

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

Date: March 15, 2012

Meeting No.: 143

Project: Barclay Redevelopment Phase 2 - Rental

Phase: Schematic

Location: Barclay neighborhood

PRESENTATION:

Catherine Stokes of Telesis provided the Panel with an overview of the Barclay / Old Goucher Redevelopment Plan, focusing on the Phase 2 development of rental housing. Ms. Stokes also described what buildings were within their project boundary, and which were not, specifically the corner lots along Greenmount Avenue which are owned by the City and part of some future development.

Sharon Bradley, of Bradley Site Design, presented the overall site plan for Phase 2, which included 67 dwelling units, 57 new parking spaces, a mid-block pedestrian walkway, and a new community gathering space. Goals for the redevelopment included creating a place that reflected Baltimore and its character, improve the pedestrian environment, and open the inner blocks and improve access and safety. This was introduced the site plan (building and open space). This was accomplished by using the rowhouse typology for all new housing, creating a “boulevard” along 20th Street between Greenmount and Barclay, locating parking on the small alley streets (like Worsley and Heaver) and utilizing the inner block area between 20th and 21st Streets, creating a new north-south pedestrian walkway from 21st Street to Heaver, and locating a small community space adjacent to the walkway. Storm water management would be accommodated in the boulevard area through bio-retention gardens as well as the use of pervious paving in the walkway and parking areas. Trees and other planting would be native species planted in masses.

Susan Lami of Lami Grubb Architects presented the architecture, which consisted of primarily three-story, brick rowhouses to be consistent with the surrounding blocks. The architecture was developed through a series of community meetings, and reflects a traditional Baltimore pattern of simple elevations with details to add variety. The units along 21st Street are two-story with rear elevations of hardy plank above first floor brick (the houses on the north side of 20th Street have similar rear elevation treatments).

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel complimented the design team on a terrific start and presentation. Although the comments were generally favorable, the Panel had the following recommendations:

Community open space / pedestrian walkway. Panel members had concerns with the proposed community space – in its use, location, and design. It appears that the open space is located in

what is a left-over space (that was described by the design team as not working for parking), rather than being located in the best place for its use. Also, it is not clear as to why this community space is needed with a small park a half-block away. More information about its use, and a larger scale plan, is needed. Although the Panel questioned the location of the community space, members felt that locating it along the pedestrian walkway and in more active areas as proposed was the right move. As was shown on a previous master plan, better integrating the community space with the pedestrian walkway should be again studied so that people would be walking through the park rather than by it.

Additionally, like the renaming of 20th Street, there is the opportunity to create a “promenade” with the pedestrian walkway. However, the definition of the walkway, as it passes through the parking area to 21st Street, needs to be strengthened by continuing the definition of trees and edge treatment. Also, lights in the area should be used to reinforce the walkway; as shown the alternating pattern is not strong enough.

Architectural treatment. The Panel was in agreement that the gable elements on the front facades look superficial and take away from the corner turrets. It was recommended that the elements be treated like bays and that the roof not extend above the cornice line (there are examples of this in surrounding neighborhoods).

Also, the rear elevations with the hardy plank look very stark. The Panel recommends that the pairing of windows be reconsidered as well as having the elevations vertically divided to provide relief. The amount of brick that turns the corner also needs to increase; the visual treatment should look like a brick building with hardy plank infill.

Greenmount Avenue. While the Panel understands that the developer does not control the vacant sites along Greenmount Avenue, a plan for their treatment is needed that reinforces and complements the new development as a placeholder for the projected mixed-use development on these lots.

Miscellaneous.

- More attention is needed as to the edge treatment of the parking areas.
- The wooden trash enclosures as shown need to be reconsidered; they are not of the character or quality of the architecture or site treatment.
- Storm water / bio-retention should be considered along Worsley given the slope of the adjacent parking area.
- A master-site plan for the entire Barclay / Grenmount Redevelopment, showing existing and proposed parks and street trees, is needed so that the new features (the 20th Street Boulevard, the pedestrian walkway, etc) reinforce and create larger neighborhood pattern and are not simply one-off elements.

PANEL ACTION:

The Panel recommends Schematic approval with comments.

Attending:

Ken Kupfer – Harris-Kupfer Architects

Susan Lami, Jim Noe – Lami Grubb Architects

Catherine Stokes, Annie Applegate – Telesis

Sharon Bradley – Bradley Site Design

Kevin Anderson – KCW Engineering Technologies

MJ Brodie- BDC

Alastair Smith – HABC

Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Ivor Quashie, Alex Hoffman – Planning

Ms. Eig, Mssrs Bowden, Burns, Cameron*