

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

Date: June 6, 2019

Meeting #19

Project: 1000 Eastern Ave. – The Loft

Phase: Schematic

Location: 1000 Eastern Ave.

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Jamshid Sepehri with Arcon Design began the discussion with an introduction of the international architectural style. He then presented the site within the context of the neighborhood and street. The building program for 30 residential units with +/- 2,000Sf retail was also reviewed within the concept site plan. The ground floor retail is concentrated along Eastern Avenue. The Residential lobby is located along Exeter Street along with two ground level residential units that have direct access from the sidewalk. The existing alley provides the access to the service core of the building. Jamshid continued the review of the concept massing with a discussion of the design idea for a traditional base, middle, top approach to the architecture. He continued the discussion with an investigation of a two-level base versus a one-level base within the context of the existing structures. The upper levels all project two feet over the property line into the Right-of-way to provide for additional living space and outdoor terraces. Terraces project an additional two feet at the tangent of the curve. The development team prefers the design that contains the two level base because they believe it allows the upper levels to feel 'lighter'. The team proposes a masonry (precast or limestone) base to the building with a lighter material above (stucco) for the body of the building and a masonry material for the penthouse. Vertical organization through the building is accomplished through the alignment of the glazing. The façade is symmetrical along Exeter Street and slightly asymmetrical along Eastern Avenue with an emphasis towards the corner glazing. A review of previous concept designs was presented culminating with images of the current proposal within the street elevation.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel asked clarifying questions regarding the proposed materials, the amount of projection over the property line and if there are any floodplain restrictions.

Site:

- Additional design of the street scape is needed to more fully understand how this building fits within the overall context

- Additional study is needed to investigate how potential projections would coordinate with the existing streetscape and impact the continuity of the pedestrian experience.

Building:

- The building design can do more to respond to the overall context. The 4-foot projection into the right-of-way is seen as too aggressive and creates an uncomfortable pedestrian experience along the ground plane. The additional projection of the balconies is challenged along with their curving shape. The curving geometry of the balconies conflict with the more industrial language that seems to be inherent within the building. The Panel challenged the success of the projection in the overall building massing and how it relates to the overall ideas of the building. Consider reducing the overall need for projections and focus them in key locations/program needs. Further explore the recesses and a layering of the facades to strengthen the architecture.
- In referencing the more traditional, Beaux Arts architectural design, consider that each portion of the base, middle, and top can stand on their own architecturally. The team is challenged to revisit the design to strengthen the pieces architecturally and in mass as well as to address the clash of various styles in favor of developing a more cohesive architectural language for the building.
- The reduction to a one-story base height is positive and more successful than the two-level base, which only seems to highlight the top-heavy nature of the projecting volume.
- The Panel challenged the relationship to the adjacent rowhouses and prefers the team development a stronger relationship to the larger commercial buildings. This will result in a more positive articulation of a multifamily building. It will further promote the idea of marking the corner and the urban gestures of a larger building within this community.
- Bringing additional information on the proposed materials will be helpful at the next meeting to fully understand the articulation of the building design.
- The building needs to engage the street in a stronger way. The two residential units along the ground floor need further development – explore additional commercial opportunities in this location to further anchor the site.
- Explore the idea of saving the more playful elements from the balcony curve to the penthouse where a more sculptural element could be more successful.

Next Steps:

Continue schematic development addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Melody Simmons – BBJ

Jamshid Sepehri – Arcon Design

Homa Ravan – LSM LLC

Al Barry – AB Associates

Mssrs. Anthony, Mses. Wagner, O'Neill – UDAAP Panel

Anthony Cataldo*, Ren Southard - Planning