

Community Meeting: 3903-3913

Front Studios

Our office is on North Craig Street. We are very excited about the project and we hope you like it. We've done quite a bit of work in the east end and in the neighborhood. We will be showing some of those slides in our presentation.

The first slide shows the squirrel hill library in squirrel hill. It was built 15-12 years ago. It has become a very popular community center for the neighborhood and the east end. It is a project that has been very very well received by the community. Our next example is the sharpsburg library, very interesting, a renovation of a indian restaurant in sharpsburg. There is now a small garden, it's very colorful and we have won many awards. It's been very well received by the community, the kids and their parents love this. The next project is the glass lofts in garfield. You all should be familiar with this project, Art describes it as one of the greenest project because it is green! It has been very noteworthy in the east end and very well received. Next here we are with Bennet place in homewood and was built 25 years ago. It's still in very good condition and shape and is very well received and well maintained. I W Able is another senior housing project, still a very well regarded project. Next is the liberty avenue medical center in bloomfield. This project was built 8 years ago. It's not that old. It was empty for many years. Now the project we will present to you. We are architects and i'm not just an architect, i also teach at CMU and i have been there for 30yrs so they gave me an award for being there for 30 years. And i didnt want to take up times so they agreed to send me a plaque in the mail. It arrived and it said 30yrs but it was in a frame, and it was broken, so apparently my 30yrs didn't count for much. But what i teach at cmu is part of what we are going to be doing for this project, the importance of the experience of architecture and the art of architecture. In this case, the art is a dialogue between the five existing buildings and the five new townhouses. And when we were hired to do this, i was told that they want to build townhouses and the implication was that they wanted to tear this building down. I am the past president of Preservation Pittsburgh, and even though my work doesn't look like it, i really like older buildings and do what i can to save them. I don't think there is a crack in the masonry at all and it's been there for 70-something years and although not a landmark, it is a marker in the community. I told the clients that we should save the building and they think i've lost a marble or two but we are on the same page and we are going to save it. We are building a second floor on each of the existing structures and building four new projects on Clement Way and all of the projects have roof terraces. The roof terraces on Clement Way are held back and the rest of it will be plants or pots so that there won't be any peering into the house next door , they are really close because they are 22ft away. The lot includes the five townhouses and the commercial garage next to it, we will be tearing down the garage and using the pre existing curb cut on Liberty avenue and that will be the entrance. Each of the five existing townhouse will have their own garage in side of the L shape. The other units will span over the driveway and the other four units will have two cars spots entering from clement and the one next to it we cannot place two garages next to it with entrance from the new driveway. There will be ten townhouses and 18 cars plus 1 car spot that

is available for loading. That will be on the right side of the building next to the grey driveway. Some of the townhomes have their own stairs and some share stairs and landings. You can see that there will be additions on the top, some of these are shaped like traditional housing with a small quirk in the design. Copper, zinc, and cedar will be used as the building material. The existing townhouses will have additions to the top. All of the new townhouses will have terraces off of the living room and roof terraces. The stair towers will all have concrete masonry. We also have calculated the height, will be 40ft from the lowest point of the site. All of the units are within the city rules for height. All of these units will meet the passive house requirements, being low energy and non toxic and meet all kinds of stringent requirements in relating to off gassing and healthful issues. There will be a total of 8 cars that have to come in one way. We are taking down 1 tree and replacing it with 8 serious trees, not twigs. By the way, the art of this project is in the dialogue between the existing building and the new building and how they become and how they talk to each other.

Patrick / Neighbor (Live across from Clement Way)

I noticed you haven't provided an exterior rendering of Clement Way. I'd like to see how tight it is. Right now we have a grass patch. There is no rendering of the back side of the building. I am not worried about any of the materials used, I am worried about its the perspective.

Front Studio

Ok we can do that.

Stephanie / Neighbor

What's the timeline for when it will go in and go up?

