

4824 EDGEMOOR LANE
Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel
Sketch Plan Narrative

Edgemoor 48, LLC (the "Applicant") is the developer of the property located at 4824 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, Maryland (the "Property"). The Property is located at the southwest quadrant of the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Edgemoor Lane. It is a corner site, generally bordered by Woodmont Avenue to the east, Edgemoor Lane to the north, and a condominium development to the south and west. The Property is also located within 600 feet of the Bethesda Metro Station and bus terminal, and falls within the Bethesda Parking Lot District.

The Applicant proposes to redevelop the Property with a 12-story multifamily building consisting of up to 77 units (the "Project"). The Project represents an opportunity to bring a new environmentally sensitive condominium building with mid-size units and space saving automated parking within half a block of the Bethesda Metro Station. As explained in detail below, the proposed multifamily building is one of exceptional design and creativity. Pursuant to Section 59.4.7.3.E.2 of the Zoning Ordinance, as well as the exceptional design criteria outlined in the Montgomery County *Commercial/Residential and Employment Zones Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines* (the "Implementation Guidelines"), the Applicant is seeking 25 public benefit points for exceptional design.¹

The ensuing narrative provides the information required by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel ("DAP") Submission Form.

A. Brief Project Description and Design Concept

Although located at a unique and highly visible location within the Arlington North District of Downtown Bethesda, the subject Property is underdeveloped with a single-family structure. Accordingly, the Applicant proposes to revitalize the Property with a modern residential landmark that will be on equal footing with other new projects in Downtown Bethesda in terms of architectural design, building quality, and visual appeal. Despite having a limited land area to work with (tract area = 8,659 square feet), the Applicant has been able to generate a creative solution that cleverly utilizes the site's configuration and blends seamlessly with the surrounding environment. Additionally, the proposed multifamily building will achieve the recommended maximum building height of 120 feet denoted in the *2017 Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan* (the "Sector Plan").

As discussed in detail below, the design concept achieves several planning goals outlined in the Sector Plan, and implements many of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines*.

¹ Under Section 4.9.2.C.4.f of the Zoning Ordinance, the Applicant can earn up to 30 public benefit points for exceptional design.

4824 Edgemoor Lane

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Narrative for Exceptional Design Public Benefit Points Justification

- Architecture

Following the meeting with the Design Advisory Panel on January 22nd, the project at 4824 Edgemoor Lane has been redesigned and adjusted per the feedback of the panel. The panel had several comments regarding the design and its compliance with the Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines. The panel felt that the design had an appreciable improvement since the initial meeting but maintained that the remaining issue was the separation between the Chase condominium to the south and the proposed project. The suggestion was raised to break up the massing to allow for separation and increase light and air. The panel also suggested to reinforce the notion of “grounding” the building at the entry through the addition of piers, rather than a continuous glass wall. Finally, the grid element was deemed extrinsic to the nature of the building and not necessary. These comments have been understood and applied to the design of this project.

4824 Edgemoor Lane establishes a modern residential design at a unique corner site at the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Edgemoor Lane in downtown Bethesda. The 12-story project is composed of a continuous wrapped façade that turns the corner of Edgemoor Lane and Woodmont Avenue, acting as a transition from the neighborhood to the urban core. The underdeveloped project site, with a net tract area of only 8,006 square feet, is highly visible along a curving Woodmont Avenue as approached from the north, as well as being visible from the neighborhood to the West and from the Metro to the East.

The irregular triangular shaped site creates the opportunity for the project to wrap around the corner, transitioning from the smaller scale to the higher scale, while the facades double height modulation breaks down the scale of the project. A vertically oriented tower element further modulates the Woodmont Avenue façade, while also highlighting the reveal of the white brick massing at the corner. The southeastern corner of the building has been carved away to break up the massing of the southern façade, providing increased separation, and to provide additional light and air between the two buildings. The building is grounded by a continuous two-story masonry that relates to the neighborhood scale and wraps around the entire building. The language of strong tower elements holding in place a curved wall is continuous around the building. Carefully composed ‘at risk windows’ enhance the elevations of the party walls and reinforce the reading of the project as a four-sided building. This contemporary building design will soon become a quiet contributor to the existing urban condition along this picturesque thoroughfare.

