

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

Date: February 16, 2011

Meeting No: 122

Project: Hopkins P-1 Parking Structure

Phase: Schematic

Location: NW Corner Ashland Avenue/N. Washington Street

PRESENTATION:

John Lecker of Forest City introduced the project scope for this new parking garage at New East Baltimore. He stated that the goal was to design a parking structure that would contribute to the architecture of the area.

Stan Britt, architect of Sultan Campbell and Britt, explained that the new garage would serve the planned hotel, tenants of the Life Sciences Building, and tenants of the Maryland Public Health building (under construction). He described the structure as 95' high, ten stories, serving 1400 cars. The lower level (at grade, with a 16' slope) was reserved for 10,000 square feet of retail along Ashland Avenue, which would become a main pedestrian/retail corridor. The site is just to the east of the graduate student housing high rise, now under construction.

John Judge of Desman Associates, parking garage specialists, explained the circulation pattern, including two one-way access points and one two-way access point. He described the structure as a 3-bay double helix with scissor ramp with two-way traffic and perpendicular parking.

Ed Hodges, architect with DiMella Shaffer, described the proposed schemes for the elevations. Three key factors that were considered were: 1) modulation of scale; 2) pleasant pedestrian experience; and 3) light control.

The structure is proposed to be built of concrete. Façade elements includes a series of large rectangular metal louvered screens, light panels creating a corner marker, and a large corner element of glass and metal to serve the elevator/stair tower. The retail level includes recessed bays with a louvered panel at the top of each bay.

Betsy Boykin of Core Studio presented the concept for landscape. Ms. Boykin stated that the proposed landscape design was consistent with the EBDI streetscape design guidelines, including plant selection, paving, and lighting.

COMMENTS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel generally liked the massing, height, and general direction of the proposal. However, it strongly recommends that the architects look at other recent parking garages in Baltimore (Charles and Lombard, Baltimore and Guilford for examples) and elsewhere that have successfully achieved this project's goals (modulation of scale, pleasant pedestrian experience, and light control).

Architectural:

1. The three goals put forward for the design (modulation of scale, pleasant pedestrian experience, and light control) are admirable. The present design does not achieve these goals and more study is needed. The scale is particularly a problem as the use of the large projecting screens does not achieve the intended purpose.
2. The rooftop (top parking deck) should be designed so as to provide a good view from the nearby tall residential buildings.
3. The storefronts are both fussy and lacking in definition, so that they fail to provide an appearance that would draw positive attention along Ashland.
4. The array of materials takes away from the design. Fewer materials would improve the appearance.
5. The corner light marker does not appear to succeed at its purpose.
6. The glass and metal corner elevator stair tower is out of character with the rest of the design.
7. The fenestration pattern of the Graduate Housing building offers a successful modulation of scale. Perhaps rather than avoiding a clear relationship with that design, the new garage could capitalize on that design and establish a relationship that is directly compatible
8. Continue studying the design until it is clear that the garage will be a positive contributor to the streetscape.

Landscape Design

9. There is concern over the value of placing plantings next to the building as it just seems to reduce the width of the sidewalk. A design scheme along the street edge that incorporates the trees and retains the width of the sidewalk would appear to be a better solution.
10. There is also concern as to the potential conditions for trees that are proposed for the 40' wide and 100' tall "canyon" between the Graduate housing and the garage.
11. There is a question as to the value of the pedestrian benches along the garage. Perhaps a different location would be better.

PANEL ACTION:

Continued Schematic required.

Attending:

John Lecker, David Dill – Forest City – New East Baltimore Partnership

Stan Britt – Sultan Campbell and Britt Architects

Ed Hodges, Lee Braun – DiMella Shaffer

Betsy Boykin – Core Studio

John Judge, Mike Pendergrass, Duane Ellis – Desman

Dennis Miller – EBDI

Melody Simmons – The Daily Record

Ms. Eig, Messrs. Bowden, Cameron, Ramberg - Panel

Jay Brodie, Darrell Doan, Paul Dombrowski – BDC

Gary Cole, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter - Planning