

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

**Date:** April 11, 2019

**Meeting #16**

**Project:** Port Covington - MXD Garage E-1

**Phase:** Schematic

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**Location:** Atlas and Rye St, Baltimore MD

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Brian O’Cooney with Torti Gallas introduced the project within the context of the overall Port Covington Plan. The goal with this block is to solve the needs of the other, smaller blocks, within this one site. He then outlined the driving goals for this site and a key support block for the overall development. The site is adjacent to the existing Baltimore Sun facility which restricts the use of the west side of the proposed building to light and air only with no access. There is also a grade change between the existing Sun plant and the new building/street network. Program elements include a ‘state of the art Grocer’ up to 460,000 SF but since the tenant is not known, the building will be flexible to handle a variety of sizes. Parking will be aggregated to this site for the entire Chapter 1 development. The parking is being designed to allow for future flexibility to right size the parking count as the parking needs change/reduce in the future. The speed ramp is being used to ease in traffic exit during large events. The ground floor uses along Rye Street are being designed as residential units that can be transitioned into retail uses in the future.

The context and façade increment development throughout the chapter 1 plan was then reviewed with an urban increment diagram. This building intends to be an extension of that identified increment development. Diagrams were reviewed that expressed the massing schemes that were investigated. The proposal provides 3 architectural identities along the park space to the east. A tower element is being used within the mid-block to highlight the elevator core in a nod to the warehouse massing tradition. Rendered views were then used to walk through the architectural expression. The architecture and signage concept for the corner of Atlas and Distillery is meant to be a visual draw from the waterfront up to this site. A small amenity space is developed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level along Atlas Street for the residential building use. The garage architecture uses a masonry frame with open garage structure within the brick frame. The main pedestrian access into the garage may be located along Atlas or at the corner with the grocer elevator core. The loading and service bays have not yet been finalized and they are working around the elevation drop to the Baltimore Sun plant that prevents a more traditional loading dock configuration. There is a deck of parking below grade to service the grocer. The residential/office/shared parking rises above the grocer.

Jonathan Johnson with Torti Gallas then walked through the floor plan organization and design intent for the 5 levels of wood construction over 3 levels of concrete.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The overall urban context for this area north of Atlas Street was discussed. Weller Development identified that a BGE substation is planned for the block north with office and garage parking above. The two edges of the building with the exposed garages will face future buildings that may lead to those being B or C streets. The placement of the speed ramp at the north inhibits the future development of Distillery Extension as a main street connecting to the West after the Sun Plant is closed and the network is extended, which will be a challenge for the evolution of the area.

### **Site:**

- The intensity of the program is a challenge to design around within this block. The garage elevations and the long-term connections to the rest of the area are not fully resolved within this proposal.
- How does the residential drop off work along Rye Street? Is there room along the street to accommodate it? Will the street network need all the lanes/space for car egress in the short term/long term? There are tentatively 150 residential units planned for the building. What are the pedestrian connections and routes coming and going from the garage to the rest of the Port Covington Development? Focusing the lobby and access at the corner of Rye and Atlas is important for the overall connectivity that will need to supersede any future grocer's desire to control the entire corner expression there.

### **Building:**

- The clarity in the two volumes is present along Atlas Street, the park side volumes are a less clear. There are currently 4 volumetric elements proposed that are competing with one another. Investigate ways to begin unifying the architectural expression within the mass and the overall architecture. Where is the hierarchy? Atlas St. has a more defined language and some of that clarity should further find its way into this elevation. The roof line and penthouse articulation changes are contrasting the unification of the overall intention. The intent is unclear - Unity or Differentiation? Only the brick color at this moment is 'unifying' the architectural styles.
- The tower feels too tightly squeezed into the space between the larger masses. The architectural expression of the corner massing is what is successfully drawing interest up to this block. Unifying the masonry pieces and eliminating the penthouse articulation at the top of the northern residential mass will be helpful. Editing the penthouse approach of the masonry pieces will allow the masses to coordinate and will let the detail within the elevation field to read better.
- Garage building - not intended to have any mesh or scrim to shield the impact of the cars. What led to a brick clad frame? Consider a lighter (less heavy) frame material choice be made to respond to the program change within the building that other buildings within the development area take advantage of and allow the rest of the brick architecture to shine.
- Grey brick massing is more successful in expressing the previously identified duality of massing within the architectural expression of the district. Find ways to replicate the clarity of the intent within the Rye Street elevations.

### **Next Steps:**

Continue design development addressing the comments above.

**Attending:**

Kevin Lynch - SouthBMore.com

Adam Genn, Kevin Sadowski, John Giardina - Weller Development

M Simmons - BBJ

Brian O'Cooney, Peter Bontempo, Johathan Johnson - Torti Gallas + Partners

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

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