Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel Submission Form

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	
File Number(s)	
Project Address	

Plan Type

Concept Plan

Sketch Plan

Site Plan

APPLICANT TEAM

	Name	Phone	Email
Primary Contact			
Architect			
Landscape Architect			

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

	Zone	Proposed Height	Proposed Density
Project Data			
Proposed Land Uses			
Brief Project	Check if requesting addition	al density through the Bethesda Ove	rlav Zone (BOZ)
Description and		al density through the Dethesua Ove	
Design Concept			
(If the project was			
previously presented			
to the Design			
Advisory Panel,			
describe how the			
latest design			
incorporates the			
Panel's comments)			



Exceptional Design	
Public Benefit Points	
Requested and Brief	
Justification	

DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL SUBMISSION PROCESS

- Schedule a Design Advisory Panel review date with the Design Advisory Panel Liaison. Laura Shipman, Design Advisory Panel Liaison, <u>laura.shipman@montgomeryplanning.org</u>, 301-495-4558
- 2. A minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled Design Advisory Panel meeting, provide the completed Submission Form and supplemental drawings for review in PDF format to the Design Advisory Panel Liaison via email.
- 3. Supplemental drawings should include the following at Site Plan and as many as available at Concept and Sketch Plan:
 - Property Location (aerial photo or line drawing)
 - Illustrative Site Plan
 - 3D Massing Models
 - Typical Floor Plans
 - Sections
 - Elevations
 - Perspective Views
 - Precedent Images
 - Drawings that show the proposal in relationship to context buildings and any planning board approved abutting buildings in as much detail as possible



4915 and 4921 Auburn Avenue Project Description

The Applicant is proposing to redevelop the aging commercial buildings on the Property with a mixed-use, predominately residential, development. The Project will contain up to 175,000 square feet of density, including up to 180 units and up to 12,500 square feet of commercial use (the final allocation of residential and commercial density will be determined at site plan review). The residential component of the Project will include a minimum of 17.6% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units ("MPDUs") (up to 33 units); the MPDUs will comprise up to 29,728 square feet that, pursuant to Section 4.7.3.D.6.c.iii, is exempted from the calculation of FAR (and thus, not included in the overall 175,000 square feet of density proposed). Specifically, Lot 1 will be developed with an approximately 2-3 story (or up to 50') commercial building. Lot 2 will be developed with an approximately 11-story (or up to 122') tall mixed-use building. Final building heights will be determined at the time of Site Plan.

The Property is located in the Height Incentive Area as specified in the Bethesda Overlay Zone. The Height Incentive Area recommends providing more than the minimum required MPDUs by allowing additional height if a project exceeds 17.5% MPDUs. Under this provision, approximately 12 feet of additional height is allowed to accommodate the proposed MPDUs (*i.e.* a minimum of 17.6%). As such, the Project will have a maximum height, as permitted by the Property's zoning and as recommended in the Downtown Plan, of 122 feet, inclusive of 17.6% MPDUs.

The proposed development will greatly improve the pedestrian environment and promote the proposed character of Norfolk Avenue, which envisions Norfolk as a shared street lined with smaller scale retail structures with varied storefronts. To this end, a two to three story commercial building is proposed to be located directly along Norfolk Avenue to define the pedestrian environment and actively engage the street. Further, the Project consolidates the existing curb cuts from three into one, a key element to improving the streetscape experience. This will result in the prioritization of pedestrians and bicycles over cars and allow flexibility for future Norfolk Avenue street improvements. The Applicant will continue to explore different avenues for implementing the Downtown Plan's vision for Norfolk Avenue, including a potential parklet along the Property's Norfolk Avenue frontage and long-term streetscape improvements, with final determination at the time of Site Plan.

One of the most unique public benefits that will come from redevelopment of the Property is the new public mid-block pedestrian connection through the middle of the building. The proposed pedestrian path completes the connection between the public pass-through between Auburn Avenue and Del Ray Avenue (located next to Imagination Stage, and illustrated on page 115 of the Downtown Plan), and the Bethesda Trolley Trail/ Battery Lane Urban Park. The through-block connection will be designed to draw people into the space. The final design will be determined at the time of Site Plan, but will incorporate lighting, active ground floor uses on both sides, ample ground-floor transparency, decorative paving, and landscaping to create an inviting connection. The Applicant will explore opportunities to extend the specialty paving, used in the through-block connection, into the streetscape along both Auburn Avenue and Norfolk Avenue to help define this public connection.

