

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT: 4824 Edgemoor Lane
Sketch Plan No. 320200020

DATE: January 22, 2020

The 4824 Edgemoor Lane project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on January 22, 2020. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel's discussion, recommendations regarding design excellence, and the exceptional design public benefits points. The Panel's recommendations will be incorporated into the Staff Report and the Project must return to the Design Advisory Panel before completion of Sketch Plan review. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.

Attendance:

Panel

Karl Du Puy
George Dove
Damon Orobona
Rod Henderer
Qiaojue Yu
Paul Mortensen, Senior Urban Designer in the Director's Office

Staff

Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director
Elza Hisel-McCoy, Area 1 Division Chief
Stephanie Dickel, Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor
Matt Folden, Lead Reviewer
Cristina Sasaki, Parks Planner
Grace Bogdan, Planner Coordinator

Applicant Team

Pat Harris, Attorney
Joseph McKenly
Wade McKinney
Robert Kuentzel
Bill Bonstra
Shawn Weigert



Members of the Public

Amanda Farber
MG Diamond
Bonnie Sherman
Neil Goldstein
Nancy Haulik
Richard Haulik
Penny Dash

Discussion Points:

General Comments

- The massing has improved, however it totally defies the Design Guidelines, which should be overcome with design excellence. The refinement of the materials is going to be very important and we cannot determine that at this sketch plan stage.
 - *Applicant Response: We can continue to show you images of what we can achieve through articulation*
- The elevations have improved, understanding it is a very difficult and small site.
- Appreciate the diagrams showing strong Design Guidelines conformance and the difficulties related to full conformance. Location-wise, it is a good site to develop due to location near metro.
- What is the island you are showing in the drawing along Woodmont Avenue?
 - *Applicant Response: DOT and the Sector Plan recommend a two-way separated bike lane along Woodmont Avenue so the drawing is reflecting that median that is part of the facility.*
- Being so close to the metro have you considered further reducing parking?
 - *Applicant Response: We have looked into that as well as working with the nearby County garage but being a condo project, the economics are driving the number of spaces.*
- Your precedents are lovely but they don't really show many brick buildings like you propose.
 - *Applicant Response: There are a handful of brick precedents and others showing terracotta which is becoming more similar to brick buildings and harder to differentiate.*
- What is the grade change?
 - *Applicant Response: From west to the east is about a 6-foot drop from the southeast to the north east corner, not sure how much from the full extent.*
- What's the proposed building separation to the south?
 - *29 feet from the building and directly on the property line.*



Overall Design

- Given the size of the site, the grey brick grid feels like one move too many. Perhaps the curve is the move of the building and the use of the windows and balconies and alternating floor treatment can simplify the feel of the façade while marrying the front/back and addressing the tower separation. It doesn't seem the framing is highlighting anything important and not sure of the purpose. Some members disagreed on the grid and felt it added to the aesthetic quality.
 - *Applicant Response: We like the flat façade at that part of the building as it works with the function of the building.*
- Perhaps keep the grid but lower the height and simplify the materials.

South Façade and Separation from Chase Condominiums

- It is clear from the several comments received that the building separation from this site and the building to the south (the Chase) is the primary issue. Ideally it would be an addition to the Chase but that isn't possible. The two southern units facing the Chase, what if you setback those units significantly back on the upper floors so you had some articulation to the south, break up the massing of the 120' wall and begins to suggest you do have tower separation above the podium.
 - *Applicant Response: Could we address it a different way with window conditions or material articulation? With a steel structure it may pose internal challenges, from a stacking standpoint. We are already pushing it with 12 stories with light gauge steel. If we did push it back, am concerned Chase residents wouldn't want the new residents looking in on them. Also, with the south side, balconies on that side being the south façade will be mostly shaded.*
- What size are those units?
 - *Applicant Response: They are one bedroom and dens, about 800 square feet.*
- How about a curve along the south façade? That would allow the unit size to remain and provide a separation. Something beyond façade materials needs to be incorporated.
 - *Applicant Response: Respectfully, it is not the location to make a strong move like a curve*
- Do we have a plan of the Chase units?
 - *Applicant Response: The units are facing north towards this site with balconies. Both buildings are 120 feet.*
- Is there a way to make up some area that you'd lose with incorporating a notch?
 - *Applicant Response: The notch is required for fire regulations, those windows are at risk.*
- Unsure what setback would be appropriate but Woodmont Avenue is a Downtown mixed-use street up to 70 feet base height, if that could be carried around and step back 10 feet on the Chase side, it would give a nod to the Design Guidelines. What can we do to address this key issue, there is a reasonable



compromise but what was shown today is not the answer and did not make any meaningful moves towards that primary concern.

