



*Catherine E. Pugh  
Mayor*

**COMMISSION FOR  
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL  
PRESERVATION**

*Tom Liebel, Chairman*

**STAFF REPORT**



*Laurie Feinberg*

**December 11, 2018**

**REQUEST:** Concept Review: Height, Massing, Scale for New Construction of a five story high residential and commercial structure.

**ADDRESS:** 520 South Caroline Street (Fells Point Historic District)

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval of Height, Massing and Scale

**STAFF:** Walter Edward Leon

**PETITIONER/OWNER:** Idan Tzameret & Marshall Klein

**SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT:** The site is located in the north western area of the Fells Point Historic District. Fells Point is significant as one of the original three settlements that merged to form the beginnings of Baltimore City. The area is directly linked to early maritime trade, which was to Baltimore's growth and development. Besides the significance of Fells Point in the eighteenth century, the community has been a constantly growing and changing urban place. Many of the earliest houses were added on to in the Victorian era creating a unique blend of pre-Revolutionary War and post-Civil War architectural styles and characteristics. Fells Point has been a diverse neighborhood of many ethnic groups each influencing the growth and development of the area throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many of the later structures are of architectural significance and are consistent with the waterfront character of Fells Point, even if stylistically different.

**Site Conditions:** The current site has an L-shaped concrete block warehouse constructed after the period of significance for the Fells Point historic district.

**BACKGROUND:** Approval for the demolition of the l-shaped, concrete block warehouse was given at the November 2018 CHAP hearing.

**PROPOSAL:** The applicant proposes to construct a five story high residential and retail structure that faces onto South Caroline Street. The building will have 31 residential units and two ground retail stores.

**APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES:** CHAP staff applied Chapter 2: Design Guidelines for Additions, New Construction, and Non-Contributing Buildings, 2.1 Guiding Principles for New Design, 2.2 Site Design, and 2.3 Scale and Form.

## 2.1 Guiding Principles for New Design

- *Identify the character defining features of the surrounding historic buildings and streetscape. Design new buildings to visually relate to the historic environment. Respect the established design precedent in the immediate area.*
  - The surrounding structures are primarily industrial in character. Smaller residential structures are mixed in the fabric of the northwest corner of the district.
- *Contemporary architectural design that reflects its current time, place, use, and culture is accepted, provided that the design is compatible with the character of the historic district.*
  - The design is very compatible in its interpretation of the commercial and industrial style of buildings in this part of Fells Point.
- *New buildings that are similar to existing buildings in materials, form, massing, and architectural features are accepted as long as the new buildings can be distinguished from historic buildings.*

The proposal complies with each one of these points listed.

## 2.2 Site Design

- *Retain established property line patterns, street and alley widths, setbacks, primary and secondary building orientation, and landscape elements.*
  - The proposal fits within an existing site surrounded by a major street on the east and side alleys to the north and west.
- *The spaces between buildings help define the historic character of the neighborhood. Design new construction to follow the existing pattern of building widths and spacing between buildings.*
  - The proposal will be adjacent to the blank north elevation of an existing and historic industrial building that anchors the nearest intersection to the south.
- *Primary buildings should have a similar orientation and relationship to the street as the existing buildings. Primary entrances and facades should be located, oriented, and sequenced to be consistent with the pattern of entrances and facades in the neighborhood.*
  - The proposal fronts the main north/ south running street of South Caroline Street and completes the north elevation with a complete façade treatment for the alley that will be re-established. Planned entrances reflect a connection to the main thoroughfare.

## 2.3 Scale and Form

- *The scale and form of new buildings must be compatible with the height and depth of surrounding buildings. Where there is variation of building height within the immediate neighborhood, the new building should generally relate to the predominant pattern.*

- The scale and form conforms to the higher industrial structures and adjacent parking garage that faces the historic district. The new structure will help shield the garage elevation more from the public view within the historic district.
- *New buildings must complement the massing of surrounding buildings, including the proportion of solid surfaces (walls) to voids (window and door openings.) Respect the characteristic rhythm (fenestration, bays, rooflines, etc.) of existing buildings.*
  - The proposed designs seeks to convey a modern interpretation of the industrial form with a variation of window and opening fenestration patterns. The overall massing is in keeping with the surrounding structures in the district.
- *Design the new building to be proportional to surrounding buildings. Consider important building proportions such as floor-to-floor heights, the size and placement of windows and doors, the scale of articulated elements such as porches, overhanging cornices, and bay windows.*
  - The proposal matches the same floor height proportion of the adjacent historic industrial building and conforms with heights on the nearest residential sites.
- *Floor-to-floor heights in new construction should be within ten percent (10%) of the floor-to-floor heights of adjacent historic buildings.*
  - The proposal's floor height is compatible with the adjacent industrial structure to the south.
- *Design rooflines to be compatible with those found on surrounding buildings.*
  - The roofline of the proposal is flat and similar to the adjacent building and those within a couple of blocks.

**NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS**

The applicants have met with the DRC and they have given favorable comments for the height, massing and scale.

**ANALYSIS:** The proposed new construction was determined by staff to be compatible for height, massing and scale for the soon-to-be-demolished site.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval of Height, Massing and Scale, with concept design to return to the full commission.

**Eric L. Holcomb**  
**Executive Director**

Site



View from South



View from North



View from West



View from East



Determination of Contributing and Non-Contributing Fells Point Historic District

