

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: Edgemont Bethesda II
Sketch Plan No. 820180170

DATE: June 27, 2018

*The **Edgemont Bethesda II** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **June 27, 2018**. 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.*

Attendance:

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

Laura Shipman (Design Advisory Panel Liaison)
Robert Kronenberg (Area 1 Division Chief)
Elza Hisel-McCoy (Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor)
Leslye Howerton (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)

Chris Huffer (Applicant Team)
Marius Radulescu (Applicant Team)
Sami Kirkdil (Applicant Team)
Aubrey Fenton (Applicant Team)
Ben Stoll (Applicant Team)
Pat Harris (Applicant Team)

Naomi Spinrad (Member of the Public)
Amanda Farber (Member of the Public)
Richard Hoyer (Member of the Public)



Discussion Points:

- The building is held back to the south?
 - *Applicant response:* Yes, away from the Christopher.
- Is the ground floor at the top of the sill?
 - *Applicant response:* Yes, the first corner mitigates the slope.
- What material is the base?
 - *Applicant response:* Masonry material
- What is the height of the building? You note that you are doing alternative treatments.
 - *Applicant response:* 150'. Because of the narrowness of the site the building would be unbuildable with full step-backs. Because of separation from the Christopher condominium as well we are constrained.
- The new base treatment is an improvement.
- Though there is better discipline in the design, the canopy was a good feature that has been lost.
 - *Applicant response:* The building has a treatment and that is the big move, the roof becomes secondary. Because all buildings will have a roof terrace it provides variety from other buildings.
- The building still feels naked at the top.
 - *Applicant response:* Not every building has to have a rooftop canopy element, for example the Silver Spring building (Eleven55 Ripley) is successful and does not have a top).
- Not every building needs to have a signature top, however do not see how the corners are unique, they all seem the same. The top treatment does have the ability to signify the corner and heightens that corner so that it is taller and explains that it is a special corner.
 - *Applicant response:* We are not averse to looking at that, and we are happy to look at what can define the corner more. We have studied many schemes, and are exploring how to follow the geometry with a base and that doesn't have to have a top treatment. We are trying to do something more pure.
- The corner could have a stronger gesture.
 - *Applicant response:* We may not solve this here but there may be a tweak or two we could do this on the southeast corner.



- The north corner is far superior now to what it was. The base height is not where it should be. I am delighted there isn't a flying wedge like every other building. The consistency throughout is good.
- The Southeast corner could be stronger. Could make a small gesture at the top that might make a difference.
- The building really embraces the curve of Woodmont well. But if there is a way to subtly enhance the corner with a treatment at the top.
 - *Applicant response:* This is a soldier building, it does not have to be like the apex building which is two times the height.
- The shadow lines are going to be very effective.
- What are the stormwater treatments?
 - *Applicant response:* We are doing as much green cover as we can and retrofitting the existing roof. As well as bioretention on the site.
- I question whether we will continue to have bike share stands in the future. The plaza needs clarity, if it is going to be the space that bikers use and people come to. There should be a hierarchy. There needs to be a formal treatment, it just seems random.
 - *Applicant response:* We want this to feel like an extension of the sidewalk and to be truly public, not just an entrance to the building.
- It could be something, the seating that draws you in.
 - *Applicant response:* We will take your comments back so that this does not seem random.
- Woodmont from Old Georgetown all the way to Montgomery - I don't think there is a door that faces that stretch and that is why it is dead to pedestrians. There is nothing bringing people in and out of your building to make that better, though there is glass. If you put entries on this façade it could help. The Shalom Baranes building in Silver Spring allows entries and exits along the base, unfortunately the grade precludes that here.
 - *Applicant response:* The challenge is, I don't know how you fix it this has happened after many decades and this area is dead. It is a speed alley. Changing this portion to two-way and adding a bike lane, as well as having art will also help to make that better. We looked at ground floor units and they didn't work.
- It is going to be extremely important what the ground floor material and detail will be because that is what people will experience.