- Could you consider a setback on the top floors?
 - *Applicant Response: Perhaps we could break up the difference of the setback by doing it on both facades?*

Corner Design

- Corner image, concerned about the white brick piers coming down onto a big glass opening, they seem disconnected and am not convinced by the design. To the right and left there is resolution but the main entrance at the corner does not work. Continuity is needed between the light and beige and grid levels.
 - *Applicant Response: We do want to open up the corner and we hear you, we can work on grounding that.*

Public Comments

Ms. Penny Dash, Chase on behalf of Board of Directors Committee

- Setbacks: Chase wants as much of a setback as possible, articulation will not be sufficient to them.
- Southern wall will be very important and viewed often from users of the metro.
- West wall should also be setback, important views from Edgemoor.
- Project should minimize conflicts between bike/ped/vehicle, it is a very busy street and needs a larger setback than 15 feet on Woodmont Avenue given the loading and bike lanes.

Mr. Diamond, President of Chase Condominiums

- Every unit of the Chase building has balconies on every façade. The renderings show a new development next to a blank wall which is not accurate.
- To the south of Chase is the Edgemoor Condominium built after the Chase and Edgemoor provided a large setback from the property line as well. That setback is comfortable, and serves as precedent.
- We are not saying no development, just a reasonable setback that was discussed here today. It shouldn't come down to economically viable, it should be the right type of development.

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Project and return to the Design Advisory Panel before Sketch Plan approval for further discussion:

- Tower separation is a big concern and do not feel comfortable moving the Project forward with the massing as proposed at this time.
- Incorporate a setback on south façade upper floors to increase tower separation beyond material articulation.
- Come back on February 26th to discuss massing on the south side.



Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT: 7000 Wisconsin Ave
Site Plan No. 820200090

DATE: January 22, 2020

The 7000 Wisconsin Ave project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on January 22, 2020. 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:

Panel

Karl Du Puy
George Dove
Damon Orobona
Rod Henderer
Qiaojue Yu
Paul Mortensen, Senior Urban Designer in the Director's Office

Staff

Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director
Elza Hisel-McCoy, Area 1 Division Chief
Stephanie Dickel, Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor
Matt Folden, Lead Reviewer
Grace Bogdan, Planner Coordinator

Applicant Team

Bob Dalrymple, Attorney
Matt Gordon, Attorney
Dennis Connors, SKI
Tim Eden
Todd Jacobus



Members of the Public
Dedun Ingram

Discussion Points:

General Comments

- This is the best version so far and it seems you incorporated comments well from the last session.
- It seems the penthouse was setback?
 - *Applicant Response: Yes, we updated that since the last DAP comments.*
- The setback on the north side is the better solution than the south side.
- The balconies in this public are very public and prominent, they typically collect a lot of junk and other projects have masked this with panels, but Panel members disagreed about the concern.
- The whole composition with the vertical and horizontal is balanced, but with the through block connection with the bulk over it seems slightly off. Materials work quite well in the through block connection and help reduce the bulk identified by other Panel members.
- What retail will be there? Will they work well with the all glass?
 - *Applicant Response: Would be neighborhood serving retail, and we would provide them with a set of guidelines to work within their space.*
- North elevation- typical existing condition in Bethesda is what the potential future party wall will look like. The light masonry grid that was shown in previous designs has been removed. We would like to have something there, like a visual element/banner/mural/ something that changes over time. Why did you take the frame away? What are your thoughts?
 - *Applicant Response: We felt the base was a 'seat' in the previous design, but as we changed from that base it did not fit right on that façade, we will continue those frame elements on the north, but the south will be maybe a metal panel or similar material. The white represents a masonry material.*
- What is that tension point at the sidewalk? What do the guidelines call for Wisconsin Ave?
 - *Applicant Response: The Design Guidelines did not speak directly to that, but the layby will go away when the adjacent site redevelops over time. In the interim we do not make the existing sidewalk more narrow, but it cannot change right now. We highlight the through block connection through the pavement material.*
- The public realm should remain public and private should remain private, the through block should be continuous so as not to confuse the two. BUP mentioned they do not want nonstandard elements in the public ROW, so Bethesda Streetscape should be the sidewalk in front of through block. This may be a DRC comment during Project review.
- How do residents access alley units?



