

Minutes
Baltimore County **Design Review Panel**
September 17, 2007
DRAFT

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Call to order

Chairman, Geoffrey Glazer, called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Baltimore County Design Review Panel to order at 6:10 p.m. The following panel members were:

Present

Mr. Geoffrey Glazer
Mr. Dean Hoover
Mr. Thomas Repsher
Mr. Scott Rykiel
Ms. Magda Westerhout
Mr. Francis Anderson (Resident Member – RRLR)

Not Present

Mr. Donald Kann
Ms. Betsy Boykin
Mr. Christopher Parts
Mr. Derrick Burnett

County staff present included:

Arnold F. 'Pat' Keller, III, Lynn Lanham, Krystle Patchak, Diana Itter

Review of today's agenda

There were no changes to the published agenda, which is filed as Appendix A.

Minutes of the July 11, 2007 meeting

Mr. Hoover moved the acceptance of the draft minutes and the motion was seconded by Mr. Rykiel and passed by acclamation.

The approved minutes are filed as Appendix B.

ITEM 1

PROJECT NAME: Towson Town Center – Façade Reviews for tenants: Crate & Barrel, The Cheesecake Factory, P.F. Changs

DRP PROJECT #: 469

PROJECT TYPE: Commercial, Towson

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

General Growth Properties, Inc. (GGP), owner of the Towson Town Center, proposes to construct an approximately 80,000+/- square-foot building addition to the Towson Town Center at Dulaney Valley Road and Fairmount Avenue. The project will include razing the existing fuel service station adjacent to Dulaney Valley Road to provide additional parking for the expansion. The panel approved the overall massing of the project as well as the overall design and materials for the addition and parking structure in April of 2007.

The prior approval of the project required individual tenants to return to the Design Review Panel for façade review and approval. Crate & Barrel, The Cheesecake Factory, and P.F. Changs all presented their façade proposals to the panel. There will be one other additional restaurant that will have to return to the panel for review.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

In regards to The Cheesecake Factory, Mr. Hoover questioned the tower element being the only hip type structure in the proposal. He would like to see it removed. Ms. Westerhout agreed and also requested to see material samples, which were presented.

Mr. Glazer questioned the vertical Crate & Barrel signage. He would like to see it work more with the horizontal element of the whole proposal. He suggested moving it and making it read horizontal. He also commented on the proposed vertical Macy's sign, which he asked to be removed also.

SPEAKERS COMMENTS:

Mr. Larry Schmidt, representing the Greater Towson Committee, which is an organization of business owners in Towson, stated support for the project.

DISPOSITION:

A motion was made by Ms. Westerhout to have the project approved as presented with the following conditions:

1. Remove vertical signage on Dulaney Valley Road (Crate & Barrel, Macy's)
2. Revise hip roof on vertical tower of The Cheesecake Factory.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Hoover and passed by acclamation at 6:27 p.m. The revised plans are to be submitted to the Office of Planning for final approval.

Mr. Rykiel and Mr. Repsher recused themselves from the review of this project.

ITEM 2

PROJECT NAME: McDonald's – 502 Reisterstown Road

DRP PROJECT #: 481

PROJECT TYPE: Commercial, Pikesville

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project calls for the rebuilding of the existing freestanding McDonald's restaurant with a drive-thru at this location. The proposed building location, orientation, and overall site circulation will be similar to the existing. The two existing entrances on Reisterstown Road will be utilized for access to the site. The northwestern entrance is shared with the adjoining strip center. The entrance and the access aisle along the northwest side of the site are encumbered by a 20-foot wide easement and right-of-way area. No changes to the easement area are proposed with the redevelopment of the site.

The project was previously reviewed by the Design Review Panel at the July 11, 2007 meeting. At that time the project was denied. The following revisions were requested with any resubmittal of the project:

1. The Design should reflect the Pikesville Design Guidelines and Office of Planning comments.
2. Revise the façade and building height. One option is to raise the parapet and add some punched windows to give the feeling of additional height.
3. Revise the location of signage and accurately depict its location and dimensions on plans.
4. Move the building forward a few feet and provide special paving on front drive lane.

Lee May presented the revisions to the panel. The proposed site plan and building plans have been revised to better reflect the guidelines. The parapet was raised 4 feet to a total height of 22'-3", and punched windows were added. An alternate showing larger windows was also discussed. The sign location was depicted on the plans and the sign plans were revised. The overall building was moved closer to Reisterstown Road, about 3 feet and the front drive lane width was reduced. Pedestrian walkways were also widened.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. Repsher stated that he expected the front drive lane to be removed. Mr. May stated that they feel it would work best to have the drive lane so that customers can return to the lot and park after they go through the drive-thru. Mr. Glazer questioned the safety of vehicles and pedestrians around the front drive lane.

