

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

Date: April 12, 2007

Meeting No.: 57

Project: Four Seasons/Legg Mason Project

Phase: Continued Revised Schematic

Location: Inner Harbor East Parcel "D" PUD

PRESENTATION:

Michael Beatty of H&S Development provided an overview of the project, including changes from the original plan (the addition of the Legg Mason office tower) and a summary of changes since the previous presentation – most importantly the additional 24' +/- at the base of the building which resulted in the need to extend the promenade over the water in order to maintain the approx. 30' promenade width (the change to the promenade is subject to Corps of Engineers approval). Richard Jones of Mahan Rykiel Associates proceeded to describe the changes to the site plan as a result of the increased footprint of the towers, including the promenade design and the entry court to the hotel. Concluding the presentation, Todd Harvey of BHA described changes to the building, focusing primarily on the treatment of the skin.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

Due to the significant changes to the project (the expansion of 24' at the base of the building and the subsequent changes to the promenade) the Panel felt that it could not give final design approval to the project as presented but instead could give schematic approval to the revised project. The Panel's recommendations are categorized according to the promenade / site plan, the treatment of the base / podium, and the treatment of the towers:

Promenade / Site treatment

1. Panel members generally felt that the promenade was not of the quality and significance needed for the project and its location. Additionally, there was concern that the location of outdoor seating for the hotel and restaurants, as well as the reconfiguration of the promenade, has diminished the amount and quality of the public space. Recommendations include placing the outdoor seating next to the building, reconfiguring the main gathering area so that there are opportunities for group activities, smaller seating areas along the edge of the space, and differentiation between how the promenade is treated (next to the water, moving through the space, lingering) – balancing the creation of places with movement between. As currently shown the promenade is mostly about circulation. Additionally, the Panel is in favor of having no fence along the edge as is done in the Inner Harbor.

2. Although Panel members liked the simple circular entry court, they felt that the changes to the base of the hotel tower have eliminated the view corridor to the water as one enters the court. Panel members would like to see the view corridor strengthened, as well as the transition space between entry court and promenade. This area could be treated as a more special place that is distinct and not simply a space defined by the geometry of the buildings.
3. More attention needs to be given to the entrance of the complex from President's Street – the treatment of the base and the edges of the entry drive need to be a better gateway for the project.

Base / Podium

1. The changes to the podium of the two buildings are now a vestige of the original design, which had a stronger and more coherent treatment of the base. Recommendations include a stronger masonry treatment (needs to read as more substantial rather than a thin “mask”) and a calmer top to the base (in particular at the base of the Legg Mason tower).
2. The Panel agrees that the office tower needs to relate to the ground plane but feels that it could be done in a different manner than that of stepping down the small glass towers.

Treatment of the Towers

1. Panel members felt that the towers should not be twins and that the differentiation of the two towers was too subtle. More of a distinction between the two towers is needed – given that one is a hotel / residential and the other an office tower – which could be created with the treatment of the glass detailing.
2. Additional study is needed regarding the various cornices; some Panel members felt that there were too many “hats”.
3. Given the layering of the towers and base, the stepping down of the tower masses, and the treatment of the cornices and balconies, the Panel feels that it is critical to see the project in three-dimensions to better understand the relationship of the various masses, edge conditions, and material adjacencies. Previous presentations that used a model were very helpful – the Panel would like to see a model again.

PANEL ACTION:

Revised schematic design approved subject to comments and gaining approval from the Corps and MDE for the promenade extension over the water.

Attending:

Michael Beatty – H&S Development

Todd Harvey – BHA

Richard Jones - MRA

Lorraine Mirabella – The Sun

Dan Sernovitz - Baltimore Business Journal

Larry White – SBER

Robert Embry – Abell Foundation

Jay Brodie, Paul Dombrowski, Shubroto Bose – BDC

Ms. Dietsch, Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Schack, Britt and Cameron – Panel

Doug McCoach, Gary Cole, Theo Ngongang, Bob Quilter - Planning