- *Applicant Response: Dwelling units fronting the through block connection have two access points, the main from the interior of the building and the secondary access from the through block connection.*

Public Comment

Dedra Ingram, Chevy Chase resident

- Disappointed there isn't a true tower separation for this building on the south or the north. Our concern has been due to the street location there is not any break in buildings on the west side and so there will be a solid wall. The community assumed with the through-block connections those would create the breakup and view of the sky but with this design it does not. It is an aggressive feeling.

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendation should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. The Panel acknowledges this site has been extremely difficult to develop due to site constraints and economic viability and appreciates the Applicant's efforts to address their concerns.
2. Public Benefit Points: The Applicant is requesting 20 Exceptional Design points, the Panel votes to support 10 Exceptional Design points, 3 in support (2 members would have supported 15), with the following conditions.
 - a. Demonstrate articulation on north and south façade walls either through grid, mural, or other visual amenity.
 - b. There must be no blank walls in interim condition (before buildings develop alongside).



Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT: 8015 Old Georgetown Road
Site Plan No. 820200130

DATE: January 22, 2020

The 8015 Old Georgetown Road project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on January 22, 2020. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel's discussion, and recommendations regarding design excellence and the exceptional design public benefits points. The Applicant must revise the design consistent with the comments, for review at Site Plan by Paul Mortensen, Senior Urban Designer. 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:

Panel

Karl Du Puy

George Dove

Damon Orobona

Rod Henderer

Qiaojue Yu

Paul Mortensen, Senior Urban Designer in the Director's Office

Staff

Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director

Elza Hisel-McCoy, Area 1 Division Chief

Stephanie Dickel, Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor

Grace Bogdan, Lead Reviewer

Matt Folden, Transportation Planner

Applicant Team

Erin Girard, Attorney

Dennis Connors, SKI Architects

John Graham

Members of the Public

Dedun Ingram



Alexandra Kosmides

Discussion Points:

General Comments

- Do like the Old Georgetown Road frontage, articulation has come a long way, and improvements on the back for stepping down, but the corner at Old Georgetown Road and Glenbrook is peculiar; understand the need for a chamfer but the vertical treatment may work better behind the glass.
- Appreciate the floor plan identifying the MPDUs, and distribution of units.
- The improvement along the back (stepbacks) will improve the relationship with the neighborhood.
- Can you discuss the ground floor entrances with the change in grade?
 - *Applicant Response: Main entrance at corner of Old Georgetown Road and Glenbrook, additional entrance on Old Georgetown Road mid-block. Entrances off Glenbrook, but no entrances from courtyard area. Ground floor parking garage and bike storage bury into first floor at access road.*
- So to get to the lobby from the through block connection at the NW you'd have to go to the corner? It seems like a labyrinth for residents, why not have two entrances?
 - *Applicant Response: That's right, unless you entered through the parking garage. We intended to centralize amenity space to encourage a sense of community.*
- What is the height and material of the retaining wall?
 - *Applicant Response: About 4.5 feet.*
- What is the dark brown material? No stucco?
 - *Applicant Response: Combination of metals, no stucco. There will be a bit of articulation along Old Georgetown Road frontage.*

