

Staff Report- February 12/2013
825 South Bond Street
Baltimore City Historic District- Fells Point

Plan: Concept Review New Construction, Hearing 2.

Staff Presenter : W. Edward Leon

Applicant : Mr. Hercenberg & Ms. Klein

Architects: James Shetler

Consultant: Al Barry

Background

These projects are coming for a Second Concept Review Hearing of a New construction in the Fells Point historic district. The projects are being reviewed in accordance with the Major Project review procedures. The site is located in the eastern side of the Fells Point historic district.

At the June 2012 hearing the CHAP Commission reviewed the project and made the following motions:

Motion # 1: Disapproval of the garage front entrance on the main facade and that the applicants are to submit a revised design that conforms to the stated guidelines. (The inclusion of the garage front is in complete contradiction to the CHAP guidelines Chapter 11, p.63 which states

“1) Design and place garage entrances and doors to be compatible with surrounding buildings and 2) Do not place garage entrances on front facades where there is no historic precedent”).

Motion # 2: To not approve height, massing and scale of the proposed new construction and that the applicants are to come back with a revised concept. (The following Guidelines were applied to this application: 11.1 Guiding principles for new design, 11.2 Site Design, 11.3 Scale and form, and 11.4 Building Features. And 10.1 Archeological resources (p.57)

The Commission is willing to consider a revised concept that does not include a garage front entrance on the main façade and otherwise conforms to the above stated Standards and Guidelines.

Plans

The plan is to construct a four story rowhouse on an empty lot site that had been demolished over 30 years ago. The proposal includes a ground floor front facade accessed garage, a contemporary rear construction with nearly full lot coverage and a three story front facade built with historically compatible masonry materials. There are two housing units proposed in the new construction.

Analysis

The staff has reviewed the site and found that the site had a three story high brick residential structure which collapsed more than 30 years ago, which was built sometime well before the 1860s. The design precedent on this site and in the immediate area is generally three story residential structures. The adjacent structure also includes a storefront. There are no historic garage front entrances in the immediate area being this block. There is no historic precedent of a garage entrance

on the front façade of a structure at this location. The staff applied the following Standards for the review of both proposals:

- *Standard 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. Note: CHAP interprets standard nine in such a way that new work may be subtly different from the old, allowing for new additions and buildings to replicate historic architectural details.*
- *Standard 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

The 800 Block of South Bond Street is a highly visible street in the Fells Point Historic District. The Commission applied Art. 6, Section 4-4 (b)(1) (2)(3) (4). Visibility of construction in the proposed location is subject to strict review by the Commission.

The staff applied the following Guidelines in the review of these projects: *11.1 Guiding principles for new design, 11.2 Site Design, 11.3 Scale and form, and 11.4 Building Features.*

The size, scale and massing has been reviewed and approved by the BMZA.

The Department of Planning commented twice on the zoning appeal for variances associated with 825 South Bond Street. The first comments were for the February 7, 2012 hearing on a proposed 4-story building with 1st-floor parking level and 3 upper levels of living space, attached only by a deck system to a 2-story rear building intended to be a separate rental unit. That rear building would have been within 3' of the rear property line. The applicant postponed that hearing in order to redesign the building to reduce the amount of rear-yard variance required from 27' out of the 30' required rear yard to 3' out of the required 30' rear yard – a lesser amount of variance to which the Department had no objection if the BMZA chose to approve it. At both hearings the Department considered the ground-level (1st floor level) parking area unnecessary as there would be no net gain of off-street parking spaces, as they are defined in the Zoning Code in terms of accessibility to the street, over the currently-possible 2 spaces that would be created on-street by lifting of the parking ban in front of the curb cut. If the curb cut did not already exist both the Department of Planning and the Department of Transportation, and the Parking Authority of Baltimore City, would have opposed consideration of 1st-floor parking as part of the building design, and none would have “signed off on” any permit to create it as a driveway for the new building.

The BMZA approved the revised application for a 2-dwelling unit building with a 3' variance of the rear-yard setback requirement. Actual design and final form of the building into which the approved use is to go was made subject to CHAP approval.

Following are excerpts from Planning Department memos to the BMZA:

825 South Bond Street is located on the east side of the street, approximately 65' south of the intersection with Shakespeare Street. This property measures approximately 18'1" by 122'5" and is currently unimproved. This site is zoned B-1-2 and is located within the Fells Point Historic District.

