



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

July 27, 2017

REQUEST: Major Subdivision Preliminary Plans / 2700, 2732 Mace Street

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions:

- Final Plans are subject to agency comments and must return to Planning Commission for approval

STAFF: Matthew DeSantis, AICP

PETITIONER: Kimley-Horne c/o Jon Kraft

OWNER: The Baltimore Museum of Art, Inc.

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: This site is currently comprised of two vacant lots utilized for surface parking. To the east is Mace Street (which is more akin to a very wide alleyway) and the rears of homes fronting Maryland Avenue. To the west are the rears of homes fronting Howard Street. To the north is 28th Street and to the south are homes fronting 27th Street. The overall site dimensions are 60' wide by 310' long.

General Area: This site is located in the Charles Village neighborhood, which is a mix of single-family attached residences, multi-family apartment buildings, religious institutions, offices, and small commercial establishments.

HISTORY

There is no previous Planning Commission history regarding this site.

ANALYSIS

Project: This application was submitted on April 27, 2017 and therefore is vested under the previous Rules and Regulations for Land Subdivision. The requested subdivision is in order to create fourteen (14) new lots for the construction of fourteen new single-family attached residences. The lots will front onto Mace Street, which while a named street, displays characteristics more akin to a very wide alleyway. The lots will all be 20' wide or greater, and the fronts of the new homes will face the rears of the properties on Maryland Avenue. The lots on Maryland Avenue are 150' deep. As such, while the proposed homes will face a combination of parking pads and accessory garage structures, they will be in excess of 100' from the rears of the residences. All proposed townhomes will feature a rear-loading two-car garage. The applicant is proposing to dedicate 7' in the front (east side), 6' along the south, and 3' along the

rear of all lots for a utility/access easement. The rears of the proposed townhomes will be roughly 40' from the rears of the buildings fronting on Howard Street.

The site is unusual in its dimensions and relation to other properties. While the former Rules and Regulations of Land Subdivision do not explicitly prohibit the fronts of buildings facing rears of other buildings, staff has consistently discouraged site design that included this feature. However, in this instance staff's analysis is that there is no other way in which the site might be feasibly developed in a way that would avoid the fronts of townhomes facing the rears of others. In spite of the shallowness of lot depth, the applicant is still proposing to rear-load all the new homes with double garages. This will allow for the treatment of Mace Street with new tree plantings and a sidewalk. Given that Mace Street currently has the feel of a wide alleyway, these proposed plans will greatly enhance the pedestrian experience and should mitigate at least some of the negative impacts of having the fronts of these homes facing the rears of those on Maryland Avenue.

Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC): This project received SPRC approval April 7, 2017.

Zoning Regulations: This project received approvals from the BMZA on July 18, 2017 for lot coverage and yard setback variances.

Elevations: The applicant has provided conceptual elevations that depict three-story, brick-clad townhomes with a stone masonry base. Each unit is 20' wide. Some of the front elevations include balconies and a turret is included in the northern-most corner unit. All units include a recessed third floor balcony to the rear. The applicant will need to provide final designs for staff review before obtaining final Planning Commission approval.

Preliminary Plans Review: The Planning Commission is reviewing Preliminary Plans per the wishes of the applicant. These Preliminary Plans have also recently been routed to the standard City agencies for subdivision review and comment. These Preliminary Plans are subject to any and all agency comments and such comments should be accounted for in the applicant's Final Plans.

Community Notification: The Charles Village Community Association has been notified of this action.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director