

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES
(Revised 9-24-08)

Date: September 18, 2008 **Meeting No:** 87

Project: Canton Crossing Master Plan /Retail Development **Phase:** Con't Master Plan

Location: Canton Crossing PUD

PRESENTATION:

Kim Potember, Greenberg Gibbons Commercial, introduced Brian Bernstein of KA Architects, who made the presentation. He provided an overview responding to the four recommendations made by the panel at the last presentation on August 21, 2008. These included:

1. Revision of the design and reduction in size (from 9500 square feet to 6500 square feet) of the larger freestanding volume in the centrally located open space.
2. Revision of street plan to provide a stronger pedestrian spine by elimination of the plaza and increased definition of the streets by giving special treatment to Main Street and widening the sidewalk to allow for greater "animation."
3. Revision of Boston Street entries from Eaton and Conkling Streets to open up the views.
4. Continued effort (not yet successful owing to retail tenants demands) to determine how best to establish a strong entry feature

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel stated that there had been improvement but the design still was not fully responding to its concerns. The site lacks clarity of its urban design. This can be corrected through the reinforcement of Main Street as the pedestrian spine and further definition of the street edges. With this basic idea as a guiding principle, the panel comments follow:

1. Despite the reduction in the size of the free-standing volume in the central triangular open space, its clarity as a major element of the design is compromised by the placement of the trees and the proposed landscaping. The space does not read as strongly as a public "square" as it should and refinement of its form, landscaping, and placement of the free-standing volume should be studied to ensure that it will succeed in its purpose as the project's major public gathering space.

2. The widened Conkling Street provides a better entrance for the project from Boston Street, however, presently this opening provides a view into the entrance to the Target parking garage. The Panel suggests that a solution for this may be to give the open space a clear focal point to deflect the view from the garage opening.
3. The 20' wide green strips to either side of Conkling Street at Boston Street should be studied further to determine if a more successful approach might be to shift the green to one side of the street allowing for a more useable space.
4. The east-west Main Street needs a terminus. Possibly the location of the hotel could be moved farther south to solve this problem.
5. The surface parking lot is large and needs a strong landscaping program that will define the edges of the lot from the streets, so as to establish an urban rather than suburban feel to the area.
6. The centrally located open space, triangular in shape, seems out of context with Baltimore's tradition of squares. This reflects the Panel's concern that as the design develops the site should not read as a "district" unrelated to its surroundings. Instead, the design should knit this area back into the city. Such devices as clear street edges with trees and sidewalks, a strong central open space, wider streets entering the site, and strong views that attract movement through the site all will help achieve this goal.
7. A concern not previously discussed is the fact that Clinton Street, which runs through the site, is and will remain a truck and bus route. It is unfortunate that this traffic cannot be transferred to the non-public Danville Street, but since the Department of Transportation has been clear that such a change cannot be expected, the impact of truck and bus traffic needs to be taken into consideration as the design progresses.

PANEL ACTION:

Approval with comments and, particularly, the strong recommendation that the owners look at creating a strong identifiable public open space that draws on the site's contextual setting.

Attendance:

Kim Potember, Mark Gibbons – Greenberg Gibbons Commercial; Stanley Fine – RMG
Brian Bernstein – KA Architecture; Doug Suess – WBCM; Ben Stone – BDC
Bill Cunningham – Planning Commission

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Schack, Britt and Cameron – Panel
Gary Cole, Natasha Poole, Jill Lemke, Bob Quilter – Planning