

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

Date: July 16, 2009

Meeting No: 98

Project: Uplands PUD - Phase 1: Rental Housing

Phase: Continued Schematic/Final

Location: Southwest Baltimore

PRESENTATION:

Nicole Battle of Pennrose Properties, project developer and member of Uplands Visionaries, introduced the Uplands Phase 1: Rental Housing project for the second time. Following the May meeting where Schematics were presented, this presentation included follow up design with the goal of gaining a joint Schematic Design and Final approval. The team presented a written response to the Panel's comments and recommendations associated with the May presentation.

Susan Williams of STV, project engineers, presented the changes to the overall site design that were made in response to the Panel's comments about the parking lots and handicap accessibility.

Ms. Battle discussed the changes to the landscape program, including the addition of 40 trees, the increase in the green buffer, gateways, screening, pedestrian spaces, and plantings.

Gill Rosenthal, architect with WRT, presented revised drawings of the housing types that will be used in Phase 1: mansionettes (large three-story building that looks like a "mansion" and houses multiple units) and townhouses (groups of moderate sized vertical housing units with apartment units stylistically similar to an urban row house). The townhouses are presented into distinct sub-types: Building B, Building C, and Building F.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel complimented the presenters for their responsiveness to the Panel's comments on the previous submission. It was generally happy with the revised designs, and in some cases very pleased with the design progress. Some issues remained related to the site plan, particularly the size and siting of the parking lots. The following additional reservations, comments, and recommendations were offered:

Overall Site Plan:

- a. The footprint of the parking lots should be pulled back so that the asphalt does not project beyond the front plane of the flanking buildings.
- b. Trees should be added to the parking lots, particularly to the island set in the parking lot, to screen the hardscape as much as possible.
- c. To the extent possible, each street should be planted with only one species of tree. Spacing should be consistent. If there is a concern about monoculture, the trees should be of a similar size, height, form, and canopy.
- d. Every effort should be made to further increase the number of trees to be planted and their corresponding caliper - greater than the anticipated 3.5".

- e. Beyond the street trees, plantings should take advantage of the topography, and a variety of species with differing height, form, flowering potential, etc. should be used to complement the buildings. Ground cover should be used to add more texture and variety to the landscape.
- f. There should only be one gateway to the Phase I area: at Athol Avenue.

Overall Buildings:

- a. The design of all the building types was much improved.
- b. The light coloration is preferred.
- c. The roof coloration should to be consistent, but care should be taken to not allow the roof colors to result in a visual separation of the Phase I buildings from the remainder of the Uplands site.
- d. The bricks should be no greater than a 4" x 8" nominal.
- e. If using a variegated brick, care should be taken to select a coloration that will not appear "zebra-like."

Building B:

- a. The Panel had a mixed response to the extent of brick on some of the walls facing Athol Avenue. Some panel members found the height of the brick to be a strength of the design, whereas others were equally displeased with the effect and stated that it should be limited to use at the base of the buildings. This should be studied to be sure that the final effect is satisfactory.
- b. The variety of Hardie Plank was desirable. The planks should be deep enough to create a shadow.
- c. The Panel strongly preferred the lighter colors and softer contrasts.
- d. The design of the brick terracing was much improved. The vertical rhythm, use of steep stairs, and the entry treatment gives a distinctive, interesting, and appropriate character to the buildings.
- e. The side wall facing Athol Avenue of the corner buildings is too blank. The windows should be larger, trimmed out to appear larger, or additional windows should be included. The street level entry does not read as a main entrance and should be studied and revised.

Building C:

- a. The pairs of small windows seem out of place. They should be modified to match the other windows.
- b. The design of the two end buildings should be studied to counter the feeling of tightness seen in the drawings.

Building F:

- a. The design of these buildings was much improved.
- b. The roofline breaks, resulting from the changing topography, are too timid.

Mansionette:

- a. The introduction of the porches at the individual entry is very successful at articulating the design.

- b. The center staircase would benefit from a center rail that would both break down its mass and provide a clear separation of the two entry doors.

PANEL ACTION:

Final approval with Comments. Return to the Panel with the final design response.

Attending: Nichole Battle; Pennrose Properties
Susan Williams and Patrick Pleasants; STV
George Bryant and Gill Rosenthal; WRT
Ivy Dench-Carter; Uplands Visionaries
Sharon Grinnell – Doracon (Uplands Visionaries)
Nicole Earle – HABC
Angela Bethea-Spearman, Sheila Young, Rondell Singleton, Barbara Reid,
Jennifer Shaw - Uplands
Greg Countess, Claudia Dock – LAB
Jay Brodie, Paul Dombrowski - BDC

Ms. Eig, Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Schack, Britt, Cameron – Panel
Tom Stosur, Gary Cole, Kyle Leggs, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter- Planning