

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

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

DATE: October 24, 2018

*The Claiborne project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **October 24, 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)
Gwen Wright (Planning Director)
Elza Hisel-McCoy (Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor)
Matt Folden (Lead Reviewer)

Neil Goradia (Applicant Team)
Laura Tallerico (Applicant Team)
Marius Radulescu (Applicant Team)
Heather Dishopolsky (Applicant Team)
Anthony Pizzo (Applicant Team)
Bruno Carvalho (Applicant Team)

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



Discussion Points:

- You did not change a lot in the design, what about the corner zipper we mentioned at the last meeting?
 - *Applicant Response:* We addressed a few items looking at the comments from last time. At the corner the balconies form the relationship between the top and bottom, but we didn't want to add a tower at the corner to detract.
- I wish the zone would come all the way down. You have a real opportunity to unite the top and base and you have not done that. The entry piece could reflect the balconies that come down and is an opportunity to mark a continuous zone.
 - *Applicant Response:* Created a stack of balconies that highlight the intersection between the two base heights, you can experience this from far away.
- The form is very interesting, but you need to consider the dimensions and how to maintain the pedestrian zone on the sidewalk.
 - *Applicant Response:* The seating concept was well-received by the different agencies and DPS was focused on the clear zone. It is over 12 feet clear zone and 15 feet on Auburn. When we bulbed out at the corner there was a lot of room. There is 18 feet total sidewalk from curb to building and we are meeting the guidelines for the sidewalk zones.
- What is the intention for the retail tenant? Will there be outdoor seating and is there room?
 - *Applicant Response:* That corner we don't have a retail tenant signed up yet but probably a coffee shop type concept. There may not be outdoor seating.
- The ADA ramps are close to the corner, how do they relate to the pedestrian flow?
 - *Applicant Response:* We have a drawing that shows that they line up well.
- The disruption between lower and upper part, it looks like timid structure and heavy material of base. Are you trying to express this as an open zone or more units? The abruptness of white and black and the intermediate zone that does not seem to be part of either one.
- Let me interject, the last time we saw this it was a well-received building but we heard this comment. What is your justification for this configuration of top and bottom?
 - *Applicant Response:* We wanted to have separation between top and bottom, as if the upper portion floats over the base. And we wanted to emphasize the separation.
- If you wanted to be transparent why isn't it transparent? I am concerned with the color and the perception.



- *Applicant Response:* We would end up with elements that will be relatively solid, it is hard to bring the structure inwards far enough.
- I am comfortable with how that component works. The column cover could be different, lighter or round concrete columns. By making them dark it is almost like the base. If they were white or the color of the glass.
- At this point in my opinion this is a pretty good building. There could be a stronger reading, but again I think we are quibbling, I think it's a nice building.
- I agree, the columns could be a little less stark.
- I have other comments I'd make if I were here at the last meeting but that would be unfair to the applicant. I support a project like this I think it is appropriate for Norfolk Avenue. It is consistent with the rest of the buildings.
- I wasn't here last time either I think the building is simple and elegant. I like the seating it is playful.
- I like the base of the building I think it will fit in well with Norfolk Avenue.
- Are those benches continuous or broken? Maybe you can create a break so its easier to walk around. It will add porosity, so people can get around it. The shapes can be continuous, but they could be several benches rather than one.
 - *Applicant Response:* They are about 16-18feet, we could do that, and break up the bigger ones.
- Can we combine the curb ramps into one ramp because they are so close?
 - *Applicant Response:* No, DPS would like 2 ramps it is an ADA standard.
- I think this view justifies even more that each cube should remain clean and pristine and are separate elements floating over a traditional base and tying them together may not accomplish a great deal.
- I applaud you for the canopies. I wish more projects would do that instead of awnings.



Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Explore the material in the transition zone, use a lighter material or blend columns with the glass.
2. Ensure there is sufficient clear pedestrian path on the sidewalk and consider creating breaks in the benches to allow more movement.
3. Public Benefit Points: The project was generally positively received and all of the panel members support the requested 10 exceptional design points.
4. Vote: **4** support, **1** support with conditions to meet recommendations above.



Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: Bethesda Market
Sketch Plan No. 320190030

DATE: October 24, 2018

*The **Bethesda Market** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **October 24, 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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Laura Shipman (Design Advisory Panel Liaison)
Gwen Wright (Planning Director)
Robert Kronenberg (Area 1 Division Chief)
Elza Hisel-McCoy (Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor)
Stephanie Dickel (Lead Reviewer)
Cristina Sasaki (Parks Department)
Hyojung Garland (Parks Department)
Rebecca Ballo (Historic Preservation Program Supervisor)

Chris Ruhlen (Applicant Team)
Heather Dhopolsky (Applicant Team)
Tade Willger (Applicant Team)
Jason Sereno (Applicant Team)
Robby Brewer (Applicant Team)



Brad Fox (Applicant Team)
Kofi Meroe (Applicant Team)
Chuck Hathway (Applicant Team)
Jim Bushong (Applicant Team)
Joe Pikiewicz (Applicant Team)

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

Discussion Points:

- Those photos of the market, when was the market built?
 - *Applicant response:* February 4, 1932
- Was the part facing on Wisconsin always parking?
 - *Applicant response:* Yes, we believe it was always parking, we are going through a historic resource analysis. The space between market and pavilion is a great opportunity for a plaza space.
- I hear you on the plaza space, but I am not seeing it now.
 - *Applicant response:* We are envisioning a winter garden extension or greenhouse that would provide more opening on the back of the building, we are going to study.
- Where is the trail? You should show the trail. Will that always be the trail? You need to draw the CCT because it so important, the interim or ultimate version.
 - *Applicant response:* We have added it to the submission and if not we will make sure that we do.
- What is your new market building as part of the public space diagram? Social, contemplative, active? I thought I understood the new market building as union market style, what is happening in the historic market?
 - *Applicant response:* There will be a food-oriented market destination in all three retail spaces. The social gathering functions encompasses all three spaces with an indoor/outdoor flow. This allows us to add elements that don't exist in the elm street park today that occupy people and make it fun like at the wharf including a playground and splash park and dog park. We can accommodate 30 tents in that space and that's our intent. The pavilion activates the space and adds the retail space we need to make this work.



- I think the concern is how much is too much development? You have to believe the apartments facing the parking garage of the adjacent building are not going to be very nice. You have the opportunity to go to a single-loaded apartment corridor, increase the size of the park and get higher quality units. You will not get the GFA you need now but I think that you'd get higher quality units. And you could possibly go from 70 feet to 90 feet.
 - *Applicant response:* We have made attempts to compress that part of the building. We did move the building back, the tower separation dictated how far back we could go.
- What would it take to get to 90 feet all the way across?
 - *Staff response:* affordable housing or master plan amendment.
 - *Applicant response:* there are significant obligations for the park and parking, there is a lot of risk and so to be honest there is only so much chipping away at density that make the risk make sense. We are at the margin already. We have made many moves to be responsive. That incremental request even if it seems small may make the project infeasible. To be clear we would have to eliminate many of the townhouses at grade to get the additional park space
- Comprehensively it is 5 acres of park?
 - *Applicant response:* Our site is 2.7 acres, but if it is all planned together then there are more features and amenities that can be added.
- For the townhouse area that looks narrow, could you orient townhouses to park to get more space in the park?
 - *Applicant response:* There we have 54 feet of park. If we reorient then it dramatically impacts the woonerf. But we could go back and study it. It would dramatically change the character of that road. It might create about 12 feet of additional dimension.
- My concern is how the retail pavilion bifurcates the park from the market building. It would be better if you make the pavilion half and increase the dimension of the east/west connection.
 - *Applicant response:* We agree and want to study the east/west connection. We are creating a consistent setback.
- The setback consistency is less necessary if it is a pavilion. While we prefer the pavilion to residential and want it to work, we want it to be done right.
 - *Applicant response:* We are doing this from a placemaking perspective not necessarily as an economic driver.
- Retail should be double-loaded so that you have activity on both sides of the street. Typically retail in the middle of a park may have more turnover. Maybe you should bring



retail closer to Willow. The retail street/plaza could be between the historic market and new pavilion.