- Parking and Loading

Given the Property's proximity to multiple forms of transit, including the Bethesda Metro Station and bus terminal (which is served by numerous bus line), and existing and planned bicycle facilities, the Applicant anticipates that a significant number of its residents will utilize transit for commuting purpose, but may still own a car. Accordingly, parking will be adequately sufficient to accommodate the residents. Given the limited size of the Property, the Project utilizes a parking elevator system to transport vehicles from the grade level of the parking garage to multiple below grade levels. The elevator system will have two cabs that can transport vehicles in either direction.

4824 Edgemoor Lane

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Narrative for Exceptional Design Public Benefit Points Justification

The Project will provide loading via a 14-foot wide access point at the southeastern portion of the site, along Woodmont Avenue. The loading was specifically located along Woodmont, in response to the concerns of the Chase residents that loading on Edgemoor Avenue would potentially conflict with vehicles entering or exiting the Chase parking garage.

- Pedestrian Circulation and Streetscape Improvements

Given the limited tract size, the Zoning Ordinance does not require the Project to provide any public use space. However, an important aspect of the Project is that it will provide improvements to the pedestrian realm. The design will create a continuous building line along Edgemoor Lane and Woodmont Avenue, which will further activate the pedestrian environment. The Applicant intends to dedicate approximately 306 square feet of land area along the Edgemoor Lane frontage to help enhance the walkability of the site.

The Project includes streetscape improvements along the Property's Edgemoor Lane and Woodmont Avenue frontage, in accordance with the Bethesda Streetscape Standards. These improvements will bookend the Edgemont II project to the north (already under construction). The proposed streetscape improvements, framed by a new, multi-family residential building with interesting architecture, will ultimately contribute to the creation of a cohesive pedestrian system through Bethesda, particularly within the Arlington North District.

B. Exceptional Design Public Benefit Points Requested and Brief Justification

With respect to Exceptional Design, the Project merits 25 public benefit points, as it meets all six (6) of the applicable criteria, as outlined in the Implementation Guidelines:

- *Providing innovative solutions in response to the immediate context.*

Generally, the Project's design evidences a keen understanding of the site's immediate context, opportunities, and constraints. The building design fills a development void in Woodmont Avenue's urban streetwall that is compatible with the established scale of the adjacent buildings and addresses the "missing tooth" condition created by the existing single-family structure. Consistent with the Sector Plan, the building's height of 120 feet appropriately steps down from the taller heights to both the north and west, and provides the appropriate transition to the lower heights further to the west of the Property.

Woodmont Avenue is a frequently traversed one-way artery. Additionally, Woodmont Avenue's curve lends the multifamily building to a dynamic, gradual reveal to motorists and pedestrians traveling southbound. Hints of the building's tripartite arrangement will precipitate a dramatic reveal of the signature vertical glass bay, fin, and entry element, just as the view opens at the Woodmont Avenue and Edgemoor lane intersection.

The building is also uniquely designed to ensure that secondary facades on property lines, such as those on the south and west that are in direct view of adjacent residents, are thoughtfully and aesthetically composed to create positive viewing experiences. An innovative measure

4824 Edgemoor Lane

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Narrative for Exceptional Design Public Benefit Points Justification

proposed is the proposed automated parking system that reserves the space needed to provide a superior residential experience.

Furthermore, the Project enhances the public streetscape by providing new sidewalks, new street trees, and a bike lane with a median strip to slow down traffic. These are essential improvements given the immediate context and daily activity along Woodmont Avenue.

