

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

**Date:** April 15, 2021

**Meeting #45**

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**Project:** Uplands Rental Phase II

**Phase:** Design Development

**Location:** Edmondson Avenue and Old Frederick Road

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**PRESENTATION:**

Patrick Stewart of WRT presented the project with a recap of the previous presentation since it has been a significant amount of time since the project was last seen by the panel. This is a mixed-use, mixed-income project in its second phase. Chang Lee, also of WRT, continued the presentation with an overview of how the team addressed the architectural comments from the Panel. Claire Fishman of Carroll Engineering, Inc. addressed the landscape design.

**Project Design**

- The rental project will consist of two (2) unit types including three-story breezeway apartment buildings which are arranged in paired and single conditions along Edmondson 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 Edmondson 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 Edmondson 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.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Panel thanked the project team for their presentation. The panel then moved into questions and comments.

- *What is the purpose of selecting plants that better for wetlands?* Selection was made with the understanding that they will still do well outside of wet conditions.

## **Site:**

- Townhouse / stacked flat models seem to be hemmed in by parking; more scrutiny is needed to address the condition of stepping out the back door and directly into the parking lot. Consider flipping the parking and eliminating the internal loop to give more green space and perhaps even add a few parking spaces.
- Erosion of corner at playground undermines both the playground and the feeling of this as a gateway – this could be remedied by flipping the building and playground. In general, reconsider distribution of the play areas.
- Stairs on the townhouse / stacked flats seem to chase the grade; number of risers can be reduced by flipping these to absorb the slope.
- Site grade is considerable throughout – measures for slope stabilization and effective plantings will be necessary, as will the fence at the front to deter desire lines / paths.
- Double-check plant selections to ensure they are not invasive in Maryland.
- Setbacks at Edmondson Avenue are not aligned – the alignment is very important for continuity of experience. Consider realigning the residential buildings and allowing the future mixed use to step back to allow for a wider sidewalk makes sense.
- Considering the utility easement is driving the setback, pay very close attention to landscaping to help transition this; study different ways to step the buildings back.
- Consider overall block development; different placement of buildings can impact the project positively if done with purpose.
- Prioritize people - steal as much of the landscape away from cars as possible; also consider direct paths between entrances and amenities to minimize the burden on pedestrians.
- Subtle details such as trash cans on axes or sharp turns will be crucial to the success of the project.

## **Building:**

- Street elevations of Building Type 1 needs to be more resolved. Although the change is minor, the red brick reading through the bay window from the earlier iteration is a more successful approach with better hierarchy. This previous iteration had a more human scale.
- The new façade of Building Type 1 is fundamentally different; design will benefit from looking back at the earlier scheme and evaluating which elements worked well. The earlier scheme was better proportioned, but needed more simplification for clarity.
- Lowering the breezeway will help this gap read better.
- Changes to the middle of the façade are more successful than the corners.
- Anything that can be done to avoid a blank wall is encouraged – kitchens and bathrooms can have windows.

- Windows need more refinement and clarity; the earlier elevation has more subtle reading with a nice rhythm.
- More hierarchy can be achieved by differentiating key corners. The intersections of Old Frederick Road and Amur Lane at Edmondson Ave. are opportunities to stand out a bit. Interior block corners can be toned down easily with simple changes to the façade materiality to give them a better reading and maintain a sense of hierarchy.
- With regard to building proportion, consider the existing urban fabric as the design moves forward.
- Gable roofs seem out of place on the townhouse / stacked flats. These rooflines are jarring and severe.
- The porches will fit better if they read more like stoops - these will not actually be occupiable space at the 3' depth, so give that space over to a little landscaping if possible.

**Next Steps:**

Continue project addressing the comments above.

**Attending:**

Sakina Linder – Pennrose  
 Chang Lee, Julie Disston, Patrick Stewart – WRT  
 Claire Fishman – Carroll Engineering, Inc.

Avi Kopelowitz, Bobby Mason, Carley Milligan, James Lauire, Sarah Cope, Theresa McGuire, Zoe Cennami  
 – Attendees

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

Laurie Feinberg, Ren Southard, Tamara Woods, Kyle Leggs - Planning