

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL

MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 27, 2014

Meeting No.: 181

Project: The Homestead at Springwell Assisted Living

Phase: Discussion

Location: W. Rogers Ave.

PRESENTATION:

The owner, John Chay, presented a brief history and current situation at the Homestead at Springwell, a wellness and long term care facility. The property, originally operating as Wellesley, has been reconfigured over the past 6 years consolidating units as well as adding a new long-term Alzheimer's wing and resulting in a decrease of actual number of approved units in the current structures. The property is zoned R-1-B with a current conditional use permitting up to 278 units on the property. The 15 acre property is located on West Rogers Avenue adjacent to both Northwest Park and Mt. Washington Swim Club. The goal of the new construction proposal is to add a new 102 Independent Living Residential building on the southeast corner of the property. Brett Stebbins of RLPS Architects, along with Michael Pieranunzi of Century Engineering, then presented the proposed new structure and landscaping. The new design includes the following design components:

- The property entrance remains on West Rogers Avenue with a new road network connecting the existing buildings with the new residential building placed. The proposed new facility is sited directly west of Wexford Road with no access from Wexford and across from Northwest Park.
- Design is cognizant of the predominant design features of the homes and cottages in the Mt. Washington community. The design takes cues from the neighborhood residential through material choices such as brick, shake shingles and siding such as Hardi plank.
- There is a major emphasis on the open space, pathway network that connects the new building to the existing facility. The open space intends to offer multiple pathways and seating options. Responding to topographic conditions, the new building is a 3-4 story softened U shaped structure pulled back from Wexford with parking between the building and the street. There is approximately 13 acres of open space on the property and with an additional 46 acres adjacent in Northwest Park.

COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL:

Landscape:

The panel responded to the symmetry of the proposed building but raised concerns that the open space connecting to the existing facility appears geometrically forced. The panel suggested more attention to the open space design, urging a simpler walkway network. A reworked Landscape Plan would be welcomed to accompany the site plan and architectural schematic.

Architecture:

There were questions regarding the “bay “architecture relating to the neighborhood vernacular. The back elevations should reflect uses in the building through facade and treatments of windows. The building entrance needs more articulation, perhaps with porches to lighten the feel. The proposed ground level porch is reading more like a colonnade which may benefit from a lighter articulation. All wings of the building should be treated equally from a materiality standpoint. The building would benefit from architectural junctures that break the length of the building and allow the internal hall to open with views to the outside.

PANEL ACTION:

Discussion Only with a suggestion that the building design requires more attention to the details discussed. In addition, there was consensus that the Landscape Plan/open space is equal in importance to the architectural site plan.

Attending:

Phil Golder, John Chay – Springwell
Brett Stebbins, Mike Martin – RLPS Architects
Michael Pieranunzi – Century Engineering
Larry Perl – Baltimore Messenger
Kevin Litten - BBJ

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

Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christian Gaymon, Laurie Feinberg –Planning Department