September 10, 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Ms. Laura Shipman
Staff Liaison
Downtown Bethesda Design Advisory Panel
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: St. Elmo Apartments
    Sketch Plan Amendment No. 32015004A

Dear Ms. Shipman:

We are pleased to have the opportunity to re-appear before the Downtown Bethesda Design Advisory Panel ("DAP") to discuss the St. Elmo Apartments Project. As you are aware, the above-referenced Sketch Plan Amendment was considered by the DAP at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 4, 2018 and was well received. The Sketch Plan Amendment currently is scheduled to be reviewed by the Montgomery County Planning Board on October 11, 2018. At Staff's suggestion, the Applicant is appearing before the DAP again, prior to the Planning Board hearing, to discuss two elements of the Project's design: (1) the Promenade façade, and (2) the building setback along Fairmont Avenue. We are submitting materials dealing with these two aspects of the Project for the DAP's review.

Promenade Façade

As reflected in Staff's memo, the building façade facing the promenade was the primary focus of the DAP's comments during the April 4th meeting. Specifically, a few of the DAP members expressed some concern with the bulkiness of the balconies and cantilevered projections along the promenade façade, specifically as they relate to the pedestrian experience. This concern also was expressed by Planning Director Gwenn Wright at the DAP meeting.
In response to the comments raised at the prior meeting, the Applicant made a number of revisions to this façade to "lighten" its appearance. The Applicant presented several design alternatives to Planning Director Gwen Wright, Chief, Senior Urban Designer Paul Mortensen, Leslye Howerton and Park and Planning Staff. As a result of this meeting, the Applicant eliminated the projecting balconies on Level 3 that were inboard of the two enclosed projections. Furthermore, the Applicant refined the balcony design to alternate solid parapets with open metal railings every other floor, on the remaining inboard balconies, to reduce any apparent mass of the cantilevers within the promenade. The Applicant believes these changes appropriately address the DAP's previously expressed concerns. The Planning Director and Park and Planning Staff present at the meeting all support this revised design to address the comments reflected above.

**Fairmont Avenue Ground Plane**

At the recent Development Review Committee meeting, Park and Planning Staff raised a question regarding the building's setback along Fairmont Avenue. This was not previously raised by the DAP or Staff in its prior review. Fairmont Avenue is classified in the Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines as a Downtown Mixed-Use Street. Buildings along Downtown Mixed-Use Streets are recommended to be located approximately 15-20 feet from the street curb. At that time, the Applicant proposed to provide a minimum of 14'-8" setback along Fairmont Avenue, to continue the building line established by the adjacent four-story building to the left of the Property. The Applicant has since discovered that the 14'-8" measurement is actually from face of curb to a 4” projecting water table, and that the building line is set back 15'-0". Staff's comment prompted us to take another look at this setback and it was through this review that we discovered that we do provide a 15 foot setback from the street curb on Fairmont Avenue, in strict conformance with the Design Guidelines. A 20 foot setback would have a dramatic negative impact on both the streetscape and the viability of the building – one the Applicant cannot accommodate. Furthermore, consistent with architectural and urban design principals, this 15 foot setback will align the main face of the subject structure with the main face of 4933 Fairmont, rather than its 4” projecting water table. Having said that, we believe providing the 15 foot setback eliminates the issue raised by Staff regarding the setback along Fairmont Avenue and conformance with the Design Guidelines.

Given the proximity of the proposed building to the adjacent 4-story building, the Applicant believes it is more important to match the building line established by the 4-story building, as opposed to the Bainbridge building which is separated by a 30'+ Promenade. Nonetheless, the subject building does setback further at grade, at the corner adjacent to the Promenade, to appropriately tie into the Promenade and provide a gesture to the Bainbridge. The
Applicant believes the building, as proposed, will result in an improved design for the pedestrian realm.