The Department of Planning has received James Shetler's Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) application, on behalf of Courtney Klein, to construct a four-story two-family dwelling with a front-loaded garage. We understand that this appeal is now scheduled for hearing on March 20, 2012, having been postponed on February 7, 2012 to allow time for redesign of a portion of the proposed development. Additional information provided by AB Associates on behalf of the applicant indicates that the four-story building has been redesigned so that the amount of rear yard setback variance being requested is 3' rather than the original 27' out of a required rear yard setback of 30' in a B-1-2 District.

Lot Area: In this zoning district, multiple-family dwellings require 1,100 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit (§6-211.c.1.). In this case, for two dwelling units, 2,200 square feet of lot area is required. The lot encloses approximately 2,200 square feet, and so does meet this requirement.

Floor area ratio: ... the floor area ratio in a B-1-2 District may not exceed 2.5 (§6-213.c.1.). In this case, the proposed floor area ratio would be approximately 1.96.

Required yard: The proposed two-story rental portion of the proposed structure will project to within 27' of the rear lot line. This is a substantial improvement over the previous design, and this Department has no objection to approval of this amount of variance. (*i.e., 3 feet of variance*)

Off-Street Parking: In this zoning district, multiple-family dwellings require one off-street parking space per 2 dwelling units (§10-405.1.iv). For two dwelling units, a parking space is required; three are proposed to be provided in tandem (*first design proposal*), so the space nearest the street would satisfy this requirement. However, as two dwelling units are being proposed and there is an allowance of one space for the residential building that originally stood on this lot, a parking variance of 75% would accommodate the proposed multiple-family dwelling (see also comments below under "Land Use and Urban Design") while allowing a design more in keeping with the character of adjacent residential properties. *

Land Use and Urban Design: While this Department's policy that curb-cuts in residential neighborhoods are inappropriate except where an existing carriage house is involved remains in effect, the facts that there is an existing curb-cut in front of this property, and that the design of the proposed structure must be approved by the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation, tend to reserve to that Commission the final determination of whether or not there should be a parking garage incorporated in the proposed structure.

There is an existing curb-cut in front of the property, and there is angled parking on this (east) side of Bond Street. If the curb-cut would be closed two on-street angled parking spaces could be created, enough to satisfy the additional demand that would be created by construction of two dwelling units at this location. This Department's policy is that curb-cuts in residential neighborhoods such as Fells Point are inappropriate except where an existing carriage house is involved, which is not the case with this property. The applicant should redesign the dwelling units to remove the ground-floor tandem parking, which in turn would free that portion of the property for use as living space and allow a revised design that would not require a fourth level or as large a rear yard setback variance. (*comment on original 2-building design*)

The Department of Planning recommends that approval of this appeal, if granted, be conditional upon approval by the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation of the design and construction of the proposed two-family dwelling, and should that approval include approval of a front-loading garage within the structure, approval also by the City's Department of Transportation of continuation of the curb-cut now located in front of the property.

The size is compatible with other precedents of new construction and additions that the Commission has previously approved. There has however been continued concern raised by both the Preservation Society DRC and adjacent neighbors regarding the near full lot coverage created by the two structures on the site. The massing and scale however, are not in keeping with the first Motion from the June 2012 hearing.

The proposal is planning on using the following materials: Clad wood windows, hardie panel with batten strips, cedar or fiber cement siding, architectural shingles, brick, metal clad wood windows, four over four wood windows, and wood trim. The materials list follows and has been used throughout new construction on the Fells Point historic district.

The elevation of the north and south facades while contemporary in style and higher than the surrounding structures is consistent with the guidelines. The rear elevations style of the main structure and the second/rental unit are also consistent with the stated guidelines.

The proposed front elevation garage front entrance is not in compliance with the guidelines or the Commission Motion of June, 2012. The first floor shows a garage front entry and main entry door

