

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL

MEETING MINUTES

Date: August 16, 2012

Meeting No.: 152

Project: W Cold Spring Lane redevelopment

Phase: Discussion

Location: Cold Spring Lane and I-83

PRESENTATION:

Donald Kann, of Kann Partners, introduced the project, which is a 5.5 acres mixed-use development consisting of 250 market-rate apartments, 30,000 sf ground level retail, a 550 car garage (200 spaces MDOT and 350 residential), and 150 additional retail parking spaces. The site is bounded by Cold Spring Lane on the north, the District Police Station to the west, Light Rail tracks to the east, and a BGE site (and possible substation) to the south (where the existing gas storage tank is located). A bridge that will connect this project to the Cold Spring Light Rail Station is planned. The site is zoned TOD (Transit Oriented Development) in the new zoning code plan.

Also participating in the discussion was Cass Gottfried of Kann Partners, Joan Flora of Flora Teeter Landscape Architects, and Judy Siegel of the Landex Companies. The Panel was shown existing site photographs, a site plan, and massing models.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel appreciated the mixed-use nature of the site, the desire to create a retail pedestrian street, and the connection to the Light Rail station. However, there were several concerns expressed, beginning with the site diagram:

1. As presented the project consists of a U-shaped building with a central vehicular drive that connects it to Cold Spring Lane and a pedestrian bridge connecting to the Light Rail station. However, as shown these pieces are disconnected, in particular the path from the garage to the Light Rail station which is circuitous, fragmented, and in general very poor. It was recommended that the design team simplify the diagram by creating a strong pedestrian connection from Cold Spring to the Light Rail station, and use this to organize the buildings, the central retail street, and the entrance(s) to the apartments. This diagram (and pedestrian path) should be primary. This would include odd items such as the private apartment terrace that one passes under to access the Light Rail bridge.
2. As shown one side of the retail street is tree-lined and the other an arcade. It was recommended to make the street section be tree-lined on either side. If the upper floor square footage is needed for the apartments, the apartment mass might be shifted to the east and cantilever over the parking (which might create an interesting and lively façade that is visible from I-83).

3. One of the concerns regarding the connection between the parking garage and the Light Rail station was its location on the west of the site.
4. A transparent pedestrian bridge connecting the two apartment blocks was recommended, rather than connecting the blocks with apartments (thus changing the building diagram from a “U” to two distinct buildings).
5. It was felt that the retail was shaping the plan, although it is only 30,000 sf.
6. Better relationship between the apartment mass, the retail, and the ground is needed; as shown the incongruence of the apartment block shape and the retail shape is problematic.
7. Given that the site is zoned for TOD, it was felt that the height and square footage of development was not taking advantage of the allowed density and adjacency to the light rail station. The developer discussed economic constraints that were guiding the size of the development.
8. It was recognized that the Cold Spring edge was very important and that its treatment should better tie into the architecture rather than simply be treated with landscaping.
9. The vehicular entrance / exit in the center was questioned as to whether it was needed. It was recommended that this be a pedestrian-only and that traffic be handled internally with a circle (to mimic the turn-around on the opposite end). This area could then be treated as a “place” rather than simply vehicular access.

PANEL ACTION:

Discussion only; no recommendations for approval were needed.

Attending:

Judy Siegel- Landex
Cass Gottlieb, Donald Kann, Vipul Talwar – Kann Partners
Carla Ryon – Colbert Matz Rosenfelt
Joan Floura – Floura Teeter
Ed Guntz – Baltimore Sun

Messrgs. Cameron*, Bowden - Panel

Melvin Hicks, Eric Tiso, Kate Edwards, Ken Hranicky Katie-Rose Imbriano - Planning