

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

**Date:** August 12, 2021

**Meeting #50**

**Project:** Parcel M

**Phase:** Design  
Development

**Location:** 1101 N. Wolfe Street, Baltimore MD 21213

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**Project Description Update:**

- Walked through the previous iterations of 2 buildings and showed the circulation of the site. Main circulation points and the main entrance along Wolf street.
- Big changes: now one building, parking lot and courtyard design- have eliminated one point of access along Washington, 56 parking spaces. Code requires 83 and will need a variance.
- Main entrance along North Wolfe, passive gathering space on north with the wings of the building. And have some built in benches and then strong curved walkway to link Biddle to the active play space and open space for yoga/movie night, performances could happen there. Synthetic turf for the grass area.
- Biking storage area and bike courtyard area for staging and seating area.
- 6 -8 feet metal perimeter fence, street trees, green planter area for shrubs and the fence line planting to soften the edge. Wolf and Chase will have at grade patios areas for direct access to units.
- Café seating private at grade seating. Community gathering space near the rail crossing and add public are.
- Outdoor amenity spaces in the early stages of design. Plant material native with year round interest. Street trees would have resiliency and biodiversity. Bike parking spaces 13- on site short-term and 38 long term.
- Showed the cadence from north to south and east to west to help describe the movement. Speaks to how the building functions and comes together and begins to separate private from public zones.
- Buildings are connected with a firewall, but are one development. Created a middle block that expresses the center of the site. The design of the facade and massing is more contemporary E/W the south façade shows with more traditional “rowhouse” inspired bays and façade.
- Internal elevations (Washington street and Biddle view). Thinking to add large art on the back of the building to face the trains as they come in and out. Tie black heritage of the City to the trains/visitors.

- Volumes sit on a masonry base and building has decreased in height. Public art at corner of parking lot can be seen from the train.
- Corner café view (Wolfe and chase on the park side).
- Entrance/stoop areas have a bit of a patio space. Wrapping planters around the corner and at the stoops.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Panel thanked the project team for sharing the project and overall felt the new design was refreshing, but needed work on the courtyard/building interface. The panel really appreciated the design team remaining open and allowing the site/building to be what it wants to be and incorporating the panel comments. Nice to see more unified language and project read as one. The comments/main discussion points were:

### **Site**

- Needed some more explanation on the rationale on the courtyard and why the serpentine walkway. The goal was to create a meander or promenade. Everything about the site is very linear wanted to create some visual interest and more interesting buffer next to the parking lot. The actual curves relate to where the vertical expression of the building relate to the curves in the sidewalk.
- There is a disconnect between building approach and landscape approach (linear vs meandering). It is not tied and grounded to main idea of the grid pattern of motion.
  - Appreciates the strategic diagrammatic look at the landscape. A lot more purpose, but the meandering path still feels arbitrary. Make the path worthwhile otherwise it doesn't matter. Develop the places of interest along the way and let the shape of the path evolve from that. Nuances of things like benches facing each other rather than the parking lot can become nodes of socialization.
- The secondary courtyard has more buffer than the main courtyard which is faced with more head in parking. There is not real green buffer as this is the main area of use which means the experience is not as pleasant.
- Continue to study the bike area of the main courtyard, its circulation and relationship to the building and the other activities of the courtyard. Consider moving the area to the front of the building to become more of a part of the urban experience (Maybe switch with utility room. The turf used in main courtyard area is too close and abrupt to the building entrance. This should be softened and transitioned with vegetation. Needs to reconcile the number of people using the plaza area from the parking and the play space. Give a more gracious area first from the door.
- Patios with the landscape are lovely. Explore creating a better way to give breathing room to that knuckle from the units and the public spaces. The biking opportunity is really great but the active program could be on the street that can be shared with the street and not tucked in the courtyard. May give the community room more breathing room and how it interfaces with the courtyard.

