

Beauregard Urban Design Advisory Committee (BDAC) - Meeting Minutes

June 19, 2017

6:30 pm

The Hermitage (5000 Fairbanks Avenue)

Committee Members in Attendance:

Pete Benavage, Chair
Donna Fossum, Co-Chair
Abed Benzina
Carolyn Griglione
Gus Ardura
Mark Ramirez
Fatimah Mateen

Absent Committee Members:

Ben Jehle

City Staff:

Maya Contreras, Principal Planner, P&Z
Sara Brandt-Vorel, Urban Planner, P&Z

Applicant Team:

John Welsh, AHC Inc.
Haley Norris, ACH Inc.
Lee Quill, Cunningham | Quill Architects

Robin McGrew, Cunningham | Quill
Architects
Duncan Blair, Land Carroll & Blair

Agenda Items

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Responsibilities
 - a. Review and Approval of Draft October 24, 2016 Meeting Minutes
3. New Business:
 - a. Applicant Presentation of DSUP#2016-0044: Church of the Resurrection Concept 2
 - b. Staff Update on Projects:
 - i. 1701 N. Beauregard – The Urban School
 - ii. Vulcan
 - iii. Greenhill
 - iv. Gateway at King and Beauregard
 - v. Beauregard Properties
4. Questions
5. Next Steps

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Benavage called the meeting to order. A quorum for the meeting was established.

Welcome and Introductions

All members of the Beauregard Design Advisory Committee introduced themselves to the audience and provided a brief summary of their background and previous involvement with the committee. Members of the audience briefly provided their names and provided their professional associations.

Responsibilities

The Committee approved the minutes from the October 24, 2016 meeting.

New Business

Applicant Presentation of DSUP#2016-0044: Church of the Resurrection Concept 2

Mr. Welsh provided a brief introduction of AHC, Inc., the affordable housing developer which has partnered with the Church of the Resurrection to redevelop the subject site, including an overview of previous project types and development experience in the region. AHC's experience developing affordable housing in the city includes Jackson Crossing and the nearby Fillmore/Saint James development projects. Mr. Welsh turned the presentation over to Lee Quill of Cunningham Quill Architects, PLLC.

Mr. Quill provided a presentation of the proposed project with the following highlights:

- The project includes a multi-family affordable building and a new church building for the Church of the Resurrection.
- The topography of the site is unique as it is located on top of a hill and surrounded by high-rise development. Many of the existing surrounding buildings are brick and the design of the proposed building will explore alternative materials so that it stands out compared to nearby buildings.
- The building design utilizes a canted wing to provide more natural light to residential units.
- Along Fillmore Avenue, windows would be interspersed with colored panels to add color to the building.
- The building would be clad in panel, of varying sizes, to create a pattern language of visual interest supported by a base of dark brick emerging from the hillside.
- The multi-family building and church building will have a shared open space that provides spaces for users of both buildings to come together. The space will be accessible from an inviting stairway from N. Beauregard Street.
- Still working on the architectural details and landscaping but wanted to present initial direction and receive feedback.

At the end of the presentation, Mr. Benavage opened the floor to questions and comments from members of the committee to be followed by questions from the public.

Committee Discussion:

Ms. Mateen inquired about the formal entrances to the building and the number of proposed parking spaces for the multi-family building. Mr. Quill responded that the entrance would be at the corner of N Beauregard and Fillmore Avenue and followed the City's design guidelines. Ms. McGrew added that there would be 78 parking spaces in the garage and five within the drive aisle. Ms. Mateen inquired how the parking would work for 113 units but only 78 parking spaces. Mr. Welsh responded that it is typical for affordable housing buildings to have fewer parking spaces than units as many families will use public transportation. And across the portfolio of AHC's properties in the region the utilization rate is .75 spaces per unit, and nearby at Jackson Crossing the building has a similar parking ratio and not all the spaces are being used. Mr. Welsh also clarified that the parking ratio meets the City parking standards.

