

*******PARTIAL MINUTES*******

Board of Architectural Review
Wednesday, July 10, 2019
7:00pm, Council Chambers, City Hall
301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

17.BAR #2019-00241 OHAD

Request for new construction at 2901 Potomac Avenue (2405, 2501, 3701 Potomac Avenue, 3251 Potomac Avenue [Parcel ID 016.04-01-01], 700 Carpenter Road, 1702 and 1880 Potomac Greens Drive, 2 George Washington Memorial Parkway)

Applicant: City of Alexandria and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

BOARD ACTION: Partially Approved as Amended, 6-0

On a motion by Mr. Conkey and seconded by Mr. Spencer, the Board of Architectural Review voted to approve BAR #2019-00241, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0. Mr. Sprinkle recused himself.

The BAR approved the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station for the following items:

- Height
- Scale
- Footprint
- Architectural Character

ITEMS FOR DEFERRAL AND RESTUDY FOR JULY 24 HEARING

The BAR did not approve the massing of the proposed station or the length of the platform canopy or the piers, and recognized that the applicant would likely return on July 24, 2019 with the following additional information:

- Massing – provide additional views of the intersection of the roof of the station between the platform and mezzanine levels to illustrate that the elements are visually distinct and not overlapping.
- Length of platform canopy – provide WMATA documentation showing that the entire platform must be covered.
- Piers – restudy the design of the piers to incorporate stone and better relate to pedestrian bridges.

ITEMS FOR DEFERRAL AND RESTUDY FOR BAR FUTURE REVIEWS

1. Provide more information on the proposed MT3 Simulated Weathered Steel, with a CorTen like finish to confirm its durability and constructability.
2. Restudy the proportions, connections and construction details of the following:
 - a. The roof structure above the pedestrian bridge trusses;
 - b. The visual transparency of the guard fencing on the pedestrian bridges and whether this should be installed on the inside or the outside of the bridge truss elements;
 - c. The shape of the concrete bridge support piers;

- d. The detailing of the roof structure above the platform, including the fabrication details and the height of the steel columns and the trapezoidal shaped longitudinal beam cover at the side of the pedestrian platform;
 - e. Glass handrail details at the station platform;
 - f. Metal louver connection details; and,
 - g. Security fence/barrier facing the George Washington Memorial Parkway.
3. Provide detailed information on the size, materials and lighting of the proposed signs.
 4. Provide detailed information on the color, lumens and type of overall architectural and pedestrian lighting, including advertising displays, to assess their impact on views from the Parkway.
 5. Provide plans, exterior elevations and design details to evaluate the ramps and pavilion on the west side of the rail tracks.
 6. Provide a materials sample board for BAR review with all materials that are visible from the Parkway.
 7. Provide full size wall mock-up panels per the DSUP condition for final approval by City staff.
 8. Restudy paving material options on walkway/emergency vehicle path on east side of station.
 9. Select a mesh that is as open and visually light as possible.
 10. Provide additional views from the Parkway and from Potomac Greens. If possible, bring a live model to allow the BAR to explore the project more fully at subsequent public hearings.
 11. Provide a site section to demonstrate changing grades and the relationship of the bermand landscaping to station design.

REASON

The BAR supported and approved key elements of the station design including the height, scale, footprint and general architectural character, finding them consistent with the Design Guidelines and Standards for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Because of the scope of the project and the design/build nature of the project, the BAR noted that this project will be approved in phases. Items that needed clarification and additional materials such as the massing and the piers, could be reviewed again at the July 24, 2019 BAR hearing. The BAR made additional comments regarding materials and design elements that they will need to complete their review prior to final approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness in the coming months.

SPEAKERS

Catherine Miliaras gave a presentation providing background information on the overall project which the OHAD BAR previously reviewed at seven concept review work sessions from April 2015-May 2016.

Daphne Kott, project manager for Potomac Yard Metro of the Department of Project Implementation, gave a brief update on the design/build process and responded to questions.

Tommy Garcia with PYC Constructors noted that the applicant hopes to nail down the building, mass, and footprint this evening, as well as introduce some design materials. They plan to piggyback some construction on the current Metro shutdown, to avoid night construction disturbing area neighbors. They hope to get approval for design elements at a September BAR meeting. Some elements of construction must comply with WMATA standards. He also indicated that CSX requires a mesh panel over any bridge or walkway over their tracks. The mesh panels holes may be a maximum of two inches in diameter.

Paol Hertel, 3716 Carriage House Court, Alexandria, VA 22309 (Fairfax County), expressed concerns with the station design. Mr. Hertel believes that the proposed design is inappropriate and will be visible from the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Katy Cannady, 20 East Oak Street, Alexandria, VA expressed concerns with the environmental impact of the station as well as its design.

DISCUSSION

The BAR supported several aspects of the project and noted they were consistent with what had previously been reviewed during the concept review work sessions. Several BAR members expressed concern over the shape and material of the concrete bridge piers, questioning why the stone previously shown had been removed and noting that the form seemed somewhat foreign to the pedestrian bridges and overall station design approach. There was also concern about the surface material for the eastern walkway/emergency driveway and a recommendation that it not be asphalt.

Ms. Irwin noted that the design shows a roof canopy over the entire platform and asked if that is a WMATA requirement. Many Metro stops do not have full platform coverage and limiting the full extent of the roofing could reduce the overall massing.

Mr. Spencer said that the bridge piers did not match the language of the station; they were too utilitarian. They should speak the language of the Parkway.

The BAR discussed the mesh that CSX requires on any pedestrian bridge over their tracks. The holes in the mesh must be a maximum of two inches large. The BAR requested that the holes be at the maximum size to visually lighten the pedestrian bridges as much as possible.

Mr. Conkey and Mr. Spencer pointed out that the drawings appeared to show the sloped roof and mezzanine roof colliding where they intersect. They noted it appeared to be an awkward and uncomfortable relationship. Mr. Garcia said that the drawings were misleading; the roofs did not collide and there was sufficient breathing room. The BAR requested updated accurate renderings.

Mr. Spencer commented that the images provided by the applicant make the building appear far more massive than it actually is. Mr. Conkey suggested that the applicant provide sections through the trees, giving a more realistic depiction of the building. Ms. Irwin requested that the applicant bring a live model to subsequent hearings.