

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

Date: February 15, 2018

Meeting #252

Project: Merritt Office Building

Phase: Schematic

Location: 3401 Boston Street/Canton Crossing PUD

PRESENTATION:

Brian Blazejak of Hord, Coplan, Macht gave a brief overview of the project, followed by Chan Byum with a lengthier presentation of the project site, its relation to the Canton Crossing PUD, and the conceptual and schematic development of their design. Josh Kilrain followed with a presentation of the goals and concept of the streetscape design.

Comments from the Panel:

The panel applauded the scope and detail of the presentation, especially the extensive site analysis and conceptual investigations, as well as the clarity and strength of the design concept. They had the following minor comments to assist in continued refinement of the scheme:

- **Parking**

At ten levels, parking comprises 50% of the building volume, and is very inefficient. Investigations should be undertaken to enlarge the building footprint so that a more efficient parking layout is possible, allowing the number of levels to be reduced. This would also have a positive impact on the exterior facades, eliminating the “high belt” condition where the façade is divided fifty/fifty between office and parking uses.

Other options such as Shared Parking strategies should also be investigated. Probably unlikely given the limited size of the building footprint, but a layout with flat parking levels would allow them to be adaptable to other uses in the future, when parking demands may be significantly less than they are today.

- **Facades**

In general, the panel felt the façade concept was very strong, and particularly responded to the elegance and refinement of the east/west facades. They had the following suggestions for the Boston Street facade:

- The grid pattern of the façade does not recognize the sloped parking levels, which will be more present than indicated in the renderings, especially at night. They are potentially in conflict with the current grid pattern. Replacing the grid with a more exclusively vertical emphasis with the vertical piers, and allowing the sloped levels to read more distinctly as part of the façade was suggested.
- Incorporating greater depth in the piers and the façade, especially at the ground level. The façade would benefit from more of the depth and vertical composition of the east/west façade.
- Do not attempt to disguise the “high belt” and equal subdivision between the parking and office, and simply allow it to read.
- Tapering the piers from wider at the base to narrower at the top might be an option.

- Some questioned the use of the terracotta material.
- Canopies over the seating area would be desirable. The height of the canopy over the office entry seems under-scaled. Raising it and introducing lower canopies over the seating areas was suggested.
- Night views should be provided in future presentations.
- Roof
The panel applauded the inclusion of the amenity and roof terrace along the west façade and suggested that it be extended to the other sides of the roof with their spectacular views of the city and the harbor.
- Streetscape
The panel supported the concept and suggested that the striped paving should register with the spacing of the piers on the façade. Perhaps it finds a way to highlight the main entrance.

Panel Action:

The Panel recommended schematic approval with comments above.

Attending:

Chan Byun, Brian Blazejak, Lisa Ferretto, Josh Kilrain, Nariman ElSaid – HCM
Patrick Huhra, Josh Asbury, Gary Swatko - Merritt

Messrs. Bowden, Burns, Ms. O’Neill* and Ms. Ilieva - UDARP Panel

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Marshella Wallace, Wolde Ararsa - Planning