

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

Date: October 6, 2022

Meeting #68

Project: 804 N. Franklintown Road

Phase: Design Development

Location: 804 N. Franklintown Road

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Jerryn McCray, the architect, reintroduced the project including outreach to the neighborhood who were concerned about the existing state of the building and safety issues.

Colleen Vacelet, the landscape architect for the project, then shared the landscape design for the project. Her team looked at two areas at the property, the entry adjacent to the historic façade and church and the rooftop amenity space. The proposed entry/courtyard space utilizes brick paving to create a connection to the façade and connect the front and rear ends of the outdoor space through the lobby. Concrete benches and pavement banding will also anchor the space. The team proposed a permeable fence along the property line with the church that provides a barrier but allows views. At the roof top, the team proposed a large turf space and umbrellas and will utilize planters and screening to create soft edges around the amenity space.

Jerryn McCray then completed the presentation with a detailed review of each elevation including the various materials utilized. This includes the understanding from the community that the rear alley is considered a street by the community.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel thanked Mr. McCray for the presentation and asked clarifying questions.

Clarifications:

- *What is the desired relationship with the church, church community, and neighborhood in general?* There is no desire to invite the church into the property, but to be a better neighbor to them than the property currently is. The priority from the community is that the development won't attract illicit behavior.
- *Is the entry plaza intended as a semi-public space?* Yes, the understanding is that anyone can walk beyond the historic façade and enter that entry plaza.
- *At the front of the building, how high is the pergola at the entry?* 12'-14'
- *Did you explore any other options for that vertical surface other than faux plants?* The use of a true green wall would not survive at this location, as it would be in too much

shade. We like the use of this idea to bring nature throughout the space. It can be found throughout Baltimore, and can also be updated to respond to changes in fads.

- *It would have been helpful to see a context map to understand the visibility between the park and the property. My sense is that screening should be provided, but not sure how to address this. Do you have any imagery that shows the relationship between the park and the rear area of the building?* This was discussed at an earlier presentation, but given the grade change this wasn't realistic.
- *The rear alley is considered a street by the neighborhood, have you explored other treatments beyond the façade? Vertical treatments, lighting, ground treatments?* There's no intent to turn it into a street, but don't want to diminish the space to just an alley. There will be lighting.
- *The plinths in the courtyard will be flush? Yes.*
- *Will the turf at the rear courtyard be faux? Yes.*
- *What material will the vertical wood be?* It will likely be a stained pine.
- *The wood paneling won't be the width of the balconies, correct? Yes, that's correct.*
- *There are two colors to the siding, gray and orange? Yes, there are two colors of siding one is brown and one is gray.*
- *What is the orange piece at the east elevation?* A painted spandrel.
- *What material is the colorful band above the balcony at the east elevation?* That will be another painted spandrel.
- *Why so many materials?* The building has a chaotic geometry, and the materials are responding to that.

Site

- At the alley agree with the intent to invite positive activity. The best way to do this is to make the space one that is cared for. Consider way to achieve this, is there a partnership with the city or a way to make this a green alley that can make this feel like a cared space that belongs to the community and the residents?
- Similarly, at the park, how does it feel to look back at the building from the park. What can be done to optimize it out of consideration for the park and being a good neighbor?
- I understand your intent with the faux green wall – however, they can gather pollutants, dust and dirt and look shabby quickly. Urge you to consider another treatment in this highly visible space.
- The plant palette seems to be predominantly sun loving plants, while the courtyard will be in shade for a large part of the day. In fact, the focal element will be under a roof and it will need to be extremely shade resistant and would certainly need to be irrigated. Consider if these are the best choices for this installation.
- On the roof, synthetic turfs get very hot. Consider some sort of shade provision to mitigate this or consider an alternative material.

- Consider the height of the pergola and make sure any trees planted below will not grow beyond that height.
- The fence is a positive contribution to the site.
- At the rear courtyard consider the visual connection/porosity along the entirety of the perimeter including the building.
- The space under the pergola no longer has a purpose and no connection to the interior space. The effort at the entry needs to continue along the entire east elevation. Really appreciate that a landscape architect is on board, have them work with you to extend the courtyard along the east elevation to create a more cohesive street frontage.
- Avoid the use of materials that will artificially cheapen the building, especially at primary facades or adjacent to the preserved brick facade. Execute the thoughtful moves that work.
- The 3' cedar fence again begins to feel more suburban rather than responding to the surrounding space. Is it necessary? Could the edge be defined with dense landscaping? Have you considered stitching together the space at the church and the forecourt of the building that would allow both spaces to be more successful?
- Concerned about the deep recessed front outdoor lobby space that faces north and will not have much use.

Building:

- Welcome the work that has advanced and progressed significantly. Bringing a Landscape Architect on board has really helped this progress further.
- The piece that's challenging is that there may be too many materials. Consider editing this further to make the building successful and achieve a level of timelessness. Need to calm down the material elements with accents of highlights strategically placed. This is most evident with the cementitious siding.
- At the setback portion of the east elevation and outside corners - consider how the cementitious material is utilized and how it interacts with the stucco.
- The rear elevation is more successful with the T shaped openings that create a very strong shadow line that will be elegant. However, you don't see this anywhere else on the building. How can it be connected to the other elevations or spaces?
- The glazed brick successfully serves as an anchor connecting all the various pieces of the building together.
- The materiality has changed so much over time and there needs to be more intention. The use of informal language can be successful, but it's not there yet. Any of the previous schemes could have been successful had they been developed further rather than replaced by a new material concept every time.
- Worried about the use of the cementitious siding at the prominent corners of the building and how this connects to the other materials.
- Simplify, clarify, and amplify those pieces that are successful.

Next Steps:

Complete Design Review with staff.

Attending:

Jerryn McCray – Architect

Colleen Vacelet – Intreegue Design

Timothy Smidt

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

Tamara Woods, Ren Southard, Caitlin Audette, Matt Desantis, Chad Hayes– Planning