

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

Date: August 13, 2009

Meeting No.: 99

Project: Kona Grill Fit-out/Addition

Phase: Schematic

Location: One East Pratt Street

PRESENTATION:

Nan Rohrer of the Downtown Partnership began the presentation by reminding the Panel of the Pratt Street Plan that was recently adopted by the City and its goal for creating an active street supported by retail. She was followed by Brad Griffith, Griffith Properties, who is the owner of One East Pratt. Mr. Griffith described the renovations that have been made over the past three years and how Kona Grill fits into the renovation plan. Michelle Wright, Entitlement Specialist, gave a brief overview of the Kona Grill as a brand and as a restaurant. Finally, Adam Meyer of Shea Architects presented the plans and drawings for the restaurant.

The focus of his presentation was on the “patio”, an enclosed, four-season structure approx. 25’ deep and 62’ wide attached to the One East Pratt building on one side and covered with a sloping, lean-to like roof. The pavilion is meant to provide an active face to Pratt Street; the structure consists of a lightweight frame of glass and metal with sliding windows that can be opened on three sides. The entrance to the restaurant is adjacent to the pavilion. Signage for the Kona Grill is set on the existing building above the roof of the pavilion, as well as on a sloping element above the entrance.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel recognizes that the pavilion structure is the first of the recommended “appendages” recommended in the Pratt Street Plan and, because of this, sets the precedent for other additions that will follow. The Panel also recognizes the difficulty of adding a small element to a large building that faces a major pedestrian street. However, the Panel feels that additional studies are needed to create a form and treatment that better relates to the existing building and the public realm of Pratt Street. Recommendations are:

1. Scale of the pavilion. It was felt that the size, shape, and relation of the pavilion to One East Pratt Street was too diminutive and needed to have a scale that gave it a greater presence. In particular, the Panel was critical of the sloping, lean-to like roof and recommends that other shapes and forms be explored. It was suggested that the architect look at creating a separation of the pavilion from the existing building in order to allow the pavilion to read more independently as a pavilion rather than an addition.

2. Relationship to One East Pratt Street. The pavilion structure did not have any relationship to the existing building other than the color of the proposed metal structure. In fact, several Panel members thought that the sloping roof of the pavilion competed with the entrance to the existing building east of it. Greater attention needs to be given to the relationship to the structure and window rhythm of the existing building and to the shape and treatment of One East Pratt's entrance. Again, the treatment of the pavilion's form, its roofline, and even the footprint of the pavilion need to be explored.
3. Relationship to Pratt Street. As shown, the exterior space of the Kona Grill (outside of the entrance and the pavilion) has little to no relationship to the public realm of Pratt Street. The architect should look at the entrance sequence to the restaurant and at how the outdoor seating area (which is suggested) can be designed in a holistic manner with the pavilion. The design team should indicate what is within the realm of the public space and what is within their lease area. The foundation planting around the pavilion, and the transition from Pratt Street to the restaurant entrance, is very weak and not contributing to one of Baltimore's most important streets. A landscape architect should be part of the team.
4. Image / Branding. The shape and the form of the pavilion are mundane and indicate nothing about the excitement that the presenters described about the restaurant. More of this character – healthy, fresh, fun – should be incorporated. In particular, the architect should present to the team ways in which the pavilion (and the restaurant) are incorporating “green” features.
5. Signage. The Panel felt that the signage above the pavilion is too small and gets lost; it should be integrated better with the pavilion structure.

The Panel understands that the design team met with several groups prior to its presentation to the Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel. However, the Panel recommends that at the next presentation the architect show different options (these can be in sketch form) for addressing the above comments.

PANEL ACTION:

Schematic Approval withheld.

Attending:

Brad Griffith – Griffith Properties
Adam Meyer – Shea, Inc.
Michele Wright – LDRA Inc. for Kona Grill
Jay Brodie, Colin Tarbert – BDC
Nan Rohrer – DPOB

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Schack, Britt and Cameron – Panel
Tom Stosur, Natasha Becker, Alex Hoffman, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter- Planning