4915 and 4921 Auburn Avenue Exceptional Design Narrative

The approach to the design of the building on the Property is the result of a collaborative process between architects, owners, planners, and neighbors. The design draws its influences from the surrounding neighborhood and the Woodmont Triangle context, as well as from the recommendations of the Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Plan ("Downtown Plan") and Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines ("Design Guidelines"). As demonstrated below, the building has been designed to respond to the site's location off of Norfolk and Auburn Avenue, and to enhance both the immediate neighborhood and the larger Woodmont Triangle District.

I. Bethesda Downtown Plan and Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines

The Project furthers many of the goals of the Downtown Plan and the Design Guidelines, including:

1. Downtown Plan

- Providing expanded affordability for housing through the inclusion of a minimum of 17.6% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units.
- Taking advantage of existing and planned transit by redeveloping the existing low-density, aging commercial buildings with a high-density, mixed-use, predominately residential building that is more appropriately suited for the Property, given its transit-oriented location within 0.6 miles of the Metro Station and various bus routes.
- The Project will provide diverse housing opportunities by including a variety of market rate unit sizes and layouts to facilitate the availability of new housing, in a range of types and rents, within walking distance of the Metro.
- Importantly, the Project's design and the Property's location presents an opportunity to improve the relationship between the CBD's more intensive uses and the residential properties that are located just outside the CBD boundary to the west. The proposed use (which is predominately residential) will be more compatible with the adjacent single-family residential properties than the current commercial buildings and surface parking lots. The building has also been designed to incorporate a series of step-backs and height step-downs on the western façade, to provide a gradual transition from the single-family residential properties and the more intensive uses located beyond the Property in the CBD.
- The Project will preserve the low-density, pedestrian scale character along Norfolk Avenue. The Project proposes to locate a two- to three-story commercial/retail building directly along the Property's Norfolk Avenue frontage. As a result, the residential building maintains the desired low-density main street

character. The two- to three-story commercial/retail building has been strategically designed to create an appropriate transitional scale and to mark the beginning of the Norfolk Avenue Shared Street.

- The proposed design consolidates vehicular access points from three existing curb cuts to one and in doing so, eliminates the existing vehicular access to the Property off of Norfolk Avenue to promote a more pedestrian oriented streetscape experience. The Project will provide significant streetscape improvements and will take an important first step toward implementing the Norfolk Avenue Shared Street.
- The Project will improve connectivity throughout the neighborhood. The Project provides a pedestrian connection through the site that will serve as the missing link between the Bethesda Trolley Trail, which includes a pedestrian/cyclist connection through Battery Lane Urban Park, and the through-block pedestrian connection between Auburn Avenue and Del Ray Avenue, adjacent to Imagination Stage.

2. Design Guidelines

- o Tower Step-Backs
 - The building design incorporates a series of horizontal and vertical stepbacks along the western façade to provide a compatible transition to the single-family properties located just outside the CBD boundary to the west. The result is a design which reduces the perceived massing of the building.
 - Norfolk Avenue is classified as a Shared Street. As recommended in the Design Guidelines, the Project will promote and maintain the character of smaller scale commercial/retail structures with fine-grained and varied storefronts envisioned along Norfolk Avenue (*see* page 98). The two- to three-story commercial building located directly on Norfolk Avenue has a depth of approximately 29 feet, which serves to create a generous stepback to the multi-family residential development behind. This will contribute to the creation of a continuous streetscape character along Norfolk Avenue.
 - Auburn Avenue is classified as a Downtown Mixed-Use Street. In accordance with the Design Guidelines, because the proposed building is within the general 120' height range and less than 120 feet tall without the MPDU bonus height, the Applicant is proposing alternative methods, other than step-backs, to reduce tower bulk along this frontage. The proposed design will incorporate a series of more discrete step-backs, recesses, and/or material changes to break down the perceived massing along Auburn Avenue, while simultaneously providing a consistent street edge that is reflective of the Property's urban character.

