

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

Date: October 25, 2018

Meeting #9

Project: 160 W. Ostend Street Office Building

Phase: Schematic

Developer: Caves Valley Partners

Location: 160 W. Ostend Street, Baltimore, MD

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

An overview of the project was provided by Arsh Mirmiran from Caves Valley. He noted that the project is part of the Stadium Square Development to bring a mix of office, retail, residential and community uses with parking, to a three-block area located just east of the elevated 1-395. The sites are bounded by Leadenhall Street to the west, Race Street to the east and front on to W. Ostend Street, W. West Street, and W. Cross Street.

The master plan shows the development planned in three phases with the current project, 160 W. Ostend St being developed as part of phase II. The project is located at the corner of Leadenhall St and W. Ostend St and is sited to take full advantage of the direct connection along W. Ostend St to the Warner Street entertainment district and casino to the west.

Matt Herbert discussed the project's goals, site considerations, plan development and massing, and elevation concepts. He shared the project's desire to integrate the new building into the overall district, and use its siting at the corner to create a solid anchor at the gateway from the entertainment district to the west; develop and expand retail use along W. Ostend St and improve walkability by strengthening connections at the pedestrian level.

He noted that the first floor was established to be above the flood plain, so corner was elevated above the sidewalk level the sloping grades still allowed access to the building east of the corner at mid-block. This created a raised outdoor plaza along W. Ostend St, for seating, planters and steps at the corner which all provide a strong connection to the street. Spaces were organized to reflect a mix of uses and materials selected to match the vernacular of the district. Although little exists within the mixed vernacular, the MC Dean building was use as a reference for color and material.

DISCUSSION:

Comments from the Panel

Street:

The Panel complimented the project and noted that the public realm benefits from the pedestrian scale site improvements around the building which ties in well with the ideas of improving walkability to the entertainment district west, and to the surrounding communities and downtown area. The outdoor area created with steps and planters was welcoming as an urban feature to tie the project to the street scape and an honest gesture to respond to the site challenges. The panel recommended wrapping the steps around the corner along Leadenhall to complete the corner and maintain a soft transition to street. The panel also

asked for further study of the N-S crosswalk orientation to be more direct to the intersection of W. Ostend and Leadenhall, to avoid casual crossing through an unmarked intersection.

Building:

The Panel thought the building's volumetric massing is generally successful, but noted that more transparency would be preferred to balance the brick masses near the ends of the south and west facades, and be more in line with the precedents provided in response to the mixed yet limited vernacular. Further study is needed to reduce or better articulate the brick mass in the south façade near the corner of W. Ostend and Leadenhall, which seems to reduce the importance given to a continuous glazed plane wrapping the corner and extending along the east facade.

Further study is needed of the sun screen at the corner and its location in or out of plane with the horizontal banding element that articulates the corner wrapped with glazing. Additional attention to the column articulation and parti-wall facades was also noted in the review.

The panel expressed a desire to see more relief in the west façade at the vertical line between the glazed panel adjacent to the brick mass that wraps and frames the glazed plane wrapping the corner, to better articulate the west façade and transition the change in materials which continue from the west façade into the north facing façade. Consider the office entry in this façade, off Leadenhall St, if feasible.

The panel asked for the office entry to at least be made more legible by clarifying the hierarchy of access between the office and planned restaurant. This will help resolve and further clarify massing and articulation and better announce each entry separately.

The use of brick that relates to other commercial buildings is good and the transition from residential with smaller openings to commercial facades with larger framed openings is welcomed.

Next Steps:

The Project will advance to Design Development addressing the comments above.

Attending:

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

Anthony Cataldo, Matthew DeSantis, Ren Southard - Planning