



*Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor*

**COMMISSION FOR
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL
PRESERVATION**

Tom Liebel, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



*Laurie Feinberg
Acting Director*

October 9, 2018

REQUEST: Revised Final Design – Construct Four-Story Apartment Building Reusing Facades of 425 North Howard Street

ADDRESS: 211 W. Franklin Street (City-Owned Properties)
AKA 423-425 North Howard Street and 217, 221, and 223-225 West Franklin Street

RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

STAFF: Stacy Montgomery

APPLICANT: Urban Design Group (Architect)

OWNERS: Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

Market Center and Howard Street Commercial Historic Districts:

The Market Center National Register historic district is a nearly 24-block area that was home to Baltimore's retail activity from the beginning of the 19th century. The district encompasses a wide variety of architecture from modest 19th century rowhouses to grand department store palaces, as well as banks, theaters and restaurants. The blocks encompassing the proposed new construction, which are part of the Howard Street Commercial local historic district, include a cohesive group of modestly scaled commercial structures at the northern end of Baltimore's historic retail district. The boundaries of the Mount Vernon and Seton Hill Baltimore City Historic Districts begin one block north of the site.

Site Conditions/Architectural Description:

The site is located at the southeast corner of North Howard and West Franklin Street. The building at 425 North Howard Street is a three-story commercial brick building that wraps the corner of Franklin and Howard Streets. The building features a large cornice, paired windows on the street-facing elevations, and single windows over the corner entry. There are several vacant lots north of the site, on the north side of Franklin Street and a new six-story residential building to the northeast of the site. The buildings south of the site are 2-4 stories. There is a five-story building across North Howard Street.

BACKGROUND

- These properties are owned by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore.

- These properties were offered in an RFP for redevelopment by the Baltimore Development Corporation. The developer is currently under an LDA with the City to purchase the properties.
- These properties are included within the boundaries of the Howard Street Commercial local historic district.
- At the August 8, 2017, CHAP hearing, the Commission determined that the properties at 423 North Howard Street and 223-225 West Franklin Street were significant and contributing to the historic district. The Commission also determined that the properties at 217-219 and 221 W. Franklin Street had lost their historic significance and no longer contributed to the district and therefore could be demolished.
- At the September 12, 2017, CHAP hearing, the Commission determined that the applicant presented a case for an economic hardship and approved the demolition of the buildings at 423 North Howard Street and 223-225 West Franklin Street.
- At the October 10, 2017, CHAP hearing, the Commission granted concept approval for height, scale and massing with the condition that the project return to the full Commission for final design review of the materials and detailing, and addressing the previous Commission motion to incorporate design features of the historic buildings to be demolished into the design of the new construction. At the January 9, 2018, CHAP Hearing, the Commission reviewed the final design and approved it with the following conditions:
 - Revisit window proportions on Howard Street elevation.
 - Strengthen the design of the cornice on Howard Street elevation.
 - Regularize window configuration on the bay windows on West Franklin Street.
 - Provide more emphasis on the entrance to the apartment building in the transitional bay on West Franklin Street.
- In the spring/summer of 2018, the makeup of the development team changed, and a new architect took over the project. As a result, the plans have been altered.

PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

The applicant proposes to demolish 423 North Howard Street, 217-219, 221, and 223-225 West Franklin Street and replace with a new market-rate apartment building that will incorporate the building facades at 425 North Howard Street. The corner building at 425 N Howard Street will be rehabbed with the installation of new wooden storefronts in the historic storefront openings and new wood windows to fit the historic masonry openings. The wood cornice will be reconstructed.

The applicant proposes to construct a four-story building that covers the entire lot from Tyson Street to Howard Street and runs along West Franklin Street. The facades of 425 North Howard Street along North Howard Street and West Franklin Street will be retained and a small deck will be located on the roof, set back from the front elevation. The new construction will be four stories, wrapping around the three-story historic building. The fourth story on the Howard Street elevation will be set back from the façade, so the building will read as three stories from the street.

The new construction on West Franklin Street will be four stories clad in brick with metal siding floating behind the brick elevation. The entry to the apartment building will be located between the historic building (425) and the new construction. The entrance will be recessed with an awning to emphasize this as the entry. Metal-clad irregular 4-pane windows will fill each bay. The rear elevation will be masonry.