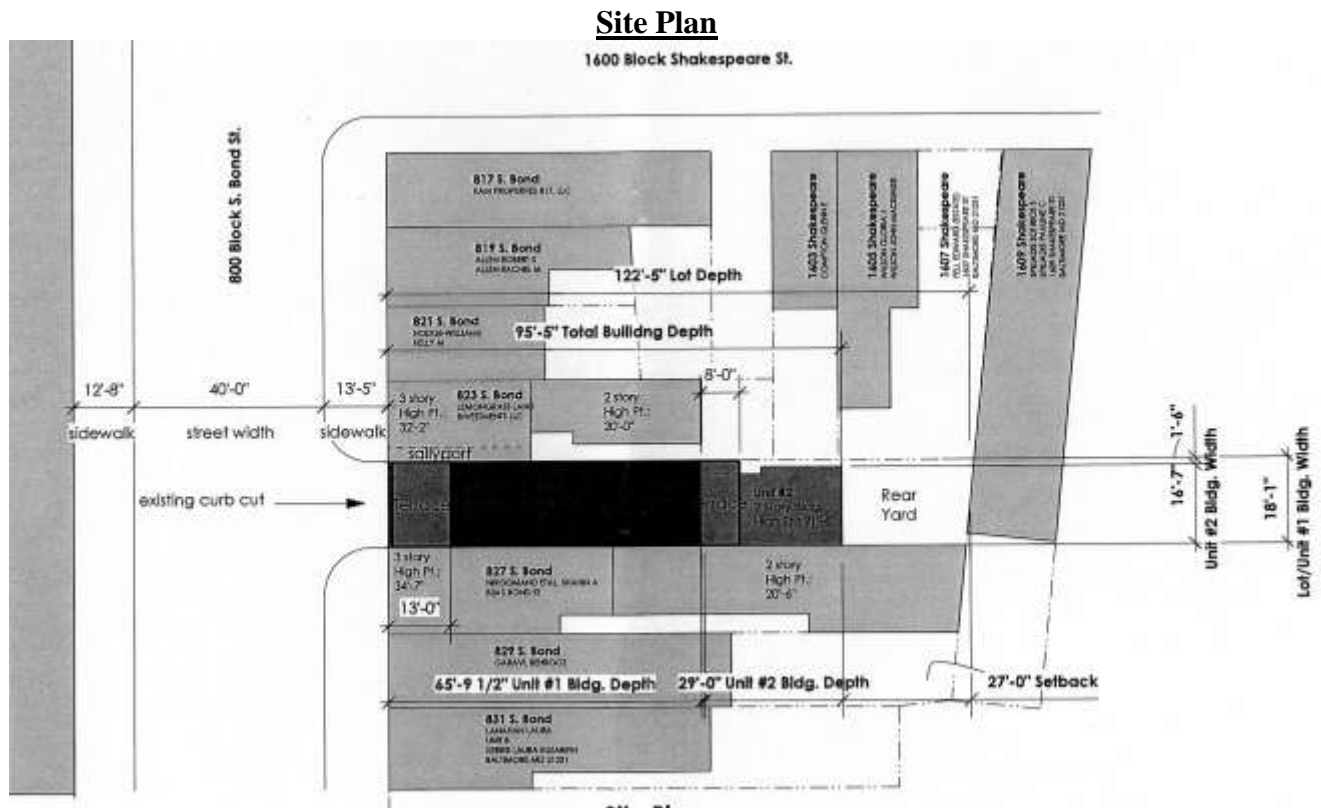
on what is a primarily residential setting. The garage front has been approved by the commission in other locations where there is historic precedent such as alley streets or other historic garage like structures. The inclusion of the garage front is in complete contradiction to the CHAP guidelines Chapter 11, p.63 which states *1) Design and place garage entrances and doors to be compatible with surrounding buildings and 2) Do not place garage entrances on front facades where there is no historic precedent.*

Other nearby garage front doors were either built historically as carriage houses on secondary streets or as new construction before the district was created in 2007. Additionally, the majority of the garage doors roll up rather than open up.

The remaining second story and third story facade treatment with brick and wood windows is appropriate and conforms to the CHAP guidelines. The details proposed for the cornice also is appropriate. The fourth story front facade while appropriate in style and material is set 12 to 13 feet from the front cornice edge.

Staff Recommendation

The staff recommends dis-approval of the new plans as they do not conform to the guidelines or the Motions that were passed at the June 2012 public hearing.