Ms. Fossum inquired about the reactions of neighbors at Jackson Crossing when it was constructed. Mr. Welsh responded that the neighbors, and the nearby civic association supported

the project but did not like that AHC was charging residents for parking, which might encourage residents to park on the street instead of the garage but this concern has been unfounded to date. Ms. Mateen inquired if this development would charge residents for parking, to which Mr. Welsh responded yes. Ms. Mateen followed up to inquire if there was any existing street parking and Mr. Quill stated no and Mr. Welsh said there would be some short-term parking on Fillmore Street. Ms. Contreras offered to provide information on the City's parking standards. Mr. Quill further iterated that many residents will likely use mass transit and this site would be even more suited for residents with the activation of the BRT line.

Mr. Benavage inquired about the timeframe for project construction and the arrival of the BRT. Mr. Welsh stated that the application for project financing was due in March 2018, ideally construction would start in Q1 of 2019 and the project would be finished in 2021. Ms. Contreras added that by 2021 construction on the BRT would be underway and portions of it would be complete. Mr. Benavage asked if the bus schedule would meet resident demand. Mr. Quill responded that it would be addressed.

Ms. Mateen asked if there were any play areas for families or other family-friendly design features. Mr. Welsh responded that AHC provides resident services with centers at about a dozen of AHC properties and have staff which manages engagement. Mr. Quill offered to do additional research and provide feedback on programming options.

Ms. Griglione asked for additional thoughts on the proposed window design, such as size and placement of windows. Mr. Quill responded that the initial design was focused on the use of the internal spaces, so the large windows seen are to create the main living space and create a play between the inside and outside. The bedroom windows are a little smaller to both fit the scale of the bedroom and to create wall space for residents to place furniture and hang items. Mr. Benzina inquired if the windows would be vinyl. Mr. Quill responded that they were researching a range of options but leaning towards composite windows. Mr. Benzina said this was not a problem and composite may generate greater energy savings for the building, however Mr. Benzina was concerned about the functionality of the windows, such as how they are to be hung, if there were canopies, how they would be operated, and wanted to iterate those functionalities would impact the design and cost for the project. Furthermore the color of the windows could be impacted by materials and this should be reviewed during design to ensure it was feasible. Ms. Griglione stated in her experience that fiberglass windows were now available and could be painted any color.

Ms. Griglione asked for additional thoughts in regards to the design theory behind a variety of textures for the skin pattern, inquiring about the ideal number of patterns and at what point there may be too many patterns creating a hodgepodge effect that was less visually appealing. Mr. Quill responded that each project was different and opportunities for various pattern strategies. When working with panels, in this project, the goal is to work with regulating lines that carry across panels, and create a rich pattern language. Ms. McGrew followed up that their approach to the materials focused on the smaller design scale of the project and had to work with the topography of the slope to anchor the building. The dark brick is the base of the building and anchors the structure and the brick is pulled into the towers. The vertical panels proposed for the project are intended to serve as the face of the building along streets, such as Fillmore Avenue, North Beauregard Street and the access road, while the vertical brick stair towers serve as a transition

from the public face of the building to the more private internal courtyard. Once in the courtyard, the design envisions using the same materials as the panels on the public face of the building, but would rotate the panels 90 degrees to create a new design pattern to emphasize a more private space.

Mr. Ardura stated he liked the direction of the project and thought it would create an attractive composition. Specifically, Mr. Ardura appreciated the design's attempt to break down large masses and he liked the color. Mr. Ardura wondered if there was an opportunity to do something dynamic with the church, such as twisting the roof. Mr. Ardura iterated that while this is not a formal gateway location, this building is prominent and will do much to set the tone of what would come in the community. Mr. Ardura expressed concern for light penetration for the lower units within the courtyard. Ms. McGrew responded that the building orientation was designed to get light penetration. Mr. Ardura inquired about the width of the courtyard. Mr. Quill responded that the narrowest was about 30'-35' and expanded up to 55' which was the goal of cranking the courtyard open. Mr. Quill offered to provide lighting studies.

Mr. Ardura inquired about the ongoing design philosophy in regards to courtyard security as there are no visual connections between the courtyard and North Beauregard Street. Mr. Welsh said it was a fair question but the team had not had any discussions in regards to a gate or fencing but wasn't likely to install one. Mr. Quill iterated that the design of the building also encourages entrance into the building from the corner of Fillmore Avenue and North Beauregard. Mr. Quill also stated that later design work for the entrance off of North Beauregard Street between the Church and the multi-family building would be a welcoming location and critical to create an open space between the two buildings. Ms. Griglione asked if the entrance between the church and multi-family building would likely be used as a cut-through. Mr. Quill stated that with their studies, most people would not find the mid-block pathway as a shorter route and would limit the use as a cut-through. Ms. McGrew also stated that the courtyard would be safe as 50 units would be overlooking the courtyard which would not have any hidden corners.