- For future projects come in with a zoning diagram to show why you can't do the guidelines for us to evaluate.
- Could the art or sculpture be placed in the plaza instead of offsite?

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Emphasize the southeast corner of the building. This could be through a subtle treatment of the top that makes this a stronger corner.
2. Develop the design of the plaza. There should be a hierarchy and a formal treatment, currently it seems random. Consider including public art in the plaza instead of off-site.
3. Activate the base of the building further through material, texture and detail because this is what pedestrians experience. Provide ground floor entries along the Woodmont façade if feasible.
4. Public Benefit Points: The panel recommends that the project receive 20 points not the 25 points requested.
5. Vote: (2) support the project (1) supports with conditions to meet the panel recommendations above.



Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: 8000 Wisconsin Ave
Sketch Plan No. 320180120

DATE: June 27, 2018

*The **Wisconsin Ave** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **June 27, 2018**. 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.*

Attendance:

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

Laura Shipman (Design Advisory Panel Liaison)
Gwen Wright (Planning Director)
Robert Kronenberg (Area 1 Division Chief)
Elza Hisel-McCoy (Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor)
Matt Folden (Lead Reviewer)

Anthony Pizzo (Applicant Team)
Bob Dalrymple (Applicant Team)
Andrew Czajkowski (Applicant Team)
Sami Kirkdil (Applicant Team)
Matt Gordon (Applicant Team)
Mike Goodman (Applicant Team)
Carlos Montenegro (Applicant Team)

Naomi Spinrad (Member of the Public)
Amanda Farber (Member of the Public)



Richard Hoyer (Member of the Public)
Bethany Rogers (Member of the Public)

Discussion Points:

- I appreciate the effort but am still concerned about bulk and density. It is interesting the site is mapped at 3 FAR and you are at over 10 FAR. There is too much bulk on the site. I agree the north blank wall should be masked however the south may not need this.
 - *Applicant response:* A small portion of the site is 5 FAR to clarify.
- I think this is more clear and simplified. I like the continuity between the two buildings. I have gotten over the issues of density and separation.
- I think the separation on the north is not an issue. However, the separation on the south is an issue because of the length of the façade.
 - *Applicant response:* We are paying for the sins of that building that came before the design guidelines.
- The purpose of the guidelines is to not create continuous walls.
 - *Applicant response:* In a perfect world both projects would setback.
- I don't know if you need to do the full 30 ft separation. Is there a way that there can be a gap between the building at the balconies.
 - *Applicant response:* Because of the distance they are acting as a corner building but also only have one string of openings.
- Could you align the vertical slit of the building back with the adjacent building to create a distinction and shadow line between buildings.
 - *Applicant response:* I think we can do that, we can set back 6 more feet. I don't understand what that does for you.
- The relationship to St. Elmo and West Virginia is dramatically improved.
- Need more detail for the glass box, the shallow floor on top is odd, should be taller to highlight the top.
- It has come a long long way.



Panel Recommendations:

The project will return at the time of site plan application and the panel will provide recommendations at that time.

1. Reduce building bulk, by reducing actual density and/or reducing perceived bulk.
2. Provide the guideline tower separation from the approved 7900 Wisconsin Avenue building to the South because of the length of the façade or alternatively explore setting back a vertical slit between buildings to create a shadow line separation.
3. Public Benefit Points: The panel would like to see the project again at Site Plan to see the resolution of bulk and separation concerns in order to recommend at least the required 10 exceptional design points.



Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: 4 Bethesda Metro Center
Sketch Plan No. 320180110

DATE: June 27, 2018

*The **4 Bethesda Metro Center** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **June 27, 2018**. 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.*

Attendance:

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

Laura Shipman (Design Advisory Panel Liaison)
Gwen Wright (Planning Director)
Robert Kronenberg (Area 1 Division Chief)
Elza Hisel-McCoy (Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor)

Bob Harris (Applicant Team)
Herb Heiserman (Applicant Team)
Simon Carney (Applicant Team)
Rich Fernicola (Applicant Team)
Peter Glasson (Applicant Team)

Naomi Spinrad (Member of the Public)
Amanda Farber (Member of the Public)
Patricia Kolesar (Member of the Public)
Richard Hoyer (Member of the Public)
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Dick Tustian (Member of the Public)
Leanne Tobias (Member of the Public)
Maj-Britt Dohlie (Member of the Public)
Bethany Rogers (Member of the Public)
Anthony Udoka (Member of the Public)
Christopher Cohn (Member of the Public)
Bobby Lipman (Member of the Public)
Deborah Schumann (Member of the Public)
Linda Miller (Member of the Public)
Susanne Shwetz (Member of the Public)
Melissa Leebaert (Member of the Public)
Jeanne Weiss (Member of the Public)
Caroline DeLasare (Member of the Public)
Melanie Manfield (Member of the Public)
Suzanne Shultz (Member of the Public)

Discussion Points:

- One of the problems we are having is that you are still holding onto office as a potential program. The residential option is a much better massing.
 - *Applicant response:* We are leaning in the direction of residential. But we do not want to take office off the table. We understand that there are more articulation issues that we would need to do if it were commercial, but there is a footprint we would need to stick to in order to be viable.
- You have made some great improvements since the last meeting. I wish you had a physical model so we could see in. I note there are improvements since the latest submission.
- The improvements along Wisconsin Avenue are good. I'm glad you made a comparison to other public spaces. I think it is bigger than the Capital Crescent Civic Green and the Apex plaza space. More localized comparisons of Bethesda would be helpful.
- What is the floor to floor height from the bus bay below? There is limit to which people will walk up stairs and this may be beyond that limit.
 - *Applicant response:* We are trying to give reason to be there and draw people up.
- We as a group had real reservations about how the Central Lawn will work. Now that you have made significant improvements the Metro Space and realize the space that is designated as the lawn could never be occupied by a part of the building you might as well make the lawn as good as you can. However, for it to work will require extensive programming



- I think you have made great great improvements.
- The massing on first floor is really important. The widening of the promenade is great. Now you have a face looking towards Wisconsin Avenue as a destination. Now the promenade is a great space and part of the plaza. I like the idea of opening it up and making better use of the space for people to enjoy the activity and action.
- Clearly the relationship of lawn to bus bay below and north stair is very important.
- I like the height adjustments on the north and south to add variation.
- You have created a more seamless spatial movement through the site, creating substantially improved visual connections and the promenade becomes one of the most important spaces as one of three rooms. This is substantially improved over what you had before, and I hope the community thinks similarly.
- Now it is a series of spaces that move one to the other and if the right retail is there it will be successful.
- Programming and activation of the ground floor are important.
- Having a stage in the back could be a great amenity, for concerts, it could be a tremendous opportunity.
 - *Applicant response:* The objective is to work with Bethesda arts on performing arts.
- What is the width of the body of the tower?
 - *Applicant response:* 65' at the center.
- The aspect ratio is going to be very elegant. I am rooting for the residential solution.
- I don't want to suggest everything is ok, the connection to west and south is still very important.
- Is there a way people can be freely drawn up into the Central Lawn from Woodmont Avenue through 3 Bethesda Metro Center to help activate this space?

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report along with the recommendations from the April 25th meeting (attached).

