

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

Date: June 13, 2013

Meeting No.: 167

Project: Jefferson Square at Washington Hill Phase II

Phase: Schematic

Location: E. Baltimore St., N. Washington St., Fairmount Ave, and N. Wolfe St.

PRESENTATION:

Development Partner Drew Chapman, Jefferson Apartment Group, introduced the project team and provided a brief project background. The PUD was amended in 2008 and Parcel B - Phase I, which includes 300 rental residential units, 20,000 SF of retail, approximately 400 below grade parking spaces and loading, is under construction. This project is more homogenous and singular in design, with common design features including corner towers; connective fabric; a traditional base, middle and top; and a uniform approach to color and material. Parcel A - Phase II is currently in design and includes a 200 unit luxury rental apartment building with below grade parking, and is the subject property for the presentation to UDARP. Mr. Chapman also noted that his team had met with and presented the project concept to the Butcher's Hill neighborhood association.

Architects Edsel Arnold and Imran Kifayat of the Preston Partnership reviewed site context, general design philosophy and presented the design for Phase II:

1. The site is bounded by:
 - a. East Baltimore Street to the south with St. Michael's Church on the opposite southeast corner, and rowhouses on the southwest.
 - b. North Wolfe Street to the west with existing 2 and 3 story brick rowhouses
 - c. Parcel B Phase one to the north. There is a through-block pedestrian connection, Fairmont Mews, with a monumental stair connection
 - d. North Washington Street to the east with existing 2 and 3 story brick rowhouses
2. Parcel A - Phase II is intended to be a design "cousin" with a distinctive difference in massing and materials. By breaking the mass, the design is intended to be more sympathetic to the smaller scale rowhouses on opposite sides of N Wolfe, E Baltimore and N Washington Streets, and the lower residential scale to the north. Specific design features include:
 - a. Slender, more contemporary, vertical towers mark the entrance to the rental office at the corner of the Fairmount Mews and N. Wolfe St., and are units on the other street corners.
 - b. Between the towers, the massing is more vertical, breaking down the long horizontal runs.
 - c. There is a much greater variety of color and material including masonry and hardi-panel and intended to be more contemporary.

- d. The street wall is broken down with faces that do not align, creating ins and outs along the elevations.
- e. The top of the building is varied, creating a skyline.
- f. There is a significant grade differential, with N Washington Street 15' higher than N Wolfe.
- g. There is a parking entrance, loading dock and above grade, louvered transformer enclosures facing E Baltimore and aligned with the side of St. Michael's church building.
- h. There are sitting height masonry planter walls, approximately 4' from the face of the building, that ring the street facades to help mitigate both grade, and a 2 ½' to 4'+ differential between ground floor line and adjacent grade.

COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL:

1. The verticality as a concept could be an appropriate to establish a reasonable contrast with Parcel B Phase I, however, the current scheme has too much variety.
2. Consider some simplification by reducing the number of setbacks (18 on one long street) from the street wall and height variations. Possibly create a horizontal datum at the lower floor level to tie the project together.
3. There is a general lack of connection between the urban/pedestrian realm and the building. Evaluate placement of building entrances, and consider adding stoops or another element to create a stronger connection, to better articulate the current design of multiple buildings, and to activate the street.
4. The overall façade symmetry is an inconsistent with grade change and the variety of building mass and expression.
5. Consider façade massing – industrial or apartment buildings with vertical and horizontal infill and addition, and improvements to vertical massing (particularly the two over two.)
6. The dark materials and variety of materials may be inconsistent with the character of Baltimore residential architecture. The panel requested more specificity on detail, color and material selections, particularly related to non-masonry surfaces and windows in order to better understand the relationships within the project and the community overall.
7. The cantilevered balconies create awkward condition at the base; consider extending building wall to grade. Reconsider the use of the contemporary railings for the balconies; find a more contextual response.
8. Provide more detail for the landscape/streetscape plans, especially related to the street planters. Provide cross sections.
9. Aggregating the loading, transformers and parking entrance creates an 80'+ expanse that is not pedestrian friendly. The Panel requested further study of this area, including considering alternate locations for some of the components. The panel also asked the development team to consider aligning the parking and loading across from the alley between St. Michael's and the rowhouses.

Members of the Butcher's Hill community association voiced concerns regarding the overall massing and materials selections and were in agreement with the UDARP Panel member's comments.

PANEL ACTION:

Recommend further study of the Schematic Phase, and return for additional Schematic Phase review.

Attending:

Edsel Arnold, Imran Kifayat – The Preston Partnership

Drew Chapman – Jefferson Apartment Group

Caroline Hecker – RMG

Tony Corteal, Susan Williams- STV

Kevin Litten – Baltimore Business Journal

Carolyn Boitnott, Virgil Bartram – Butcher’s Hill Association

Ms. Eig and Allen, Messrs. Bowden, Burns and Haresign* - UDARP Panel

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Laurie Feinberg – Department of Planning