

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE ADVISORY PANEL

MEETING MINUTES

Date: June 23, 2022

Meeting #63

Project: 3700 Boston Street

Phase: Schematic Design

Location: Canton

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Ryan Scully with the development team introduced the team and shared the process the team has completed with Planning since the previous UDAAP meeting.

Scot Foster shared their intent for the presentation including providing more context for the site, sharing the completed massing studies, and providing refinements based on feedback received from both the panel and staff.

Paul Evenson walked the team through six additional massing studies prepared following the last UDAAP meeting. Pavlina Illieva requested that the team share what they learned from each study and how those studies were successful. Specifically, for Massing Study 2, the team appreciated one solution that they liked, but wouldn't work structurally with the necessary construction type. For Massing Study 3, the proposal pulled away from Boston Street, but found the impact to the square footage was too large. Massing Study 4 and 5 implemented a separate area for move-in and trash directly opposite the back of house of the grocery store.

The proposed scheme used a simple angle that generally followed Boston Street along with an expanded first floor to allow enough square footage at the lobby and commercial space. The scheme also maintains an enclosed courtyard to the north, similar to what was previously proposed. The access to the garage on the west elevation was moved further north, away from the entry.

Ryan Cosgrove continued the presentation with a discussion of the landscape referencing the Brewer's Hill Design Guidelines and identifying the different palettes used at various location along the site to address the variety of conditions. Have worked to respond to the panels comments to prioritize the pedestrian experience specifically with the use of a continuous raised sidewalk at the drive way for move-in and trash vehicles.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel thanked the project team and proceeded with clarifications, questions and comments.

Clarifications:

- *Did you consider having a portion of the building at a different height? We elevated Toone Street to 7-stories with the intent to drop down the Boston Street massing by one-story. However, the articulation along Boston Street required a loss in square footage and the need to maintain 7-stories.*
- *The areas labeled as lawn, will those be lawn or similar to the images provided showing native natural planting? A bit of both, along Eaton Street there will be a lawn strip with the street trees, but will use native plantings under trees along Boston Street.*
- *What is the plan for the green areas near the transformers? The existing transformers will be screened with planting, but still allow maintenance access.*
- *For move-in and trash access how are the vehicles accessing the drives? Trash trucks will back in and pull out, the move-in trucks will likely go head in and back out. Trash will only be utilized a few times a week.*
- *Where would the mail trucks and food deliveries, etc. arrive and park while unloading? This depends on where the mail room is located, currently planning on utilizing the move-in area for mail trucks. The lay-by adjacent to the lobby is intended for quick drop offs and deliveries or quick passenger drop-off.*

Comments:

Site

- Appreciate the time the team has to respond to the panel's comments, however, it seemed that the team took each comment on its own and responded to them individually rather than cohesively in search for a stronger solution.
- Generally, the response at the ground level, especially shifting the entrance to the parking garage north and the entry sequence has created a less fragmented ground place.
- An unintended consequence of creating an additional access point to the parking lot that serves the Bottle Building is that many people will begin using Dean Street to access Boston Street as it is easier than navigating Conkling Street. This means that the angled parking opposite the lobby will often be difficult to access or leave due to a large queue of cars, or rapidly turning cars trying to get to west bound Boston Street. Consider altering the parking lot to allow a longer lead time to get to the Boston Street vehicular entrance.
- The approach at Eaton Street where the move-in and trash is a satisfactory solution to the issue.
- Remain concerned about the pedestrian experience adjacent to the commercial space at Boston and Eaton Streets. The current design creates pinch points and seems likely to be congested with all the various pedestrian and multi-modal traffic anticipated.
- Happy to see more vegetated streetscape, the more tree canopy that can be provided the better.

- Along the north-south pathway through the parking lot, some of the plans have trees in all the pockets and some don't. Recommend inserting as many trees as possible and making sure they are equipped to survive. The importance of amplifying and giving weight to these pedestrian connections though the parking lot can't be overstated.
- Recommend the use of native and drought and salt resistance plants along the street edge rather than lawns to increase the likelihood that the plantings thrive in difficult conditions.
- Provide a purpose for the green space adjacent to the transformer area (dog-run, etc.) this is an important edge that's highly visible from the parking lot and Toone Street and it needs a purpose.
- The approach to the trash and move-in loading areas is definitely improved, appreciate that it's set back from the intersections. Continue to consider the pedestrian experience as this is further developed.
- The possibility of drop-offs and deliveries disrupting Boston Street is high as it is at the Avalon on President St, also a major arterial road. There needs to be a strategic design solution to these needs, especially for a project of this size. There should be dedicated area for food deliveries, rideshare, parcels and mail along or close to Boston Street in addition to a designated area that may be more remote as some vendors use the primary address and the main road as a more convenient access for service.
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Building

- From the overall massing – which has remained fairly similar to the previous proposal – the Eaton Street side of the building continues to be of concern. This will be one of the first buildings in the vicinity that will have an open garage façade and a clear back of house space – a clear drawback of this scheme. For example, at Toone Street the north elevation of this project had to respond to the opposite side of the street. Whereas, if the previous development had created a back-of-house space here, you wouldn't have created the current design. The creation of an empty elevation has a cascading effect on future developments which no longer need to address that street in the same way, creating an alley street. Project needs to address the issue and provide a building façade that supports viable future development.
- The concern with the pool on the second floor of the west elevation, is similarly the future developments in the area. If the lot to the west is developed and a taller building is constructed then the courtyard is in shade with limited views. Along Boston Street this is less of a concern due to the width of the street.
- Similar to other buildings in the area the pool could be located on a taller massing, or deeper in the site.
- Appreciate the study of the other building surrounding it, however, the panel's concerns regarding height were not about nominal dimensions but rather overall proportions and the perception of the large mass from various viewpoints as related to surrounding context.
- The angling of the building along Boston Street, at a certain perspective, draws the eye to the corners that have more verticality. Not sure that the crank and angle is the correct solution yet, continue to study along with other schemes as the building is articulated. One of the options presented showed an articulated massing that expressed the south façade as separate volumes

and less monolithic and horizontal expression that could be more successful than the flat slightly bent façade.

- Consider how you want the buildings to be perceived, do you want them to read as horizontal masses or connected vertical masses. The scaling and proportioning of the masses is important.
- As the proposal is more developed and the finer details are explored, consider the personal experiences of the users.
- The small volume of the move-in and trash area appears additive and needs to be integrated seamlessly into the overall volume.

Next Steps:

Continue to refine the design based on the comments from the panel and work with Planning Staff prior to returning to the panel.

Attending:

Paul Evenson, Scot Foster— BCT Design Group

Ryan Scully, Martin Howle, Alex Van Hollen – Avalon Bay

Melanie Monaco, Jake Bolen, Ryan Cosgrove – Kimley-Horn

Ed Gunts, Carley Milligan - media

Messrs. Anthony, Bradley and Ilieva - UDAAP Panel

Jeff LaNoue, Ren Southard, Tamara Woods, Caitlin Audette – Planning

Ryan Rumbaoa, Rick Diehl, Olivia Sharp Buster, Joe Don, Jimmy Bobby, Greg Baranoski, Brandon Brooks-Attendees