

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

MEETING MINUTES

Date: February 25, 2010

Meeting No.: 108

Project: Anderson Site Redevelopment

Phase: Master Plan

Location: Maryland / 25th / Howard / 24th Streets Vicinity

PRESENTATION:

Donald Kann, of KANN Partners, provided the Panel a brief overview of the introductory master plan as presented in December. He then went through the revised master plan, highlighting those elements that have changed, including:

1. A Walmart that replaces the previously shown supermarket on the upper level of site #1 (the parcel west of Howard Street);
2. A new retail building to be located on Huntingdon Avenue that maintains street frontage;
3. A small addition to the existing Honda building at the southwest corner of 25th and Howard Street, as well as a re-cladding of the building;
4. Changes to the entrance to site #1 along 25th Street, as well as changes to the entrances to site #2 (the parcel east of Howard Street);
5. Increasing the amount of residential units on site #2 from 60-70 to 80-90;
6. Modifying the structured parking on site #2 so that it is no longer below the retail but is now above the retail, improving access to the residential units along Maryland Avenue. An exposed ramp will provide access to the parking.

Mr. Kann also described why the stone building (a former church) on the southwestern corner of site #1 at 24th and Sisson could not be saved, which was due to the access needed by CSX at this location. The revised plan showed a new structure as part of the garden center that would recall the stone building in material as well as scale and form.

Jennifer Leonard of STV Inc. presented the site circulation, street sections, and landscape and open space treatment, as well as how the project was utilizing a combination of green roofs and small bio-retention areas to address storm water runoff.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

Overall the Panel felt that the addition of the retail building along Huntingdon Avenue was an improvement. However, members still had issues with how several elements of the site layout, massing, and architectural treatment relate to the goals established for the project:

Establish a clear rationale for which street frontages are considered important to activate and which are less important. As previously mentioned, the location of a retail building along Huntingdon Avenue provides a better street edge and link between the Remington neighborhood and the project site (it was also suggested that the building could have a greater height and scale). However, all of the Panel members, as well as the Planning Director, were in agreement that retaining the existing building on the southwest corner of Howard and 25th Street creates a gap in the pedestrian fabric, exposes the interior of the site and the large amount of parking, and creates a suburban character to what should be an urban edge. This corner needs to better relate to the building that is being kept at the southeast corner of Howard and 25th Street.

Integrate and connect pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The Panel is still concerned with pedestrian access into and through both sites #1 and #2. The Panel recommends again that the design team consider breaking up the lots into more appropriate block sizes by treating access drives and pedestrian frontage of the retail as “streets” that better integrate into the fabric and access of the surrounding neighborhoods. While there is pedestrian circulation shown, it is subservient to the vehicular access and to the buildings – it is too narrow and does not connect in an orderly manner. The concept should be of a street with buildings fronting it, rather than an apron in front of the building. Pedestrian connection to the Lowe’s from Hampden Avenue (South Remington) should be strengthened. Additionally, the connection from 24th Street to the upper level is still not clear.

It was also suggested that the entrances be treated with architectural elements (like those shown for the ramp on site #2) that better mark the entrances.

Create open spaces that benefit adjacent uses and pedestrian activity. The Panel welcomes the use of green roofs and bio-retention planting beds, and suggests that the design team can do more to green the parking lots. Additionally, the small open space next to the new retail building on Huntingdon Avenue was questioned as to its location and size – it seems very small and hidden.

While the street sections were helpful the Panel recommends that the design team bring a landscape plan for the entire site showing tree planting and open spaces – several of the plans and images did not match and it was difficult to understand the final intentions.

Relate the scale and architectural character of the project with that of the surrounding communities. The Panel still had several issues regarding the treatment of the Lowe’s garden center and the retention of the existing stone building. Although it was described as to why the building could not be saved, the Panel hopes that there is some way to rectify this situation, and suggests that the Planning Department see if there is a role that they can play. If the building cannot be saved, several Panel members question whether creating a “recollection” of the building is the right move. It is acknowledged that however this corner is treated that the garden center and edge landscape treatment should help to screen the larger buildings behind while also relating to the scale of the rowhouses adjacent to it.

The relocation of some of the retail on site #2 is an improvement, but additional attention is needed regarding how the facades “open up” with windows that turn the corner from Maryland

Avenue to 24th Street and along Howard Street. Also, it was suggested that a small retail space might be “tucked under” at the southwest corner of Howard and 24th Street. The tower elements are a good start to creating site markers and special (maybe even playful) elements, but more attention is needed as to their location, height, and rationale. The Panel was also split as to the addition of the exposed ramp, although in agreement that more attention is needed to the ramp and the landscape edge between it and Howard Street. Responding to a discussion about views into the site from 25th Street and general circulation, one Panel member offered an alternative site plan that showed the Lowe’s/Walmart structure rotated 90 degrees to the railroad tracks and affording the possible retention of the stone building.

Finally, several members from the surrounding community made public comments regarding the project. Their concerns regarded saving the stone building (and making it a more neighborhood friendly use), the scale of the project along 24th Street, the amount of blank walls along the edges, the lack of retail along Maryland Avenue, the height of the residential buildings along Maryland Avenue, vehicular access to the site, and views and access into site #1.

PANEL ACTION:

Approval Withheld.

Attending:

Donald Kann, Shaw Rahman, Adam Podbielski – Kann Partners
Susan Williams, Tony Cortea, Jennifer Leonard, Anna Owen, Don Sternat – STV
Mark Viani – McGuire Woods
Mike Birkland – Bowman Consulting
David Hoffman, Chris Carlson – David L. Hoffman FAIA
Jon Laria – Ballard Spahr
Majid Jelveh – Shaw Jelveh Design
Al Barry – AB Associates
Eli Pousson – Baltimore Heritage
Jay Brodie, Leon Pinkett, Ben Stone – BDC
Ed Gunts – Sunpapers
Douglas Armstrong, Megan Hamilton – Remington Neighborhood Alliance
Judith Kunst, Kara Kunst – Remington
John Dean – Maryland Avenue Business
Daniel Shub, Cathy Yates – SDYM
Stephen Gewirtz
Mark Brown - BCDOT

Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Britt and Cameron – Panel
Tom Stosur, Gary Cole, Wolde Ararsa, Gary Letteron, Jill Lemke, Lisa Morris, Alex Hoffman,
Brigitte Fessenden, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter - Planning