When looking at the footprint of the multi-family building, Ms. Fossum commented on the length of the proposed hallways and asked if there could be jogs in the hallways to create small clusters of units to create a sense of community. Ms. Fossum also inquired if one laundry unit per floor would meet demand as the laundry room would be a social meeting place and encouraged exploring adding a second laundry room per floor. Mr. Welsh responded that they work with a laundry management partner to right-size the number of units and have not had an instance of being under-machined. Ms. Fossum also stated she appreciated the initial landscaping and inquired about the long-term maintenance strategy for the open space. Mr. Welsh responded that the on-site management company would manage the space.

Ms. Fossum also iterated that massive power lines were in place along North Beauregard Street and that units on the third and fourth floor of the multi-family building would have views of the power lines unless they were undergrounded or otherwise treated. Ms. Fossum also asked if any of the existing trees on site could be saved. Mr. Welsh indicated he was unsure about the trees but it was unlikely they would be preserved. Ms. Fossum countered that she was more concerned about the power lines, and the large size of them. Mr. Welsh stated that their plan was not to underground the power lines as it would be very expensive and that power lines were above ground from

Seminary to King Street and to put that cost on affordable housing development to underground a short stretch of power line did not make sense to him. Ms. Fossum asked if the undergrounding would be done by the City at some point. Ms. Contreras stated that the City typically requires developers to underground as part of the development process and listed other projects which completed undergrounding, such as AHC's project, Jackson's Crossing, ARHA's project at the Ramsey Homes, the Jefferson School undergrounded along West Street. Ms. Contreras continued that City staff had requested that the applicant provide the City with information on the uses located on the power lines and an estimate for the cost to underground in order to continue to explore options related to undergrounding. Ms. Fossum agreed that it would be more cost efficient to bury the lines during construction than at some point later in time. Mr. Blair also iterated that with many affordable housing projects the City had assisted with some sort of financial aid to cover the cost of undergrounding or other infrastructure investments. Ms. Fossum asked if the committee should make any requests of the City for this project. Ms. McIlvaine responded that City practice had been to require undergrounding by the applicant and for the City to provide a loan in the amount of the cost to underground, which was a reason the City had asked the applicant for an estimate of the undergrounding cost.

Mr. Benzina stated it was refreshing to see an affordable housing building with a commitment to good architecture and design intent and that BDAC's goal was to see that intent carried through. Mr. Benzina started his questions inquiring how the number of units and unit mix was determined. Mr. Welsh stated it was an iterative process which assessed, the church property in conjunction with the multi-family building, the City's desired unit mix, the design possibilities, the potential revenue generation and demand drivers in the city and that this process has gone on for about two and half years.

Mr. Benzina, referring to the section on page 10 of the applicant's presentation, indicated the current design had a large, blank wall facing North Beauregard Street and inquired if there had been any exploration of adding a single-loading corridor of units along the street frontage to better activate the building. Mr. Benzina inquired if the construction would be 3A on top of a podium. Mr. Quill confirmed that was the construction method and that fiber cement would be able to span all the floors and brick could extend to the fourth floor, possibly fifth. Mr. Benzina stated the fiber cement was a great direction and had a lot of potential. Mr. Benzina then pivoted to the importance of the windows, observing that the proposed window head height was of great importance and appreciated the syncopation of windows along North Beauregard. Mr. Benzina iterated that he wanted to ensure that the window syncopation would be feasible with the development reality and that the design intent would be implementable at a later stage. Mr. Benzina also raised the importance of integrating stormwater management treatment with the architecture of the building design, such as the roof drains and downspouts. Mr. Quill responded that the design team was exploring drains on the outside, grading the courtyard with a slight slope to explore the feasibility of water collection, and more traditional water retention basins on site.

