

# Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

**FROM:** Laura Shipman  
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

**PROJECT:** ZOM Bethesda  
Sketch Plan No. 320180050

**DATE:** November 8, 2017

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*The **ZOM Bethesda** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **November 8, 2017**. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel's discussion, and recommendations regarding design excellence and the exceptional design public benefits points. The Panel's recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report and strongly considered by Staff prior to the certification of the Site Plan. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

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## **Attendance:**

Karl Du Puy (Panelist)  
George Dove (Panelist)  
Damon Orobona (Panelist)  
Rod Henderer (Panelist)  
Paul Mortensen (Panelist, Senior Urban Designer in the Director's Office)

Laura Shipman (Design Advisory Panel Liaison)  
Matthew Folden (Lead Plan Reviewer)  
Gwen Wright (Planning Department Director)  
Robert Kronenberg (Area 1 Division Chief)  
Elza Hisel-McCoy (Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor)  
Michael Brown (Area 1 Master Plan Supervisor)  
Leslye Howerton (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)

Heather Dhopolsky (Attorney, Applicant Team)  
Andy Czajkowski (Architect, Applicant Team)  
Trini Rodriguez (Landscape Applicant Team)  
Andrew Cretal (Applicant Team)  
Phil Dales (Attorney, Applicant Team)



## Discussion Points:

- The project checks a lot of boxes in terms of urban planning and streetscape, it is a sound design, but is this exceptional design? Could more be done from materials perspective to make this exceptional?
- A passageway could come across the site from east to west. That through-block connection could make buildings more distinct and make the block smaller. This could create a natural place to stop and gather along Arlington Road. Could just be a 1<sup>st</sup> floor passageway.
  - *Applicant response:* This makes internal workings much more difficult. The grades are problematic and essentially prevent such a connection. Would not necessarily connect to any destinations because the connection would not reach all the way through to Woodmont Avenue.
- The design is heading in a strong direction. However, it is a long building which is a challenge for pedestrians. Courtyards are positive to add articulation along the Arlington façade, and the pavilions are very nice along the northern portion of the building. However, a bit more attention to the transition between the north and south buildings along Arlington Road might help. Right now, it is an abrupt clash. Perhaps a recessed plane or joining element of some sort could be more effective in easing the change of architectural facade treatments.
- Materiality feels dark, may consider lighter metal panel to make the upper floors less prominent (though there were dissenting opinions that dark may look best with brick).
- Should the lobby be placed along Arlington as the major road?
  - *Applicant response:* Main entrance on Moreland is better for pick-up/drop-off.
- Because of the Arlington Road façade's orientation with a long western exposure, could metal panel become dark brick instead, and with those cost savings add solar-shading/sunscreens to this façade?
- Units along southern portion ground floor of the building with direct access stoops are great.
- Is there any way to bring natural light into the very long hallway on southern end? Two separate buildings would solve this problem, but as an alternative you could consider flipping the fire stair to bring in light.

## Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Exceptional Design Points: The design is headed in a positive direction to achieve at least the 10 out of 30 points requested in this category, based on the upgrade to a concrete construction type, quality materials and building articulation.



2. Create more distinction between the north and south portions of the building to break up the long Arlington Road facade and bring in more natural light at the transition.
3. Coordinate with the adjacent properties to better configure and maximize the proposed outdoor spaces between buildings to the east of the site.
4. Integrate a way to provide sun shading on the long west-facing façade along Arlington Road.



# Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

**FROM:** Laura Shipman  
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

**PROJECT:** **Marriott International Headquarters**  
Sketch Plan No. 320180060 and Site Plan No. 820180030

**DATE:** November 8, 2017

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*The **Marriott International Headquarters** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **November 8, 2017**. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel's discussion, and recommendations regarding design excellence and the exceptional design public benefits points. The Panel's recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report and strongly considered by Staff prior to the certification of the Site Plan. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

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## **Attendance:**

Karl Du Puy (Panelist)  
George Dove (Panelist)  
Damon Orobona (Panelist)  
Rod Henderer (Panelist)  
Qiaojue Yu (Panelist)  
Paul Mortensen (Panelist, Senior Urban Designer in the Director's Office)

Laura Shipman (Design Advisory Panel Liaison)  
Robert Kronenberg (Lead Plan Reviewer)  
Gwen Wright (Planning Department Director)  
Michael Brown (Area 1 Master Plan Supervisor)  
Leslye Howerton (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)

Bob Dalrymple (Attorney, Applicant Team)  
Matt Gordon (Attorney, Applicant Team)  
Duncan Lyons (Architect, Applicant Team)  
Jim Hart (Applicant Team)  
Nancy Regelin (Applicant Team)  
Jim Young (Applicant Team)  
Michelle Dandenica (Applicant Team)



