

DRAFT McBride Redevelopment Steering Committee – SIP Phase

Two members of our steering committee were able to meet with the developers to receive an update on the implementation plans for the Pinkus McBride block redevelopment. Additionally, the developers presented at the rescheduled James Madison Park District Neighborhood Association on the 26th of March, and again at an open meeting the developers hosted on April 3rd at the Gates of Heaven Synagogue.

By and large, most of the steering committee's concerns were discussed during the GDP phase, and the project, from the committee's perspective, remains fundamentally the same. We therefore see no need to rehash the positives and negatives we discussed earlier this year. We instead choose to highlight some of the changes that we see as positive, and identify a few changes that we would like to see considered.

First, we appreciate the shorter wall on Hamilton St. The shorter wall will make walking along Hamilton significantly more pleasant. The second patio that is slated for moped parking is a nice addition because it breaks up the space, but we wonder if it could be used for something more engaging than moped parking. Perhaps some colored and textured concrete on the ground, and some benches, perhaps built right into a wall, along with the plantings, could make for a nice mini urban park, like a scaled down version of Lisa Link Peace Park or Concrete Park.

The Hamilton location for the entry way is a good change. The Hamilton location is more visible than the middle of Hancock, and it will be nice to have the entrance close to the store entrance. The return of the historic windows on the Pinkus building is a nice touch. One thing we remain concerned about is the distinctiveness of the entrance. The developers assure us that it will be there, but it has been difficult to see that from the renderings we've seen. We trust that the UDC will be able to use their trained eyes and either confirm that the developers are correct or that there is still work to be done. Long term we would like to see additional windows on the Johnson St side of Pinkus. We understand that they have not actually ever been part of the building in the past, but it simply feels like there are some large windows on Johnson that were bricked in and are waiting to return. We appreciate the impact that this would have on the store operations and understand that now may not be the time to make this change.

The "contemporary" design of the building remains a concern by some members of the committee. The buildings on the Hamilton corridor are usually a more

conservative masonry exterior, including the very recent buildings such as Hamilton Point and Capitol Point, and of course anchored by the State Capitol building, which is decidedly not contemporary. Of course, a contemporary building should not be ruled out automatically, but extreme elements should be reined in. An example is the steel cables along the sliding glass doors of the upper units. Simple steel cables alone were very out of place. The later renderings have shown the top cable replaced with a thicker rod or thicker cable, giving it more a patio feel. These sorts of simple, positive changes are appreciated.

We hope that there will be additional bike parking on the Hancock side of the building, to serve the residents who may exit that side of the building. The developers seem amenable to that, and we hope that any waivers or permits that the city may need to grant would be speedily approved.

We continue to support the overall project, and wish the developers a speedy, safe, and uneventful construction phase. We look forward to welcoming our new neighbors in the second half of 2009.