

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL

MEETING MINUTES

Date: April 26, 2007

Meeting No.: 58

Project: Cambria Suites/Sleep Inn Development

Phase: Schematic

Location: Fallsway and Front Streets

PRESENTATION:

Developer Sanket Patel introduced the project to the panel. It will be two hotels, one in a renovated four story brick structure and the other a new eleven story building to the north. An entry drive separates the two. Mark Blackburn, MWT Architecture, presented the plans, elevations and site plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel is supportive of the project; however it offers the following comments:

Full Block Plan:

1. A site plan for the entire block, including the first floor plans for both hotels should be developed and presented at the next meeting. In general, the presentation should focus on elevations, site plan, landscape plan and contextual perspectives of the project. Consider presenting a landscape plan at a larger scale to properly show the landscape space along the Fallsway.
2. The parking drive between the two buildings offers greater design opportunities than those shown. Consider incorporating more landscaping, decorative paving and the possibility of an extension of the landscape court in front of the Sleep Inn project. The Panel believed the preliminary sketches showed more promise for an urban design at the ground level.

Sleep Inn:

1. Develop plans for streetscape and planting of the pedestrian easement on the south side of the project.
2. The Panel expressed concern that the thru-wall HVAC units on the historic facades may compromise their appearance.
3. The entrance on Fallsway needs additional thought as to how it relates to the existing building.

Cambria Suites:

4. Generally, the Panel recommends that the facades of the Cambria Suites building should be simplified to reflect the context of the surroundings. The facades should be mainly brick, with EIFS used only at the top and the north side wall, where visibility is limited. Additionally, there are too many material colors on the façade. Consider using no more than two or three colors of materials.
5. Specifically, the facades should read as base, middle and top – where there is a continuous structural relationship between all three. Elimination of some of the horizontal banding might lead to a more unified building. The cornice over the second floor appears over-scaled and the band at the 10th floor is disjointed.
6. Proportions and divisions of the various window types are inconsistent. Consider double-hung windows or other more traditional window types.
7. The window bays of the façade are highly irregular and inconsistent, especially the corner bay by the stair. Consider removing the vertical piers above the base and realigning the windows into a field.
8. The tower should read all the way to the ground. Re-study the cap to the tower. Consider locating the entrance to the tower, creating a relationship with the entrance drive and landscaped court.

PANEL ACTION:

Schematic Approval withheld.

Attending:

Sanket Patel – Pioneer Contracting

Mark Pollak, Patti Berkey – Wilmer Hale

Mark Blackburn – MWT Architecture

Fred Thompson – Gower Thompson

Ed Gunts - Sunpapers

Jay Brodie, Shubroto Bose, Simeon Oliva – BDC

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

Doug McCoach, Wolde Ararsa, Theo Ngongang, Thor Nelson - Planning