Aerial Views of the Site from North Looking South



Aerial View of the Site looking East



Aerial View of the Site Looking West



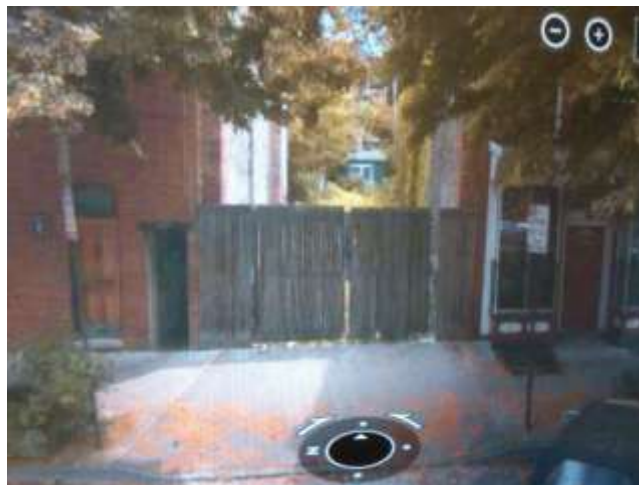
Aerial View of the Site Looking North



Current View



Historic View



Front/West Elevation

June 2012

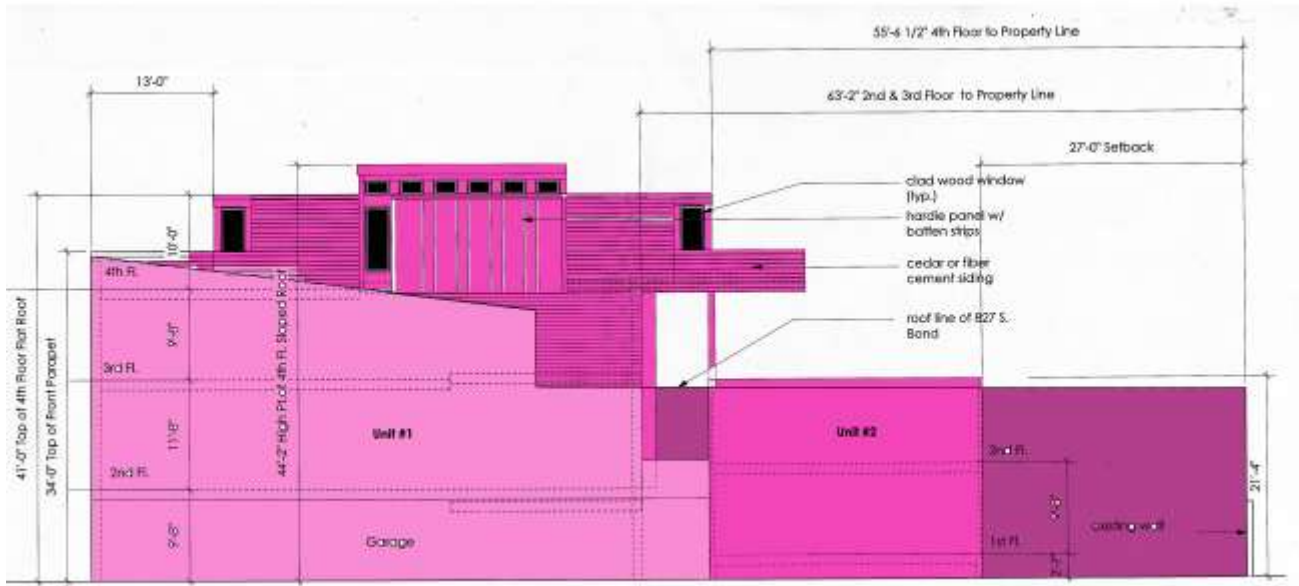


February 2013

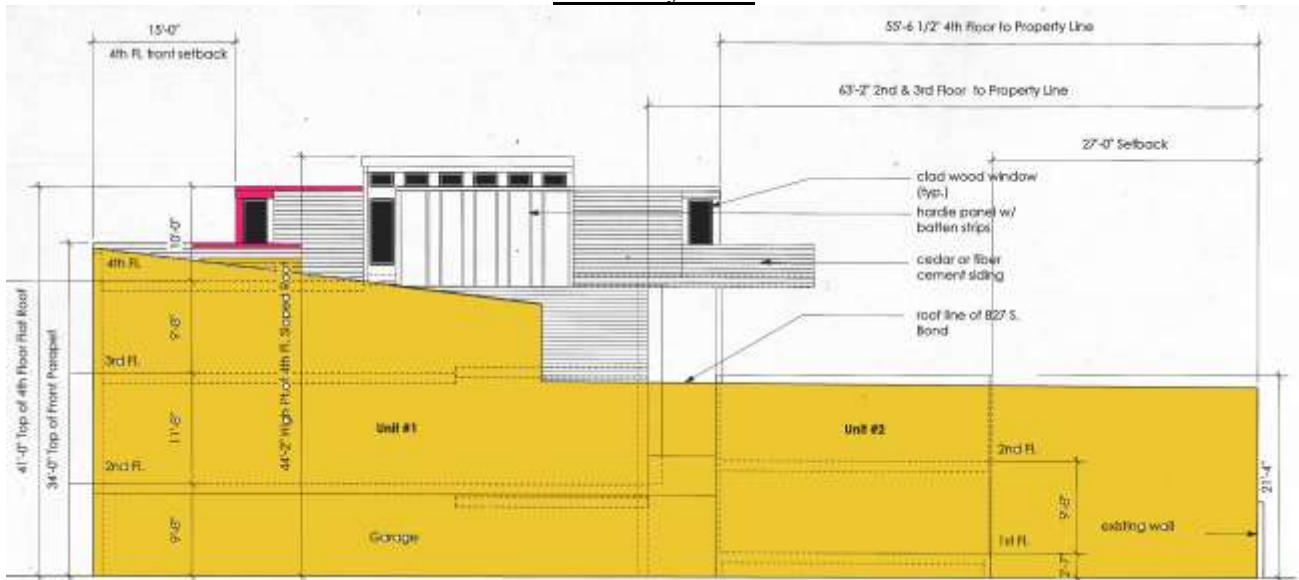


South Elevation

June 2012



February 2013



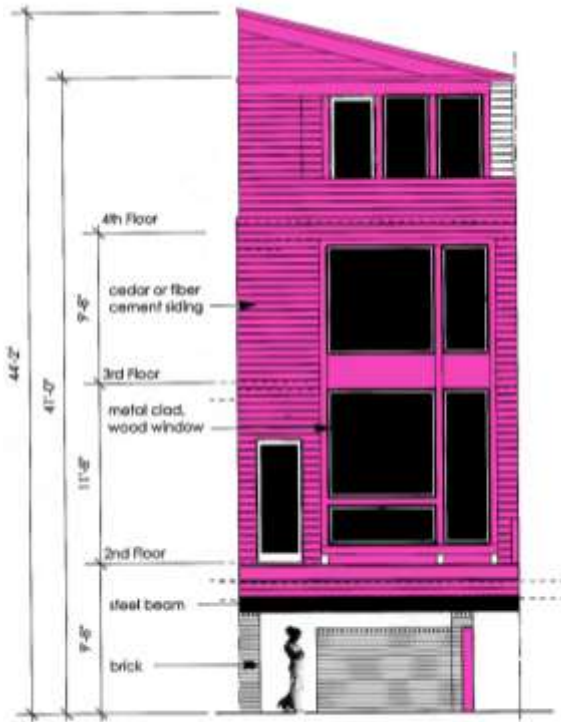
North Elevation



