

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

Date: August 28, 2014

Meeting No.: 191

Project: Research Building, 873 W. Baltimore Street
UMBioPark PUD

Phase: Schematic

Location: Site bounded on the north by W. Baltimore Street, to the west by S. Poppleton Street, on the south by Booth Street, and to the east by an alley and vacant lot slated for future development

PRESENTATION:

Anthony Cataldo introduced the project team, noting that the master plan and this project had previously received a Schematic Design approval of a six story building in 2011-12. The developer is Wexford Science + Technology, and the architect is Gaudreau, Inc. Architects. Mr. Jim Bartlett, Director of Design for Gaudreau, provided an overview of proposed program and planning modifications, site context and the updated design. Key elements include:

1. The master plan originally assumed that six-story predominantly red brick buildings would line W. Baltimore Street. Current thinking suggests that some variety of height, massing, architectural expression and materials will provide a more interesting and varied streetscape.
2. The site slopes approximately four feet from east to west along W. Baltimore Street. A ramp system/steps under the arcade provided access to the midpoint lobby.
3. The speculative building program has also evolved to include additional area requirements, responsiveness to tenant requirements, and outdoor amenity space that is incorporated in a covered arcade at the northeast corner of the building, east of the main entry.
4. The new building design is anchored by a lighted and signed mid-block curtainwall tower that is intended to be visible from Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. A wood-like metal shroud and brise soliel surround the elevated tower.
5. The wood-like metal extends and creates a horizontal datum at the second floor spandrel. The underside of the projection extends back into the arcade, clad in phenolic wood-grained panels (Trespa or Prodema.) The panels also mark the main mid-block entrance, and frame retail storefronts.
6. The predominant and featured material on the long north façade is a polychromed glass curtainwall system with periodic perpendicular copper-colored fins. The curtainwall returns to approximately half way down the west face. The curtainwall system is bordered by a light precast concrete surround.
7. Half of the west façade, the south elevation, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the east elevation are clad in red brick masonry spandrels between masonry column covers, with a precast sill and the

midpoint vertical. Four two-story openings between columns are arranged on 7th and 8th floors of the south façade.

8. The design team indicated that the project is targeted to receive a LEED Silver certification, and that the project would include innovative features similar to others that the developer has used on past projects in North Carolina.

PANEL COMMENTS:

The panel noted the following concerns:

1. Site
 - a. The panel requested the design team to reconsider the relationship of this building to approved master plan, particularly related to creation of green space/pocket parks along W. Baltimore Street.
 - b. The panel questioned the effectiveness/utilization of a story and a half arcade on the north side of a building, asking the team to reconsider the design. Is it possible to provide an interesting breakout space for employees at the top of the building in lieu of the arcade?
 - c. The panel requested the design team to include a streetscape and landscape plan.
 - d. The panel requested the design team to provide additional ground level context photographs, keyed to a vicinity map.
2. Building Design
 - a. The panel requested the design team to show the proposed building in context with surround projects, and to provide building massing outlines for future development.
 - b. The panel questioned the effectiveness of the marquee signage concept, especially in light of future development east of the site, and asked the design team to reconsider if the tower might be more effective if related to the building entrance.
 - c. While the panel appreciated an approach that re-imagined and more contemporary design the requested the design team to reconsider the building design, and to provide a clear diagram of the “big ideas.” The building design appears fragmented with multiple design moves on each façade.
 - d. Other specific comments:
 - i. Reconsider the massing of the tower-like element, whether at the corner or in another location signifying entrance. The tower may want to ground itself, and may also give more prominence to its skyline presence.
 - ii. Reconsider an alternate selection in lieu of metal panel rendered to look like wood.
 - iii. Consider the polychrome and synchopated design of the curtainwall. Despite the blade-like perpendicular projections, will it be appreciated from such a narrow street? Is polychrome glazing a dated design motif, and one that has not been successful on recent institutional projects?
 - iv. Reconsider the light-colored capture plane behind the curtainwall. Would a more pristine glass box be more appropriate and contemporary?
 - v. Evaluate the massing breakdown on Poppleton Street; the current +/- 50% breakdown seems arbitrary, and is ill-proportioned.
 - vi. The masonry expression is dated, harkening back to a less successful brutalist concept, with a strong reference to the parking garage. Consider alternative contemporary masonry façade design.

- vii. Consider ways to mitigate spandrel height on both masonry and curtainwall facades.
- viii. Reconsider the two story window expression currently shown on the four bays on the south elevation. Consider committing more fully on all facades, or to a different expression using an alternate masonry or other material to define the top of the building.
- ix. Consider creating a stronger contextual relationship to the surrounding neighborhood, such as by establishing a clear two story base.
- e. Provide a clearer picture of sustainable design strategies, including specific examples provided by the developer on other projects that will be applied at this site.

PANEL ACTION:

The Panel recommends the development team should further develop the revised Schematic Design, and respond to comments.

Attending:

Jim Bartlett, Bill Gaudreau – Gaudreau Inc.

Steve Hanssen, Gregory Herlong – Wexford Science and Technology, LLC

Kate Dailey – DPOB

Jane Shaab - UMBiopark

UDARP Panel Members – Dr. Meany, Messrs. Burns, Bowden, and David Haresign*

Planning Department- Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Brent Flickinger