

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: The Claiborne
Sketch Plan No. 32017003A, Site Plan No. 82017008A

DATE: July 25, 2018

*The Claiborne project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **July 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)
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)
Matt Folden (Lead Reviewer)
Leslye Howerton (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)

Neil Govadia (Applicant Team)
Anthony Pizzo (Applicant Team)
Marius Radulescu (Applicant Team)
Sami Kirkdil (Applicant Team)
Brad Fox (Applicant Team)
Heather Dhopolsky



Discussion Points:

- Would like to see the cross section and elevation in context with the adjacent Donahoe building and see what is happening. Show the existing elevation looking from Auburn and your elevation to see how the plinth relates to your building.
- Appreciate the massing diagram on compliance with the guidelines. Generally, really like the building. My company actually looked at this site and found it to be very difficult and constrained.
- I like that the streetscape is extending down Norfolk to the end of the block.
- I didn't realize the height difference is because of the zoning but it works well.
- Very compelling, works well as a larger rather than small building.
- The whole composition works very well, particularly the scale and material of the base.
- The subtle articulation or crenulation as an infill building makes this more interesting and will be very effective in reality.
- Your base will be larger and you are able to fit units in this way which we have gotten push back on. Its good to see that you are able to achieve this base and tower that is in the guidelines.
- I don't think you should have trouble moving forward.
- The two bases and how they overlap is not clear, how does the lower cream-colored base end in relation to the other base? This needs to be clarified because you are going to have an edge where the cream colored meets the grey.
- The corner zipper language appears to be broken, I would carry the zipper all the way up. The zipper is a terrific idea I wish it were stronger and more consistent all the way
 - *Applicant Response:* We chose the integrity of the box. Tried to imply a tower without making one.
- Why did you use the base material on the floor between and not use the material from above? Maybe it is the graphic, but the stitch looks so much like the base. Maybe the grid from above slides down.
 - *Applicant Response:* That is actually a grey metal and is a different material than the base. What was important for staff was to make the base have clarity rather than stitching them together.
- The zipper may want to come all the way to the ground at the corner. And the entrance is an opportunity to acknowledge the balconies above.
- Mirror the balcony detail in the base or as a canopy.
- As a massing model this is very nice, we are talking about details now.
- What does the back elevation of the addition look like? It would be nice to see that.
 - *Applicant Response:* We don't do this often in Maryland, you can have at risk windows in DC, however Maryland does not allow that.
- Landscaping and seating?
 - *Applicant Response:* This was the result of coordination with DOT DPS and Planning, everyone agreed that the seating would be an interesting element.



- It is weird to have the geometry focused on a corner that doesn't exist. It doesn't come to the door. So, the chevron relates to the intersection? All brick?
 - *Applicant Response:* I'm not sure the door will be there it will be what the retailer wants. The chevron will actually read as a subtle gesture. Yes, it will be all brick just combining the darker brick.
- Planter and stability?
 - *Applicant Response:* We are using structural soils and following Bethesda streetscape standards, so it should be stable.
- I'm not a proponent of using brick in high pedestrian areas because of slipperiness and tripping hazards.
- Identifying the lobby more strongly would be helpful. Maybe acknowledge that corner zone.
 - *Applicant Response:* We will study it, we want to take any opportunity to make the building better.

Panel Recommendations:

The project will return at the time of Sketch/Site Plan amendment application and the panel will provide recommendations at that time.

1. Show all elevations of the building. In particular, the panel would like to know how the back of the building is designed and how the building meets the adjacent project along Auburn Avenue.
2. Update the building cross section to include the adjacent building.
3. Create a stronger and more consistent corner treatment or "zipper" at the corner of Auburn Avenue and Norfolk Avenue from the base to the top. Also, clearly identify the lobby.
4. Clarify how the two building bases overlap.
5. Consider better stitching together the upper floors with the lower floors in the transition floor. The grid/materials from above could slide down rather than using materials similar to the base.
6. Public Benefit Points: The project is on track to achieve at least the minimum 10 Exceptional Design points required in the Bethesda Overlay Zone. The panel is supportive of the general massing and design direction.



Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: 4915 Auburn Avenue
Sketch Plan No. 320180170

DATE: July 25, 2018

*The **4915 Auburn Avenue** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **July 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.*

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Elza Hisel-McCoy (Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor)
Matt Folden (Lead Reviewer)
Leslye Howerton (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)

Stacy Silber (Applicant Team)
Brian Gelfand (Applicant Team)
Bill Landfair (Applicant Team)
Liz Rogers (Applicant Team)
Robert Sponseller (Applicant Team)
Filipa Powell (Applicant Team)



Discussion Points:

- You had a previously approved project?
 - *Applicant response:* Yes, it was approved under the CBD zone. The approval included the corner piece along Auburn. Bringing Shalom Baranes on we wanted to be more creative and carve the building. People were very happy about the design at the community meeting.
- Generally, very much like the concept.
- Do you have any drawings that show the fence between the houses and your through-block connection? There are lighting, access and safety issues. Is there any idea to coordinate your side of the fence for continuity? Access should maybe be closed at night, concerned about safety.
 - *Applicant response:* That's a nice idea to coordinate the look of the fence and coordinate that with landscaping. There is a challenge because there is a storm drain easement in the back, so it determines how we can construct the fence and what materials. We want to green it as much as we can.
- Where are the entrances to commercial?
 - *Applicant response:* On Auburn Avenue, in the through-block connection and on Norfolk.
- I know it's early, but do you know what retail tenants will be there? We are concerned if the retail is vacant what the effect will be on the through-block connection.
 - *Applicant response:* Could be many uses in addition to retail such as daycare. They will be activating ground floor uses.
- The massing is very special for Bethesda and almost anywhere else. You are able to achieve your density and give up large chunks of the building. The community should be delighted.
- I am a big fan of through the building through-block connections. I would be concerned that there should be some pedestrian hierarchy because of the service access, and vehicles.
 - *Applicant response:* There will be bollards for a protected pedestrian side.
- Need to have something you are walking to, need to have a node or focal point at the end of the through-block connection.
 - *Applicant response:* We plan to have a landmark point along fence to draw people in, lighting or art for example.
- In covered pedestrian passes, lighting is critical. LED makes this much easier. Even lighting during the day to be welcoming, we forget that too often.
- The Auburn façade not meeting the guidelines is easy to justify with the articulation. Need to detail at Site Plan the moves you mention.
- I really like the building and it will be something special.
- I love the passage through and the articulation in the back.
- The presentation is very clear.



- That will be very important, how articulated will Auburn Avenue be? Will it be stacked boxes, fine-grained or large openings? Preference for concept 2.
- Show existing trees on your site plan.
- Ownership or rental?
 - *Applicant response:* Probably apartments
- Consider more contemporary paving to relate to the contemporary design of the building.
 - *Applicant response:* Yes, we can have them work together.
- Materiality?
 - *Applicant response:* Considering wood with something like metal, laminate, or resin. As well as more typical materials, metal, terracotta, brick.
- I would like to live there.
- Make sure that there is ground floor transparency on both sides of the building and the through-block connection.

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Ensure the ground floor uses activate the through-block connection. Also, provide ground floor transparency on both sides of the building and the through-block connection.
2. Consider access and safety of the through-block connection. Create a node or focal point at the fence to draw people into the space such as public art or lighting. Create a pedestrian hierarchy because of the service access, and vehicles. In the covered pedestrian passes, lighting is critical including lighting during the day to be welcoming.
3. Coordinate your side of the fence on the through-block connection for a continuous look and feel.
4. Show existing trees on your site plan.
5. Further develop the articulation on the Auburn Avenue façade. How this is detailed is critical as an alternative treatment to step-backs.
6. Consider more contemporary paving to relate to the contemporary design of the building
7. Public Benefit Points: The project is on track to achieve at least the minimum 10 Exceptional Design points required in the Bethesda Overlay Zone. The panel is very supportive of the massing and direction of the design.
8. Straw vote: **3** in support