o Building Placement

- The façade of the base building will be located directly along the Property boundary to create a continuous street edge along both Auburn Avenue and Norfolk Avenue. To further activate the pedestrian environment, active ground floor uses are proposed along both Auburn Avenue and Norfolk Avenue. Additionally, the building design will incorporate ample transparency, articulation and various building materials at the ground plane.
- *Tower Separation*
 - The Design Guidelines generally require that tower floors be separated at least 22.5 to 30 feet from the side and rear property lines. However, the Design Guidelines also provide that in instances such as the subject application, where the proposed building (before accounting for additional MPDU height) is less than 120 feet tall and where the Property is of limited size/width/depth, the tower separation may be reduced. As discussed in detailed below, the building on Auburn Avenue applies a unique approach to its organization and massing based on its specific location and adjacencies and takes advantage of the alternative compliance allowed by the Design Guidelines for constrained sites.

I. Exceptional Design Public Benefit Points Requested and Brief Justification

The Project seeks 20 Public Benefit Points for Exceptional Design. As previously stated, the Project's design is in compliance with intents and prescriptions of the Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines and meets all of the criteria established by the zoning ordinance and the Commercial/Residential and Employment Zones Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines. Each are addressed below:

1. Providing innovative solutions in response to the immediate context

One of the primary goals of the design was to provide a volumetric approach to the building that would provide an appropriate transition between the adjacent neighborhood to the taller heights that surround it, with the proposed design serving as a mediating element between these scales. The design team quickly abandoned a traditional massing approach of base, middle and top, and instead designed a more interesting organic, modular response. The dynamic north side of the building proposes elements that step down and cascade from north to south, east to west, and employ a scale that is compatible with the neighborhood. Further, the approach avoids a large, blank façade, providing instead smaller volumes with outdoor terraces and greenery.

2. Creating a sense of place and serves as a landmark

The Woodmont Triangle District is perhaps the most interesting neighborhood in Bethesda due to its strong urban street plan and pedestrian orientation. Commercial in use, the subject project will introduce needed residents creating more of a 24 hour environment on Auburn Avenue. This will result in additional "eyes on the streets", helping to more fully activate the area, fulfilling the Sector Plan goal of a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. One of the unique Design Guidelines for the site is the formation of Norfolk as a shared, pedestrian oriented street. This proposal provides a key anchor in achieving this goal by placing a wing of the building, at two- to three-stories, along this Norfolk Avenue frontage, including an outdoor 'parklet' that further knits together the single family residential and central business district communities. The remainder of the building is set back from Norfolk focusing on the larger scale of Auburn Avenue. Together with the mid-block pedestrian passage, the building's design elements reinforce the unique sense of place that is the Woodmont triangle neighborhood.

3. Enhancing the public realm in a distinct and original manner

The building proposes a very unique pathway through the middle of the site that breaks down the large urban parcels on Auburn Avenue and provides access to Bethesda Trolley Trail/Battery Lane Urban Park. This expanded public realm helps enhance the pedestrian orientation of the area, by connecting Norfolk, Auburn and the Battery Lane Urban Park. Further, this mid-block pedestrian passage will be lined with active uses and continues the connective culture already present in the Triangle.

To provide the most appropriate public realm possible, all building services will be entered from the mid- block passage and will not be visible from the Auburn Avenue frontage. This allows a maximum of active street frontage for the site.

4. <u>Introducing materials, forms or building methods unique to the immediate vicinity or applied in a unique way</u>

The building materials will reinforce the unique massing approach in a distinctly contemporary architectural response to the site. Materials being considered include fiber cement panels, textured metal panels, and masonry rain screens, with the design to be further reviewed at time of Site Plan. At the ground level, ample glass lines will face the activated passage that traverses through the site and provides a new point of connection through the District. Paving in the pedestrian passage will have a welcoming pedestrian texture and scale.

5. <u>Unique solution to challenging infill site</u>

The design process began with a thorough analysis of the surrounding context and neighborhood. This analysis considered both the present and future development of the site and neighborhood. The results of our analysis lead to the idea of using the site to mediate between future development and the existing adjacent neighborhood. This consideration forms the basis of the architectural concept and embodies the concept that good design can and should enhance the environment. The resulting design is rooted in the specifics of the site's location and based on providing an appropriate urban mediation from east to west, and north to south. As a result, the façade and composition vary with a granular, scalar composition of overlapping and stepping elements tapering to the residential neighborhood, and a more urbane-façade oriented composition on Auburn Avenue.