The Howard Street elevation will be three stories of brick with a fourth story that is recessed six feet from the façade and is clad in metal with a small metal canopy. The Howard Street elevation has four-pane metal-clad windows, reflective of the “Chicago Style” windows found on other commercial buildings on the block. The first story entrance will be topped with a shallow awning that is in line with the storefront cornices on the historic building. A brick cornice runs along the top of the third story.

Staff applied *Chapter 2 of the Design Guidelines for Additions, New Construction, and Non-Contributing Buildings*, specifically *2.1 Guiding Principles for New Design, 2.2 Site Design, and 2.3 Scale and Form, 2.4 Building Features, and 2.5 Materials and Detailing*.

ANALYSIS

The proposed new construction meets *Design Guideline 2.1 Guiding Principles for New Design*, which states:

- *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.*
- *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.*
- *Radically contrasting building designs are discouraged within historic districts.*
- *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 the historic buildings.*

The new construction is contemporary in design, but is only one story taller than the historic building on the corner, with the taller massing set back from the historic building. The brick and metal are materials found within the district. The design can clearly be distinguished from the historic buildings nearby.

The proposed new construction meets *Design Guideline 2.2 Site Design*, which states:

- *Incorporate character-defining site design features of the historic district into the designs of new construction projects.*

- *New construction at corners or abutting public spaces require special consideration in the design of entrances and multiple, publicly visible facades.*

The building wraps the corner of North Howard Street and West Franklin Street. The fenestration on the new construction is different on the two street elevations. The new construction takes design cues from the buildings in the surrounding district, but is also deferential to the historic corner building that is being rehabbed.

The proposed new construction meets *Design Guideline 2.3 Scale and Form*, which states:

- *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.*
- *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.*
- *Floor-to-floor heights in new construction should be within ten percent (10%) of the floor-to-floor heights of adjacent historic buildings.*
- *Design rooflines to be compatible with those found on surrounding buildings.*

The new construction closely matches the floor-to-floor heights of the existing building, as do the rooflines. The proposed windows are slightly larger in scale than the windows on the historic building and the proportion of solids to voids is slightly greater on the historic building than the new construction.

The proposed new construction meets *Design Guideline 2.4 Building Features*, which states:

2.4.5 ROOFS

- *Design new roofs to complement the orientation, pitch, complexity, and scale of roofs on surrounding buildings.*
- *Locate and screen rooftop features to minimize their visibility from the street.*
- *Design cornices to be compatible with the height, scale, and articulation of existing cornice lines on surrounding buildings.*

The roofline of new construction is flat like the historic buildings. The proposed rooftop deck will not be visible from the street. The new cornice on Howard Street is simple to highlight the historic cornice on the corner building.

The proposed new construction meets *Design Guideline 2.5 Material and Detailing*, which states:

2.5.1 DOORS AND WINDOWS

- *Design doors and windows to be compatible with the placement, scale, type, and operation of doors and window and their openings in surrounding buildings.*

- *Design doors and windows to be compatible with the architectural character of the new facade and the surrounding buildings.*

2.5.2 MATERIALS

- *Choose building materials that are compatible with the color, size, texture, scale, and quality of building materials used in surrounding buildings. Where a particular material is dominant within an area, utilize that material in the new design.*
- *Cover and finish exterior walls with quality materials that are compatible with surrounding buildings. Traditional materials existing within the historic district, such as wood, brick, and stone, are preferred.*

The doors and windows on the new construction are compatible with the surrounding buildings. There are a variety of window types on the surrounding buildings, including single double-hung windows and multi-pane “Chicago Style” windows. Brick and metal, the materials used for the new construction, are the same materials used on the surrounding buildings.

In January of 2018, the Commission approved a design with the following recommendations:

- Revisit window proportions on Howard Street elevation.
- Strengthen the design of the cornice on Howard Street elevation.
- Regularize window configuration on the bay windows on West Franklin Street.
- Provide more emphasis on the entrance to the apartment building in the transitional bay on West Franklin Street.

The revised design addresses all of the items and places greater emphasis on the historic building by using only two materials and keeping a simple window pattern.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

There is no neighborhood Architectural Review Committee in this area. Notice has been sent to the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Mount Vernon Belvedere Association, and the Market Center Merchants Association. To date, CHAP staff has not received any comments on this project.

