

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

**Date:** November 10, 2011

**Meeting No.:** 139

**Project:** O'Donnell Heights Phase I

**Phase:** Final

**Location:** East Baltimore/O'Donnell Heights Community

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**PRESENTATION:**

Magda Westerhout of Marks Thomas Architects (lead architect for the design team) introduced Courtney Galiber of Morris Ritchie Associates, landscape architects, who reviewed the proposed landscaping for the project. The major areas of the presentation were as follows:

- Public and private spaces of the project and their design treatment with particular emphasis on the central cross axis spaces;
- Various street tree selections and their locations;
- Stormwater management /bio-retention components and their locations
- Shrubery and other landscape elements such as proposed parking area and street lighting;
- The decision that trash would be collected at individual properties with some supplemental shared facilities (not shown);
- Wood fences (although not described in detail) would be provided between adjoining properties.

Donna Rosano of ZA+D Architects reviewed the most recent architectural designs for the project. The major elements of the presentation included the following:

- The incorporation of changes recommended at the prior review (elimination of certain window types, creation of a “waterline” base to the buildings etc);
- That all units would have covered entrances or porches;
- Proposed treatment of individual housing types and their grouping/massing strategies;
- Colors and materials proposed consisting of three brick colors, two “hardi-board” siding colors, and a single unifying color roof shingle for all the units.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:**

The Panel uniformly felt that the project’s design was continuing to move in a very promising direction. Specific comments are as follows:

### **Site Plan and Landscaping**

The Panel felt that the landscape presentation was thoughtful and thorough and complimented the landscape architect for their efforts. The items presented were well received and the Panel suggested some minor rethinking in a few cases. There were concerns voiced about items missing or not presented that continue to require development.

1. That some areas throughout the project would benefit from more fencing where privacy, safety and control may be desirable. Continuation of fencing may need to be considered along the alley/parking rear property lines to help organize trash containers and create gateways between the public and private areas. Specific designs should be presented;
2. That the “Pocket Park” felt underdeveloped and that more study was recommended to strengthen its edges, and perhaps free up its design by not relying so much on the symmetrical duplication of the pavilions and raised private garden beds. One suggestion was to increase the number of such planter beds. Other questions arose about the specific design of communal structures such as shared bulk trash areas, mail pickup and any service/equipment buildings.
3. That shade trees might be considered within some of the rear yards in addition to those along shared public edges.

### **Architecture/Buildings**

Although progress was acknowledged, the Panel voiced its concern that the design rationale for the architecture of the buildings has not crystallized and requires more study. Other comments and concern were noted as follows:

1. That some simplification of the number and type of housing facades would benefit the overall cohesion of the project;
2. That differing street identity for some housing groupings, (as in the street tree landscaping approach) might be explored;
3. That the rear of the buildings need more design attention/interest with more windows and less blank wall treatment;
4. Several Panel members were concerned about the 3 bedroom, Type C unit design specifically and suggested that it did not fit comfortably with the other units and required more study and possibly elimination;
5. That the overall palette of colors felt dark and might benefit from livelier coloring, Consider the introduction of more and brighter colors in the front and rear doors themselves;
6. That a clearer approach to the design of house groupings be explored, specifically in the treatment of ends and middles of such groupings;
7. That the “flatness” of the long stretches of houses might be mitigated by slight differences in the front planes of those facades;
8. That larger scale masonry units be explored for the waterline base brick expression;
9. That the “Ownership” houses should receive additional design attention.

**PANEL ACTION:**

Landscape and Site Plan approved with comments. Building design/architecture to return after further study and development.

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**Attending:**

Andrew Vincent, Mary Claire Davis – GBAHC  
Sasha-Gaye Angus – Michael’s Development  
Richard White – Interstate Realty Management  
Bruce Zavos, Donna Rosano – ZA+D Architecture  
Magda Westerhout – Marks Thomas Architects  
Courtney Galiber, Tim Madden – MRA  
Michelle Holmes, Rosella Queen, Ella Broadway – ODH Tenant Council  
Tabinda Riaz – Legal Aid  
Lembit Jogi, Daibeth Saunders – HABC/HCD  
Jay Brodie – BDC

Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Britt and Cameron – Panel  
Tom Stosur, Gary Cole, Martin French and Anthony Cataldo - Planning