

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE ADVISORY PANEL

MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 19, 2023

Meeting #72

Project: Leadenhall Street Apartments

Phase: Schematic

Location: 810 Leadenhall Street, Baltimore 202310

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Caitlin Audette began the session by introducing Osborne Anthony as the Panel Chair for the Leadenhall Street Apartments presentation. Pavlina Ilieva recused herself from the Panel for this item, and instead will act as the presenter. The project is located in the Otterbein neighborhood, and the immediate context around the site includes a mix of historic rowhouses and a small apartment building. The broader neighborhood context includes a recently built 8-story multi-family building, churches, an elevated highway, and the nearby stadiums.

The site currently holds an older warehouse, and the team strove to preserve a portion of the existing warehouse despite the fact that the building is not a protected historic structure. Other strategies, such as stepping the massing back, were employed to integrate the building and to ensure that it will connect with the existing neighborhood.

Major features of the building are as follows:

- The building will have 168 residential units, with a 4-story volume wrapping the primary façade along Leadenhall and Henrietta Streets, and a taller 6-story volume located at the interior of the site, pushed back from the street.
- Parking will be provided at a ratio of 1:1 with two garage entrances possible. The main entrance will be from Peach Street, which is a service street. The number of entries has not been finalized and the project team is in conversation about the pros and cons of one or two entrance points. During community meetings, it has been suggested that there should be two entrances.
- The parking will be structured with two levels.

- The corner piece is designed to stand apart and showcase the preserved building façade, the intent is to embrace the historic neighborhood fabric while also weaving in a new architectural language.
- The massing is meant to read as a series of smaller volumes with their own identities and will utilize a variety of materials including board and batten or other material with a vertical reading.

The team has started to explore materiality and fenestration, but these items are still in process. The next step will be to soften the periphery of the building with balconies and reinforce the façade as a series of volumes, rather than one long façade.

Alice Storm Jones (Floura Teeter) concluded the presentation with an overview of the landscape approach. Because the site does not have a lot of outdoor space, the team is proposing very hearty plantings to withstand the tight urban condition. Sidewalks will be a minimum of 6' with scored concrete near the entrances. There are two amenity decks, one on the 3rd floor and one on the 5th floor. Several of the units have private terraces or balconies, so the two amenity spaces will act as added outdoor space to supplement the smaller private spaces provided. The shared amenity space on the 3rd floor will be a quiet, reflective space appropriate for small gatherings but it is not intended for large parties. In contrast, the 5th floor will have space for gathering, and contain a pet run for residents' use.

In conclusion, the team mentioned that they are studying how the building may evolve over time. There is currently not much demand for newly built commercial spaces; however, there is a need for parking. While a main focus right now is to meet the parking needs, there might be an opportunity for one of the aforementioned garage entrances to become a commercial space in the future.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel thanked the team for their thorough presentation and began the discussion with clarifying questions and comments.

Clarification:

- *It looks like this is mostly studio and 1-bedroom apartments; are kids expected in this multi-family project?* No, this project is based on a market study. This project intends to fill a gap in the neighborhood. There are many rowhouses and another multi-family building that has 2- and 3-bedroom units – these building types are already serving the need of families. The expectation is that residents in this building will most likely be single occupants, roommates or some other non-family makeup.
- *Where is trash removal handled?* The trash room is located off the Peach Street garage entrance and tucked within the building. Note: the project team is still in conversation with the management about where this element will be located. There is a possibility it will move to the street if needed.

- *Where is the move-in / move-out handled?* The move-in is located off Leadenhall, due to location of elevators. Additionally, Leadenhall is a through street with parking on both sides.

Site:

- The Panel agrees that allowing for future flexibility of the space (specifically converting the garage space to retail) is a good approach. The project has been thoughtfully integrated and looks like it belongs in the neighborhood.
- Peach Street is a challenge – it is neither a street, nor is it an alley. The Panel notes that because of the narrow width, street trees are not an option, but study whether there is room to open up a portion of the sidewalk for a narrow planting of vines to create a green screen (with the understanding that a vine on the north side would need to be a shade-loving variety).
- Peach Street will continue to be a concern – the building has 3 prominent sides and the main ingress lands on Peach Street by default. Pushback from the community about use of Peach Street for parking access is understandable due to the fact that Peach Street is viewed as a protected space where kids play.
- Unintended consequence may result if the secondary garage entrance is not carefully studied – the team is encouraged to look again at the traffic patterns and patterns of pedestrian use on Peach Street.
- The Panel appreciates how the team incorporated the community input (actual comments) and the deliberate design response to community comments.
- Outdoor amenity space concepts are appreciated; both have been articulated as outdoor rooms at a nice human scale. The residents at the northern edge will appreciate a separation between that public space and their unit windows – please keep privacy in mind as the design evolves and decisions about the amenity spaces are reached.
- Water source at the pet exercise area will be essential for keeping this area clean; also consider the liability and fence heights in the pet area.
- Integration of water feature is appreciated, and the Panel agrees that low-maintenance models will benefit the space without a lot of hassle.
- Comment specific to the slide showing “View 03” – Henrietta Avenue: the function of the program at the corner creates a challenging condition for traffic. Consider moving the garage entrance back and recessing it into the alley more. This could become a prominent corner instead of feeling like a back door.
- Tree pit organization coordination should be studied in relation to the two-story elements, with the understanding that much of what determines the location of the trees within the urban fabric has to do with utility locations.

Building:

- Project has been gifted with a historical feature (the existing building) while also not having to uphold the rigor of CHAP standards; the team seems to have utilized that feature to a good extent. The Panel feels this element has been used wisely.
- The attention to detail is appreciated, specifically the focus on context and edge. The building appears to respond well to the scale of the neighborhood.
- Balconies do not need to be open to the air in every instance; study the balconies and decide whether they can be enclosed based on the shadow patterns.
- Initial material studies are appreciated. Vertical board siding helps the project feel lighter and airier, which is a refreshing departure from the standard Baltimore brick typical to many multi-family projects.

Next Steps:

Continue project addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Pavlina Ilieva – PI.KL

Matt Ellingson, Alice Storm-Jones – Floura Teeter

Chris Martin – Kimley Horn

Todd Tilson, Brian Baska, Workshop Development – Project Team

Andy Scherer, Carley Tilson, Ed Gunts, Jean Sibelius, Neil Tucker – Attendees

Messrs. Anthony, Ms. Bradly - UDAAP Panel

Ren Southard, Caitlin Audette, Jazmin Kimble - Planning