

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

Date: October 23, 2014

Meeting No.: 195

Project: 225 North Calvert Street
Re-purposing and Façade Replacement

Phase: Schematic

Location: Site fronting North Calvert Street to the west, East Saratoga Street to the north,
Davis Street to the east, and the historic Court Square Building to the south

PRESENTATION:

Anthony Cataldo introduced the project team, including owner's representative Ken Meile of Washington, DC based Monument Realty, and architect Frank Andre, AIA, Hord Coplan Macht Design Principal. Ken Miley provided a brief overview of Monument Realty and of the project.

Frank Andre provided the following background information:

1. Orientation
 - a. In the heart of Baltimore's Downtown at the northern edge of the Business and Government Center Historic District
 - b. Adjacent to Mercy Hospital Medical Campus on the site's northern edge
 - c. Behind and adjacent to the Court Square building, which faces East Lexington Street
 - d. Near new and adaptive use projects, including several multi-family housing projects
 - e. Despite its prime location, the building is nearly empty, and is in poor condition
2. The original building
 - a. There is approximately 10' of grade change from the Court Square building to the corner East Saratoga and North Calvert Streets
 - i. The ground floor slab steps down, 1st at the point of the 1973 addition (see below)
 - ii. The balance of the ground floor is registered at the midblock main lobby
 - iii. Retail is several feet above grade level at the corner of East Saratoga and North Calvert
 - b. Built in 3 phases
 - i. 1967 – 2 levels of below grade parking, 3 levels of parking above retail and lobby at street level, with 7 levels of office above the parking podium, and a mechanical penthouse. The building structure is a concrete frame.
 - ii. 1973 – horizontal infill expansion to the Court Square property line, with exception of below grade parking, and an additional secondary entry lobby and vertical core were also added
 - iii. 1976 – 5 additional levels plus a new mechanical penthouse were added above the existing mechanical penthouse. The addition is a structural steel frame.
 - c. The exterior is a predominantly light colored brick masonry and limited vertical fenestration striped façade - mid-century modern in design character.
3. The development team proposes to convert the existing building into a 350 unit residential building with retail at grade. Key components include:

- a. Site and Ground Floor
 - i. Main entry lobby, with attendant leasing and tenant services at approximately the mid-point of the building
 - ii. Secondary lobby entrance maintained in current location
 - iii. Retail terraces adjacent to the main entrance and at the corner of East Saratoga and North Calvert Streets
 - iv. 7,500 sf of retail/office flex space north of the main entrance lobby and loading
 - v. Approximately 6,000 sf of fitness center, including locker rooms immediately south of the secondary entrance, facing North Calvert Street
 - vi. Above grade parking level entrance along North Calvert Street, just north of the main entry
 - vii. Loading docks for retail, building services and tenant, below grade parking level entrance, plus limited delivery parking midblock along Davis street
- b. Building Design
 - i. Plan and program
 - 1. Existing parking levels remain virtually intact
 - 2. Two of the existing office levels are converted to parking
 - 3. Due to the width of the typical office floors, approximately 5' balconies and side-vented VTAC mechanical closets for each unit stretch east to west along the north and south facades from the Court Square building stopping at the corner units that face East Saratoga Street
 - 4. Level 12 will include 2 story loft units
 - 5. The existing roof and mechanical penthouse will be reworked with dunnage to create an amenity floor and to house replacement rooftop mechanical equipment
 - ii. Envelope
 - 1. The existing masonry and glass envelope will be removed in its entirety
 - 2. Several precedents were presented as inspiring the proposed re-skinning
 - 3. The new façade will consist of:
 - a. General organization
 - i. Primary staggered grid clad in metal panels; details noted below
 - ii. Vertical expression at the 1973 infill and above; details noted below
 - iii. Open staggered grid similar to i. above – recessed rail panel to screen bumpers and headlamps, and no infill
 - b. Details
 - i. Dark stucco finish applied to a secondary layer of the existing structure and mechanical closets
 - ii. A third layer of recessed accent colored and/or textured stucco panels at solid wall panels, with full height aluminum and doors
 - iii. A dark grey aluminum picket rail system
 - iv. Two story expression at the 12th floor lofts
 - v. Projected soffit at the pool opening

PANEL COMMENTS:

The panel praised the general approach to the project, repurposing and initial façade replacement design efforts. The panel noted the following concerns:

- 1. General

- a. Excellent conversion that should help to reactivate street life and continue the resurgence of this neighborhood.
- 2. Site
 - a. Provide a streetscape plan that provides an improved pedestrian experience on North Calvert and East Saratoga Streets. 12' width is adequate to accomplish "sociable space" and respond to the character of the building
 - b. Carefully consider terrace/arcades
 - i. Can they be activated further?
 - ii. Is a single level expression enough, given the height of the building?
 - iii. Can planting be introduced to soften edges?
- 3. Building Design
 - a. Can the skin expression be pushed a little further?
 - b. Universal major concern about the open garage. Further investigate screening options, particularly along the main North Calvert and East Saratoga Street facades and a return at Davis Street; balance of Davis may be more open.
 - c. Retain and study colored panels further
 - d. Better explain balcony soffits
 - e. Should there be a clearer elevation definition between the concrete frame and the steel structure above? (Note: the panel was not in agreement on this issue.)
 - f. Could there be a more gradual grade out of expression from the Court Square building to the new façade? Evaluate the vertical glass "slot" on North Calvert Street; continue through to the roof
 - g. Consider extending the two story expression of the loft units onto North Calvert Street – the primary building façade
 - h. The new rooftop amenity and projected overhangs create a skyline expression opportunity. Continue to develop. Provide further information about skyline potential as seen from various viewpoints.

PANEL ACTION:

The Panel recommends the development team should further develop the Schematic Design, and respond to comments.

Attending:

Ken Meile – Monument Realty

Chris Parts, Frank Andre, Monica Robertson, Cedric Al Kazzi – HCM

Adam Bednar – The Daily Record

UDARP Panel Members – Dr. Judith Meaney, Messrs. Gary Bowden, Rich Burns, David Haresign* and David Rubin

Planning Department- Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Jill Lemke, Alex Hoffman