

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

**Date:** November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Meeting #54**

---

**Project:** Caroline / Aliceanna Development

**Phase:** Schematic Development

**Location:** 600 S. Caroline and 1400 Aliceanna (Fells Point)

---

**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Caitlin Audette with Planning introduced the project and new joint-review process. This project is the first to receive a coordinated review from two review bodies in Planning – the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) and UDAAP. CHAP will cover the portion of the site located in the Fells Point Historic District, while UDAAP will advise on Master Planning and early Schematic architectural design for both sites. As the architectural design progresses toward Design Development, the portion of the project located at 600 S. Caroline will be governed by CHAP, while 1400 Aliceanna will continue to receive UDAAP review only. The urban design elements, such as streetscaping and site design will continue under the purview of UDAAP.

After the introduction about the new process, Nate Pretl, of AB Associates, continued with a brief overview of the project. Drew Peace, of Chasen Companies, provided background on the Meyer Seed building and discussed the specifics of the project in more detail. Justin Seto, of Seto Architects, proceeded with the design rationale and building evolution.

**Brief description of the project:**

- The project features two existing single-story brick warehouse buildings. One of the buildings, 600 S. Caroline Street, is in the Fells Point Historic District, while the other building, 1400 Aliceanna Street, is not.
- Additions will be vertical, resulting in a 5-story mixed use development. Rooftop and amenity spaces will be shared between the buildings.
- Exteriors will maintain existing brick façade, unique historic features, and preserve existing structure.

- 600 S. Caroline will feature 172 luxury boutique apartment units (100 at 1-BR, 72 at 2-BR) and 41,000 sq. ft. of commercial retail space.
- 1400 Aliceanna will feature 100 luxury boutique apartment units (80 at 1-BR, 20 at 2-BR) and 12,200 sq. ft. of commercial retail space.
- Sidewalks and streetscape enhancements will be made to improve accessibility / ADA compliance and pedestrian comfort.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The Panel thanked the team for their presentation. Because of the new review process, overview of the UDAAP's purview was clarified, including the purpose and intent of the Panel's comments. In general, the purpose of UDAAP is to positively impact significant projects in Baltimore City. Comments are meant to move developments toward a positive public realm experience, ensure longevity of the built environment, and create cohesion between old and new urban fabric. The Panel then continued with clarifying questions.

### **Clarification:**

- *Are streets shown in the render proposed or conceptual?* Trees on the civil plan are closer to what is proposed, but the exact locations are still being resolved.
- *Is Spring Street going to be a green alley? What is the use of this space?* The proposed use of Spring Street will be trucks, loading, etc. Second floor garden is located along that side so there will be use but it will not be at grade.
- *What are the sizes of the courtyards and how are they accessed?* Courtyards are accessed from the second floor and will be shared between the buildings. Size was not clarified.
- *How are the flood plain requirements met?* The team is addressing the flood plain requirements with a clip-on flood gate panel. The floor will remain at the same elevation. Note that residential entrance will be on Fleet Street, at the higher level.
- *Which building will be built first?* 1400 Aliceanna will be built first.
- *What is happening at the lighter colored recessed entrance pieces at grade?* These are the existing garage openings, but they will become entrances for the retail or office tenants in the future.
- *What is the material of the bookend pieces?* The bookended feature of 1400 Aliceanna will be clad in fiber cement panel.
- *What is the idea behind the frame over the new volume on the 600 S. Caroline building?* To break up the large scale of the additional volume, the massing has been recessed at the center and the frame was added.

### **Site:**

- This project has transformative quality – very important to think about the bigger picture. Continuous urbanity and careful transitions to the blocks to the north and south to inform the urban elements like tree pits and stitch the spaces together.
- Establish an attitude about the urban experience to help guide design and ensure integration with the surrounding blocks.
- Development of the street scape is very important; the existing conditions include stretches of narrow sidewalk. Team is encouraged to bring on a Landscape Architect to help address locations for street trees, planters, etc.
- Street trees and sidewalk width need to be coordinated – think about tables and chairs, connection to the interior. Can the sill heights be lowered without impacting the historic nature of the building too much?
- Hold off on the planters – don't design any fixed elements in the right of way yet; allow these spaces to be flexible for people to move freely instead of compressing the space and pushing people away from the building. Movable planters might show up later as a buffer (between tables, or to create a buffer with street, etc.)
- Spring Street is very important – people will use it, but as designed, it risks feeling like a forgotten space. Easy to see it now as a beat-up old alley, but it's great that there is program on that side. The old industrial quality is an asset to the project and should be embraced – fake alleys are built into projects for their fun gritty nature. Consider relocating and consolidating some of the less desirable uses (trash room, etc) to another location in order to maximize the usable portion. Use lighting to reinforce the quality of the space.
- Courtyard space is very narrow in proportion to building height; study the courtyard and test shadow patterns to ensure it is comfortable and sunlit.

### **Building:**

- Building masses are starting to work but will need some adjusting to address the courtyards and relationship to the existing building façades.
- New façades seem to have a lot of pieces that do not yet seem intentional and integrated.
- Plans will need to inform what is happening at the ground level; the interface with Aliceanna and Caroline feels safe. This is a transition point and could be more exciting; let the program (yes, retail, but what kind?) help to inform the intentionality of the

corner. Is there an opportunity to erode it more? This corner is starting to work, but needs more resolution.

- Consider how flood gates will interact with historic elements.
- Bookending 1400 Aliceanna does not serve the purpose of the program and adds a sameness to both sides of the building. The different sides can (and should) be differentiated to address the street conditions they face. It should also be noted that cement panel can look cheap – crucial that this is detailed very well, especially at outside corners.
- Cement panel could be used to organize the volume on 600 S. Caroline; because of its tendency to look cheap, it will require careful execution, but could be applied to the recessed portion of the volume in a dark color to help break the masses up visually.
- The team is strongly urged to remove the false frames on 600 S. Caroline; the frame has no practical, historic, or aesthetic value. It is purely decorative and appears gratuitous. It does not achieve its intended purpose of scaling the volume.
- Use a more considered approach for the fenestration – proper proportions of these openings will help to scale the façade and quiet the vertical addition. The historic base will do most of the talking. An approach of quiet elegance on the top will help to resolve friction between the old and new.
- The generous setback on 600 S. Caroline is appreciated – it allows the historic building to really shine. Also, it exposes the Aliceanna corner, which could be a design opportunity. Consider adding balconies to highlight the corner and take advantage of how nicely the corner is framed. The design of this façade should be elevated.
- Entry to the apartments needs to be more visible; this can be achieved through stronger hierarchy at the ground level and the volume above.

### **Next Steps:**

Continue design addressing the comments above. The Panel will continue its review of 1400 Aliceanna and of the Master Plan elements; 600 S. Caroline will proceed to CHAP review.

### **Attending:**

Nate Pretl, Al Barry – AB Associates

Drew Peace – Chasen Companies

Justin Seto – Seto Architects

Carla Ryon – CMR

Ed Gunts – Baltimore Fishbowl

John Smith, Steven Stern – Attendees

Mr. Anthony, Mses. Ilieva, and Bradley – UDAAP Panel

Tamara Woods\*, Ren Southard, Jeff La Noue, Eric Tiso, Lauren Schiszik, Eddie Leon, Caitlin Audette – Planning