Front Studio

2.14.19 is our hearing and if this is approved we would start in the spring. The first thing we would do is tear down the garage. And we would remove all of the wood structure from within the existing buildings and after that i can't tell you what's next. I can tell you this, the contactor sent me a list of how they are going to handle this. First they are gonna find lots where people can park and they are going to identify a place where they can put their dumpsters so where it won't become a nuisance. There is a whole list of things and they are very responsible people and i would tell you who the contactor is but i'm sure the price would go up if i did. The contractor is very aware that they don't want to caused problems for the community.

Lawrenceville United (Matt G)

Typically the zoning hearing gives 45 days after the hearing and thinking of if there isn't any opposition. So the project is going to be running from 2019-2020.

Stephanie / Neighbor

Our block has really taken a hit and this has changed our lives and i have been pregnant and have a young child. How much of a disturbance and how much additional traffic will this cause? Will it be safe to walk and cross the street around the site?

Front Studio

I am disabled myself so i assure you there wont be any huge danger or disturbance to the neighborhood.

Enzo / Property Owner

We own 3901 Liberty and right now there is a gap between the property, according to the visual there isn't a gap anymore. Will there be space between the property

Front Studio

Yes there will still be a small gap. We are aware of the property we are aware and the developers have tried real hard to purchase the property. Do you want them to try harder?

Enzo / Property Owner

Sir they have not tried hard, i own the property and they haven't.

Jimmy / Neighbor

Thank you for saving the property

Front Studio

You are welcome

Chuck / Neighbor

How much will the homes be priced at and will the bus stop be disturbed

Front Studio

There won't be any problem with the bus stop. As far as what the price is going to be, it's not affordable housing and the developer does not have \$200 or \$250 x 10 to mark these things down so they can be affordable.

Patrick / Neighbor

Are you going to fix the sidewalk that's all torn up around there.

Front Studio

Cory 9th ward: what variance if any are you seeking?

Front Studio

Next to the house we are seeking a variance from 5ft to 3ft and the lot area requirements. The lot area requirements are 1800 square feet and there aren't many houses that have that. The

five homes along liberty avenue will have a little over 100 square feet per lot and the other ones will have 1100-1300 per lot

Lauren / Neighbor

I got a preview of this project because i ran into these folks. My property faces the backside of the building and our homes are impacted by the presence of new volume. I can also appreciate how redevelopment of the site which is sorely needed may impact the land. I really appreciate the way they save the original building and i'm glad of that and I like the materials being used and i like the resolve around parking. My question is: when you talk about green stuff, i wasn't sure if that was between the two sets of u buildings or will the be brought to the back.

Front Studio

There will be.....we are doing a project....a few projects in china for one organization.. And we had the renderings for another project that we are doing and we sent them to China to have the renders there do the renderings because the price was about a third of what it would have been here. The president of this organization saw our renderings for apartments in New Jersey and we are doing a project with 556 apartments. And he pointed at it and said "happy architecture" because it has bright colors and dynamic shapes and we are now calling our architecture "happy architecture" and it will be green in regards to environmental issues and we will plant what we can but we only have 2ft back there. We are hoping to save, the vines because the building is covered in vines. We are going to try to save the vines as part of the landscapes.

Lauren / Neighbor

My front door faces that alley which is the backside of the building. If there was vertical a solution, that would be.

Walt / Neighbor

I work for an architecture and i ride my bike up Liberty ave every day. I like keeping the original facade and keeping the bones and the material choices are interesting. Are those same materials going to be on the back of the buildings?

Front Studio

Everything but the burnt pine will be on the back of the building.

Matt / BDC Board

lis there a unit above the driveway? And where is that person's parking?

Front Studio

It's half under and half over the parking area.

Cory R / LU Board

How many bathrooms and bedrooms are in each unit?

Front Studio

The one over the driveway are two bedrooms and the pre existing buildings will be 3 bedrooms and the 4 new units are either 2 or 3 and i don't remember actually which is which. That's a vague answer but i am not trying to hide anything.

