



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

April 21, 2015

REQUEST:

Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval/ Harbor Point PUD #81 – Wills Wharf Office/Hotel Building

RECOMMENDATION:

Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval/ Harbor Point PUD #81 – Wills Wharf Office/Hotel Building – Approval.

STAFF: Anthony Cataldo

PETITIONER: Beatty Development

OWNER: Same

SITE/GENERAL AREA

General Area: The Harbor Point PUD is located on the western peninsula of the Fells Point community. Across Caroline Street to the east of the site is the heart of the Fells Point Historic District, to the north is the Living Classrooms Foundation main campus and beyond is the Harbor East development area. The Ferndale Fence property and The Living Classroom Foundation Frederick Douglass Isaac Myers Maritime Park are located immediately to the southeast.

Site Conditions: To date, the Harbor Point PUD is only improved by the Thames Street Wharf office building at the western end of Thames Street and a facility maintenance building to the north. The rest of the site contains some surface parking or is currently under construction for the Central Plaza parking structure, the Exelon Building, and Pointe Street Apartment Building. The site is divided by on-cap and off-cap portions that reflect the environmental clean-up that occurred for many years prior to any development.

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- Ordinance #04-0682, approved May 10, 2004, repealed the original Allied PUD and replaced it with the Harbor Point PUD.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- Ordinance #07-555, approved November 26, 2007, repealed the old URP, and established Fells Point as a Baltimore City Local Historic District.
- Ordinance #07-575, approved November 27, 2007, established the Fells Point Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan
- Ordinance #07-625, approved December 3, 2007 amended the Development Plan of the Harbor Point PUD
- On March 6, 2008, the Planning Commission approved the Final Design for 803 South Caroline Street – the Black Olive Inn
- Ordinance #08-16, signed by the Mayor to the City Council on May 27, 2008, was Amendment #2 to the PUD and expanded the boundaries to include 803 South Caroline Street – the Black Olive Inn
- Ordinance #09-153, signed by the Mayor to the City Council on April 7, 2009 authorized the sale of the property known as 950 South Caroline Street
- On February 18, 2010, the Planning Commission approved the Minor Amendment and Revised Final Design Approval for Harbor Point PUD – Thames Street Wharf
- On October 21, 2010, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the City Council Bill #10-0594/Harbor Point Development District
- On November 18, 2010, the Planning Commission approved the Minor Amendment for US Lacrosse
- Ordinance #13-136, approved June 18, 2013, repealed the previous Harbor Point PUD and designated it anew.
- On October 17, 2013, the Planning Commission approved the Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval for Exelon, Central Plaza, Parking, and Phase 1 Roads.
- On March 12, 2015, the Planning Commission approved the Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval for the Pointe Street Apartment building.
- On May 21, 2015, the Planning Commission approved the Final Design of the Exelon Building Signage Package and the Minor Amendment and Final Design of Temporary Parking Lot Expansion on Parcel 3.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The project is consistent with the Comprehensive Master Plan's LIVE section, Goal One: Objective 2- Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties Throughout the City of Baltimore; LIVE Goal Two, Objective 3 – Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Mixed-Use Development to Reinforce Neighborhood Centers and Main Streets.

ANALYSIS

Ordinance #13-136, approved on June 18, 2013, repealed the former PUD for the Harbor Point development site and designated a new PUD and corresponding development plan. The action increased the allowable build-out on the site to a maximum of 3.02 million square feet (pursuant to its underlying zoning) and is based on a master plan that underwent extensive design and technical reviews, with high density mixed-use and transit oriented development at its core. With construction nearing completion on the Exelon building parcel and the new Central Park and Garage, and recent ground-breaking for the Pointe Street Apartment building, the

development team would like to begin the next phase of development along Wills Street with the Wills Wharf Office and Hotel building on Parcel 5.

The twelve story Office and Hotel building will include approximately 300,000 square feet, and includes a partial (approximately 82 space) parking structure which creates a shared podium/plaza with the Thames Street Wharf and Pointe Street building.

- Site Plan: The building fronts Wills Street just south of Pointe Street. The main entrance to the office building is along Wills Street adjacent to the upper plaza. The hotel entrance and restaurant space are located at the southern end of the building adjacent to the promenade. The parking access is located off Wills Street and will align with the future service/parking entrance of the adjacent parcel. Service and loading for the building will be in the same location it is currently, to the north of the Thames Street Wharf building, but will now be enclosed beneath the plaza level as designed with the Pointe Street Apartment building. There will be direct access through the sub-grade garage space into the Wills Wharf Building.

This building will be displacing some of the existing surface parking on site and, as such, a temporary surface lot has been designed to provide the necessary parking spaces until the Central Garage/Exelon garages are in operation following the construction. As per the PUD, the temporary surface lot was approved by Planning Commission.

- Landscape/Critical Area: The design strategies for site circulation and building access include a series of ramps and stairs to transition from promenade elevation to office entry plaza approximately 16 feet above. The proposed Wills Wharf building resulted in 40' distance between the new building and the existing Thames Street Wharf structure. To the west, the landscape design proposal includes a street parallel to the building, sloping down towards the waterfront, and resulting in a circular drive that engages the pedestrian promenade. A continuous ADA accessible ramp accompanies the driveway for access to the hotel and parking garage entries. The materiality of landscape includes brick paving around the park green space and wood boardwalk transitioning into tonal pavers and gravel. Other elements include native and adapted plants, combination of post lights and low-level exterior lighting fixtures and coordinating site furniture. The park space is designed with a series of terraced and sloping panels and circulation systems to get from the promenade level up to the upper plaza.
- Architectural Elevations: The building's design proposal entails two masses – a 7-story, 100' high office mass intersecting with a more vertical 130' high mass with additional 4-story hotel above. The building will provide open and flexible floor plates for the office floors and a green roof terrace for the first level hotel rooms. Parking garage and services will be located subgrade under the building and adjacent green space to the east. Materials for the two masses includes a rain-screen for the office volume, glass curtain wall with glass fin details for the hotel volume, and masonry base at ground level.

- Signage: A complete signage package has been included within the design documents for approval. The criteria cover office and hotel signage as well as building ID signage which is envisioned atop the building.

Community Notification: The Fells Point Residents' Association, Fells Point Community Organization, Fells Point Main Street, Fells Point Task Force, Greenspace Action Partnership, The Preservation Society, Southeast CDC, Waterfront Coalition, Fells Prospect, Upper Fells Point Improvement Association, Perkins Homes Resident Advisory Council, Broadway Area Business Association, and Rich & Henderson, PC have been notified of this action.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director