

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

Date: April 30, 2020

Meeting #33

Project: Yard 56, Phase 2

Phase: Schematic

Location: 5601 Eastern Ave.

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Robert Northfield introduced the project and noted the importance of this meeting as the project moves forward toward city approvals and permitting. The updated plan simplifies vehicular traffic and creates a service loop through the site. Phase II is 225 residential units, medical office building and 635 parking spaces to serve residential, medical office and retail.

Project Priorities:

- Walking neighborhood with a “main street” feel
- Respond to the PUD guidelines for street scaping and build-to lines

Medical Office Building:

Site design revisions focus on the NE corner and stair, site circulation, NW corner and retaining wall. Tyson Woodby addressed the Panels comments from previous meeting and explained design rationale for each revision.

Vertical design revisions focus on materiality, rhythm of openings, NW corner where the senior center will be located. Revised diagram shows façade materials and opening with more restraint / more clarified design language.

Apartment Building:

Robert Northfield began the presentation of the apartment building by addressing the Panels comments from the last meeting. Mr. Northfield discussed the changes to landscape planning, circulation, and connections to areas outside the site. Ryan Hochfelden proceeded with an explanation of the design rationale and how the team selected façade materials. The team showed several iterations of the design revisions, as well.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel thanked the project team for their presentations and for showing their work as they addressed the Panel’s comments. The panel asked clarifying questions on the mixed-use project first, then moved to the MOB project. Service road design is a product of the PUD and seeks to

separate service circulation from regular pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Right turn into the project from Eastern Ave. to West Drive is due to a denial from DOT for a two-way entrance at that location (would interfere with bus route, etc.). Trash storage and collection will be integrated into the site and shielded from neighbors.

In General:

- Team seems to have misunderstood previous comments about brick – Panel did not intend to dissuade the project team from using brick in general, rather the way the materials should be used.
- Constraints imposed by DOT have made circulation difficult and impacts the ability to enhance other key areas of the project. At the service area west of the MOB, right turn in is ok but it creates a challenge for recirculation at patient drop offs. Getting back to the entry is problematic; a right turn into the site from Eastern on to West and a right turn out could compress the circulation of the MOB and lessen the need for MOB traffic to circulate through the rear of the mixed-use building. Point of this comment is to enhance the pedestrian-centered nature of the green space located at the west side of the mixed-use/multi-family building.
- Success in attention paid to pedestrian circulation, including pedestrian access from greater communities to the north, west and east, and extending into the development along Bayview Boulevard.

MOB:

- Landscape addresses the NE corner, and the main entrance is improved greatly. Visually and functionally acts as a collector for the building.
- Greater separation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic with the enhanced landscaping.
- NW corner revision is more successful as a terraced planting.
- One more level of simplification of the planters would be helpful to integration of the landscaped element.
- Additional refinement – stair doesn't necessarily need to be a wrap-around, area to the east of the building could become a planter.
- Changes to the vertical design are successful, but the canopy at the drop off area needs a bit more development and refinement; needs to be better integrated into the canopy element rather than two separate pieces.
- Green element (grass or landscaping) on North Ave is needed curbside in front of the garage elevator, to redirect pedestrians to the crosswalk.
- The drop off is generous, one car space could be eliminated in front of the drop-off entrance on the south side.
- Signage is plentiful and lacks hierarchy – needs refinement.

- SW corner – diagram showed the articulation of the primary and secondary facades; updated diagram removes the hierarchy and instead expresses the corners. Consider the opportunity to close the corner – corners are not equal. NE corner is the anchoring corner, SE and NW corners are supportive of commercial use (secondary) – ok for the SW corner to be quieter. Adapt the language of ‘corners’ so it reflects the natural hierarchy of the building and site.

Mixed-Use / Multi-Family Building:

- Many of the ground plane changes are improvements and create meaningful open spaces.
- Entrance to garage is unfortunate, but team addressed this through material and refinements to the façade.
- Maintaining the frame as a 4-story read is successful and simplification of materials are successful, but the dark feature is a disruption in the articulation. In previous version, more successful integration of this central element.
- The façades should respond to what it faces – architectural language should reflect the elements on the different sides. Bayview is more distinguished, and distinguished language is appropriate. On the west façade, the language should be more residential and commensurate with the planned lush landscaping.
- Bays are set up as A-B-A-B-A on the north of the central entry element, while the bays south of the central element read as A-B-A-A-B-C. This could be clarified by simplifying the rhythm in manner similar to the north.
- Horizontal band reads very independently, opportunity for the band to tie the corners together at the top of the building.
- Consolidation of service area is an improvement – appropriately shields the community.
- Abrupt change in density for the neighborhood; green space as buffer is important and trees are essential to transition between densities.
- Transition to the community on the southwest edge of the site could become a park node that allows improved pedestrian connection.
- Residential lobby is very different program from the adjacent commercial – carving out a little of the ground level with some buffer or screening will help to elegantly transition between very public and very private program that are mixed in the ground floor of the building. Integrate the physical elements.
- Simplified language of openings is successful.
- Overall materiality – brick frames arbitrarily composed are unsuccessful and outdated. The northeast corner with base band and lighter mass floating above is more successful than the adjoining composition with brick frames. The building is not huge and doesn’t

need to be divided up so much or artificially mask the building. The proportions are very elegant and do not need the masking – team is urged to take another look at the building.

- Materiality lends itself to a feeling the building being overworked. Team has an opportunity to shed some of the applied elements and produce something fresh and new to more closely reflect ongoing transitioning of the region.

Next Steps:

Continue design addressing comments above.

Attending:

Robert Northfield, Ryan Hochfelden, Theresa Lucarelli – BCT Architects

Al Barry – AB Associates

Tyson Woodby – HCM

Jamie Lee, Patrick Reid , Joshua Neiman – Project Team

Melody Simmons – BBJ

John Smith, Ryan Rumbaoa, Joshua Sharon, Michael Dobkin– Attendees

Mr. Anthony, Mses. O’Neill, Ilieva, Bradley – UDAAP Panel

Laurie Feinberg*, Ren Southard, Chris Ryer, Tamara Woods, Matthew DeSantis, MC Buettner,

Amy Gilder-Busatti, Lisa McNeilly, Eric Tiso – Planning