighborhood, pulling too much public activity away from it. They particularly questioned the mid-block lobby sequence, arguing it should have a more straightforward path to be successful and need not extend to Block E5B.

The Panel also questioned the elongated park/open space at E5B and felt its landscape needed more careful study. The space will not be animated by much public activity but is fairly large so may acquire an empty, neglected feel. Suggestions including turning over more of the area to private outdoor spaces for the ground floor units or concentrating the occupiable active open space near the retail or building entrance, articulating the remainder of the space as un-occupiable landscape.

#### Architecture:

##### Block E6

Panel members appreciated the general direction of the architecture of the building but felt there were too many façade motifs and additional editing is needed. The building seems an amalgam of multiple precedents and a more consistent, distinctive language still needs to be found.

The panel suggested that the façade strategy for the private street shift from articulating each building volume with a distinct façade to wrapping the street with a continuous façade, so the building volumes communicate across the street and create a more powerful space.

Panel members questioned the placement of the amenity terrace on the corner of the building exposed to Whiskey Plaza, with the tower on the corner of the Private Street. Some felt the tower should either be placed on the Whiskey Plaza corner in lieu of the amenity terrace, or if it remained in its current location, it should not be so prominently articulated.

The Atlas Street façade is very handsome and has a clear articulation and use of the red brick as a volume. This strategy is broken at the Rye Street corner, where the brick is expressed as a thin, flat plane. Panel members felt this inconsistency should be eliminated and the volumetric brick expression should be used throughout and another solution for this unique corner found.

##### Block E5B

In general, the panel approved of the architectural design of this building, feeling it a distinctive, but very refined and elegant industrial-inspired language. Some panel members felt the façade would be improved with more emphatic horizontal readings across the recessed balconies and a finessing of the metal frame of the building.

#### Actions:

Block E6 – Continue Schematic Development addressing the comments above.

Block E5B – This building project will advance to the Design Development review addressing the comments noted by the Panel.

**Attending:**

Sean Fefferstan, Hannah Rosenberg, Keith Kobin, Sharon Pula – HCM

Jeff Baker, Alex Laurens, Adam Genn – Weller

Addison Palmer – STV

Wil McBeath, Gabriella Condrut – MGMA

Patrick Terranova - BDC

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

Laurie Feinberg, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Matthew DeSantis, Brett Flickinger - Planning