

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

Date:	March 1, 2018	Meeting #253
Project:	Four Ten Lofts	Phase: Schematic
Location:	410 W. Mulberry Street, Baltimore MD	

PRESENTATION:

Jim French of French Development Company, introduced the project. The proposal is for two new buildings to house artist apartments/lofts as well as gallery, amenity space, and parking with a mix of market rate and low income housing units. Building one is proposed to be 5 levels - 4 residential levels above a ground level podium of parking and amenity space and building two is proposed to be 3 levels with some ground level gallery space and apartments above.

Nancy Liebrecht with Marks Thomas Architects, walked through the site history, existing site conditions (surface parking lots), and the proposed site plans. She outlined the community process they have engaged in which included focus group meetings with artists after the initial concept were submitted for the BDC award of the properties. Ms. Liebrecht then walked through the concept plan for the buildings and the precedents that they reviewed during development.

Building one is proposed to be a brick building joined with a grey panel building in terms of its massing breakdown. Glass boxes are expressed at the base for individual entrances and animation. Color is used at the base of the building and tied into the extended ‘zipper’ between the masses at the main entrance along Eutaw Street. The concept is that the entrance piece be made of glass and panel with color to represent a large art installation. The building also envisioned color being added to the balconies

Building two has a massing concept of two boxes linked with a stair and envisions a second gallery or workshop space at the ground level. Brick is envisioned for the building. There was also a second concept for this building which proposed two adjacent ‘buildings’ with similar masses but with different materials to accentuate the two ‘building’ idea.

Comments from the Panel:

The Panel thanked the team for the presentation and found it extremely helpful to see the precedent images as well as the early design concept sketches include in that presentation. The team was applauded for reaching out to the artist community early to gather input into both the living spaces as well as the overall building design. This project has the opportunity, with its clear site organization and massing to be an example of a not overly formulaic ‘apartment building’ but to be more creative in unit types and mixes for a diverse population. The following recommendations were offered:

- **Entry/corners** – shifting the entrance off of the corners makes sense here and allows the main corner of the building to open up to the activities of the ground floor/gallery. This relationship is consistent to the more commercial uses being located on the corners and allowing a more private residential entrance down on the street. With that, investigate ways that the art is more integrated with the building design. The proposed large scale art piece at the main entrance of building two seems applied and static. Pull away from the ‘apartment and commercial space’ typology and push more into the artists’ words and questions design typology.

- **Building 1** – This building seems too articulated right now and would benefit from some additional editing to allow the life of the artist to take shape within the simple, well detailed building. Allow the building to read as 3 volumes – one along Eutaw, one along Mulberry, and then corner volume. The panel system building is direct and reads clearly. Begin to simplify the panel and masonry masses with ground articulation and a nice top and allow the middle portion of the building to be simply articulated. Continued to refine the concept with well-proportioned openings, nice materiality with one palette per volume, as if a series of buildings developed as the project grew. Investigate ways to allow the program and the variety of living spaces within the building express themselves within the facades.
- **Building 2** – Investigate the programming overall and, perhaps, allow all the gallery space to be located within Building 1 and open up the ground floor here to replicate the residential entrances/stoops/glass boxes along Mulberry. This would provide direct connection to the ground plane and allow the artist, their work, and their energy to activate the space.
- **Color** – Steer away from simply applying color and allow some creativity in building to show. Investigate customization of panels to add texture and depth as ‘art’. Consider commissioning an artist to help with integrating art into the building materials/skins. This will allow the large building moves to be permanent and will allow the base of the building/individual artistic expression be ever evolving and transient within the built framework.

Panel Action:

The Panel recommended Schematic approval addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Nancy Liebrecht, Lauren Figley, Magda Westerhout – Marks Thomas

Dan McCarthy – Episcopal Housing

Armstead Jones – BDC

Jim French – French Development Co.

Ms. Ilieva - UDARP Panel

Anthony Cataldo*, Christina Hartsfield - Planning