Mr. Repsher also commented on the dumpster area. He questioned the maneuverability of trash trucks in the space provided. Mr. May ensured the panel that trash pickup will be done at non-peak hours and the dumpster enclosure will be done all in brick.

Mr. Hoover commented on the proposal with the larger punched windows, which was previously presented to the Chairman after discussions.

Ms. Westerhout questioned the false second story placement, specifically on the non drive-thru side of the building. She suggested continuing the parapet to line up with the edge of the entrance door.

Mr. Rykiel questioned the placement of the sign on the plans. The sign appears to be under a proposed tree.

SPEAKERS COMMENTS:

Ms. Melanie Anson, of Sudbrook Park Inc., stated her concerns about the Pikesville Design Guidelines being adhered to. She explained that the guidelines are not optional and no one has the authority to change them. Ms. Anson feels that the McDonald's project does not comply with the guidelines. Mr. Glazer assured Ms. Anson that the panel is not ignoring the guidelines and that the panel will not set a precedent by their review of this project.

Ms. Darragh Brady, also of Sudbrook Park Inc., seconded Ms. Anson's comments and also stated that the community is trying to obtain a better streetscape. Ms. Brady also stated that she understands some leverage being given to this project, due to its nature, but she would like to see a letter stating that this will not set a precedent.

Reverend Hipkins, of the Ames Sudbrook United Methodist Church located on the opposite side of Reisterstown Road stated her concerns about the safety of pedestrians at the McDonald's site. She was also concerned with the increased traffic at peak times at the plaza next to the McDonald's.

DISPOSITION:

A motion was made by Mr. Repsher to approve the plan with the following conditions:

1. Remove front drive lane and replace with pedestrian space.
2. Revise sign – put sign on brick column, no advertising board is needed.
3. Revise elevations to show extension of parapet on non drive-thru side and larger punched windows (as shown on the alternate).

The motion was seconded by Mr. Rykiel and passed by acclamation at 6:57 p.m. The revised plans are to be submitted to the Office of Planning for final approval.

Mr. Glazer stated that he would like this approval not to set a precedent for the Reisterstown Road Corridor. He suggested a different set of guidelines for the urban convenience area.

ITEM 3

PROJECT NAME: 619 York Road

DRP PROJECT #: 484

PROJECT TYPE: Commercial - Towson

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Stuart Macklin presented the project to the panel. The applicant is proposing a new 3,520 s.f. three-story, LEED Silver Certified Green Building over the exact footprint of the existing building, with a 18' addition in the rear. The first floor is a restaurant with an outdoor seating area, adjacent to the front of the building at York Road. The restaurant also has a drive-up window with 5 stacking spaces for cars. The two upper floors are shell space for future office tenants. There is also an existing basement for storage and mechanical space. The two existing curb cuts on the site will remain off of York Road and one of the two existing curb cuts at the rear of the property will be retained for access to Joppa Road. The site is zoned BM-CT and is approximately a ½ acre.

The building will be constructed of mainly high efficiency and spandrel glass with stone masonry to match the existing adjacent historic building.

The adjacent building, to the south of the site, located at 617 York Road is on the Baltimore County Final Landmarks List (#188), known as the Schmuck House, (MIHP) BA# 208.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. Glazer questioned the parking ratio for the property. Mr. Macklin stated that 19 parking spaces are provided on the site and the ratio is 2/1,000 in the CT district. Mr. Hoover stated that additional parking can be obtained off site through the revenue authority.

Mr. Rykiel was concerned with the scale of the building compared to the historical site. He suggested expanding the footprint to widen the building and reduce massive height. Mr. Macklin stated that the applicant is trying to use the current footprint. Mr. Rykiel suggested putting parking underneath the building.

Ms. Westerhout stated her concerns about the height of the stone element on the front of the building. She suggested keeping the stone in line with the cornice line on the historic building. Ms. Westerhout also questioned the wedge elements near the top of the building and the roof.

Mr. Hoover also suggested making the building larger to help offer more options for potential office tenants. He also suggested that the applicant meet with the GTC to go over the plans.

Mr. Glazer then commented on the solar panel on the roof. He would like to see it re-worked, if possible. He would also like to see the wedge elements re-worked. Mr. Macklin stated that the location of the solar panel is in the location where it will reap the most benefits.

SPEAKERS COMMENTS:

Mr. Francis Anderson, of 7912 Springway Road, stated the importance of green architecture and how architecture speaks to technology. He stated that a good green building is one that works well with its surroundings, such as a historic structure or a residential neighborhood.

Ms. Nancy Horst, of 7819 Ellenham Avenue and a member of Tomorrow's Towson, would like the applicant to meet with the GTCCA and the Towson community to help achieve a more walkable towson.