6. <u>Integrating low-impact development methods into the overall design of the site and building</u>

The Project will result in significant improvements to the treatment of stormwater management on-site, as there are no known stormwater management facilities located on the Property. An approximately 8-inch green roof, spread across several of the terraced roofs, is proposed to reduce impervious cover and more closely mimic natural hydrology. In addition to the proposed green roof, two micro-bioretention facilities are proposed to treat the stormwater runoff from the remaining roof area not being treated by green roof. Due to space constraints, two micro-bioretention facilities are proposed as planter boxes. The site at ground level will preserve the same drainage characteristics as exist today, while including a variety of plant material to further mitigate runoff.



4915&4921 AUBURN AVE

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Prepared for:

AUBURN BUILDING ASSOCIATES.LP

Prepared by: shalom baranes associates architects

JULY 03, 2018









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2







SITE PHOTOS	02
shalom baranes associates	architect







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2.1.3 Downtown Mixed-Use Street

Downtown Mixed-Use Streets typically accommodate high levels of pedestrian activity with frequent parking turnover, as well as loading and service access needs for local businesses and multi-unit residential buildings. These streets are predominantly lined by mid- to high-rise buildings with a mix of commercial and residential uses. Examples of Downtown Mixed-Use Streets include Woodmont Avenue and most streets in the Downtown Bethesda core and Woodmont Triangle District.



* The Frontage Zone can be minimized or eliminated to provide a wider Pedestrian Through Zone in areas with heavy foot traffic.

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NORFOLK AVE

2.1.5 Shared Street

Intent: Building and sidewalk designs

along Downtown Mixed-Use Streets

should create a vibrant environment

that accommodates the diverse needs

walkability for continuous pedestrian flow

of businesses, residents and visitors.

Sidewalks should balance ease of

with space for outdoor uses.

Shared Streets provide continuous special paving and slower speeds to allow people who walk, bike and drive to share the entire street, and to encourage street activity. Shared Streets are typically similar to Neighborhood Main Streets and are predominantly lined by low-rise retail buildings and mid-rise mixed-use buildings with active ground-floor retail. Shared streets are also designed to be partially or temporarily closed to vehicular traffic to serve as linear plazas for markets and other community events. Examples of proposed Shared Streets include Norfolk Avenue and Pearl Street in Bethesda. Note: Until the shared street is constructed, use guidelines for 2.1.4 Neighborhood Main Street for sidewalk zones, building placement and building form.

Intent: Building and streetscape design along Shared Streets should prioritize the pedestrian experience. These streets should provide a linear public open space that is flexible to accommodate all modes of transportation, street activities and occasional large events.



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Sidewalk Zones
A. & C. Planting/Furnishing and Frontage zone dimensions on shared streets are flexible based on the specific street design.

Table 2.04: Shared Street

elements should be 6 - 10 ft.

Building Placement

right-of-way line

Building Form

B. A clear Pedestrian Through Zone separated from vehicle traffic by bollards or other design

D. Build-to Line: Sector Plan recommended

2.4.6 Tower: Separation Distance

Intent: To allow access to light and air. limit the impact of shadows on the public realm and reduce the extent of large blank walls as new buildings develop at or near the property line.

Guidelines:

- A. Separate tower floors at least 45 to 60 feet (22.5 to 30 feet from the side and rear property lines).
- B. Provide a continuous building base along the lower floors.
- C. Avoid building towers to the property line creating expansive blank party walls that are imposing on the pedestrian environment.

Alternative Treatments:

Buildings below 120 feet or with limited property size/width/depth may reduce tower separation or consider party walls. If party walls are necessary, mitigate their visual impact with elements such as public art, lighting, texture and/or patterning that provide visual interest and are appropriate to the context and architecture of the building.

Where existing neighboring building towers are built to or close to the property line, new development should aim to achieve the total tower separation where possible. However, at a minimum, the new building tower levels should provide the separation distance indicated in Guideline 2.4.6 A from the side and rear property lines, except where building to the lot line could better address an existing blank wall condition.

Varied geometry in a building's upper floors, and facade modulation between buildings can also be used as methods to increase the perception of tower separation and allow access to light and air.



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2.4.8 Tower: "Menu" of Methods to Reduce Bulk

Intent: Downtown Bethesda is an important location in Montgomery County for increased building heights to accommodate future growth. However, collectively, buildings at taller heights can be an imposing presence on the public realm by casting large shadows, limiting sky views and creating an uncomfortable scale for pedestrians.