IF THERE ARE ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS PLEASE SEND US SUGGESTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS. (PROVIDES EMAIL CONTACT FOR FIRM TO AUDIENCE)

CLOSED DOOR SESSION

Enzo / Owner of Adjacent Property

What does LU, BDC and LC think of this?

LC / Matt G

This is part of our process and our work in the neighborhood and on one hand we are a bit ambivalent. And this as a strategic location does not seem very strategic. On one hand there is a "do we care about this" on the other hand there is a thoughtful design that considers the reuse of the building. It's an interesting play on the townhouse approach dealing with modern material and contemporary desires. Id say if i had a concern it would be the curb cut, and because this is a run to downtown. If we could right a wrong we would make sure traffic would not be pulling in mid block, that is something that gives us concern and give an unnecessary conflict. That is a thumbnail of where we are.

BDC / Christina H

my two initial concerns were that there were no entrances or front doors on Liberty Avenue and the usage of the pre-existing curb cut. They had initially planned to take away street facing doorways. And they asked me about the lack of front doors and we told them we don't want gated communities in our neighborhood and we want people to be connecting. I think the curb cut is concerning for me. We can be fairly ambivalent about densinty in certain places, some people like it some people don't. I think the curb cut is my second initial concern.

Walter / Neighbor

I been to a lot of meetings that are heavily focused on the developer during the meeting. There was a question earlier about affordability. Developers seem to be more math driven. I find it interesting that the developer is not present and there is a different tone of the meeting and i am looking to see what that means. We were not as focused on the economics of the project

and more on what the architectural qualities were. It was a positive discussion whereas if the developer was running the meeting it probably would have been less positive and enthusiastic.

BDC/LC

It depends on the developer and team. In this case, in a project of this scale to push affordability is really tough based on scale and economies of the projects. This is not an "A site" for market rate townhouses. Their ability to generate enough money at the top end to make this project affordable is just not feasible. On units of 20 or more we are pushing for at least 10%-15% inclusion of affordability.

Jesse / LU Board Member

Touching on that what is the threshold? Is it 20% or 10%?

LC / Matt G

Its 20 and over 20 at least 10% would need to be affordable

Patrick / Neighbor

These projects being developed are great and clement way is a narrow street and we are going to add 4 additional cars? And the other developments on Clement Way have a parking pad and this is going to be a 40ft wall outside of my bedroom.

LC / Matt G

Let's talk through this, is a site zone permanently vacant? No. Development is going to happen on this site. What can they do, setting it back? Parking port, set it back, give it some poracity. Vines would be great but vines grow up fast. It's also not clear to me if the material being used will be receiving to vines and can we do something that just isn't a grey wall and not choking off Clement Way.

Chuck / Neighbor

I'm concerned about entrance and exit on Liberty Street. People zoom very fast and there are a bunch of pedestrians im not sure how easily people exiting the lot will be able to see because it is a two way entrance on liberty.

Jesse / LU Board

Could they reroute this to the alley? Would that solve the problem?

BDC / Christina

Dave suggested that and they said it was impossible due to the grade change from the alley to the courtyard area.

Leslie / Neighbor

It is also very narrow because of two way chain., right now people pull into that grassy area.

Jesse / LU Board

How much of the block is this parcel?

BDC / Christina

It is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the block

Jesse / LU Board Member

Would it be a heavy lift to turn the alley way into a one way?

BDC / Christina

i don't think that is what should happen , that isn't a resolution to the entrance on Liberty

Cory / LU Board Member

Is clement no parking right now?

CLement Residents

Its technically unenforced but it is no parking and we will be losing parking space. Also why if the driveway works why wouldn't it be able to match the grade on clement way?

Amanda / Neighbor

Do they know what they paid for this lot and whats their cost.

BDC / Christina

The architect said a little north of 250k per unit. That is the building cost not the purchase cost.

Stephannie / Neighbor

They talked about changing the water lines because of lead?

Kevin / Neighbor

There are existing projects happening on that block. I have no clue when these projects are going to end but are these projects all happening at the same time?