

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

Date: September 9, 2021

Meeting #51

Project: UMMS – MSGCCC Addition

Phase: Design Development

Location: University of MD Medical Center – Greene and Baltimore Streets

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Mohammed Ayoub with HDR reintroduced the project and expressed how comments from the Panel have impacted the design in a positive manner, specifically regarding prioritizing pedestrians and managing vehicular traffic. The proposal is for a 10-story building addition with a height of approximately 125 feet. The building fronts the intersection of Baltimore and Greene Street, with a small park space across the street to the east.

Main changes to the project from the last UDAAP include the following:

- The arrival sequence has been simplified and refined.
- Terra cotta lintels have been studied, but the break at entrance was kept in place to emphasize the entrance. Horizontal banding has been updated to a more appropriate scale.
- The signage was reduced by 11% to accommodate for the proper placement on glazing.
- Additional study of future phase vertical addition was completed; team agreed that continuation of the building skin to the top is preferred over breaking up the façade reading with a glazed “belt” at the mechanical level.
- Staff entrance has been studied and refined.
- Berms in the healing garden have been refined to take on a more natural feel.

DISCUSSION:

The Panel thanked the project team for very thoroughly studying and addressing comments from previous meeting, followed by questions and clarifications.

Clarifications:

- *On the west façade, what are the horizontal elements in the glass strip?* The glass is continuous, and the floor slabs have been minimized to enhance the read. The minimized floor slabs are the horizontal elements seen in the rendering – functionally, the glass strip was introduced to democratize the access to light and views out of the building.
- *What is the condition of the termination of the fiberglass screen where it meets the other materials and existing building?* The screen dies into the corner; it has a return that closes the edge off.
- *What is the material of the walls of the berms in the healing garden?* The team is considering different metals to contain the plantings. The walls of the planters will be steel or Corten with wood benches. The ground plane will be precast concrete pavers, with a Flemish running bond pattern.
- *Please clarify north façade street scape; how was this handled? Was the urban rhythm upheld?* Paving and accents have been continued around the building. Trees are organized in a continuous fashion to read as part of the campus. Trees on the north side of the building were placed to continue the rhythm.

Site:

- Site treatment is successful in achieving a human scale but will benefit from minor changes and revisions.
- Streetscape reads more cohesively, revisions of the hardscape – consolidation of materials, etc. – are very successful.
- Addition of trees on the west side will help continue the feel of the park across the street – even two or three additional trees will help to soften the streetscape and connect better with the park.

- Team is strongly encouraged to consider the larger urban context for proper placement of trees. Examining the urban fabric and placement of existing trees will help ensure continuity and rhythmic cadence – these are small tweaks and can make the project feel integrated instead of isolated.
- Staff entrance is much improved; introducing a vining plant to the planting plan (in addition to the tall grasses) will match the render more closely. Addition of a vining plant will also ensure the entrance feels welcoming and not like a service entrance, which was of concern previously.
- Courtyard section of the berm shows the topography dropped, but the render shows it rising. Render responds better to comments from previous meeting, and team is encouraged to base final design on the fuller berm shown in the rendering.
- Panel commends the move to raise the curb access on the west; this improvement will aid pedestrian traffic and calm vehicular traffic, improving safety and comfort for pedestrians.
- Rhythm of crosswalks is important – carefully consider the placement of each within the context of the site and relationship to each other.

Building:

- The proposed façade concept is an elegant solution and will be wonderful addition to the Baltimore skyline.
- Modification of the joint system of the terra cotta is improved and works better with the monolithic nature of the base. The continuous lintel works better for the overall composition and with the overall uniformity of the building. This more refined simplicity adds to the elegance of the composition.
- Concern with the future vertical expansion; the proportion of the current building proposal is nice, but the location of the band shown with potential addition of 3-stories feels unresolved. Positioning of the band doesn't need to be solved now but continue to study the proportions of the volume.
- Slight reduction in size of signage is welcomed.
- Consideration of the edges and material changes – good attention to detail where the terra cotta meets the fiberglass screen will be needed. Fine craftsmanship will ensure success of how these elements come together.

- On the north façade, the second pier doesn't continue up, which interrupts the overall rhythm of the building. Allow the façade to wrap the corner and speak the same language as it does on the east.
- Reduction of the elements to their essence has resulted in successful elegant and precise language, but the preexisting openings need more attention to make them feel as though they are intentionally blended into the façade.

Next Steps:

Continue design addressing the comments above and complete Design Review with Department of Planning staff.

Attending:

Mohammed Ayoub, Shawn Xu, Ankur Deshpande – HDR
Linda Whitmore, Jason Goodman, Andrew Jinks – UMMC
Gordon Ingerson – KPN Architects

Ed Guntz – BBJ

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

Tamara Woods*, Renata Southard, Caitlin Audette – Planning