

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

Date: June 7, 2007

Meeting No.: 61

Project: Wesley Home Development PUD

Phase: Master Plan

Location: Mount Washington

PRESENTATION:

Curt Wilson, architect for CSD, reviewed the intentions of the PUD, existing site conditions, and the master plan program, as well as addressing the comments made previously by the Panel. Scott Huot, landscape architect for CSD, presented a single revised master plan, which shows the existing facility to be demolished and replaced with an entirely new facility (which was option #2 in the previous presentation).

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

Most Panel members felt that there were many good qualities of the master plan as shown – maintaining a setback from Rogers Avenue, locating the higher density units to the west and the cottages adjacent to the park, and using Enslow and Wexford as main entrance roads, and trying to create a residential neighborhood scale, especially in the creation of blocks where the cottages are located (although a couple of Panel members felt that, given that the existing buildings are to be demolished, the design team could have looked at other options for the site layout). However, there were still several concerns raised by the Panel in the following areas:

1. Master Plan Principles - While the Panel feels that the building massing, height, circulation, and open space pattern are generally in the right direction, they would like to see clearer and a more definitive expression of these principles; ie, all buildings will have pitched roofs, streets will be tree lined, no building will be higher than a particular elevation, etc.
2. Length of building faces – The Panel agrees that breaking up the mass of the building is needed in order to fit the residential scale of the neighborhood and diminish the institutional character; it is recommended that this continue to be explored, especially along the western side of the ILU which suffers from a very long façade. Additionally, more information is needed about the existing slope to understand how the building might better respond to this in order to further break up the massing.
3. Buffers – given the length of building that fronts the western edge of the property, and the need for services and access to the parking garages, the Panel recommends that additional landscaping be developed in this location, especially since there are many units that look onto this area.

4. Parking – The Panel appreciates the need to accommodate parking and encourages the developer to continue looking for ways to reduce the number of on grade parking spaces. Additionally, the Panel feels that ringing the main building complex with parking is not a good solution and asks the design team to consider other parking options, such as moving parking from the western edge to the southern edge along Enslow. This could also work better if the main entrance is moved to the southern end of the complex (see next note).
5. Entrances – the Panel asks the design team and developer to consider moving the main entrance of the ILU to the southern end of the complex. This would allow the entrance to open directly to Enslow (a main circulation road). Moving the entrance from its current position would allow the drop off area and entry court now shown to become a true community space that is shared between residents of the ILU and the cottages.
6. Road Pattern / Block arrangement – the Panel likes the idea of creating a residential block for the cottages and think that it would be stronger if the main access to the interior street did not split the block but instead helped enclose the block. Additionally, the interior street should have trees on both sides; the same should be true for Enslow and Wexford.
7. Additional information – Again, a simple site model will help the Panel understand the grade. Also, it is difficult to understand the pedestrian circulation from the drawings – a simple diagram showing this would be helpful. Finally, showing more of the context on the site plan will better help the Panel understand building, circulation, and parking relationships.

The Panel recognizes that many of these recommendations require an upgrade of Enslow and Wexford and resolving traffic issues at the intersection of Enslow, Greenspring, and Northern Parkway and strongly encourages the City to pursue these.

Finally, Roberta Strickler, representing the Mount Washington Improvement Association, identified three areas of concern raised by the community: 1) that the new building be no higher than the existing building, 2) maintain the open space setback on Rogers Avenue, and 3) traffic impact, especially along Rogers Avenue.

PANEL ACTION:

Approval withheld

Attending:

Jeff Middlebrooks, Tim Elliott – Threshold Development; Curtis Wilson, Scott Huot – CSD
Al Barry, Alex Hoffman – AB Associates; Joan Millane – Millane Partners for UB
Roberta Strickler – Mount Washington Improvement Association
Jay Brodie, Shubroto Bose – BDC

Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Schack, Britt and Cameron – Panel
Doug McCoach, Natasha Poole, Sara Paraniyam, Bob Quilter - Planning

