

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

Date: December 13, 2018

Meeting #11

Project: Uplands Rental Phase II

Phase: Schematic

Location: Edmondson Avenue and Old Frederick Road

PRESENTATION:

Sakinah Linder from Pennrose provided a brief overview of the history and phasing of the Uplands project, followed by Julie Disston and Chang Lee from WRT with a presentation of the character of the community built to date and the Rental Phase II site plan, unit types and proposed street facades. Claire Fishman from Carrol Engineering presented the landscape design. Highlight's of their presentation are as follows:

Project Design

- The rental project will consist of two unit types including three-story breezeway apartment buildings which are arranged in paired and single conditions along Edmonson Avenue, and two bedroom stacked units on Pine Avenue, internal to the neighborhood.
- Future rental phases will be on the blocks to the east, fronting on Edmonson Avenue and will include ground floor retail with apartments above. Precedent images were provided of the potential character of these buildings.
- The Phase II unit types are arranged in a conventional block with internal surface parking, with the multifamily buildings fronting Edmondson Avenue and the smaller two-bedroom stacked units Pine Avenue.
- There is substantial topography within the site and the buildings will step down with the grade, both from north to south through the site as well as along Edmonson Avenue.
- The project facades include two brick types and several panel colors; bay windows and changing roof profiles are used to break down the mass of the multi-family into a townhouse-like scale and character. A similar strategy and palette is used on the two bedroom stacked units.

Landscape Design

- A presentation of the landscape design was made including the different plant types.

Comments from the Panel:

The project was presented with minimal discussion of its urban design and relationship to the surrounding context, especially Edmondson Avenue. The site plan currently seems a product of the residential program and responsive primarily to internal site demands. A larger idea about Edmondson Avenue was not presented – both as it exists today and how it will be impacted by this project and future building. The panel had the following specific comments:

- The site plan for the project should be developed within the context of an overall strategy for Edmondson Avenue, including the future mixed-use phases. How these will work with the Rental Phase II project to create a new front along Edmondson Avenue is key to the urban design

strategy, as well as how the two phases will work together, both from an architectural and an urban design perspective.

- Urban Design Diagrams should be developed and brought to the next presentation. These should include critical framework items such as vehicular and pedestrian circulation and should include both the Phase II site and the surrounding context.
- The panel questioned the layout of the two-bedroom stacked units with public entries on both sides of the building. This conflicts with the site layout in a conventional urban block, with its clear demarcation between public and semi-public spaces. They recommended revisiting the unit plan to place all entries on the public streets.
- The panel questioned the townhouse-like character of the multifamily buildings and argued that a larger-scale, potentially more continuous frontage would be more appropriate to the busy avenue. The townhouse-like scale should be reserved for the smaller-scale internal residential streets. The hierarchy of the architecture should reflect that of the surrounding streets and differentiate between Edmondson Avenue and the smaller residential streets.

The panel had the following specific recommendations or suggestions for further investigation:

Site Plan:

- Assemble the multifamily components in a longer string to create more continuous frontage along Edmondson;
- Rearrange the units to eliminate the gap at the end of the site at Uplands Parkway;
- Investigate placing the paired units on the western edge of the frontage and place the two singles to frame either side of the site entry on Amur Lane;
- The multifamily buildings are very close to Edmondson Avenue which is a very busy street. Every effort should be made in the site plan to reduce setbacks within the block to create a better buffer along Edmondson; even minimal increases such as 3' in the depth of the setback can make a big difference.
- The multifamily buildings are closer to Edmondson than the mixed-use buildings in the next phase. These relationships should be further studied and if they remain as such careful study of the streetscape and the transition between the two should be conducted.

Architecture:

- The breezeways give the multifamily buildings a clear division into end/corner units that bookend the elevation between a longer middle portion. The elevations should reinforce this reading rather than submerging it in the townhouse motif. The articulation of bays and special roof profiles should be reserved for the corners, allowing the middle to have a more subdued articulation with larger-scale readings.
- There is too much articulation of the roof profile and they should be more subdued, especially with the stepping required by the grades.
- The corner units could be placed in the site plan forward of the interior units between the breezeways along Edmondson Avenue. This would reinforce their identity as the corner/end and would allow a deeper buffer at the internal units.
- There is already a lot going on in the massing of the building and the panel generally approved the playful attitude to the facades. Given the variety of massing articulations however they felt a quieter material palette should be used.

Panel Action:

Continue Schematic Design while addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Jennifer Langhid - Bozzuto

Sakina Linder – Pennrose
Chang Lee, Julie Disston – WRT
Claire Fishman – CEI
Addison Palmer - STV

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

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Matthew DeSantis, Ren Southard, Martin French, Kyle Leggs -
Planning