

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

Date: September 24, 2020

Meeting #37

Project: Parcel 4, Harbor Point

Phase: Schematic

Location: 1000 Wills Street, Fells Point

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

This is the first review of Parcel 4 of Harbor Point, which is a major Planned Unit Development in Harbor East. Jonathan Flesher of Beatty Development began the presentation by introducing the team and giving a brief overview of the project. Harbor Point is a 27-acre parcel on the waterfront nestled between Harbor East and Fells Point. Last bastion of undeveloped land on the harbor. Todd Harvey of BHC Architects continued the presentation with surrounding buildings, PUD overview and basic massing proposals.

Project Overview:

- Intent of Master Plan is to minimize parking and maximize views, promote walkability through density.
- 1500-space parking garage will be wrapped by multi-family residential
- Proposal is much less (narrower) than maximum allowed by PUD
- 325-350 residential apartments with 10,000 SF ground floor retail
- Irregular site allows for park on east edge of site
- Base building will be 6-stories; narrow tower will rise another 14 stories.

DISCUSSION:

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

Clarifications:

- *Views* - within the tower views will remain unobstructed; new buildings will have lower towers (105' or so, roughly). On the west side, Parcel 3 will be a large office component; remaining buildings will be residential or hotel, which are more slender in nature.

- *What are the series of façades; how do they transition to the existing fabric?*
Strategy for how the new buildings are creating a new urban environment.
Team has not yet spent time with the landscape team to determine the nature of those spaces.
- *Flood resilience aspect* - Site is higher than surrounding because of environmental remediation. Large park in later phase will have more flood resilience design. Park will slope up to the building.
- *Future building locations* - will be placed off central plaza (no buildings will be constructed on the former Sand Lot site); large parcels at the north of the site are designated parking locations as determined by PUD. Note that three existing buildings have little to know parking; will be addressed by additional parking on Parcel 4.

Site:

- Central Avenue bridge makes a new connection from the north, opportunity to create a connection to the east, as well.
- The original urban design strategy for the parcel envisioned viable uses on all sides, particularly on the minor street to the east and despite conformance to overall massing/heights the proposed plan does not fulfill that. Specifically:
 - o The small triangular parcel east of the garage is not viable as an independent development parcel and could only conceivably be viable if developed with the garage
 - o It is not viable as a park, with one side of it abutted by a multi-story garage
 - o The size of the garage plate and its collision with the geometry of the street on the east undermine the integrity of that street as a viable mixed-use, pedestrian street that is part of the fabric of the district. The automobile activity of entry and access from the garage will likewise undermine that
 - o Is there an alternate strategy where the lower floors of the garage on the east could have viable active uses to animate the street on that side and their parking replaced on upper levels?
- Much thought has been put into new streets and massing; clear definition of design - needs to be resolved and bigger thinking about the typology of space; how does this new portal space become a successful gateway to the project.
- Think about what invites people in / celebrates the new development - nodes and corridors will determine success of drawing people in, sequence of moments. Careful consideration is needed of how the building meets the ground, of how the street is activated.
- Concentrated parking is problematic, could be spread throughout the site more effectively.

- Take advantage of grade changes to help organize site; locating the service edge on Dock Street will help preserve the continuity and character of Caroline Street, continuous building face at ground level that turns the corner into Dock Street to create a bookend, which aligns with the intent of the PUD.
- Garage and resulting residual wedge-shaped spaces need to be turned into meaningful urban gestures; opportunity to study change of perspective if site is recentered from the view of the neighborhood. Current view treats Caroline Street as fringe - missed opportunity for one of the most important sites in Harbor Point.
- Stronger corner is needed; not convinced that this is best possible use of the site. Capturing corner of Caroline and Dock Streets will help to strengthen the project. Turning the geometry of the garage will achieve this and have the benefit of giving some relief to Wills Street from the tall tower by rotating it away.

Building:

- Slimmed down mass is a good move - more elegant and gives relief to the surrounding lower buildings.
- Tower could be reoriented to better preserve views; important to avoid making Harbor point into new acropolis, separate and distinct from the rest of the neighborhood. Straight, rigid geometry may not be the right answer for this building.
- Opportunity to play with masses at this early stage and consider the impacts on neighboring buildings and resulting urban spaces.
- Need to develop a cohesive vision for the west side of the building as it interfaces the proposed open spaces.
- Look at the project in two ways; early phases were internal - this piece (Parcel 4) is both internal and external. Massing has the opportunity to be respectful to the existing neighborhood and tie into complete buildings.

Next Steps:

Continue design addressing comments above.

Attending:

Todd Harvey, Alex Olson - BHC Architects
Jonathan Flesher - Beatty Development

Mr. Anthony, Mses., Ilieva, Bradley - UDAAP Panel

Maurice Mead, Daniel Stanislawski, Peter Duke, Ed Gunts, Klaus Philipsen, Kristen Hoover

Laurie Feinberg*, Ren Southard, Matthew DeSantis, Martin French, Tamara Woods - Planning