Corner Treatment

- The white material does not seem to center so it frames one side and the other is off. Not quite there yet, the blade walls help break down the verticality, but the corner treatment is not there yet functionally and aesthetically.
- Ground floor unit shares the corner at Old Georgetown Road, which is odd. It should all be amenity or all unit, seems odd to celebrate an entrance as shared unit ground floor living. The scale seems off.
- Perhaps there needs to be some relationship between façade around the corner to acknowledge the setback.
- Perhaps the way of solving this is grounding the white as you did on Glenbrook
 - *Applicant Response: That relationship was to connect with the neighborhood, may not achieve the same look on Old Georgetown Road.*



Design Guidelines Street Design

- How does this relate to the street type and setbacks? There does seem to be a deep shadow along the street? The paneling of the balconies make it seem like the entire first floor is setback rather than equal or stepping out, its recessed.
 - *Applicant Response: Old Georgetown Road is neighborhood connector, base height 3-5 and stepback of 15-20, neighborhood local 2-4 base height and stepback of 15-20 feet. Rather than stepping back, it projects.*
- How far are you setback from curb?
 - *Applicant Response: 25 feet from curb to base, projections for balconies are 5 feet.*
- So it appears the whole elevation is projecting. It becomes very apparent with the base diagrams that the whole first floor is in shadow, which may be an issue with the Planning Board and it should be addressed why you are doing that or why it is not meeting the Design Guidelines. If it was just balconies it is one thing, but the panels create overhangs which the Planning Board has made clear they will not support. As shown now is problematic.
 - *Applicant Response: The scale of this building is smaller, at 85 feet, the balconies with panels layer the façade and diminish the mass. The reading of base, middle, top is there while not traditional, its distinguished. Exposed balconies along Old Georgetown Road are not going to be aesthetically pleasing.*
- Agree with the layers helping diminish, however the base being recessed is still a problem What is the base height?
 - *Applicant Response: The shadow may be off, 20 feet tall base height.*
- Why 20 feet on the base?
 - *Applicant Response: Since the project is on the fringe, the building will have more of a hospitality feel, so the entrance will be more of an experience rather than just an entrance.*
- Given Applicant's explanation, what they are proposing on Old Georgetown Road is the right design, the two-story amenity space and connections are the right scale, it is highly articulated and meets the alternative materials criteria in the Design Guidelines.
- Articulation in two-dimension drawing is very nice, base and top, the middle creates a strong horizontal, but this base setback needs to be addressed in the Project's Statement of Justification and why it works for this project.
 - *Applicant Response: Understood*
- The range in setback allowed by the DG would mean that it conforms, the elements you are using with the plane changes are very helpful.



Glenbrook frontage

- The setback in the guidelines would result in a 15-20 foot after the base.
 - *Applicant Response: We focused the design on the additional setback from the residential rather than fronting Glenbrook as the opposite side of the street is commercial.*
- So the thickness of the panel and materials would allow the visual change? What is the thickness?
 - *Applicant Response: 4 inches, the angle of the street makes it look like more*
- Need to focus the SOJ explicitly address why that decision was made there
 - *Applicant Response: Understood.*

Public Comment

Alexandra Komisades, City Commons of Bethesda resident

- Generally in support of project but disappointed in the design as it reads more of a suburban office design rather than a residential building, were hoping for more texture particularly along Glenbrook. The bright white masonry should be toned down and the aging of the color may not be nice. Concerned about the through block connection being accessible and want to be sure the gate through to the fire site will be accessible.
 - *Applicant Response: There is currently a gate, so we refer to that area as the gate, but it is always open.*

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendation should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Public Benefit Points: The Applicant is requesting 20, the Panel supports a maximum of 15 (based on staff's review of improvements) Exceptional Design points, the Panel votes 5 in support, with the following conditions.
 - a. Corner treatment recommendations to be reviewed by Staff, which may determine whether it needs to return to the DAP
 - b. Direction on corner treatment:
 - Seems to be ambivalence between building entrance and the unit location on the ground floor which is a real problem. Should communicate more as domestic rather than office.
 - Is there an opportunity to inset or project one to emphasize entrance? The blade wall isn't enough and the blade wall on the right side reads very different than the left, but the solid plane glass could be manipulated. Perhaps more detail, with window character?

