BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE ADVISORY PANEL

MEETING MINUTES

Date: August 4, 2022   **Meeting #66**

Project: Park Heights Senior Housing -Phase 2   **Phase:** Design Development

Location: Park Heights

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Mansur Abdul-Malik introduced the project, noting that this multi-family building is a continuation of the Park Heights Major Redevelopment Area Phase I – the first phase contains this project and the neighboring building, which is senior multi-family. Allen Cowling continued the presentation with a description of the building. The presenters highlighted the following:

- The building is a courtyard fronting on Park Heights Avenue
- Rooftop solar will be included despite not being shown in this presentation.

Heather English delivered the landscape presentation; the team explored circulation, public versus private realms and how the outdoor and indoor spaces interact. The team aims to enliven the street edge along Park Heights Ave. The

Discussion

The Panel thanked the project team for their succinct presentation and proceeded with clarifications, questions and comments.

Clarifications:
- *Please walk us through the landscape continuation; how does this building connect to the other?* There is a continuation of the enlarged tree pits (5' x 12'), trees are the species, the sidewalk is the same width on both blocks and the scoring pattern is the edge. The smaller ornamental trees are going to be only within the courtyards, and this is the case for both blocks. The buildings will also have a setback.
- *What is the use of the terrace space?* It will be a landscaped green roof and will not be programmed, but there will be some smaller vegetation. The space will be accessible to residents.
- *The team mentioned that there is a semi-private space at the front; what is the level of engagement expected for this space – will the public be invited in?* While this will be

open to the public for deliveries, resident guests, etc. but there will be a fence and a gate to separate it from feeling too public.

- Is there a philosophy for why the garage entrance located off Virginia rather than the alley? It was very efficient to locate the garage on this side; it allows for more accessible parking and makes trash pickup more efficient.
- *What are the dimensions of the courtyard?* 82' x 52' - between the patio and the public sidewalk, there is a green space containing steppingstones and a landscaped area.
- What are the materials of the bay windows?

Site

- The playground on Park Heights Avenue raised a bit of concern at first, but the diagrams and programming are helpful in understanding how this works. In combination with the dooryards, it gives back the "stoop culture" and defined the fronts as a space for people.
- The fence is a subtle element to reinforce the edge and allow parents to feel comfortable about having their kids play in that space. The green buffer will need to be generous to create a buffer.
- Use of multi-sensory activity is applauded – can the team add more percussive elements to add color and sound? These are cleverly designed to make enough noise to be engaging but not cause noise pollution.
- Virgina Avenue is the gateway, so it needs to feel like a beautiful boulevard and not just a side street.
- The rear courtyard needs more development, but Panel agrees with the decision of the team to provide unprogrammed space here.
- Make sure the alley side is generously planted. Consider the pedestrian experience and how the parking will be screened.
- Alley could provide the services and allow Virgina Avenue to be the boulevard it should be; team should study other options showing the garage and trash pickup on the alley side. There is a value proposition here – how does efficiency now impact the project over the course of 30, 40, 50 years?
- The geometries of the courtyard appear forced on the geometry of the site and building and need refinement; the strong axis is great, but the width of the paths begin to undermine that; need more hierarchy. The center path needs to remain the main path; set the other paths as secondary and allow the main path to dominate the others. Overall great ideas, but need another iteration for stronger execution.
- Lawn space needs to have a little more deliberate separation; the main walkway next to it creates a conflict between the use as play space and general circulation including pet access. Consider a buffer to keep law and play space safe and clean.
- The outdoor gathering space is divided by a circulation path making it difficult to use for small events as desired. Consider reworking the layout geometry to make it more useful.

Building

- Strong desire to recall the history of Park Heights. Designers need to make decisions about the styles and details. This building reflects that more classic approaches and the respect to the overall development is appreciated.
- Massing and scale are appropriate for this portion of the Master Plan area.
- The details are not yet resolved – the coins are sprinkled all over the building and would be used more selectively. Because of the contrast, they stand out too much and cause distraction. Consider removing them from the center of bays and using them more strategically to reinforce hierarchy.
- The headers of the ground floor should be a little taller. The building appears to step, perhaps because of the grade, and the ground floor could benefit from a little taller opening.
- As the building turns the corner onto Virginia Avenue – secondary entrance is offset from the bay windows; adjust this so these elements are in alignment.
- The color combination is very interesting, but the team will reserve comments related to the color; however, brick should continue along Virginia Ave.
- The back site of the building looks assembled with cheap off-the-shelf components. The balcony elements in the rear use black railings, which departs from the language used on the white bay windows at the front. Rework the rear balconies as unifying elements to help tie the front to the back.
- The siding itself doesn't relate to a single-family home as stated but rather to suburban multifamily developments. Can it be simplified and urbanizes a little bit by switching to a panel. This could speak more closely to the formal language of the rest of the building.
- This building is not a house, thus it does not need to pretend to be a house with the materials. It is acceptable to use other materials like metal panel with the brick. The team is encouraged to explore options other than blue cementitious lap siding.
- Very simple, rational approach.

Next Steps:

Continue design addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Tom Gallas, David Stembel, Allen Cowling, Heather English – Torti Gallas Architects
Sharon Huber-Plano- STV
Mansur Abdul-Malik – NHP Developers

Melody Simmons, Pamela Lee, Seda Candir, Gabrielle Hapi, Tawfiq Abdul-Karim – Attendees

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

Tamara Woods, Caitlin Audette, Ren Southard, Nichole Stewart, Matt DeSantis – Planning