



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

March 12, 2015

REQUESTS: Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval/ Harbor Point PUD #81 – Point Street Apartment Building

RECOMMENDATIONS: Approval

STAFF: Anthony Cataldo

PETITIONER: Block Street Apartments, LLC

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 Douglas 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 and the Exelon 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- Ordinance #04-0682, approved May 10, 2004, repealed the original Allied PUD and replaced it with the Harbor Point PUD.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 with 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- Ordinance #07-555, approved November 26, 2007, repealed the old URP, and established Fells Point as a Baltimore City Local Historic District.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
- One February 18, 2010, the Planning Commission approved the Minor Amendment and Revised Final Design Approval for Harbor Point PUD – Thames Street Wharf
- One 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.

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 One, Objective 5 – Increase the City's Population by 10,000 Households in Six Years; 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 new PUD 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 begun on the Exelon building parcel and the new Central Park and Garage, the development team would like to begin the next phase of development along Point Street with the Point Street Apartment building on Parcel 5.

The 265,000 gross square foot apartment building is anticipated to include +/-289 residential apartments, approximately 19,230 square feet of retail, and includes a partial parking structure which creates a shared podium/plaza with the Thames Street Wharf building.

- Site Plan: The building fronts Point Street as the grade rises approximately 18 feet from east to west. It is a bar building which creates an upper level plaza to the south, connecting to the existing Thames Street Wharf building and a future building. The main entrance to the residential building is along Point Street as are the entrances to the retail uses. The residential entrance and some of the retail spaces are double height and contain access to the southern plaza level. The parking access will be temporarily located off the central plaza via an access road that will bring vehicles to the existing surface parking lot. The parking lot will provide access to the lower level parking structure for the building. Ultimately, the entrance to the parking structure beneath the plaza on Parcel 5 will be located off of the new Wills Street once building #8 is constructed. 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.

This building will be displacing some of the existing surface parking on site and, as such, a temporary surface lot will be 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 will be subject to Planning Commission design approval and will be brought to the Commission prior to the construction of this project.

- Landscape/Critical Area: The new plaza proposes a hardscape space with individual trees with custom seating as you enter off of Wills Street. The focal point of the perspective will be an art piece which terminates the entrance view from the west as well as from the future park space to the south. The art is highlighted with a grove of trees which create a semi-private space with an inclined lawn panel between the Thames St. Wharf building and the Point St. Apt. building. There are multiple opportunities to populate the plaza spaces with outdoor tables and chairs. A landscape buffer is created along the eastern edge of the plaza in order to help screen the service and transformers located below.
- Architectural Elevations: The building mass is stepped and sculpted along the south façade to take maximum advantage of the view to the east. It is narrower and steps down to create views toward Fells Point. The overall design proposes a vertical tripartite division that places a tower-like gesture toward the urban park and the residential entrance centered on the midblock mass. The interior units and amenity spaces are organized to maximize views to the east, south, and west. The elevations contain vertical masonry piers, structural concrete frame, curtain wall systems, and metal panels which provide for a visual layering of articulation within the elevations.
- Signage: A complete signage package has been included within the design documents for approval. The criteria covers retail signage as well as building ID signage which is envisioned to be internally illuminated individual letters atop the projecting canopy.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Stosur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "T" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director