

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

Date: October 31, 2013

Meeting No.: 175

Project: 25th Street Station PUD
Phase: Revised Master Plan and
Revised Final Building Review – Walmart Building

Location: Sisson, West 24th and Howard Streets, and Huntington Avenue

PRESENTATION:

Jon Kraft, a landscape architect Bowman and Dan Contadore, Walmart’s architect from /MMA, presented the revised master plan and design for the proposed Site 1 including a Walmart store and parking garage. Since the last UDARP presentation on October 10, 2013, the development team has met with planning staff and neighborhood groups to further discuss additional refinement. The essential organization and composition remains the same as last presented to the UDARP panel at the October 10, 2013 meeting. Proposed modifications since the last presentation include:

1. Site Plan

a. General Comments

- i. Mr. Kraft reminded the panel that there is an approximately 18.5 foot grade change from the intersection of Huntington Avenue and West 25th Street to the entry at Walmart
- ii. Recent modifications enhance the pedestrian experience with an expanded and improved pedestrian network to and on the Walmart site
- iii. Unifying elements include plantings and site furnishings.
 - a. Public Realm elements follow Baltimore Streetscape and neighborhood sector guidelines, including street trees, paving, Acorn light fixtures, and benches. Improvements along Sisson and W. 24th Street follow these guidelines.
 - b. Private Realm elements are contemporary and unique to the Site 1 district.
 - c. The approach to plant materials is more mixed with some crossover.

b. There are 5 distinct Pedestrian Areas

- i. Pedestrian Enhancement Area 1
 - a. This is the main arrival to Phase 1 intended to create a sense of arrival to the Site 1 precinct
 - b. Special paving is provided at the intersection of Huntington Avenue, West 25th Street, and the entry drive to the Walmart ramp, and in front of retail building C-1 to the access to the top level of the parking
 - c. Crosswalks are broadened to approximately 10’
 - d. The median now includes approximately 11’ light columns are scaled to vehicular traffic in lieu of previously illustrated bollards

- e. Willow oaks tightly spaced at approximately 25' on center provide a canopied entrance
 - f. Bollards are spaced in the planters parallel to the entry road, creating a pedestrian marker leading to the stair and elevator to Walmart
 - g. A bicycle rack is adjacent to the C-1 retail building and top deck of the parking lot
 - h. The walkway is in direct alignment with the stair to the lower level, creating a clear path
 - i. There is approximately 8' clear between the planter and the edge of Retail Building C-1
 - j. A masonry wall continues to screen the parking lot or the pad site
 - k. A Walmart sign is mounted to a panel that matches the sign panel mounted to the store
 - l. A planting strip between the ramp paving and the retaining wall has been adjusted to provide space for street trees
- ii. Pedestrian Enhancement Area 2
 - a. This area includes an upper terrace from the entrance to the parking deck, a covered pavilion, the stair and elevator to the lower level, the lower level parking entrance, and the initial stretch of walkway to the Walmart entrance
 - b. A row of 5 parking spaces has been eliminated, and raised planters have been enlarged to provide a significant buffer between pedestrians and the parking deck
 - c. The canopy has a split roof w/ open trellis over the circulation path and solid roof over side areas
 - d. A bike rack is placed on the inside corner of the overlook to the parking lot below
 - e. A round piperail is placed on top of the masonry spandrel overlooking the lower parking lot
 - f. The screenwall to the roof is now predominantly masonry with a steel frame system creating a rhythm for the length of the wall, and an architectural language that is repeated at the front of the Walmart. There are two openings in the wall providing viewports to the green roof.
 - g. The stair is reconfigured to follow the circulation axis, with a sculptural infill adjacent to the garage wall.
 - h. The elevator includes a glass wall facing the parking lot to improve visibility
 - i. The spandrel above the lower level of the parking structure has been split to allow for a few port immediately before the stair opposite the elevator
 - j. The retaining wall for the access ramp includes a planting area for 4 – 5 London Plane trees on the ramp side, and for wall climbers, ornamental plants, and Honey Locust trees on the lower level
 - k. The planter against the building is shaped to reinforce the circulation path
 - iii. Pedestrian Enhancement Area 3

