

*Minutes*  
Baltimore County Design Review Panel  
November 10, 2020  
**Approved**

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**Call to order and announcements**

**Review of today's agenda**

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**Items for initial or continued discussion**

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**Adjournment of the Board meeting**

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*Appendices*

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**Appendix B**

Agenda  
Minutes – October 14, 2020 meeting, as approved

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**Call to order**

Design Review Panel (DRP) Chair, Mr. John DiMenna, called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Baltimore County DRP to order at 6:11 p.m. The following panel members were:

**Present**

Mr. John DiMenna  
Ms. Kelly Ennis  
Mr. Matt D’Amico  
Mr. Matt Renauld

**Not Present**

Ms. Cecily Bedwell  
Mr. Donald Kann  
Mr. Joseph Ucciferro

Residential reviewer present was: Ms. Nancy R. Goldring

County staff present: Pete Gutwald, Jeff Mayhew, Jenifer Nugent, Marta Kulchytska, Brett M. Williams, and Te-Sheng Huang.

**Minutes of the October 14, 2020 Meeting**

Mr. D’Amico moved the acceptance of the October 14, 2020 draft minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ennis and passed by acclamation at 6:13 p.m.

The approved minutes are filed as Appendix B.

**ITEM 1**

**PROJECT NAME:** 407 E. Joppa Road, Red Maple Place

**DRP PROJECT #:** 632

**PROJECT TYPE:** Historic East Towson Design Review Area

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The presentation was given by Mr. Chris Mudd of Venable LLP, Ms. Stacey McArthur, Chief of Planning and Landscape Architecture of D.S.Thaler & Associates, Inc., and Mr. Keval Thakkar, Principal and architect of Hord Coplan Macht. Other attendees for the project included Ms. Diane Clyde and Ms. Dana Johnson of Homes for America and Mr. Mark Vaszil and Mr. David Thaler of D.S.Thaler & Associates, Inc.

Mr. Mudd stated that this project has been going through the review process for over two years, including a pre-concept plan, a community input meeting, and numerous meetings with members of the community. The Administrative Law Judge’s hearing for this project is scheduled for November 19, 2020. Recently, passed legislation included the project to be within the Historic East Towson Design Review Area, thus subjecting it for review by the Design Review Panel. Mr. Mudd further expressed that the design of the project in the presentation was created some years ago and has been proceeding through the full county development plan review and approval process.

The proposed site is located less than a half mile from Downtown Towson. The applicant proposes to construct a four-story apartment building with a parking garage on the lower level. The building will include a lobby/lounge (644 sf), a multi-purpose room (1,176 sf), a fitness room (311 sf), a mail room (108 sf), a computer room (186 sf), a kids nook (166 sf), and a service coordinator room (145 sf). The building façade is a combination of brick, corrugated metal siding, and fiber cement panel and trim.

**SPEAKERS:**

Ms. Kirsten Hoffman is a Maryland licensed architect and a Towson resident. She expressed that she does not represent any community associations but speaks as a resident and an architect. Ms. Hoffman provided context from the East Towson Design Standards (adopted October 2003) that indicated how new projects in this review area should be evaluated.

**DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:**

Before the staff report, Mr. Mudd expressed his position that this project should not be reviewed as a residential project because apartment buildings are typically treated as commercial projects. If the project were to proceed as a residential project, a residential reviewer is required to be on the review panel but this person is prohibited from participating if he or she has an interest in the matter presented before the panel. Mr. Mudd expressed his concern about Ms. Goldring’s qualifications to be a residential panel member because she is the president of the Northeast Towson Community Association which has retained an attorney that has opposed this development plan. He additionally expressed that it is entirely inappropriate for Ms. Goldring to be nominated as a member of this panel and suggested that she recuse herself from the vote.

Ms. Kulchytska provided an overview of the staff report and presented to the panel the staff's proposed conditions.

Mr. DiMenna, DRP chair, opened up the floor to the panel members for discussion.

Ms. Ennis suggested, in addition to the proposed recommendations by the staff, toning down the color contrast of the white brick coursing and other exterior materials in order for the building to blend in with the surrounding landscape.

Mr. D'Amico complimented the design of the project and stated it was executed well. For the proposed front entrance of the project, he noted that it misses an opportunity to create a safer and more generous pedestrian access to the front door of the proposed building. Mr. D'Amico recommended to reduce the amount of pavement for the automobile circulation and try to make the pedestrian area more accessible.

Mr. Thakkar responded to Mr. D'Amico's concern and stated the need for loading and unloading, as well as accessibility for emergency vehicles to pull up to the front door and not be hampered by parking spaces. He noted that they will investigate the project for possible solutions.

Ms. Goldring asserted the proposed project does not fit with the community. She also noted that impervious surfaces in the project will create a serious downstream water issue to the community that already has been suffering from this issue. Ms. Goldring also suggested the applicant reduce the building to two and half stories. She felt that this project reflects business rather than residential. In addition, she stated that the project forces traffic to move further east on Joppa Road because of the building's only entrance. Residents of this community would have to go around the town, or use a private road in Harris Hill, if they would like to visit the downtown area.

Mr. Renauld concurred with Mr. D'Amico's comments regarding the interaction of the proposed building to E. Joppa Road as the parking seems to have a better connection to the road than the building does. He then commented that the eastern façade of the building is nicely done and breaks up the massing to make it feel like separate buildings. He further suggested the applicant apply the design approach from the eastern façade to the western façade.

Mr. DiMenna concurred with the comments made by Ms. Ennis, Mr. D'Amico and Mr. Renauld and did not have any additional comments.

Ms. Goldring asked Ms. Kulchytska to bring up an elevation drawing, provided by Ms. Beth Miller, and stated that it would be the view from E. Pennsylvania Avenue when the building is completed.

Mr. DiMenna added his explanation to the drawing that Ms. Goldring presented and stated that this is a two dimensional drawing where everything is drawn in the same plane. He explained that the proposed building is located a couple of 100 feet further north with the forest buffer in the foreground. The two dimensional drawing is representative of the height of the building, but it would look different as a three dimensional drawing.

### **DISPOSITION:**

Mr. D'Amico made the motion to approve the proposed project with several conditions. All the conditions that are listed hereafter should be addressed in the new drawings and re-submitted to the Department of Planning for review:

1. Revise the front entrance sidewalk and driveway to reduce the automobile paving and maximize pedestrian connection to E. Joppa Road.
2. Consider a design approach that might break down the mass of the west side façade.
3. Tone down the contrast of the proposed white exterior brick material to a more tan or grey hue to be consistent with the rest of the building and surrounding structures.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Ennis and approved by vote of four and one against at 7: 13 p.m.

Mr. D'Amico made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. DiMenna seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.