DISPOSITION:

A motion was made by Ms. Westerhout to have the project resubmitted with the following revisions:

1. Provide landscaping details for plaza/courtyard wall.
2. Provide lighting details addressing security. This area is dark.
3. Study the height of the stone on front façade in relation to historic structure
4. Rework cut outs, or wedges, on glass walls
5. Enlarge the building, reducing mass of building height.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Rykiel and passed by acclamation at 7:32 p.m.

ITEM 4

PROJECT NAME: Butchart Property – 7821-7823 Ellenham Avenue

DRP PROJECT #: 482

PROJECT TYPE: Residential, Ruxton/Riderwood/Lake Roland

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Ruxton Cottages LLC, is proceeding with a subdivision of the property known as 7823 Ellenham Avenue and proposes the redevelopment of the property, which encompasses about an acre. The new proposal, consists of razing the existing residence, along with a portion of the existing driveway that will no longer be used. Two new residences will be built on the subdivided property. Lot 1, known as the “Rockwell House” will be comprised of approximately 3,800 finished feet above grade and lot 2, known as the “Vanderhorst House” will be comprised of approximately 3,600 finished feet above grade.

The project was previously reviewed by the Design Review Panel at the July 11, 2007 meeting. At that time the project was denied subject to the following conditions:

1. Revise landscape plan to show appropriate screening and preserved trees
2. Depict appropriate storm water management issues, particularly how the drainage onto Roland Avenue will be controlled.
3. Revise roofline on both homes.
4. Revise cupola plans on lot 1 house, “Rockwell House.”
5. Revise the rear elevation of the “Vanderhorst House” on lot 2 to make window layout more symmetrical.
6. Note material selections on the plans.
7. Clearly define easement on plans.
8. Amend LOD system to show all existing trees on site.
9. Submit corrected house elevations for both lot 1 and 2 without markup notations.
10. Place a note on the plan that the fir trees used for screening that are damaged during construction will be replaced.
11. Address tree protection measures on the proposed landscape plan.
12. Locate HVAC units on the plan.

Mr. Gill, managing member of Ruxton Cottages LLC, presented the revised plans to the panel.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. Anderson, resident member for the Ruxton/Riderwood/Lake Roland area commented on the roof height adjustments on both homes. He also questioned the screening at the Fink residence. He was concerned with the comments from the neighbors.

Mr. Repsher was concerned with drainage issues. He stated that he does not see increased drainage problems occurring closer to the Fink residence, he suggested moving the proposed drain closer to the driveway and not planting on top of the drain.

Mr. Rykiel questioned the evergreen screening area close to the Fesperman’s as well as the landscaping allowance for screening plantings. He suggested putting the agreements in writing and consulting with a landscape architect.

Mr. Glazer commented on the overall house improvements, specifically the scaling down of the roof heights.

SPEAKERS COMMENTS:

Ms. Liz Fesperman, of 7827 Ellenham Avenue, stated that she met with Mr. Gill, the applicant, in late August and had a lot of unresolved issues. Those issues included: easement improperly located on site plan, inconsistent surveys, no specific landscape plans, and trees not located on her lot, which will be impacted by L.O.D. Other concerns included the fact that the easement was not put in writing until 4 hours before this meeting.

Mr. Dan Fesperman, also of 7827 Ellenham Avenue, was concerned with the improper location of the flower beds, which would be addressed by the easement, on the site plan as well as the depicted size of them.

Ms. Nancy Horst, of 7819 Ellenham Avenue, was concerned with the accuracy of the property lines as well as the black walnut trees, which will be used for screening. Ms. Horst stated that these trees become very bare in the winter months and will not serve much purpose. She suggested adding mid-size evergreens or getting a landscape allowance to address this problem. Ms. Horst also voiced her concerns about the scale of the homes.

Ms. Geraldine Heisel, of 1808 Roland Avenue, was concerned with flooding problems.

DISPOSITION:

All panel members agreed that all issues, described below, need to be resolved before a approval can be granted for the project.

A motion was made by Mr. Anderson to approve the project administratively if the following conditions are met:

1. Individual site surveys are resolved. (All surveyors agree that information is accurate – Flower beds, building placement on the Fesperman property)
2. Evidence is provided that all parties have agreed to the language contained in the easement.
3. Screening plans are finalized and noted on plans (Fesperman side)
4. Soils report is attached to plans to show that drywells will work.

The revised package is to be submitted to the Office of Planning for final review. The motion was seconded by Mr. Repsher. Panel members Glazer, and Westerhout were for the motion and Mr. Rykiel was against the motion. The motion passed at 8:35 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:37 p.m.

Code Statement: Section 32 – 4 – 203 (i) (2) of the Baltimore County Code states, *The Panel's recommendation is binding on the Hearing Officer, and on the agencies under subsection (1), (Directors of the Office of Planning, the Department of Permits and Development Management and the Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management), unless the Hearing Officer or agencies find that the Panel's actions constitute an abuse of its discretion or are unsupported by the documentation and evidence presented.*

Approved as of November 14, 2007