- a. There is a special paving crosswalk from the parking lot pedestrian spine to a seating area to the right of the main entry and canopy, which stretches across to engage the storefront and steel frames
- iv. Pedestrian Enhancement Area 4
 - a. This area includes both an mini-entry plaza on W. 24th Street and a pedestrian collector leading through the parking lot to the Walmart at Pedestrian Enhancement Area 3
 - b. Street trees (elms) are provided at approximately 25' o.c., pending final coordination with site utilities
 - c. Redbuds in a planter strip provide a buffer at the parking lot retaining wall
 - d. Public element street lights at 60' o.c. line the 5' concrete sidewalk
 - e. Mini-plaza
 - i. Ornamental plantings flank one side of the plaza and public element benches and furnishings are provided
 - ii. A Walmart sign is placed on a composite panel that matches the large panel at the face of the Walmart
 - iii. Stairs up to the parking lot have a 45 degree symmetrical throat
 - iv. Raised planters with ornamental planting screens the parking lots on either side of the stair
 - v. A cart corral is placed on one side of the stair behind the planter wall. A gatekeeper system will help keep the carts on the Walmart site.
 - f. Pedestrian walkway
 - i. Flanked by a low masonry wall on one side with periodic breaks to allow for pedestrian access.
 - ii. London Plane trees at approximately 25' o.c. with underplanting line one side of the walk.
 - iii. Bollards define and light the path
- v. Pedestrian Enhancement Area 5
 - a. The retaining wall transitions into a screenwall
 - b. Redbuds turn the corner helping to screen the parking lot
 - c. 3 red maples are planted between the sidewalk and entry drive
 - d. Special paving continues the walkway as a crosswalk, connecting to the sidewalk in front of Walmart
 - e. Bollards and special ornamental planting are placed between the walkway and the screenwall

2. **Building Architecture**

- a. The architectural character has been further simplified based on the panel's prior comments.
- b. Primary East façade
 - i. A canopy stretches across the two story entry and engages the storefront to the east
 - ii. The steel frame shown at the upper level reappears above the eastern storefront.
 - iii. The Market & Pharmacy signage stretches across the canopy

- iv. The large sign panel with composite panels has added depth and return
- v. The number of types and sizes of masonry are reduced
- c. East, north and west elevations
 - i. North elevation includes the steel frame as noted above.
 - ii. West and south elevations are unchanged

PANEL COMMENTS:

The panel offered the following comments:

0. General

- a. The panel is in unanimous agreement that modifications are a major improvement to the prior submissions. The developer and design team, including both the landscape architect and the architect, deserve recognition and commendation for their willingness to listen and to advance the design based on community and UDARP panel input.

1. Site plan

a. General Comments

- i. The panel previously identified the pedestrian experience as the singular area that needed most attention. The development team has responded well.
- ii. Unifying elements for both public and private areas are well conceived
- iii. The panel suggests 3 – 3 ½” tree caliper in critical areas, i.e as trees that create alle’es and/or line walkways
- iv. Maintenance agreements for plant materials are critical, as the success of this plan is heavily dependent on the landscaping. The developer indicated that plant materials have, as a minimum requirement, a 2 year replacement warranty
 - 1. The bollards create a strong pedestrian pathway signal. Spacing is critical – 10 – 12’ o.c. maximum preferred. Development team will confirm for each area as there is inconsistency between plans and renderings.
 - 2. Confirm public street light spacing as 60’ seems too wide
- v. Architectural perspective renderings frequently convey incorrect tree species and are difficult to read
- vi. Site plans, architectural plans, detailed plans, elevations and perspective renderings frequently show inconsistent depictions and require significant coordination. Mr. Kraft indicated that the large scale plans are the most correct. The design team will coordinate these drawings.
- vii. The community noted that bicycle pathways and storage are increasingly important in this Baltimore community, and the panel agrees.
- viii. The gap caused by the loading area for the storage building is a break in the pedestrian experience. The panel encourages the city to work with the landowner to improve the experience in front of this building.