Ms. Griglione stated that the city recently passed a stormwater fee for all residents, businesses and property in the city, including churches, which was assessed by impermeable surface area and that innovative stormwater management would be an opportunity for the applicant to reduce potential fees. Mr. Quill agreed that this had been an ongoing discussion for the design team.

Mr. Benzina concluded that the details of the design proposal need to be realistic with the cost and materials for the project. Mr. Benzina also inquired how the project would be vented and integrated into the design. And specifically reiterating the importance of windows and how they would be realistically incorporated into the design and construction that maintained budget constraints. Mr. Welsh followed up in regards to the single-loaded corridor and that the design team would study the idea, however affordable-housing financing is challenging and AHC has already established an \$8.4 million loan with the City and that each additional unit in the building would create a potential financing gap. Mr. Benzina stated he understood Mr. Welsh's point and followed up that in-unit laundry would also be something to consider. Ms. Griglione reiterated her support for in-unit washers and dryers. Mr. Quill indicated they would look at other affordable housing development projects in the area to see how washers and dryers had been treated.

Mr. Welsh stated that their experience indicated stackable washer/dryer units typically did not function well and generated complaints by users. Furthermore, a centralized laundry facility was able to generate slight additional revenue for the building since rent alone is unable to cover the debt service of the building. This revenue generation was incorporated into the financing calculations for the building, much like parking.

Mr. Ramirez stated he appreciated the massing and scale of the building proposal and enjoyed the playfulness of the colorful scheme and the dark brick. Mr. Ramirez stated he wasn't sure of the proposed design of the windows, using one large window and two smaller windows and asked if combining the three into one larger window could be explored. Mr. Ramirez further inquired about the proposed location of the building lobby at the corner of North Beauregard and with potential foot traffic levels, could a courtyard lobby be a better location. Mr. Quill responded that the Fire Department required a building entrance off a major road, and that with the nearby bus stops there would be lots of building activity through the proposed lobby. However, Mr. Quill said they could explore a possible doorway and connection between the church and multi-family building. Mr. Ramirez supported the idea and that a courtyard lobby could enhance the social connection between the two buildings.

Mr. Ramirez asked if Mr. Quill could further explain the design decision for the lobby to have an in-condition versus an out-condition. Mr. Quill responded that the Beauregard Design Guidelines encourage play in the façades instead of a blank wall. Due to site constraints the design has some limitations on the type of movement, but a cantilever along North Beauregard was used to showcase the prominent corner, highlight the entrance to the building and open the building up to the site. Mr. Ramirez agreed with Mr. Quill's analysis but stated he would support a stronger movement at the location, especially a horizontal movement or a canopy. Mr. Benzina stated he felt the existing columns looked flimsy and Mr. Ardura joined the architectural conversation and stated he was concerned that the lobby and loading dock were directly adjacent to each other. Mr. Ardura inquired if there was a design solution to divide the loading dock away from the building lobby, such as a projecting wall, which could also be incorporated with the overall presence of the lobby. Mr. Quill stated the column presence and width would continue to be refined.

Ms. Griglione asked if the building wing, along the new road, could be fanned outwards, like a tiered amphitheater at each floor of the building, which would make the overall building feel less boxy. Mr. Quill stated that with the type of construction proposed for the building, cantilevering

the building would be prohibitively expensive; on a smaller scale it's more feasible but harder on larger buildings.

Ms. Fossum inquired about the location of the trash rooms to which Ms. McGrew responded there are trash chutes adjacent to the laundry rooms which feed into the loading dock where dumpsters can be rolled out for trash collection.

Mr. Ramirez concluded his questions by asking about the blank wall of the building, facing the proposed church. Mr. Quill stated that due to a proposed subdivision line there would be limited windows along the wall. Mr. Benzina asked for clarification if it would be two lots, or two buildings on one lot. Reverend Belser stated it would be a ground-lease. Mr. Quill stated they would look into the line further and how that would impact potential windows.

