

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

MEETING MINUTES

Date: February 25, 2010

Meeting No:108

Project: Greektown Housing Revised Master Plan (South) **Phase:** Revised Master Plan

Location: East Baltimore

PRESENTATION:

Lee Driskill, architect with Hord Coplan and Macht, re- introduced the proposed amended project. This project, last seen January 21, 2010, requests a Minor Amendment to the Greektown South PUD. The proposed amendment covers the 14.4 acre site. Approximately 2.25 acres is reserved for open green space, including two rectangular shaped passive parks, mews, and a court. It is intended to create an affordable “for sale” project that can be built under today’s changed economic circumstances. It includes a readjustment of unit types for the site, decrease in density, change in the disposition of open space, minimization of grading, introduction of a different mix of row houses with some mid-rise and high-rise apartment buildings, integration of numerous sustainable attributes, increase in the number of trees to be planted, and a rearrangement of the street plan that both reduces the number of roads and alleys and, through placement, minimizes the length of the water and sewer system. The proposed amendment does not affect the boundaries of the three phases. The community is enthusiastic in support of the proposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel appreciated the responsiveness of the applicant. Generally, the revised design represented a strong resolution of the Panel’s concerns that were expressed at the January 21st meeting. All three phases of the revised design now work as parts of a whole, and show an integration of the plan that should result in a visually pleasing and identifiable new neighborhood. There were some comments that should be addressed as the project goes forward.

1. The revised gridded plan responds to the Panel’s desire that the pedestrian experience, not parking is the dominant visual image.
2. The street grid now reads as a connector, not an arbitrary overlay.
3. Further work on the variety of housing forms, corner articulation, garage placement, and other design components is encouraged to enhance the street plan and pedestrian experience.
4. The plan respects the role of Macon Street as the “neighborhood’s” main thoroughfare. It is now better connected through the project and all houses sited along Macon are oriented towards this street.

5. The substantive widening of the mews and the re-orientation of the end houses improves the appearance of the mews, increases the importance of their role in the plan, and establishes their primacy over the parking alleys.
6. The reduced width of the alleys is a marked improvement from the previous scheme. The inclusion of brick “garden” walls at the points where the alleys meet the streets will reduce visibility of the alleys, strengthen the streets as connections, and increase the reading of the alleys as tertiary elements of the plan, following green connectors and streets. These walls should be substantive in appearance with real depth and appropriate masonry treatment.
7. The green spaces have been defined as passive recreational spaces. The orientation of the houses towards the green spaces is improved. The Panel looks forward to seeing more detailed plans for these spaces as the project proceeds.
8. The edges of the green spaces should have special attention to maximize public enjoyment of the total design.
9. A fence or “garden” wall should be placed around the edges of the church that are adjacent to the project.
10. Landscape and hardscape should be cohesive and designed so as to increase the connections through the neighborhood, while establishing a “green” identity. Pedestrian paths should play an important role in the design, both in purpose and appearance. Landscaping of the mews should respond to the individual houses as well as the overall site. Streets should be lined with similar species of trees at regular intervals and be of a reasonably substantial caliper. Pockets of green should be designed so as to be special places within the system of connective elements.

PANEL ACTION:

Approved with comments.

Attending:

Lee Driskill – HCM

Seth Harry – Seth Harry and Associates

Nate Prett – AB Associates

Wesley J. Riddle – JHU Carey Business School

Stuart Sirota – TND Planning Group

Stanley Fine, Caroline Hecker – RMG

Chris Ryer – Southeast Community Development Corporation

Jason Phillipou – Greektown CDC

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

Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter - Planning