b. Pedestrian Areas

- i. Pedestrian Enhancement Area 1
 - 1. Can a project medallion or other symbol be placed in the special paving at the W. 25th Street and Huntington Avenue intersection?
 - 2. Light sabres are a significant improvement to the bollards in the median

3. The panel recommends moving Retail Building C-1 2' to the north to provide a 10' clear walk between the building and the planting area
- ii. Pedestrian Enhancement Area 2
 1. The new screen wall design is a significant improvement
 2. The panel suggests incorporating the elevator into the Walmart store mass as it interferes with other site elements. Mr. Contadore will discuss with Walmart.
 3. The community suggested that a single elevator provided the only easily accessible path to the Walmart, and suggested adding a second elevator. The panel agreed that the development team should investigate this issue.
 4. The panel suggested uplighting the screen wall at the edge of the parking lot
 5. Reconsider lighting in the pavilion; use wall mounted fixtures upset into the trellis and over the pathway in lieu of can lights
 6. The sculptural infill adjacent to the garage wall may be a safety issue
 7. The slot in the spandrel at the garage causes the appearance of an unsupported beam and is disconcerting. A structural solution of a masonry pier, a column or a spanning structural beam could alleviate the problem, and should be studied further.
- iii. Pedestrian Enhancement Area 3
 1. Clarify bollard spacing and tree quantity/spacing west of main entry
- iv. Pedestrian Enhancement Area 4
 1. Mini-plaza
 - a. The panel suggested allowing the stair throat could be asymmetrical with a straight edge against the western boundary
 2. Pedestrian walkway
 - a. As the walkway approaches the Walmart, the axial terminus is a bench in front of a storefront with a canopy fragment above. The panel recommends extending the focal two story glass centerpiece to end the axis.
- v. Pedestrian Enhancement Area 5
 1. As a pedestrian approaches the Walmart, a fire exit door terminates the axis. Consider adding directional signage or a powerful graphic.
 2. Consider adding a historical plaque at the reconstructed stone screen wall that explains the history of the site and church

2. Building Architecture

- a. The architectural character has continued to improve.
- b. East façade
 - i. Continue to simplify the number of types and sizes of masonry
 - ii. See comments above related to the main entry.
 - iii. The storefront west of the main entry could be similar to the storefront and steel frame that is east of the main entry

COMMUNITY COMMENTS:

Comments were made by Megan Hamilton, Historic Fawcett Community, regarding bike access and paths; Joan Floyd, RNA, regarding the base height of the new building, loading dock location, and handi-cap access; Bruce Willen, Old Goucher, seeking to move the building and retain the existing church; Sandy Sparks, CVCA, who was pleased with the redesign and site/landscaping; and Richard Gilmore, Remington Resident, who liked the improvements in both architectural design and site work.

PANEL ACTION:

The panel recommended approval with comments of the revised Masterplan and revised Final Design of the Site I buildings, landscaping, and site.

Attending:

Bob Rosenfelt – Colbert Matz Rosenfelt
Dan Condatore – MMA Architects
Jon Kraft, Jessica Heinz, Dan Heil – Bowman Consulting
Jon Laria – Ballard Spahr
Caroline Paff – WV Urban
Sandy Sparks, Sharon Guida - CVCA
Dan Shuts, Cathy Yates, Bruce Willen – Old Goucher
Nina Albert – Walmart
Kara Kunst, Calvin Wilgie, Bonnie Stiffey, Richard Gilmore, Judith Kunst – GRIA
Megan Hamilton – Historic Fawcett Community
Joan Floyd, John Viles – RNA
Cindy Leahy – 14th District City Council
Councilman Carl Stokes
Leon Pinket, Patrick Terranova – BDC

UDARP Panel Members- Ms. Diane Jones Allen, Messrs. Gary Bowden, Rich Burns and David Haresign*

Planning Department- Mr. Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Wolde Ararsa, Natasha Becker, Mark Cameron