

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

Date: August 28, 2014

Meeting No.: 191

Project: 414 S. Light Street

Phase: Final

Location: Inner Harbor

PRESENTATION:

Developer Steve Gorn of Questar Properties gave a brief review and update of the project since the initial presentation. The proposed building at the southwest corner of Light and Conway Streets on the prior McCormick Spice property was described as a 500 foot tall, 44 story highrise residential tower of approximately 382 units with 12,500 sq. ft of street level retail and parking occupying approximately 6-7 floors in a podium base. The proposed project represents Phase I of a future development which would cover the entire area between Conway, Light, Barre and Charles Streets and include additional possible residential, hotel, office and parking uses.

Devon Patterson, Architect with Solomon Cordell Buenz (SCB) further described the development of the design comparing the original presentation with the current proposal.

The major changes include:

1. Height – the building height increased by one floor;
2. Massing – the southeast corner at Barre Street includes an expanded 2nd level rooftop “dog park” thus diminishing the continuous Light Street podium expression;
3. Top – the angle of the topmost “sail” form was decreased and altered, as well as the location of a horizontal “slot” element at the topmost balconies;
4. Light Street sidewalk – the sidewalk, transitional grade areas, dropoff area and edge tree line were refined;
5. Vertical corner expression at Conway and Light - the previously overlapping masses at the corner of Light and Conway were changed to allow the corner mass to continue fully to grade and the second and lower mass to be independently expressed;

Proposed materials for the project were discussed. Semi reflective silver/blue tinted glass was the primary material, with painted concrete framework, metal panel, and “synthetic” stucco described as the main building materials; the main entry area utilizes a synthetic wood material with the retail base employing a precast concrete frame, dark granite and glass curtain wall. The garage skin was described as horizontal corrugated painted metal louvers. The proposed sidewalk layouts, materials and landscape were also presented. Project seeks a LEED “gold” designation.

Comments from the Panel:

The Panel welcomed the design team’s quick response in beginning the detailed resolution of the proposed building’s design. Additional detailed drawings were required to understand the various material conditions such as corners, caps, rails, trellises, joints, recesses and other places where differing materials meet or terminate and generally adding surrounding context to the site drawings. Additionally, the Panel offered the following major comments:

1. **Sidewalk/ Landscape Relationship** – Considerable discussion centered around the design of the sidewalk area along Light and Conway Streets. Of particular concern was the lack of continuity of the tree line and clear expression of pedestrian edges along Light Street. The overall relationship of edge treatments along the balance of the two streets, adjacent properties and medians must be studied further. The corners should become stronger “events” with less

emphasis on the cascading stepped grade transition elements and a clearly defined edge should be established along the street.

2. **Main Entry /Motor Court** – Consider strengthening and clarifying the pedestrian continuity and integrity of this area – making pedestrian paths the top priority over the automobile movement. As with Light St., streetscaping and trees should be considered to establish an edge and buffer pedestrians from the traffic of Conway St. Seek to create a stronger relationship between the Light Street and Conway Street entrances and the main lobby.
3. **Light Street Massing** – the setback of the building’s podium massing to accommodate a second floor “dog park” was challenged as interrupting the continuous 80 to 100 ft edge wall of the Inner Harbor Plan. It was felt it also placed too much emphasis on the Barre service street rather the harbor facing Light Street. Strong consideration should be given to holding the street wall along that portion of Light Street to strengthen the relationship between the inner harbor as well as the tower element.
4. **Edge “Shear” wall pattern and material** - It was suggested that the expression of the shear wall grid at the corner of Light and Conway be restudied and simplified. Additionally, the appropriateness of painted poured-in-place concrete was challenged in such an important landmark building. Consider simplifying the expression with other finishes or claddings.
5. **Garage Cladding** – Consider replacing the painted louver infill of the garage with a material that might screen views but allow light into the garage structure. Clarify whether this louver material is suggested for the Barre Street face of the garage and the temporary western side as well.

Panel Action: Recommend continued design development, addressing the above comments.

Attending:

Steven Gorn, Zach Gorn, Frank Maccherone- Questar Properties
Tony Cortea, Addison Palmer, Sharon Huber-Plano – STV
Devon Patterson, Basil Souder- Solomon Cordell Buenz (SCB)
Henry Valeri, Barbara Valeri – Towers at Harbor Court
Cari Perri – DPOB
Jon Laria – Ballard Spahr
Adam Bednar – The Daily Record
Laurie Schwartz – Waterfront Partnership
Kevin Litten - BBJ

Dr.Meany; Messrs. Bowden*, Burns and Haresign - UDARP Panel

Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Zane Hadzick, Wolde Ararsa, Alex Hoffman –
Planning Dept