

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

Date: August 21, 2008

Meeting No.: 85

Project: 100 Light Street – Building + Plaza Renovations

Phase: Schematic

Location: 100 Light Street

PRESENTATION:

John Alba, representing the 100 Light Street ownership group, began the presentation with an overview of the tenant changes in the building and the need to renovate the building exterior, lobby, and plaza in order to make it a more marketable and inviting property. Jim Carroll, of Design Collective, reviewed the three elements of the building’s renovation – façade work / removal of the sill “benches”, lobby expansion, and renovation and additional greening of the plaza.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel was encouraged by the desires of the ownership group to renovate and update the building, in particular making the plaza a greener and more desirable public space and the design team’s initial thoughts regarding sustainability. However, several Panel members expressed concerns with the removal of the “benches”.

Façade work / removal of the “benches”

While the Panel understands the rationale of removing the benches to improve sight lines and views from the interior of the building, several members expressed concerns on the affect that this would have on the exterior look of the building. It was felt that the removal of these elements would eliminate some of the detail and articulation of the facades and create an overly simplified opening to what is an iconic building in the City. Additionally, while having a before and after rendering was appreciated, it was very difficult to read given the distance the image was taken from the building.

The Panel requests that the design team provide additional before / after renderings that show a closer view of the building (from the perspective of a person on the plaza as well as adjoining sidewalk). Also, the Panel would like to meet on site to review the interior effect of the benches.

Lobby

The Panel appreciates the sensitivity of the design team regarding keeping the lobby expansion behind the overhang of the building.

At the next presentation the Panel would like to see some additional information regarding the proposed glass system.

Plaza

The Panel was very encouraged by the initial design presented for the plaza and feels that it will be a positive improvement and create a new public space linking the downtown with the Inner Harbor. A few particular comments included:

- Continue to push the idea of “sustainability” with the plaza – there is an opportunity to be more inclusive and visible with the proposed changes (reuse of the benches, collecting of water runoff, types of plants chosen, solar light, etc).
- Give some additional thought to the southeast entrance; Panel members felt that the geometry of the entrance was awkward and that the curve could be more sweeping.
- Give some additional thought to the treatment of the south, west, and north sides of the plaza – as shown they are very similar and there is an opportunity to create different experiences and places of different scale.
- While trees are encouraged, the two trees shown closest to the building piers seem to compete with the building meeting the plaza, which is a strength of the original design.
- Make sure that whatever changes are made to the plaza, they do not preclude the possibility of adding future retail along Pratt Street.

In the next presentation the Panel would also like to see additional sections through the plaza and adjoining sidewalks in order to better understand the plaza edges and heights, as well more information about plaza furnishings (benches, bike racks, etc.)

PANEL ACTION:

Schematic approval given (with comments) for the plaza and lobby. Schematic approval is withheld for the removal of the benches.

Attending:

John Alba, Brian Wittner, Mark Smith – Winthrop Management

John Corkill, Jim Carroll, Nick Mansperger, Loli Ghitman, Brian Reetz – Design Collective

Ed Gunts – The Sunpapers

Andrew Cannarsa – Baltimore Examiner

Sarah Husain – Downtown Partnership of Baltimore

Jay Brodie – BDC

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

Bob Quilter - Planning