- Washington streetscape layering is not really carrying over to Biddle street. Would like to see this treatment carry around more.
- For the site organization there is a lot of real estate given to circulation of space. The active amenities are squeezed in, so there might be a way to dedicate some of the pass through space to the amenity space to let it be active to allow for the square footage you really need.
- All that activity outside of the windows of bike and play space should be moved out a bit. Active next to active.
- Major approach of the courtyard looks like a main entrance but is to private units. There should be some hierarchy to the circulation and make sure it's clear where main entrance is.
- Public art on the northeast corner of parking lot needs to have layered planting and not just in the lot. Likes the idea of having it public, but how is it experienced and/or used.
- Differing opinions: 1.) Give more thought of if people will sit on the street in private terraces. Seems very public and very on-the-street. Maybe should be a planting space since close on the street. 2.) The stoops and small patios work really well and would be used because they have purpose beyond the side facing stairs.
- Dumpster screening is necessary. Study the travel path to the dumpster. Perhaps switch the driveway and circulation to get there by moving the parking lot entrance to the north.
- Precedents for programming on the courtyard are apt but show story higher, so the team should find precedents that interface with grade units.
- Love the internal courtyard and the intimate nestled spaces are great. Edge along the landscape has to be developed more and use these spaces as a narrative to move the design of the space forward. Love the idea of the more lush plantings and a good buffer to the parking lot. Great design opportunities for the linear park.
- NE corner plaza/art:
  - Like the idea of the community space at Washington and Biddle. Art piece works well but is it to be useable by the community or only to be viewed.
  - Needs to be more purposeful. It doesn't seem like a great gathering place and the sculpture seems more like a symbolic gesture of generosity. Art and communities need to be more meaningful and not just check the box. Perhaps the fence square off towards the parking and give the space to the plaza, making it a true corner plaza that people can use. Give layers of activity and movement and people will use it.
- Excited about the possibility of more naturalistic landscape. Will feel a lot better.
- Remember to program for pets.

### **Building**

- Building- Chase street side carrying proportions of the rowhomes is a good move, but losing the details of what's happening at the ground level site. The bays seem to be somewhat applied and not coming off as mass but only materials. The forms are not

strong enough and need to be expressed more. Would recommend increasing the return depth to the main mass, so that it reads more like a building element.

- Several comments about the proposed murals:
  - Artwork facades off the parking lot. I understand and know what the intent is, but be careful and mindful about the sensitivity of expression when it comes to art so that it does not come off as pandering to a certain group. Murals should have more community participation and feels like it's being forced.
  - Not properly integrated into the building. Would be ok if parts of building were being designed specifically to accommodate the murals. Mural needs to be better integrated and be careful about how its executed so it does not come off as offensive.
  - Murals could be a really dynamic idea. Don't want to dismiss the idea of the art on the facades plus the short face of the south façade. Could consider a "mural" that continues on as a meaningful expression across multiple faces of the building croutyard. Maybe the murals talk to the linear park courtyard. Artistic expression vs not a token one.
- Good response to the existing context and nice synthesis with the park, market, and rowhouses. The simplified language is good and can reinforce the connection and openness of the market to other non-residential elements to the courtyard. Study how to rearrange the puzzle pieces so there is a more direct connection.
- Like the fresh easy approach to the building. It is a breath of fresh air. Like the monochromatic and the darker base.
- Nice about how the white volume comes at the market volume. The gray pavilion elements are starting too soon. The flat gray frame is too close to the corner and emphasizes their flatness.
- Internal facades need one more level of simplification. Consider losing the gray panels where the playground is. Dark base would be nice with the white base. The panels no longer make sense.

### **Next Steps:**

Continue design addressing comments above.

### **Attending:**

Peter Fillat, Kevin Roycroft – Fillat + Architects

Ben Phillips, LeAnn Hanfield, Ronald Lipscomb – Beacon Communities

Kristen Gedeon – MK Consulting Engineers

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

Tamara Woods– Planning