

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

Date: December 10, 2020

Meeting #40

Project: Harbor Point, Parcel 3

Phase: Schematic I

Location: 1000 Wills Street, Fells Point

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Micheal Beatty introduced the project team: BHC is the architect of record, KPF is the design architect, IO Studio is the landscape architect, and Beatty Development is the developer. Parcel 3 will be the new world headquarters for T Rowe Price. Despite the buildings being tall and containing parking, a strong focus has been put on pedestrian experience and connection from the inland neighborhood to the waterfront. Site porosity is a key consideration.

Jeff Kenoff of KPF continued the presentation with a short history and context. The project goals seek to address the following four categories: pedestrian scale, varying city, urban flow, city fabric (Baltimore vernacular).

Project Overview:

- Campus approach with two buildings split to enhance porosity and views; smaller scale glass box between to give the appearance of a stepped group of buildings
- Parking is hidden below a green deck to read and operate as a continuation of the landscape
- Retail on ground level with housing and office above – a courtyard in the center plaza to enhance retail
- Central plaza connects to the park, waterfront, building.
- Façade inspiration (rhythm, proportion, color, texture) from existing Baltimore vernacular defined by historical cast iron structures

Richard Jones of IO Studio continued the presentation turning the focus to the landscape component. Marshland and soft coastlines found in the regional context form the landscape framework – rather than the paved elements reflecting the hard industrial edge, the approach of this project is to use softer curves and respond to the water edge, creating memorable moments.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel thanked the team for their presentation, expressed congratulations in advancing the project and proceeded with clarifying questions and comments.

Clarifications:

- *Height of the Buildings* – Datum line matches up with the bulk of neighboring buildings.
- *Will there be a space for docking boats* – Due south of Wills Street will have public transit type piers for loading and unloading.
- *What happens to the Sandlot?* – Designed into the park spaces and slightly relocated (moves to the west – “Sandlot 2.0”)

Site:

- Kudos to the team – wonderful project on a difficult site. Idea of maintaining a certain scale along the water’s edge while preserving open space.
- Courtyard:
 - o Access to the private T Rowe Price building only – no public access through the building at that point; conflict between the design of the space, which presents as very public since it is very transparent.
 - o Door mat connecting the central plaza to T Row prize needs work – will operate awkwardly as designed. Could be scaled down and still be ceremonious and welcoming but does not necessarily need to connect across to the central plaza.
 - o Clarity of the glass cube might be confusing for visitors – need hierarchy of spaces to guide people toward the park (aligned just to the West).
 - o The park is a truly public space – this is how visitors should access the waterfront, but it needs to be designed to feel intuitive.
- Point Park:
 - o Play area is a bit empty. Mounds with tunnels present security concerns
 - o Initial thoughts on materiality are strong (stone, vegetation, textured concrete, wood)
 - o Circle framing the lawn area – unclear about the logic of the shape but carving into the pure geometry is successful. Geometry makes sense for a diagrammatic phase but needs more development to help refine the residual space between the park geometry and adjacent buildings.
 - o Does not yet feel intentional – arbitrary shape is too rigid, which doesn’t invite casual use necessary to support the retail component.
- In general:
 - o Open outdoor spaces will benefit from more hierarchy when considered as a system. Now is a good time to look at the pieces together as a complete urban edge.

- o Different landscape experiences work together as a gradient. Outdoor spaces are becoming active and framing wonderful views. Opportunity to add more variety to green spaces nestled between the buildings and an alternative to the lawn experience with ecologically inspired plantings (less manicured) but adding to the cohesion and continuity. Elements of surprise layered into purposeful landscape.
- o Strong pedestrian experiences: scale, circulation, spatial sequences, balance of hardscape and planted elements, tree-canopy coverage.
- o Appreciate consideration of experience from the building to landscape
- o Gracious grade transitions (Slide 36), inclusive ADA access within courtyard
- o Interesting textural and sculptural edge at water

Building:

- Consider varying heights of the buildings - but don't compromise the scale; successful use of proportions, materiality and rhythm of reading.
- Finger-like buildings recall the historical piers – works well for this proposal.
- Varied ecology of buildings is welcome; this design approach will carry the project and will allow each building to act in its best interest while supporting the whole of the site.
- Skin is very appropriate to smaller scale – simple and elegant; not overworked – allows the landscape around it to shine.
- Glass cube feels conflicted – transparent, yet physically separates visitors from the water. Materiality is too close to the two main volumes; frames should be played down and help glass to read as stronger singular plane; the deeper recess of the gasket is successful but the canopy aligned with the front of the building undermines the volume of the glass cube.
- Central Ave. vantage point needs to be considered as it terminates at the corner of Central Park and entry of Point Park.

Next Steps:

Continue design addressing comments above.

Attending:

Todd Harvey, Alex Olson – BHC Architects

Jeffrey Kenoff, Johnathan Flesher – KPF Architects

Kevin Johnson, Adam Gross – Ayers Saint Gross

Richard Jones – IO Studio

Michael Beatty, Max Beatty, Tulip Yeung – Beatty Development

Ed Gunts – Baltimore Fishbowl

Hallie Miller – Baltimore Sun

Melody Simmons – BBJ

Laurie Schwartz – Waterfront Partnership

Greg Mell, Forth Badley, Brian Dean, Johanna Alonso, Justing Thomas, C. Jett, Amy Beall, Brian Lewbart, Drew Bauer, Travis Akiwowo, Chris Seiler, Adam Cook, Peter Duke, Peng Gu, Terek Saleh, Matthew Clever, Cooper Melton, Kevin Lynch, Jerrell Perry – Attendees

Mr. Anthony, Ms. Ilieva (Ms. Bradley supplied comments via email) – UDAAP Panel

Stephanie Murdock – DHCD

Laurie Feinberg*, Chris Ryer, Ren Southard, Matthew DeSantis, Tamara Woods, Jeff La Noue – Planning