

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

Date: June 12, 2014

Meeting No.: 186

Project: EBDI PUD – 1812 Ashland Ave

Phase: Schematic

Location: Ashland Ave at Rutland Avenue – East Baltimore

PRESENTATION:

Scott Levitan, Vice President of EBDI, began the presentation by reviewing the built projects since inception. After outlining the strategic, programmatic and contextual influences on this site, he explained the perceived changes in the marketplace for research facilities and their desire to respond to a building type that may cost less and serve a different and more diverse clientele as compared to the very expensive lab buildings often found in this sort of development. This new building type is expected to house multiple, smaller, incubator type tenants, with less compartmentalization, and less hierarchically driven desire for corner offices, for example. The proposed building falls within the height guidelines established in the current PUD.

Architect Bill Harris of Perkins + Will further explained the design concept for the proposed six storey (plus basement) research building which would serve as Phase I of an ultimate build-out extending northward to E. Eager Street. The two buildings would share a loading facility accessed from N. Rutland Avenue. The strategically important site, across the street from the lower scaled historic Deering Hall, in relative proximity with the taller 929 Graduate Student Housing and proposed hotel building(s) would be the first building proposed flanking the (pedestrian only) western edge of Eager Park.

Other elements of the design include:

- A modestly scaled corner building entrance statement which shares its key location with a proposed retail use and covered mini plaza;
- An articulated façade along Ashland Avenue in response to the scale of Deering Hall across the street;
- An overall façade organized within an informal shifting grid of fiber cement, clear glass, fritted glass and ribbed metal panels, along with projecting metal fin frames to provide additional three dimensional relief and detail.

Comments from the Panel:

Although the Panel initially questioned the strategic decision of proposing such a modestly scaled building on this site, rather than preserving it for a future “anchor” building, the overall design strategy was ultimately embraced. The urban design goal of creating a new urban “place” with real edges as soon as possible was mutually shared. The Panel felt that the design presented was a good start. There were, however, a few issues that the Panel felt required further study and resolution:

1. **The Corner Entrance** – Continue to study the entire corner entrance design in search of an expression that is stronger with more impact and less dependence on the retail shop for its identity and color. Perhaps rethink or clarify the role of the covered outdoor mini plaza;
2. **Shared Service Area** – Although the concept of shared facility was well received, additional study is necessary to illustrate its workability. The accompanying “green” space between the two phases of the building lacks definition and clarity;
3. **Materiality/Orientation** – Although the color palette and varied textures appear promising, questions were raised regarding the suitability of certain materials as the building meets the ground at pedestrian and landscape zones. The consistent treatment of corners of the building in reference to the shifting grid of the façade was raised. Additionally, the question of the potential

impact of differing solar conditions on the proposed consistent treatment of all facades was challenged;

4. **Roofscape** – with the roofscape of the building being so potentially visible and views to the adjoining park being so desirable, it was suggested that the roof play a greater role in the design.

Panel Action:

Recommend Schematic approval, addressing the above comments.

Attending: Scott Levitan, Curtis Adams, John Lecker – Forest City New East Baltimore Partnership
Bill Harris, Chris Lockery - Perkins + Will
Zemi Gebrekristose, Craig Wright – McKissack & McKissack
Betsy Boykin – Core Studio Design

Ms. Jones Allen, Messr. Bowden*, Haresign, and Burns - UDARP Panel

Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Tamara Woods, Wolde Ararsa –Planning Department