

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

Date: February 6, 2020

Meeting #29

Project: 2434 Greenmount Ave

Phase: Continued Schematic

Location: 2434 Greenmount Ave

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Aaron Zephir with Moseley Architects started the presentation with review: existing building will be razed and have underground parking with a new mixed-use project above. pointed out changes to the site plan, including addition of trees and shrubs. Site plan and overall floor plans did not change much, however, the team did address comments from the Panel including revised design bridging over drive aisle on the south side, upper level west façade is stepped back 30' to blend more with the existing neighboring houses. In addition, entrance is tucked in rather than extruded.

The team was not able to address the comment regarding pairing the driveways – problematic due to DOT requirements, would have required the building to lose significant square footage, however the bridging over helps to continue the street edge. City will be removing houses to the northeast of the site through project CORE, and the new development will put eyes on the alley (units will face the alley).

DISCUSSION:

The Panel clarified that comments should be addressed systematically and noted comment regarding the dead-end alleys had not been addressed. The Panel asked questions related to program (clarified this is affordable housing), and how the edges of the property are treated (shown as a dotted property line currently), and whether the alley has been formally closed (not yet, team has support from Council Member and is working with DPW).

Site:

- Continue investigating how the alley terminates at the building further, as the dead end is still very problematic.

- Give more value to terminus spaces – make these more desirable, ground-level outdoor spaces for residents; show images of these spaces
- Study edges and transitions in the trash area; consider putting the compactor in the lower level of the garage
- Movement through the space is better than ‘eyes on the space’ and will help ensure these smaller interstitial spaces don’t become of trash, illicit behavior, rats, all the negative urban conditions
- Consider pulling the alley east toward the Greenmount side of the building.
- There is still a physical disconnect from the ground plane – think about how the building meets the ground plane on the south and north sides, the building will become more humane; think about long-term development
- Consider facilitating a process to close the entire north-south alley with the neighbors since this space cannot be patrolled – alley is 10’ wide and not used for trash collection
- Discussion about flipping the plan to allow for the driveways to be coupled; can cantilever the second floor over to accommodate the change – would only need 5’ or so. Single drive aisle is better than 2 curb cuts within 200’ and could make the southern space a full ground plane, which can really improve the potential of that space.

Building:

- Plan has not changed much, but elevator core has been offset to accommodate one-bedroom windows above. Massing is working, rhythm of openings on west façade is much more clear
- On the west elevation: study whether the vertical strips need to be a different color or whether the depression will be enough. Does not need to be a row house since it is an apartment building and a more subtle differentiation may be sufficient to reinforce the desired proportions. Overall more appropriate within the context of the street.
- On the recessed west elevation at roof patio: clarify the frame and disburse the windows more evenly or add additional to capitalize on western light for apartments
- On the east elevation: consider splitting some of the windows on the upper floors in the lighter central bay; Consider continuing the dark finish below the residential windows at the ground floor in order to unify it with the rest of the base and express more clearly the framed volume above.

Next Steps:

Continue schematic design addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Aaron Zephir– Moseley Architects
Bret Griffith – Fortis

Mr. Anthony, Mses. Ilieva and Bradley – UDAAP Panel

Laurie Feinberg*, Renata Southard, Matthew De Santis, Reni Lewal – Planning