

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

Date: October 1, 2009

Meeting No.: 102

Project: Kona Grill Fit-out/Addition

Phase: Continued Schematic

Location: One East Pratt Street

PRESENTATION:

Brad Griffith, Griffith Properties, owners of One East Pratt, began the presentation by explaining that he has added the architectural firm of Brown Craig Turner and the landscape architecture firm Core Studio Design to the team along with Shea Architects.

Betsy Boykin, of Core Studio Design, presented the Pratt Street plan as a context for the project and discussed how the Kona Grill patio would fit into the eventual “greenway” streetscape proposed for Pratt Street. Bryce Turner, of Brown Craig Turner, followed with a revised design for the “patio”, an enclosed, four-season structure approx. 25’ deep and 62’ wide. Major changes to the previous plan included:

- Separating the pavilion structure from the existing building by using an “urban design reveal” approximately 10’ deep and set back from the edges of the pavilion 3’.
- A roof proposed to be a sweeping curve that rises toward Pratt Street (replacing the previous lean-to roof), with the height of the roof 23’ at its’ tallest along Pratt Street.
- Replacing the accordion type windows that were above a planter to full-height doors that extend to the floor, thus eliminating the planter.
- Proposal of small canopy structures over the adjacent retail space and over the mechanical vents on the existing building to the west of the pavilion.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel complemented the new design team for addressing many of the concerns raised by the previous design, including the scale of the building, its relationship to the existing building, and its overall image. However, there were still concerns expressed by the Panel, especially the landscape treatment outside of the pavilion structure. Recommendations are:

1. Relationship to Pratt Street. It was very helpful to see the Kona Grill as it relates to the proposed Pratt Street Plan. However, this plan may be many years from completion; what was missing was a site plan for the exterior space prior to the completion of the Pratt Street improvements. This is important because it is unclear as to what commitment the owner has to the space between his building and the curb, and it is still unclear to the

Panel what is City responsibility (this was raised in the previous minutes and still not addressed) and what might need to happen to improve the landscape along Pratt Street. How the design team is handling the current slope also needs to be shown. Additionally, the Panel felt that the diagonal path to the entrance of the restaurant, and its overlap with the patio, was very awkward and diminished the sense of the pavilion set in a park (see comments below). Until a site plan for the immediate future is shown (including landscaping and entrance treatment to the Kona Grill) and addresses the concerns raised in the August presentation, it is difficult to comment holistically on the proposed design.

2. Scale of the pavilion. The Panel was generally favorable to the new design of the curved roof and the height of the roof along Pratt Street. It was suggested that the roof might extend further beyond the edges of the pavilion structure to give it greater presence and to possibly create an entrance canopy for the restaurant (the current entrance to the restaurant difficult to see and needs greater attention). Also, the depth of the pavilion could be increased and more separated from the existing building.
3. Relationship to One East Pratt Street. The Panel complements the design team for taking the suggestion of 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. This is in keeping with the concept of a “greenway” and more garden-like setting on the south side of Pratt Street. However, some Panel members felt that the separation needed to be greater in order for the structure to truly read as a pavilion set in a park (again, this is dependant on the landscape that would surround the pavilion). Additionally, the pavilion structure and placement seemed to be just off the column grid and window rhythm of the building – a condition observed at the previous presentation as well.
4. Image / Branding. The new shape and roof profile is a great improvement. It was further suggested that the pavilion’s structure be emphasized in a greater way (the Panel likes the architect’s approach of tracery). As presented the pavilion reads flat given the apparent lack of depth between the structure and the glass. Also, the ribbing on the roof either needs to be more pronounced or eliminated (allowing the roof to float); again, its current representation reads too flat. The Panel would also like to be advised as to how the pavilion (and the restaurant) is 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. It was also recommended to eliminate the proposed canopy awning over the mechanical vents – hiding these vents could be better accomplished with trees and landscaping.

Although this is outside of the Kona Grill program, it was also suggested that the adjacent bus shelter on Charles Street be moved to afford better pedestrian flow around and better integration into the open space between the building and Charles Street.

PANEL ACTION:

Continued Schematic approval withheld.

Attending:

Brad Griffith – Griffith Properties

Bryce Turner, Craig Purcell, Mark Herbkersman – Brown Craig Turner

Betsy Boykin – Core Studio Design

Molly Moyer - GBC

Michele Wright – LDRA Inc. for Kona Grill

Paul Dombrowski, Ben Stone – BDC

Nan Rohrer – DPOB

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Schack, Britt and Cameron – Panel

Tom Stosur, Alex Hoffman, Jill Lemke, Brigitte Fessenden, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter-
Planning