1. The preferred massing is the residential option.



2. Continue to develop all of the access points to the plaza level including from the bus bay below, the north stair and the connections to the west and south.
3. Continue to emphasize the activation of the ground floor and programming the open space because these are critical elements.
4. Provide a physical model at site plan if possible to allow the panel to see the relationships to the open space and between buildings.
5. Public Benefit Points: The project is on track to achieve the minimum 10 Exceptional Design points required in the Bethesda Overlay Zone.
6. Straw vote: 3 support with conditions to meet the panel recommendations above



Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: 4 Bethesda Metro Center
Sketch Plan No. 320180110

DATE: April 25, 2018

*The **4 Bethesda Metro Center** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **April 25, 2018**. 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.*

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)
Stephanie Dickel (Lead Reviewer)
Gwen Wright (Planning Department Director)
Robert Kronenberg (Area 1 Division Chief)
Elza Hisel-McCoy (Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor)
Leslye Howerton (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)
Matt Folden (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)
Grace Bogdan (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)
Margaret Rifkin (Director's Office)
Mike Smith (Development Ombudsman, Montgomery County Executive's Office)

Bob Harris (Attorney, Applicant Team)
Simon Carney (Applicant Team)
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Peter Glasson (Architect, Applicant Team)
Richard Fernicola (Applicant Team)
Scott Phillips (Architect, Applicant Team)
Andy Jones (Applicant Team)

Naomi Spinrad (Member of the Public)
Patricia Kolesar (Member of the Public)
Reggie Oldak (Member of the Public)
Richard Hoyer (Member of the Public)

Discussion Points:

- Public Comments:
 - The Bethesda bus bay should be welcoming, currently the metro station is a negative and poor entryway. Focus not on what is above but on the station level, and the perspectives for others looking at the site from afar as a pedestrian from blocks around. Happy to see the development to make it a more welcoming place. How does this site speak to a broad cross-section of people?
 - The residents would prefer a corner park, we have sent emails to protect the Bethesda open space. The central lawn is not central, it is hidden and you cannot see it.
 - Like this plan a lot, reminds me of small streets and squares in European cities. It is a respite from the urban area. The angled building allows some of an open space. I personally would not want to hang out at the corner. Programming is very important and getting in the right retail.
 - As a pedestrian, it is critical to have massing of buildings to make the intersection feel more comfortable. Having too much space at the corner is uncomfortable like at the Chevy Chase bank building which is a failure.
- The space has diverse programming and includes active and passive uses. The lawn space seems secluded. With all of the buildings around and shade will the lawn grow?
 - *Applicant response:* We have done several shade studies and are confident the lawn will grow.
- Will parking and circulation/loading affect public space?
 - *Applicant response:* There is no additional parking proposed. We are using the existing garage, may utilize existing loading, or work with WMATA to add loading. These will not affect the public space.



- I'm a proponent of maximum transit use, but we will be losing a public garage to Marriott, and many find that the garages are too full. MCDOT did a detailed parking study, the team may want to look at the study.
- Assume that you have analyzed all the problems today with this plaza. There are probably 20 different levels. The great spaces are great because they are linked to everything around them. One of your precedents was Bethesda Lane, having a street at each end makes it successful and active. But you don't have that, when you look at the grand stair it is clearly not used, there is no connection to Woodmont from the plaza. There are several new residential buildings on that side, so how do you get up and over from Woodmont onto this plaza. The lack of these links kills the plaza space. There used to be a lot of retail, but if you put new retail here, it may be highly used for a year or so but what will sustain it. The plaza can't just be programmed, there has to be something else. The entrance to 3 Bethesda seems to be secondary and the Woodmont Ave building has a secondary entrance. In order for all of this to work, there has to be a coordinated effort including changing lobbies and reorienting retail. The location of the stair is very poor.
 - *Applicant response:* You are right and it is a challenging space in every respect. It is not going to be a perfect space but more retail and development will help. We will talk to Chevy Chase Land Company about incorporating their space into the design.
- Need a prominent visual to bring you up into this space, there is no porosity to bring and draw people up into the space.
- Show more drawings to show the plan of bus bay and perspectives of the views coming from that level.
 - *Applicant response:* We are working closely with WMATA on the design of that level.
- How are you going to establish a new ground plane?
 - *Applicant response:* There is enough run to do an ADA compliant slope, with an almost imperceptible slope.
- I come from a firm that does a great deal of retail, and we do predictive heat mapping to see where pedestrians go in the space. Try heat mapping to see what that gets you. Is there a way of making the Chevy Chase Land space an active participant rather than boundary?
- The back stairway down is so miserable.
- The problem we are having is we don't know what the building is right now, its program. Suggest half of the building should be raised up at least 30 feet in the air. Anchor the



