

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

**Date:** April 30, 2020

**Meeting #33**

**Project:** Sojourner Place

**Phase:** Schematic

**Location:** Preston and Harford Road in Oliver Neighborhood

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Aaron Zephir from Mosely Architects presented the project and addressed the Panel's comments from the previous meeting. The team tightened up the parking area, simplified the façade and looked at different building configurations on the site. The site as designed contains 30 parking spaces and a 70-unit multi-family building (affordable – note that some of the residents will be former chronically homeless).

Project priorities:

- Scale the building appropriately both to the width of Harford road and to the residential neighborhood
- Respond to the irregular shape of the site
- Highlight the main entrance and amenity spaces above
- Break up the long façade with a woven expression of volumes and materials while keeping the rhythm of the windows

**DISCUSSION:**

The Panel asked the project team to systematically address the comments within presentation in future presentations, preferably in this order: 1.) Show previous design and the comment; 2.) show updated design with a callout of change to design. The panel then asked clarifying questions and moved into discussion about the project.:

- Entry sequence – front entrance will be a main entrance for pedestrians; residents arriving by car will enter the same lobby, but through rear (east side) of building.

**Site:**

- Clarification on previous comments – from the north the building should tuck in and create a more intimate courtyard space. Use the building to protect the intimate space, and closing the gap on the south side (Preston St.)

- Further massing studies are needed, but if the private “park” does remain on the north edge, could the fencing be pulled back to allow the public green along Hoffman to continue, rather than interrupting it?
- The railroad materials should be repurposed authentic materials if that becomes a theme of the park.
- Moves to acknowledge what cannot be seen (railroad below) are less important than moves that address what can be seen (gaps, vacancy). Building as it sits is a monolog instead of a dialog with the neighborhood.
- With pervious paving, parking lot could serve as storm water management; could also help to soften the parking and make it more “plaza” like.
- Harsh linearity to the landscape plan; needs to be more varied and respond to the building façade along Harford Road.
- Bus stop – right at the entrance of building – needs to inform how the ground plane is dealt with. This area needs to accommodate the bus activity.
- Lopsided relationship between parking and main outdoor amenities. Parking spaces are prioritized instead of access to amenities.
- Private outdoor space with heavily planted edge sends the wrong message of “Keep Out” – this could have more porosity and visibility while providing the kind of security residents need.

### **Building:**

- Building has not changed substantially, so team should revisit previous comments from the Panel (see notes from Meeting #31, March 20)
- Building is a first for the neighborhood in a long time – development will influence possible future developments in neighborhood that has experienced vacancy. This project has real capacity to have positive impact. Important for the building to revitalize instead of reinforcing the historical gaps.
- Preston St. side could have double-loaded corridor and infill the gap – this is a small adjustment which will improve the plan (Hoffman Street)
- Move some of the community spaces north to improve utilization; opportunity for the building to open up and engage more with the outdoor space and community.
- Change to brick volume is successful, but the triangular bay seems out of place and arbitrary – look at this piece again.
- Invest more energy in the corner element – needs a bigger gesture. The north corner could be suppressed. Main entry architecture and ground plane have opportunity to be improved.

**Next Steps:**

Continue design addressing comments above.

**Attending:**

Martina Reilly, Magda Westerhout, Aaron Zephir – Moseley Architects

Daniel McCarthy, Kevin Anderson, Kevin Lindamood, Melanie Voelker – Project Team

Kate Leisner, Shannon Snow, Dan Henson

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

Laurie Feinberg\*, Ren Southard, Tamara Woods – Planning