Given the existing development along Fairmont Avenue, a truly continuous building line is unlikely to exist in the foreseeable future. For example, the Bainbridge has a 10'-6" long concrete wall at grade, approximately 9'-8" tall at its southeast corner that projects into the streetscape, due to a discontinuous sidewalk grade condition of 8" to 9". The concrete wall is closer than 9' to the curb. Additionally, the Bainbridge building cantilevers approximately 4'-6" over the streetscape, starting at the second floor (only approximately 12 feet above grade). Furthermore, as one approaches Old Georgetown Road, the streetscape varies between 9'-6" and 14'-8", given the presence of the Fairmont Avenue Building and its associated garage, which are unlikely to be redeveloped anytime in the near future. For all of these reasons, we believe a 15 foot setback along Fairmont Avenue (that conforms to the Design Guidelines), as opposed to up to 20 feet, continues to best accomplish the goal of creating a continuous building line and results in an improved design for the pedestrian realm. We respectfully request the DAP reconfirm its acceptance of this condition along Fairmont Avenue.

We look forward to having the opportunity to share our revised plans and continue our discussion of the Project with the DAP on September 26th.

Very truly yours,

LERCH EARLY & BREWER, CHTD.

[Signature]
Steven A. Robins

[Signature]
Elizabeth C. Rogers

cc: Mr. Robert Kronenberg
    Mr. Mark Pfefferle
    Mr. Eliza Hisel-McCoy
    Ms. Grace Bogdan
    Mr. Edward Lenkin
    Ms. Nancy Bassing
    David Schwarz/Craig Williams
Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel
Submission Form

PROJECT INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>St. Elmo Apartments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>File Number(s)</td>
<td>12015020A and 32015004A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Address</td>
<td>4931 and 4925 Fairmont Avenue and 4920, 4922, 4924, 4926, 4928 St. Elmo Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland</td>
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Plan Type

- Concept Plan [ ]
- Sketch Plan [X]
- Site Plan [ ]

APPLICANT TEAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Contact</td>
<td>Steve Cook</td>
<td>301-916-4100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>Craig Williams, David M. Schwarz Architects, 202-862-0777, <a href="mailto:craig.williams@dmsas.com">craig.williams@dmsas.com</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Architect</td>
<td>Becky May, Rhodeside-Harwell, 703-683-7447, <a href="mailto:beckym@rhodeside-harwell.com">beckym@rhodeside-harwell.com</a></td>
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Proposed Height</th>
<th>Proposed Density</th>
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<tr>
<td>CR 5.0, C-5.0, R-5.0, H-225'</td>
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<td>12.0 FAR</td>
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Proposed Land Uses

- Multi-family residential, office, and retail

Brief Project Description and Design Concept

(If the project was previously presented to the Design Advisory Panel, describe how the latest design incorporates the Panel's comments)

See attached cover letter.
**DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL SUBMISSION PROCESS**

1. Schedule a Design Advisory Panel review date with the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.  
   *Laura Shipman, Design Advisory Panel Liaison, [laura.shipman@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:laura.shipman@montgomeryplanning.org), 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
ST. ELMO APARTMENTS
WASHINGTON, DC

13TH AND U - ENTRANCE

ST. ELMO AVE, PROMENADE VIEW

REVISIONS FACADE

BRACKET DETAILS AT SECOND FLOOR PROJECTIONS BAYS
STRICT CONFORMANCE COMPARISON

FROM CURB LINE
- UPPER MASS SETBACK 25FT
- LOWER MASS SETBACK 15FT

DMAS CURRNT DESIGN

STRICT CONFORMANCE

FARMONT AVE INTERPRETATION 1
STRUCT CONFORMANCE COMPARISON

FROM CURB LINE
- UPPER MASS SETBACK 30′
- LOWER MASS SETBACK 20′

FROM CURB LINE
- UPPER MASS SETBACK 30′
- LOWER MASS SETBACK 20′

FARRMONT AVE INTERPRETATION 2