- promenade and increase visibility from Wisconsin and visibility to the back space similar to 7359 Wisconsin. Could be an architectural space at the human scale.
- *Staff response:* If you go with this approach you just have to ensure that this is a fully designed gathering space rather than just a walking area.
- Explain Wisconsin intersection and pedestrian crossing at Wisconsin.
 - *Applicant response:* Pedestrians cross from the pedestrian refuge. We think the tunnel has been successful with the artwork.
 - *Staff:* What is below the central lawn. Could you eliminate the central lawn and make it more about connecting from Woodmont and the bus bay?
 - Could be a glassed in pavilion? So that it is a destination in winter and summer. Maybe more secondary to the primary building.
 - *Staff:* Green up the entry plaza, make it greener like the central plaza. Make a central glassy element at the escalator in the middle of the lawn. If they need ventilation do it at the back where the central lawn is.
 - *Applicant response:* We are talking with WMATA about a unique canopy rather than typical canopy.
 - Would help on ground floor plan to show land uses around with true plan of uses around.
 - We looked at the spaces just to compare this to plazas we know, the central green is the size of Rockville town center, entry plaza is size of Bethesda Lane. Might help to compare with similar sized spaces that people know.
 - *Staff:* The panel has not looked closely at the building. Would prefer that the project come to talk about building massing before sketch plan review at the Planning Board.
 - Would like to see 3d models, physical models. Very clear presentation about the massing. See 7607 Old Georgetown Road's submission to the Design Advisory Panel.
 - Is this the only place where the building could be?
 - *Applicant response:* Could be a little closer to Wisconsin based on the structure but we tried to balance thoughts from members of the community to have some space at the front of the building.
 - Public Comments (cont.):
 - Would like to echo comments to provide more green at the front of the building.



- How does the plan bring folks together? Like the idea of raising the building for the community and travelers, like union station. And to map what are the routes that people would use. Honor the back-door experience. Create a 24-hour walkway to and from bus bay area.
 - *Applicant response:* From the entrance to the bus bay we are working with e-bikes and have met and working on a way to bring folks up to the 3 Bethesda Metro area. We are inheriting a desert in the bus bay but who would know that Dunkin Donuts would be the beacon, we want to create other beacons there.

Panel Recommendations:

The project will return to the panel prior to Planning Board review and will focus on building placement, massing and the relationship to the Metro Station and Bus Bay below. The following are initial recommendations.

1. Ensure that there are clear links between the plaza and the destinations around it, particularly to the residential areas west of Woodmont Avenue where the connection is poor.
2. Work with Chevy Chase Land Company to incorporate their space into the design.
3. Show more drawings to show the plan of bus bay and perspectives of the views coming from that level.
4. Do predictive heat mapping to see where pedestrians go in the space.
5. Consider raising half of the building at least 30 feet in the air. Anchor the promenade and increase visibility from Wisconsin and visibility to the back space similar to 7359 Wisconsin, as long as the space is a major gathering space and not just a walkway.
6. Provide 3d models and physical models if possible. Create a very clear presentation about the massing. See 7607 Old Georgetown Road's submission to the Design Advisory Panel as an example.
7. Explore making the central lawn area more about connecting from Woodmont and the bus bay. Could possibly be a glassed in pavilion so that it is a destination in winter and summer. Maybe more secondary to the primary building.
8. Green up the entry plaza, make it greener like the central plaza. Make a central glassy element at the escalator in the middle of the lawn. If they need ventilation do it at the back where the central lawn is.