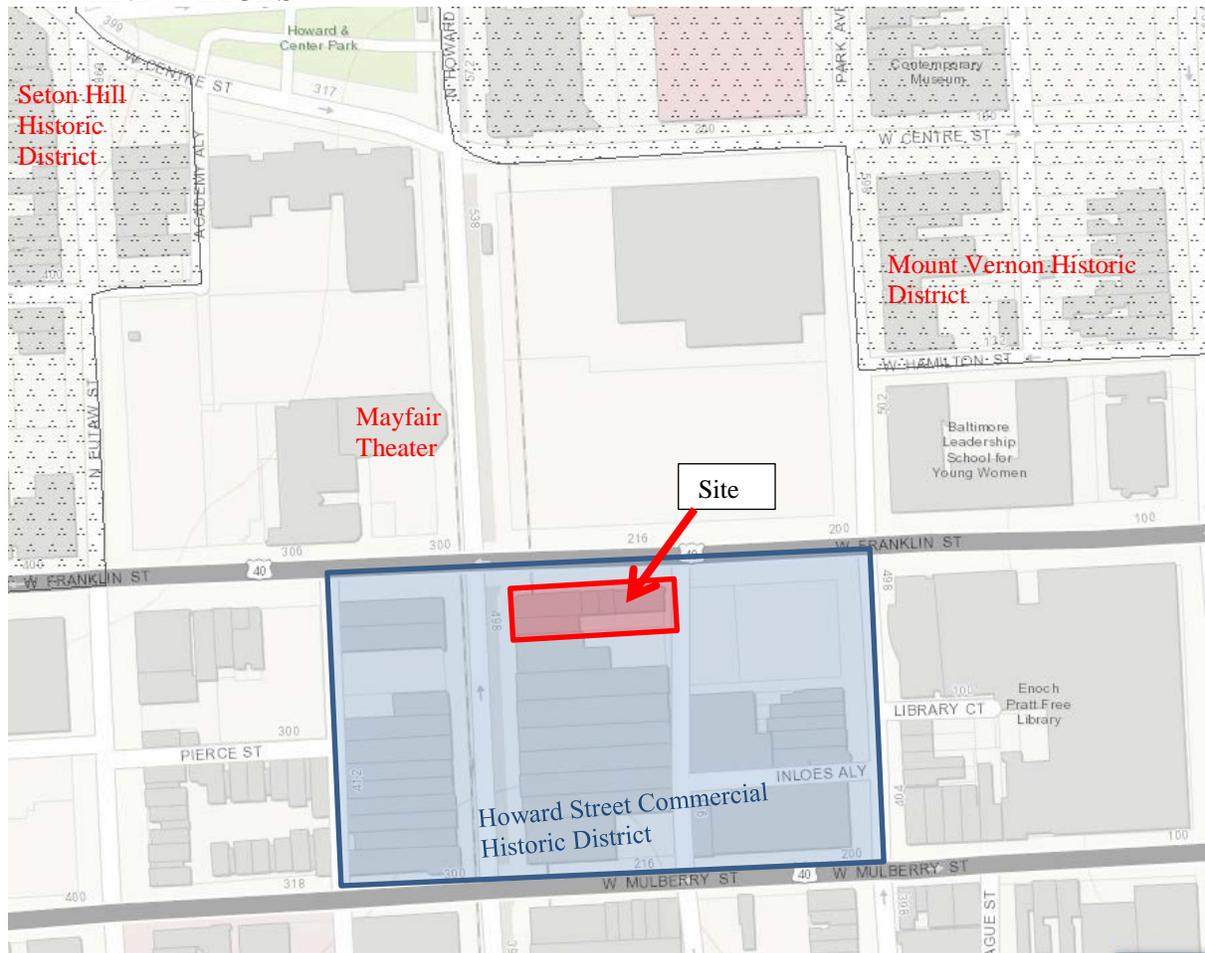
RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the final design with final details to be reviewed by staff as the design meets *Chapter 2 of the Design Guidelines for Additions, New Construction, and Non-Contributing Buildings*, specifically *2.1 Guiding Principles for New Design, 2.2 Site Design, and 2.3 Scale and Form, 2.4 Building Features, and 2.5 Materials and Detailing.*



Eric Holcomb
Director

MAP AND IMAGES



Site Map



Intersection of Howard and Franklin Streets, Facing East; showing 425 N Howard Street



400 Block of North Howard Street, Facing South



2016 Aerial View of the Properties



423-425 North Howard Street



West Franklin Street facing east

