

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

Date: September 21, 2107

Meeting #246

Project: Eager Square

Phase: Final

Location: 1900 + 1901 East Eager Street, Baltimore, MD 21205

PRESENTATION:

Ivy Dench-Carter of Pennrose gave a brief introduction of the project goals.

Michael Weincek, FAIA of Weincek + Associates followed with a detailed presentation of the design of Buildings A and B, which included changes made in response to comments from the previous presentation. Additional details on façade design, building massing, lighting and materials were also included. Devin Leary, Human + Rohde made a brief presentation of the landscape and streetscape design. Highlights of the presentation are as follows.

Building B

Massing

- A review of the design of the courtyard.
- The relocation of the loading to the inside corner of the alley, further removing it from Washington Street.
- The relationship of the façade articulation to the context.

Façades

N. Wolfe Street

- A detailed presentation of the façade design and comparison with the previous scheme.
- The design of the corner tower at Eager Street.
- The “picture frame” component in the center of the façade and the building entry.
- Adjustment to the façade proportions because of the wider setback at the alley.
- Emphasis on bringing façade components to the ground, and eliminating the “floating” appearance, in response to panel comments from the previous presentation.
- Details on façade materials which include three bricks, two spandrel panel colors and seven Hardi panel colors.

Eager Street

- A description of the façade adjustments from the previous scheme.
- Details of the ground floor condition, including the unit balconies, landscape treatment and relationship to the projection of the floor above.

N. Washington Street

- A description of the façade adjustments including reducing the width of the corner element at Eager Street, and the enlargement and further articulation of the central “picture frame” component

Alley Façade

- A presentation of the revised design including the addition of several bays in the center of the façade and additional articulation of the taller building masses at either end with central insets in a contrasting Hardi panel color.

Building A

- An overview of the revised layout with the taller stacked units turned to face the Park and N. Washington Street, creating a “bookend” composition along Eager Street.
- The creation of a separation between the units in the center of Eager Street to accommodate site utilities.
- An overview of trash collection.
- A discussion of the changes to the façade design including a more vertical emphasis and definition of individual units, the addition of angled glass bays, the material distribution and relationship to Building B.

Landscape

- Details of the streetscape design were briefly provided.

Comments from the Panel:

The panel responded positively to many of the design changes, but also felt that aspects of the design from the previous presentation were stronger and should be returned for a stronger design. In general, the panel felt the design was too self-conscious and the facades overly complicated, with too many motifs and would benefit from an additional round of editing.

Specific Panel comments are the following:

Building B

N. Wolfe Street

- The corner tower at Eager Street is too aggressive and is overpowering the other elements, in particular the central “picture frame” element which was the big move on the façade and a powerful gesture to the Park. The panel recommended the tower element be greatly reduced and the entrance to the retail made a more modest gesture.
- The elongated vertical recesses and windows in the tower elements on either end of the façade give it an institutional and overly monumental appearance. A return to the square, residential windows and “ladder” pattern of the previous façade would improve the design.
- Some panel members felt the façade need not have corner features on both the alley and the Eager Street corners, given the difference in urban design character between the two, and that the alley corner feature could be eliminated. If the two are maintained, others

questioned the desire for the two to be equivalent in color and of different materials, with one brick and the other Hardi panel.

- Too many different materials and window patterns are used on the façade and should be edited for a stronger and more effective design, a comment that pertains to all the facades. Many felt the “spots and dots” Hardi Panel in particular was distracting and unnecessary given the number of other façade motifs and materials.

Eager Street

- The adjustments to the façade had in general improved it over the previous version. The following additional suggestions were made.
- The line of subdivision between the brick and the Hardi panel in the deep recesses on either end of the facade seems arbitrary. Either the brick should be extended to the roof or the recess should be all Hardi panel.
- The articulation of the ground level with the projecting balconies and streetscape details is a positive move for the streetscape but enlargements of a bay and additional details need to be provided.

N. Washington Street

- The panel felt the earlier version of this façade was superior to the current design. They specifically commented on the elongated vertical window and recess pattern of the corner elements, the enlargement of the “picture frame” component and its articulation in two different panel and window patterns as detracting from the façade. The simpler, earlier version was more powerful.

Alley

- The panel diverged over whether the revised design with its addition of façade elements and motifs was an improvement or whether the simplified design of the previous presentation was more appropriate for an alley facade.

Building A

- The panel applauded the change to the layout of the units, with the bookend composition and the break in the middle, and felt they were strong urban design moves.
- The panel felt the vertical emphasis and identity of the units was successful, however similar to Building B, the facades were unnecessarily complicated, which was more apparent in the 3-D perspectives. Specific suggestions were:
 - The line of subdivision between the brick and the Hardi Panel seemed arbitrary and the façade would be improved if the brick were brought to the roof.
 - Red brick across the façade may be more appropriate to these townhouse-like units and a color differentiation between these and the larger scale multifamily building would articulate the different scales of residential building.
 - Not every motif that appears on the multifamily building need appear on these much smaller units and motifs should be scaled down to be appropriate to the size

of the buildings. The individual entries should be dominant in the elevations and the design should find ways to subtly identify the individual units. The sidewalls of the end units need editing attention as well.

- The angled bays should not break the roof line but instead be capped by the main building roof, allowing them to read as an interpretation of typical townhouse residential bay. Their current appearance gives the façade a commercial appearance.
- Trash collection should be more closely studied and accounted for in the site design.

Panel Action:

The Panel recommends continued final development addressing the comments above.

Attending:

Ivy Dench-Carter – Pennrose

Melanie Voelker, Devin Leary – Human + Rohde

Fred Thompson – Gower Thompson, Inc.

Michael Wiencek, Carl Skooglund, Ehsan Hajabbassi – Wiencek + Associates

Bowden, Burns, Illeva, O’Neill* - UDARP Panel

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Tamara Woods, Stephanie Smith, Marshella Wallace –
Planning Department