## Discussion Points:

- It is great that Marriott is moving to Downtown Bethesda and increasing activation in the Downtown.
- Elegant building, not just a glass box, glass box with character. The experience will be of much less bulk than what is actually there.
- The activation of the street and increased setback makes the sidewalk more comfortable from a pedestrian standpoint.
- The north façade is attractive; however, the south façade top could be treated differently. Maybe the vertical element is too broad, not as slender and elegant as the other façade treatments.
- The base is very successful all the way around the building.
- The through-block connection is a real plus of the project. Is this open 24 hours?
  - *Applicant response:* It will be closed midnight to 6 am, but not with gates or fences, more so the owner has the right to close it off.
- Beautiful project, but may feel imposing over the remaining small retail on the block.
- Might we think that we have missed an opportunity to design something iconic a few years down the road?
- Interlocking planes very successful, especially the thinness of the L and breaking into two towers.
- Will the hotel cast a lot of shadow over the public through-block connection?
  - *Applicant response:* Shadow studies indicate the center will be mostly a shaded area, so the design includes shade-tolerant plantings. There will be reflected sunlight from the buildings and the hanging string lights will add visual interest and reflections.
- Can the circulation be simplified, particularly curb cuts along Woodmont. Woodmont will be a difficult street for pedestrians and conflicts with vehicles.
  - *Applicant response:* Limitations because servicing can't happen along Wisconsin Avenue and Norfolk Avenue.
- The top of building feels cliché, doesn't feel like a 21<sup>st</sup> century idea and could be stronger. The idea of the glass coming to street is effective. The top angle in elevation should be re-considered.
  - *Applicant response:* Making angle in elevation accentuates the angle in plan to add more emphasis to the shift. This is also a place for the Marriott identity.
- What is the relationship to Tastee Diner, will that property be redeveloped?
  - *Applicant response:* Facades closest have exterior fire-rated wall which anticipates the possibility these abutting sites could redevelop though they have a small footprint.



- High Performance measures? Deep floor plates and little daylight, how is the project achieving LEED Gold?
  - *Applicant response:* Open work areas rather than perimeter office along with the L-shape of site allows windows on interior of L. Hardly any point is more than 45 feet from exterior of building. A circulation corridor also runs along windows for maximization of natural light.
- The applicant noted that 20 exceptional design points were requested because the project cannot fully achieve all objectives of the design guidelines due to the required density and program.
- Because the project is not truly high-performing it would not receive the full 30 points.
- Tower Top maybe should be even more simplified or more slender. However, it also may be too subtle and could be more expressive.
  - *Applicant response:* At night the southeast tower will have intricate lighting from base to top to add visual interest, as well as transparency of the top with a double thick structure.

**Panel Recommendations:**

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Exceptional Design Points: The panel recommends the 20 out of 30 points requested.
2. Tower Top: Explore a better solution for the tower top at the office building southeast corner, perhaps one that is more reflective of the successful north façade.



# Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

**FROM:** Laura Shipman  
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

**PROJECT:** **Artery Plaza**  
Sketch Plan No. 32015005B and Site Plan No. 81984002D

**DATE:** November 8, 2017

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*The **Artery Plaza** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **November 8, 2017**. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel's discussion, and recommendations regarding design excellence and the exceptional design public benefits points. The Panel's recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report and strongly considered by Staff prior to the certification of the Site Plan. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

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Paul Mortensen (Panelist, Senior Urban Designer in the Director's Office)

Laura Shipman (Design Advisory Panel Liaison)  
Gwen Wright (Planning Department Director)  
Robert Kronenberg (Area 1 Division Chief)  
Leslye Howerton (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)

Pat Harris (Attorney, Applicant Team)  
Laura Croce (Architect, Applicant Team)  
Kristi Smith (Applicant Team)  
George Hayward (Applicant Team)



## Discussion Points:

- It is a beautiful building with simple and distinct design language.
- The project enhanced the upper floor to activate it and make it occupiable. It also creates a attractive top for occupants of taller surrounding projects to look down onto.
- Great design of the curtain wall system. The idea of the structure and the bronze stainless steel grid is very nice and well detailed.
- The building has a calmness to it, and sets itself apart in a very tailored way.
- This building is unique, exciting and forward-looking.
- There could have been a reveal considered at the southwest corner detail.
- How does it compare to height of the Darcy?
  - *Applicant Response:* The proposed building is taller than the Darcy.
- The panel thought the architecture was exceptional, but had some concerns about the contribution to the public realm. The panel will have to determine their approach to reviewing discretionary public benefit points.

## Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Public Benefit Points: The panel recommends the 30 out of 30 points requested.
2. The balconies in the design are successful. They are recommended and encouraged by the panel.

