

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

Date: October 29, 2009

Meeting No: 103

Project: JH Graduate Student Housing

Phase: Continued Schematic

Location: 900 Block North Wolfe Street - New East Baltimore Community

PRESENTATION:

John Lecker of the Forest City/New East Baltimore Development team and Charles Harris of Allen and O'Hara re-introduced the project, which was last seen on February 28, 2008. Dawn Taylor of Otis Warren Companies was introduced. Mr. Lecker noted that East Baltimore Development is now the owner of the project. He provided a synopsis of the project status, explained the site plan differences, noting the revised location of the garage as presented last February, as well as the increase in units from 327 to 370. Mr. Harris explained the project purpose: graduate student housing, explaining that the building would actually open to any tenant, but that it would be marketed to graduate school students who are studying at the nearby professional schools.

Faith Nevins of Marks Thomas presented the plans for the building. Proposed to be massed as an L-shaped elevation block, 8 stories (100') high at the north end and 21 (200') stories high at the south end and sited across from the proposed park, the building is intended to be a "landmark" while providing affordable housing. The plan consists of a single double-loaded corridor allowing for affordability; a location on a large park and height and massing that enable extensive views of the city carry the connotation of luxury units. The height and massing are intended to give the building a "beacon-like" character. Ms. Nevins went through a summary of changes from the February 2008 scheme, and explained the design process that led to the present design. The design as presented would be constructed with a façade of brick and metal with some low relief vertical divisions and horizontal spandrels. It includes a roof garden/terrace at the 9th floor, as well as a conference/party room and health club at that level. The design is planned to meet LEED Silver at a minimum, with the intention of meeting LEED Gold. It is designed to meet New East Baltimore PUD Design Guidelines.

COMMENTS OF THE PANEL:

1. The building does not present its function accurately and its form lacks aesthetic presence.
2. The massing and fenestration are too horizontal.
3. The composition is so orderly it lacks rhythm and therefore lacks interest.
4. The composition and massing should relate to the park setting.

5. The vertical component is too squat, especially seen in juxtaposition to the base block. The building's height should be presented more like a tower than a block. The previous scheme that brought the tower to the ground appeared much more successful.
6. The fenestration lacks a meaningful organization. The use of the various commercial window types is inconsistent with the building's residential purpose.
7. The façade lacks interest, as the "bites" appear to be arbitrary, without purpose.
8. The red brick is too dark. The Design Guidelines should be reviewed to gain direction for the use of materials on high rise residential buildings.
9. The building's directional orientation should be considered in the design of the exterior recreation space on the 9th floor.
10. Alternate massing schemes that relate to the setting should be studied. The project team should look to design precedents for inspiration as to how color, light, fenestration, and massing can enhance urban settings. Two examples are particularly recommended: Jose Luis Sert's Married Student Housing at Harvard University and his nearby Boston University project.

PANEL ACTION

The Panel looks forward to a revised scheme in the future Continued Schematic presentation.

Attending:

John Lecker – Forest City

Dennis Miller - EBDI

Dawn Taylor – Otis Warren Companies

Charles Harris – Allen&O'Hara

Faith Nevins, Michael Blake, Sam Culpepper, Tim Offutt – Marks Thomas Architects

Jay Brodie – BDC

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

Tom Stosur, Gary Cole, Wolde Ararsa, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter – Department of Planning