

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

**Date:** January 29, 2009

**Meeting No:** 93

---

**Project:** Saratoga Street Residential and Automated Garage

**Phase:** Final

**Location:** 18 West Saratoga Street

---

**PRESENTATION:**

Robert Quilter, Planning, briefly introduced this mixed use project of an automated parking garage and twenty-two (22) residential units adjacent to the 1791 Old St. Paul's Church Rectory. The residential portion of the project fronts on Saratoga Street, with setbacks from the neighboring Rectory property as previously shown. Although the project has undergone various iterations since being introduced in 2004, it continues to elicit strong community opposition. The garage capacity remains at 402 vehicles and the height of both the garage and residential portion remain at 80 feet above mean grade.

Architects Basil Rousos and Eric Lowe of Peter Fillat Architects presented models and drawings indicating minor revisions in response to the Panel's comments of the previous meeting held on June 5, 2008. As requested at that meeting, the residential entry on Saratoga Street has been strengthened and the design of the garden on the podium level has been further developed. In response to the Panel's concern about the impact of the garage's 402 cars on local traffic, the architects reported that an engineering analysis indicated that this number of cars would not have any negative impact. This has been confirmed by the Department of Transportation. Beyond the above, the Architects responded to a number of questions about the proposed sun-screen, the materials proposed for the exterior of the garage, and questions about possible noise from the mechanical operation of the garage.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:**

Following the presentation and questions described above, the Panel commented on a number of issues and established the following recommendations:

1. The mean grade, as currently calculated to obtain height, should not be used in this case. A maximum height of 80 feet should be established for both the garage and the residential units as measured from the sidewalk elevation on Saratoga

Street, adjacent to the project. Mechanical structures may exceed this 80 foot height, but should be limited in height and visibility as much as possible. Some Panel members believe that a relationship with the adjacent buildings would be an even better height limitation, but the 80 feet identified above is an absolute maximum.

2. The top floor of the residential portion should be no higher than 80' above the sidewalk elevation on Saratoga Street and retain the set back from Saratoga Street and between the Rectory and the garage as currently shown.
3. The proposed material of the exterior of the garage, consisting of solid light colored block with some metal articulations, is not considered appropriate. The Panel recommends that this be reconsidered. Alternatives discussed include a darker material, or possibly brick. The latter would offer a stronger relationship to the existing context. The brightness of the white sunscreen was also discussed and merits reconsideration.
4. The garage entry also requires further design development. The wall height above the vehicular opening should be kept to a minimum by utilizing a rail and/or landscaping to reduce the height. In addition, every effort should be made to continue the existing stone wall into the podium design.
4. The Panel was disturbed by the absence of larger scale presentation drawings and/or models of typical details such as the sun screen, residential fenestration and railings, and the garage exterior wall. These were requested at the June 5 meeting and are requirements of a final design review as well as lighting and signage details.
5. The Panel expresses appreciation for the Architects' efforts to qualify this project for a Gold rating under the USGBC LEED program.

Following comments by the members of the Panel, the audience was invited to comment. The extent of community opposition to the project was evident by the number of electronic communications received, in advance of this meeting, by both the Department of Planning and individual Panel members and the large audience in attendance. In view of the written material already received, comments were limited to brief statements. Those speaking in opposition to the project, included among others, Messrs. Matthew Kimball, Preservation Maryland; Frank Gant, Architect; Rob Hendrickson; Matt Simmons, Esq.; Cleveland Miller, St. Paul's; Fred Craig, OSP Vestry; and Ms. Courtney Capute, Attorney. Kirby Fowler, of the Downtown Partnership, spoke eloquently in support of the project, and David Hillman, the developer, again outlined the need for this garage relative to his other downtown residential projects.

### **PANEL ACTION:**

The Panel does not approve the project as presented and considers the recommendations established today as mandates for future support. Many of the comments at this meeting were articulated at the June 5<sup>th</sup> and previous meetings. Hopefully, a project with a lesser

number of cars, a lower building height and materials better suited to the context might gain a modicum of acceptance by all parties.

**Attending:**

David Hillman, Richard Hillman – Southern Management Corporation  
Basil Rousos, Eric Lowe, Kevin Rosecroft, John Sangley, Thomas Keller - Peter Fillat Architects  
Robert Johnson, Steve Hayes, William Neville – Daft McCune Walker  
Courtney Capute – Venable  
Robert Huether, Fred Craig, Cleaveland Miller – Old Saint Paul’s Vestry  
Rob Ross Hendrickson – Boyd Benson & Hendrickson  
Matthew L. Kimball, Henry L. Lord – Preservation Maryland  
Matt Simmons, Esq. – 330 North Charles Street Professional Building  
Johns Hopkins – Baltimore Heritage  
Frank Gant – GBA Architects  
Pat Alexander – 13 West Mulberry Street Resident  
Anthony Jones – Councilman Cole’s Office  
Ed Gunts, Jacques Kelly – The Sun  
Kirby Fowler, Bob Aydukovic – Downtown Partnership  
Nate Pretl – AB Associates  
Paul Dombrowski – BDC  
Tom Stosur – Mayor’s Office

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Britt, Cameron and Schack – Panel  
Gary Cole, Kathleen Kotarba, Brigitte Fessenden, Wolde Ararsa, Alex Hoffman, Bob Quilter –  
Department of Planning