A. Limit Tower Floor Plate

Reduced tower floor plates limit shadows on the public realm and allow access to sky view while also improving the quality of the building's indoor environment.



B. Use Unique Geometry

Varied geometry adds visual interest and helps to reduce the perceived bulk of a building's upper floors. Angled and curved facades allow a building to be viewed dynamically from different vantage points. They can enhance privacy between towers in close proximity by directing views away from nearby windows.



Whether creating a large development with several towers, or an infill development between multiple existing towers, variation in building height can reduce the imposing massing of several large structures built adjacent to each other.



There are several ways to reduce the actual bulk of a building's upper floors or to creatively reduce the perceived bulk of the building. Below is a menu of design techniques that can be used to sculpt building towers and achieve a varied skyline responsive to human scale. Every project is not required to apply every method; however, several should be used in combination to best meet the guideline intent.

D. Modulate and Articulate Facades

Techniques to break up large facades and reduce perceived building bulk include shifts in massing to allow for upper floor terraces, green roofs and balconies; changes in facade planes; and varied fins, frames and mullions to add depth to glass facades.



E. Vary Tower Placement and Orientation

Similar to variation in tower height, variation in tower placement and orientation can increase perceived separation between towers, reduce the perceived imposing massing of several adjacent towers and increase privacy by orienting views in different directions.



F. Limit Apparent Face

The apparent face is the length of a facade plane that is unbroken by vertical changes in depth. Limiting this length reduces the perceived bulk of a long building facade.



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CCDC, SBA

THE ORONOCO, SBA







DESIGN GOALS:

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• NORFOLK AVENUE

ENHANCE MIXED USE NEIGHBORHOOD BY PROVIDING FIRST RESIDEN-• TIAL ON AUBURN AVE

- •
- •
- •

MIXED-USE STREET



SHARED STREET

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PROVIDE PUBLIC THROUGH-BLOCK CONNECTION BETWEEN BATTERY LANE URBAN PARK, NORFOLK AND AUBURN AVE

FURTHER SECTOR PLAN GOALS OF RETAIL AND SHARED STREET ON

PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN NEIGHBORHOOD

ENHANCE COMPATIBILITY THROUGH ADJACENT USES AND MASSING

PROVIDE UNIQUE, QUALITY ARCHITECTURE WITH CONTEXTUAL DESIGN

REINFORCE 'TRIANGLE' DISTRICT UNIQUE CHARACTER





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BUILDING CONCEPT - CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAMS 09





2 NORFOLK SHARED STREET







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CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAMS - URBAN SCALE TRANSITION & NORFOLK SHARED STREET 10









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DIAGRAMS ILLUSTRATE POTENTIAL FAÇADE ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE AUBURN AVENUE FAÇADE. MATERIAL OPTIONS INCLUDE MASONRY, METAL RAIN-SCREENS, AND FIBER CEMENT PANEL RAIN-SCREENS THAT HAVE A FULL RANGE OF COLOR OPTIONS. THE DESIGN STRATEGY EMPLOYS A CONTINUOUS FACADE AT THE RETAIL LEVEL, AND SETBACKS FROM THE PRIMARY FACADE PLANE OF 5-7' FOR THE UPPER FLOORS WITH STEPPING/ TAPERING AT THE UPPER FLOORS AS ILLUSTRATED. FURTHER REFINEMENT AND DELINEATION OF THE FINAL APPROACH WILL BE ILLUSTRATED AT SITE PLAN ALONG WITH MATERIAL SELECTIONS.



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CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAMS - AUBURN URBAN FACADE 11

4 THROUGH BLOCK CONNECTION









LIGHTS, ART & COLOR



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THROUGH-BLOCK CONNECTION | 12

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SOUTH-WEST AERIAL FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES

WEST AERIAL FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES

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FUTURE BUILDING HEIGHTS

DESIGN CONCEPT- MASSING 13



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FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES

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SECTION ALONG AUBURN 16

B1 PARKING LEVEL



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B1- PARKING DESIGN CONCEPT TO BE FINALIZED AT SITE PLAN 17

B2 PARKING LEVEL



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B2 - PARKING DESIGN CONCEPT TO BE FINALIZED AT SITE PLAN 18