

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

Date: July 17, 2014

Meeting No.: 188

Project: 611 Charles Street

Phase: Schematic

Location: Banner Hill – Otterbein Neighborhood

PRESENTATION:

Developer Andy Cretal of ZOM Mid Atlantic Inc briefly introduced the proposed 6 story 351 unit residential multi-family project facing South Charles Street between Lee Street and the Hill Street pedestrian-way near Christ Lutheran Church. The property sits partially over an existing parking garage serving the church and the adjacent senior housing facility and backs on a shared open space and plaza. The Charles Street site, sharing two city blocks, was formerly occupied by a specialist hospital and its 1986 Lee Street addition.

Cretal introduced Architect Andy Czajkowski of Torti-Gallas and Partners Inc. who reviewed the project's strategic location as well as its major design and contextual influences. The original conceptual design approach was to divide the long site into two separate façade expressions, served by two internal courtyards and a single shared entry/auto court in the northern section. That idea evolved into the northernmost segment being described as the "bay window" expression and the southernmost segment being described as the "balcony" expression with each employing its own individual materials, coloration and details. Both sections selectively employ ground level units with individual stoops, entrances and landscaped terraces.

Landscape Architect Richard Jones of Mahan Rykiel, shared the site analysis and described the streetscape goals which incorporate 20 ft wide generously landscaped sidewalks accommodating zones for pedestrians, street trees, unit stoops and terraces along three sides of the project. Additionally, concepts were presented for the shared plaza area to the east that was suggested as having three separate focus areas accommodated areas of "celebration" and areas of quiet repose.

Comments from the Panel:

The Panel complimented the design team on the thoroughness of its presentation. Additionally, the Panel offered the following comments and suggestions for areas where further development was deemed necessary:

1. **Plaza/ Landscape Relationship** – Although three sides of the project appear to seek a strong and activated interface between building and landscape, it was felt that the plaza side lacked in this regard and requires continued study. Questions were also raised about the appropriateness of a couple of the more "civic" elements of the proposed plaza design in light of its somewhat more "private" aspect. Consider creating stronger and more direct connections and relationships between the main entry courtyard and the rear plaza.
2. **Main Entry /Motor Court** – Consider strengthening and clarifying the pedestrian continuity and integrity of this area – making pedestrian paths the top priority over the automobile movement. Seek to create a stronger relationship also between the Charles Street and Lee Street entrances, the main lobby and the courtyard. A stronger vertical expression at this main entrance is also encouraged.
3. **Façade Treatments** – Several compliments were made regarding the design direction of the southernmost building expression versus the northern end which appears not to be as successfully directed. Although creating two differing façade identities for the project appears a desirable goal,

the decision to use balconies and bay windows as the primary basis for separate distinctiveness is questioned. Study whether a mixture of both of those elements could be employed creatively in both segments where finishes, proportion and detail establish the major differences. The roofline expressions (particularly light grey parapet treatment on the southernmost grouping and the cantilevered “lids” of the northern segment) require further study to find a compatible and complimentary relationship with each other in the overall composition.

Panel Action: Recommend Schematic approval, addressing the above comments.

Attending:

Andy Cretal - ZOM Holding Inc - Mid Atlantic,
Andy Czajkowski - Torti-Gallas and Partners Inc.
Richard Jones, Michael Humes - Mahan Rykiel Landscape Architects
Susan Williams – STV
Ryan Potter – GEJ

Raven Thompson, Patrick Terranova – BDC
Mackenzie Paull – Downtown Partnership

Dr.Meany; Messrs. Bowden*, Burns and Haresign - UDARP Panel

Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Wolde Ararsa, Alex Hoffman
–Planning Dept.