Mr. Benavage asked the current square footage of the Church of the Resurrection building to which Mr. Blair responded it was approximately twelve thousand square feet. Mr. Benavage acknowledged that the design had yet to be finalized but hoped that some thought would be given to somehow connect Goodwin House, the Church, and the multi-family building into a campus-type arrangement. Mr. Benavage further clarified that the goal was not to replicate any design but to rather connect elements. Mr. Benavage also indicated there previously was a stream located in the median of North Beauregard, and inquired if there would be a benefit or possibility of connecting the building stormwater to the stream. Mr. Benavage concluded his statements with an overall observation that while it was still early in the design process it was obvious that there had been a tremendous amount of thought put into the design and he commended the team's effort. Mr. Benavage stated that the committee was there to assist with developing an optimum plan that was within the financial constraints and the city's guidelines and that the committee was not there to be obstructionists.

Ms. Griglione asked for confirmation that the use of the Reston project examples included in the presentation were selected as they were showing what COULD be done. Mr. Quill responded that the Reston project was an example of a building that was predominately fiber cement and was a high level of design using fiber cement. Mr. Quill also stated they could provide sketches of the multi-family building as seen by Goodwin House at the next meeting to show the intended high-level of design which would be provided to all sides of the proposed multi-family building. Mr. Benavage followed up that his earlier campus comment emphasized the importance of good building design that would be visible from all vantage points and that the colors of the materials will be important. Ms. Contreras concluded the meeting by stating that after the project goes through the hearing process with City Council it would proceed to site plan and final building permits, but during the final site plan process the applicant would provide staff with materials boards, with samples of all materials and mortars and staff would review to ensure that everything worked well together. Finally, a mock-up panel with all materials and windows would be constructed on site and are required to be located in clear sight.

Public Comments:

Cathy Puskar, representing Goodwin House, provided an overview of a letter sent by Goodwin House to the City of Alexandria in response to the previously submitted Concept 2 plan for the Church of the Resurrection. Ms. Puskar indicated Goodwin House had a few concerns, including:

- A request to close the road between Goodwin House and the Church of the Resurrection via the Church's new proposed road;
- Adequate parking spaces for the multi-family building;
- Adequate parking spaces for the Church;
- The functionality of the church parking lot when full, and if vehicles would be able to turn around, especially if access if to Goodwin House's road was closed off;
- The high percentage of fiber cement panel proposed for the multi-family building;
- Ensuring the proposed architectural detailing of the multi-family building is implemented during construction;
- A concentration of less desirable building materials will be more visible to residents of Goodwin House and the design focus for the building should not focus on North Beauregard and Fillmore Avenue to the exclusion of the street facing Goodwin House;
- Requesting additional study of options for the blank wall of the building facing the future church and exploring shifting the potential lease-line to allow for additional architectural elements on the blank wall; and
- Requesting to see architectural designs for the proposed church so that both buildings can be seen together.

Reverend Belser stated the church was going through a lengthy internal review, but that the congregation was dedicated to providing affordable housing in the community and the diocese and Bishop also approved. The congregation was going through an internal review process for the Church design and needed to reach an achievable design but cautioned that without a new church building there could be no affordable housing constructed.

Next Steps:

Ms. Contreras stated that due to two separate buildings, the multi-family building and the church building, AHC had requested to have the two projects move at slightly different schedules. Mr. Blair further elaborated that the financing for the multi-family building was driving the review schedule for the multi-family building while the church would likely be a second phase to allow the church parish to go through an internal design approval process before proceeding through the City's review process. Ms. Griglione inquired to what extent the church building would lag behind the multi-family building. Mr. Blair stated it would be difficult to determine the period of time as the Church was still finalizing their program of future activities and going through a cost estimate for the proposed church design. Ms. Contreras indicated that staff would work with AHC to clarify the required application information for hearing for the multi-family submission and the subsequent church hearing. Ms. Contreras further elaborated that in a conversation with AHC it was discussed that with the construction timing of the larger multi-family building and smaller church building it would be desirable to have both construction projects conclude at the same time, and this timing would still be feasible if the Church went to hearing two to three months after the multi-family building.

Mr. Benavage requested copies of the correspondence between Goodwin House and the Church of the Resurrection.

Ms. Contreras suggested September 25th, 2017 as the next date for BDAC at which AHC could present additional details on the architecture and provide an update on the Church timing.

Mr. Benavage inquired if Ms. Contreras could present updates at the next meeting in the interest of saving time. Ms. Contreras offered to send an email update to members as an alternative to which Mr. Benavage agreed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.