- *Applicant response:* We do want to make this a two-sided space with activation and that is our goal.
- You are going to have a nice plaza facing Wisconsin. And a nice park facing the other side. So, you have a park to the east and the park to the east, so something in between is more of a retail street more like Bethesda Lane. Maybe it is less green at the middle.
- Percentage of park to the building is one issue.
- Concerned about congestion of access from Wisconsin and conflict with pedestrians in option B.
 - *Applicant response:* The farm women's market building would move 23 feet to create sufficient space and have fire access, safe pedestrian passage in 40 feet.
- You are also building under the market for parking
 - *Applicant response:* Yes.
- In option A it's a problem of the relationship between pavilion and park because of the parking entrance.
- I think the massing has gotten better, and the relationship to the market. Really unfortunate not to do option A. We like option A better. I think it is nice to have residential above the pavilion.
- The sentiment in the town is that residential above the retail pavilion will create a wall within the park, effectively separating the park into two, one for Bethesda off of Wisconsin and one for the Town to the east. It needs to be one park for Bethesda.
- I think option A has taken a gigantic step forward. The building is not just one wall but is broken in many spots, I appreciate the idea of increasing the height and thinning building, I think the transition from a wider to more linear park at the south is sound. You have a 4-block park that goes from larger to more intimate. Having townhouses along the south is really important and a little compromise on the public space width is acceptable. I see it as a linear movement through the site with fingers. I share concern that new pavilion is separated from park with ramp, but if Willow is the link and there are fingers that come off of it this is less of a problem. I am very intrigued by the massing configuration of the west building.
- 7126 Wisconsin - I think that the building creates an architectural statement that is a good resolution of what is a very tight sight even when it steps back out.



- I think the development team should be applauded for how they have looked at the site comprehensively and with the collaboration with many agencies.
- The master plan envisioned that both lots could be park, if you recognize how little park space there is in Bethesda.
- I agree that there is not enough green in Bethesda, but I am in favor of bigger park space and greener.
- What I don't like about the two towers is the symmetry. The space between the pavilion and market is more important than creating the slot right in the middle, you could have solid as a backdrop to the market.
- Similarly, on 7126 the corner could be emphasized and be more off center.
- The guidelines talk about a base but it does not require that the base be the entire building, the tower can come down. I think in 7121, the base is more important along the market than on Wisconsin. Looking at asymmetry more will help some of the moves.
- I think there are too many moves on Wisconsin.
- I think it is important to point out the scheme may be ok for option B the symmetry might make sense. But on A scheme it makes less sense.
- In defense of them, the previous design for the west side of Wisconsin was alien to the site. And there is an improvement. I like the precedent images for 7126 better than what I see in the sketch. You might be trying a bit too hard, maybe it is just 2 moves. A vertical element and supporting element. There should be more compatibility between the base and tower above.
 - *Applicant response:* I think originally, we got too into the façade before coming to consensus on massing and now we will go back to exploring the façade.
- In the future, who is going to maintain the park? Important to know.
 - *Staff:* there might be a partnership with the owner, though ownership will likely be with Park and Planning.
- The parking extends into the green space, you are showing a lot of trees over the parking. We are right now studying a 3-level garage that will limit the footprint of parking below and allow more space for trees.
- It would be nice if you could get those massive species trees coming across east west rather than a perfect edge grass field.



- *Applicant response:* We've thought about special paving and table top road between park spaces, we definitely like the idea of the mature canopy. We will be having meeting with Historic and having charettes with the Parks Department.
- There could be a structure between the 2 buildings, a winter garden. I hadn't been thinking about it, I had been considering lights and connection but not an actual structure.
- The design of the new market Hall and what happens between the two is important and is not developed enough.
- The sun and shadow diagrams are also important to provide.

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Preference for Option A if it is feasible; however, three of the panel members would like to see a greater proportion of green space on the space potentially compressing the building to increase the green space.
2. There should be more attention to the east/west connections across the site from Wisconsin to the park either widening on Willow or widening of the woonerf.
3. Consider not having as much symmetry in the massing of the buildings, could create verticality in the building and not have base along the entire building. The Wisconsin façade could be different than the façade along the market.
4. Further develop the winter garden or some connection between the old market building and the pavilion.
5. Create connection between the ground floor of the pavilion to the park. Currently there is separation because of the parking access ramp.
6. Provide sun and shadow diagrams to see building impacts on the park.
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.
8. Straw vote:
 - Option A – **1** support, **4** support with conditions to meet the recommendations above.
 - Option B – **5** support with conditions to meet the recommendations above.