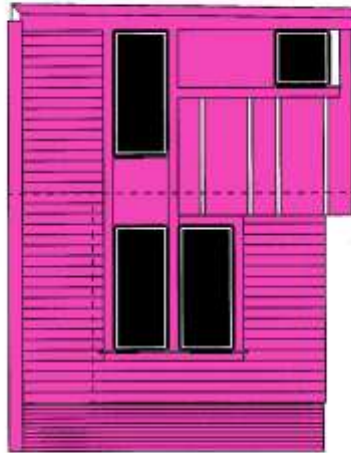
North Elevation



Rear/East Elevation
2012

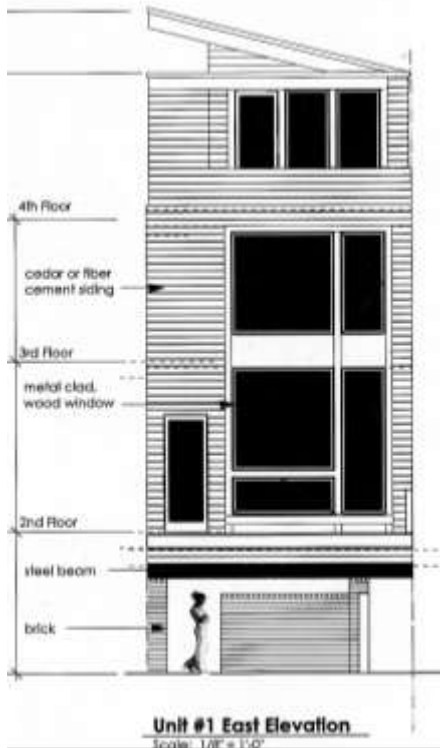


Unit #1 East Elevation
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

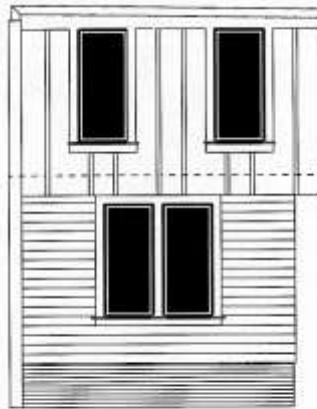


Unit #2 East Elevation
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

2013



Unit #1 East Elevation
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Unit #2 East Elevation
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Proposed front façade view 2013

