

Monday, November 6, 2006

(74)

Peer Review Session Eight

Downtown Economic Development Initiative

Lot 5

Town of Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Report Prepared By
Marvin J. Malecha, FAIA

Peer Reviewer

Marvin J. Malecha, FAIA

Prologue

Peer review session eight was conducted at the office of Cline Design. The objective was to review proposed changes to the schematic design since the prior peer review conducted in February, 2006.

Since the schematic design was last reviewed in February, 2006 I am advised the costs of project construction have risen up to 30% and the interest rate has risen by 100 basis points. The following changes have been made by the design team to value engineer the building plan:

- Reduction in height of Lot 5 project by one story
- Redesign of building into one unit increasing the sellable space, reducing the skin area and reconfiguring common space.
- As a result the alley to the east has been deleted and the once three separate buildings function more like one.
- A pedestrian access north south has been created through the site and more public space created on Rosemary Street.

The purpose of the review was to check that the changes still meet the Council's primary goals and objectives for the project as expressed to me at the beginning of the review process.

Attendees

Peer Reviewer:

Marvin J. Malecha, NC State (marvin_malecha@ncsu.edu)

Meeting Participants:

Jody Brown, Cline Design Associates (JodyB@clinedesignassoc.com)

John Felton, Cline Design Associates (JohnF@clinedesignassoc.com)

Walter Sawyer, Cline Design Associates (walters@clinedesignassoc.com)

John Florian, Ram Development Company (jflorian@ramrealestate.com)

Jon Keener, Ram Development Company (ikeener@ramrealestate.com)

Walter Sawyer, Cline Design Associates (walters@clinedesignassoc.com)

Gordon Sutherland, Town of Chapel Hill (gsutherland@townofchapelhill.org)

Session Eight:

11.06.06 (4:00-5:45p.m.)

General Observations:

- The urban design of the proposed reworking is appropriate. The respect for the street and the pedestrian movement across the site enhances the urban quality of the concept.

72

While the massing is not significantly different from the prior iteration, there are several opportunities to utilize the rooftops for mechanical space and a roof top garden to give greater interest to the profile of the complex.

- The proposed through arcade connecting Franklin and Rosemary Streets adds strength to the project by making the project more pedestrian friendly but also by increasing the exposure of retail space. The schematic design leaves many details of importance yet unresolved. This includes a greater understanding of window and façade materials, the detailing of and quality of materials is particularly important at the pedestrian level.
- The design team should devise a strategy for the parking garage, for way finding and a lighting scheme; residents and customers will get their first experience of the project in the parking garage and it needs to be a good one.

Design Considerations:

Some components of the design require additional work if the project proceeds. These are listed below:

- Consider connecting the through arcade to the arcades on the Franklin Street building and the Church Street building. Arcades assist with meeting the objective of providing human scale, helping to reduce the impression of surrounding building height.
- The courtyard concept for the space between the Franklin Street building and the Church Street building is good. A potential treatment to provide connectivity could be an open trellis. This would provide shade and a focal point to the plaza. Trellis would provide greenery; also it would be lighter and less problematic to the parking deck roof structure than trees.
- Consider adding an expression line at the fourth floor level of the interior building.
- In order to deal with the change in grade of the site from east to west and north to south, the plaza will be stepped. This is acceptable.
- Care should be taken to provide disabled access to the through alley at Rosemary Street. Consider adding ramp on to Rosemary Street at corner of Church Street.
- The end elevation of the Franklin Street building requires more attention to make the appearance of the penthouse unit sit comfortably with the cornice detail. Consider a more robust cap taking a lead from the cap for the interior building.
- The design team explained that the architecture of the Franklin Street building aimed to respond to the character of Franklin Street. The design team was reminded that the Council had expressed a desire for a human scale contemporary design. More emphasis to the arcade entrance is recommended; use this opportunity to create individual identities for the flanking buildings; this currently reads as one building. Pay attention to the fenestration in particular to the depth of the recess and reveals to the windows; consider differentiating and reflecting the use of the rooms by using different window recesses. Use the function of the space behind the windows to rationalize modulation.
- The 1930's/1940's design influence to the interior building, windows extending to and wrapping the corners is good.
- The design team discussed ways to address and disguise the appearance of plant and equipment located on the roof. Consider a raised parapet wall; also consider a trellis treatment to the central section that may be a communal roof garden.
- The treatment of the base on Rosemary Street should have a robust appearance, consider using large building blocks.
- Use techniques to minimize the appearance and the pedestrian experience of the loading bay entrance.

(7-3)

Recommendations

- As reported in February 2006, the proposal continues to be a schematic design idea worthy of further development and is ready to move toward the next phase, design development.
- In addition to the design considerations noted in the previous section, for the next level of design development the design team should provide details of the eastern elevation of the project.

The conduct of this review session has established that the urban design decisions are with merit and should be developed further. Further discussion established that the architectural expression demonstrates the potential of the urban idea of the project but that there is a need for continuing development of the aesthetic strategies. The ideas presented represent early schematic design. Further development of the architectural character of the project should follow as soon as the decision is made to continue to develop the presented ideas. The ideas presented in this review represent a level of development that is appropriate to early schematic design. They require further articulation before the initiation of design development.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Malecha", followed by a long horizontal line.

Marvin J. Malecha, FAIA

11.07.06

Date