



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman



Thomas J. Stosur  
Director

### STAFF REPORT

February 18, 2010

#### REQUESTS:

- Minor Amendment/Harbor Point PUD – Thames Street Wharf
- Revised Final Design Approval/Harbor Point PUD – Thames Street Wharf

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Minor Amendment – Approval subject to compliance with the revised Critical Area requirements. Also, with the understanding that the applicant will continue to work with staff to finalize easement agreements for both the temporary and permanent promenade areas that are required by the Harbor Point PUD.
- Revised Final Design Approval – Approval.

**STAFF:** Robert Quilter

**PETITIONER:** Harbor Point Development, LLC

**OWNER:** Same

#### SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The Harbor Point Planned Unit Development encompasses 26.8 acres bounded roughly by the Baltimore Harbor to the south and west, the Living Classrooms site to the north, and Caroline Street to the east.

General Area: The Harbor Point PUD is located along the western edge of the Fells Point Community. To the east of the site is the heart of Fells Point and to the north is the Living Classrooms main campus. Directly east of the site is the Ferndale Fence property, a historic two story brick building occupied by a fence business. Across Caroline Street is a public parking garage, with residential units that face the street. Immediately adjacent to the east, along the waterfront is the Living Classroom's Frederick Douglass/Isaac Myers Maritime Park.

#### HISTORY:

- Ordinance #93-260, approved August 1993, established the Allied and related sites Planned Unit Development.
- Ordinance #04-0682, approved May 10, 2004, repealed the original Allied PUD and replaced it with the Harbor Point PUD
- On May 18, 2006, the Planning Commission approved a Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval for the Thames Street Wharf Building and Street Closings for Dock, Willis, Block and Philpot Streets within the Harbor Point PUD

- Ordinance #07-429, approved May 17, 2007, implemented the rezoning for Historic Southeast Baltimore
- Ordinance #07-555, approved November 26, 2007, established Fells Point as a Baltimore City Local Historic District
- Ordinance #07-575, approved November 27, 2007, re-established the Fells Point Urban Renewal Plan
- Ordinance #07- 625, approved December 3, 2007 was Amendment 1 to the PUD and amended the Development Plan of the Harbor Point PUD
- Ordinance #08-16, approved May 27, 2008, was Amendment 2 to the PUD and allowed for an expansion of the PUD boundaries to include 803 South Caroline Street
- On March 6, 2008, the Planning Commission gave Final Design Approval to 803 South Caroline Street, The Black Olive Inn

### **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

The proposed Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically: EARN Goal 1, Objective 1: Retain and attract business in all growth sectors. They are also consistent with the terms and conditions of the Harbor Point PUD.

### **ANALYSIS**

This Minor Amendment and Revised Final Design Approval request is intended to allow for changes required during the final design and construction process for Harbor Point Phase I – Thames Street Wharf Building. On May 18, 2006 the Planning Commission approved among other actions for Harbor Point PUD the Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval for Thames Street Wharf. Since that approval, the building and site has been under construction and nearing completion. Due to economic considerations the project design has been modified and therefore requires these actions.

Minor Amendment – The design approved in 2006 featured an eight level office building that included a raised terrace plinth for what was to be a three building complex. Beneath that terrace was to be underground parking to partially service the site. Construction of that terrace and its associated lower level parking has been delayed until a future phase of the complex. Hence, the current building has been redesigned to stand alone with temporary surface at-grade parking to the west and north. The parking area will park approximately 450 cars. It will be accessed off the extension of Thames Street. The parking lot has been held back from the water's edge on the west side of the building to allow for a temporary promenade connection that will include raised planters and benches. The loading/servicing area for the building has been shifted from inside the building adjacent to the promenade to the north side of the building. It will be enclosed with board fencing and gates as well as a brick enclosure for mechanical units.

It should be noted that this Minor Amendment request for temporary parking is subject to a five (5) year maximum time frame from the date of occupancy permit. Any extension of that time frame requires an additional Minor Amendment and approval by the Planning Commission.

Revised Final Design Approval – Originally, the main entrance to the Thames Street Wharf building was to be located at its northwest corner at the elevated terrace level. Now the building has been modified to allow for an interim at-grade entrance at the northeast corner, off the promenade and at the western terminus of Thames Street. This corner was to be the location of the loading dock. The dock has been shifted to the north side, shielded by a one story brick enclosure for mechanical equipment and board fencing and operable gates. The original entrance area at the building’s northwest corner has been constructed but will not be utilized or accessible until the terrace level is built.

The review process for these actions included the following:

- SPRC – The revised site design, access points, promenade location and parking layout was approved by the Site Plan Review Committee in February, 2010.
- Design Review – Staff reviewed the revised elevations and approved them. It notes that the shift of the loading area away from the promenade in favor of an additional building entrance to be a positive change.
- Critical Area Review – The applicant is working with staff to complete revised Critical Area requirements for these changes.
- Promenade Requirements – The revised plan retains the twenty foot (+) wide brick promenade along the east and south ends of the building. This connects directly to Thames Street and the promenade at the Living Classrooms’ Douglass/Meyers Maritime Park. The wood promenade extension originally approved at the south end is intended to be constructed at a later phase of this Phase I complex. To the west of the building will be a temporary promenade link along the water’s edge to the current temporary promenade around the entire Harbor Point site. Staff continues to work with the development team to finalize the promenade easements required for the Harbor Point PUD.
- Morgan Stanley Signage – A signage package for the lead tenant in the building, Morgan Stanley has been submitted and reviewed by Staff. Included are lighted individual letter style signs located at the top floor of each elevation. Approval is recommended.

The following community organizations were notified of this action: Fells Point Task Force, Douglass Place Community Association, Perkins Homes Resident Advisory Council, Fells Point Community Organization, Fells Point Homeowners Association, Fells Point Main Street, The Preservation Society, Waterfront Coalition, Fells Prospect, Inc., 1400 Lancaster Condominium and Upper Fells Point Improvement Association.

**Thomas J. Stosur**  
**Director**