- *Creating a sense of place and serves as a landmark.*

The design concept includes various elements to create a sense of place and establish a landmark development. The Project will provide and maintain an aligned street edge along Woodmont Avenue and Edgemoor Lane. The design incorporates a human-scale lobby and amenity spaces, which will activate this street edge and establish an urban sense of place that the existing single-family structure cannot achieve. The building's ground floor spaces will be recessed behind planters aligned with the building facades. The loading and garage access points will be screened with opaque rolling grills to block any views of internal activity.

The composition of the building responds directly to the site, as Woodmont Avenue curves around the project, so too does the façade. The project is grounded by tower elements on the elevations, holding a curved façade that turns the corner from Edgemoor Lane to Woodmont Avenue. The subtle architectural move allows the project to fit in appropriately with the context and provide the opportunity for incorporating additional building signage to stand out, which could enhance pedestrian wayfinding along the street.

Familiar, well-composed residential materials and building elements at grade-level will also function to create a sense of place. The use of familiar residential elements, such as the modulation of the façade to articulate units, as well as the use of balconies and roof terraces will enhance the projects sense of place and help to establish a landmark development in this area of downtown Bethesda.

- *Enhancing the public realm in a distinct and original manner.*

The Project enhances the public realm in a distinct and original manner. The building's base, which reinforces the Woodmont Avenue street edge, incorporates elements to enhance the pedestrian experience. A composition of masonry materials and glass creates a visual connection between the lobby level and the street, thus establishing a harmony with a projecting canopy to provide a welcoming, hospitable environment along the sidewalk. Additionally, ± 5-foot-wide planters along the base – positioned between projecting columns in the above façade plane – add to the visual experience for pedestrians along Woodmont Avenue and Edgemoor Lane and provide additional greenery on a constrained site.

- *Introducing materials, forms or building methods unique to the immediate vicinity or applied in a unique way.*

4824 Edgemoor Lane

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Narrative for Exceptional Design Public Benefit Points Justification

The Project utilizes various architectural features to accommodate the site's unique and irregular configuration. The building's design concept resembles a fan-shaped, three-dimensional structure that opens up to the southwest corner of Woodmont Avenue and Edgemoor Lane. The geometry of the site is responded to through the use of a curved façade turning the corner around Woodmont Avenue and Edgemoor Lane. This massing is modulated by varied double height readings to break down the reading of the massing. These façade elements also reinforce the cellular nature of a multifamily building and create identifiable multi-story individual (unit) faces, which break down the building's scale in a sculpturally artistic way.

- *Designing compact, infill development so living, working and shopping environments are more pleasurable and desirable on a site.*

The Project's design maximizes the development potential of a constrained site that is in close proximity to a variety of living, working, and shopping opportunities. Prospective residents will be drawn to the proposed landmark development at this highly convenient location along Woodmont Avenue. The site is within 600 feet of the Bethesda Metro Station and within a short walking distance of Bethesda Row – the current retail center of Downtown Bethesda. The Project helps to stimulate pedestrian activity along Woodmont Avenue and Edgemoor Lane. Additionally, by orienting living rooms towards street views, new residents will be able to put "eyes on the street", which increases public connectivity, area safety, and ultimately creates a more pleasurable environment.

Furthermore, the project utilizes a compact, space-saving automatic parking system. This allows for a more spacious, enjoyable lobby environment that will be transparent to the public domain and create a more desirable living experience for prospective residents.

- *Integrating low-impact development methods into the overall design of the site and building, beyond green building or site requirements.*

The Project will integrate a variety of low-impact development methods into the overall design of the multifamily building that go beyond green building or site requirements. The automated parking system will reduce vehicle emissions, lower excavation costs, and mitigate any adverse impacts on the surrounding environment. The multifamily building will also consist of green roofs and screened HVAC units on the penthouse roof and provide opportunities for enhanced recycling efforts. Overall, the Project is a low-impact, environmentally sensitive development, especially given the physical constraints of the site.