

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

June 24, 2020

Location: Virtual Meeting

9:30a **Hampden East**
Sketch Plan No. 320200070

10:30a **The Avondale**
Sketch Plan No. 320200050

11:30a **4824 Edgemoor Lane**
Sketch Plan No.

12:30p **ADJOURN**





MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE: June 17, 2020
TO: Bethesda Downton Plan Design Advisory Panel (DAP)
FROM: Elza Hisel-McCoy, Chief, Area 1 Division *EH*
RE: Staff comments for projects presented at the June 24, 2020 DAP Meeting

Staff has identified the following issues for the projects to be presented at the June 24 meeting.

Hampden East

Shalom Baranes Associates
Washington Properties

- Sketch Plan, focusing on high-level conformance of building massing and urban design; 1st presentation
- Planning staff has met with the applicant team several times to discuss the design as it has developed over the past six months.
- The project occupies the western, interior half of this small block with three street frontages with significantly different levels of traffic, from the heavily traveled Montgomery Lane to the north and the less-traveled East and Hampden Lanes to the west and south. The massing and urban design must negotiate these conditions and the site's extended relationship to Wisconsin and Woodmont Avenues one block away.
- The project design options use a number of alternative guideline compliance measures and include building overhangs along select portions of the building facades. The use of overhangs in particular should be limited and serve significant architectural and urban design functions, and not simply as a means for capturing density.
- This project backs onto the 7340 Wisconsin Avenue senior living project for which the DAP discussed the back-to-back relationship when it reviewed that project.

The Avondale
Perkins Eastman
SJ Investments

- Sketch Plan, focusing on high-level conformance of building massing and urban design; 1st presentation
- Avondale Street is an atypical dead-end street currently developed with two- and three-story walk-up apartment buildings. Middleton Lane to the north is primarily single-family homes and directly to the south is higher-intensity commercial development along East-West Highway.
- This site is the first on this street to take advantage of additional building height permitted by the *Bethesda Downtown Plan*. Building heights on this side of the street are limited to 70 feet, the opposite side to 40 feet, and the properties to the west along Wisconsin Avenue to 110 feet, all in the CR or CRN zones.
- Staff determines there has been insufficient effort to break down the scale of this building to attempt to better “fit” within the context of the existing buildings along this short and narrow street. The massing must take greater steps to promote compatibility with the existing low-rise buildings.
- For the Neighborhood Residential Street, the guidelines recommend a setback of 15-20 feet above a two- to three-story base. The current design proposes a two-story base with only an eight-foot setback, bringing the upper massing significantly closer to the street.
- The entrance lobby extends into the street setback guideline, partly in response to a fire-access requirement. The Applicant states the minimal glass box design will add visual interest at a pedestrian scale. Staff does not support the encroachment for the lobby and has recommended that the Applicant redesign this space, as the setbacks for existing development on either side of the Property is at least 35’ from the curb and the proposed building footprint is a significant change from the existing character.

4824 Edgemoor Lane

Bonstra Haresign Architects

Edgemoor 48, LLC

- Site Plan, focusing on more detailed design guideline conformance; 1st presentation
- Sketch Plan Condition #4 required the Applicant to further explore ways to improve building separation from the existing Chase Condominium building.
- Page 74 of the Design Guidelines says:

Buildings below 120 feet or with limited property size/width/depth may reduce tower separation or consider party walls. If party walls are necessary, mitigate their visual impact with elements such as public art, lighting, texture and/or patterning that provide visual interest and are appropriate to the context and architecture of the building.

- The canting of the walls on the southern façade helps to mitigate the impact of this tower close to the condos.
- The penthouse element rises significantly above the maximum building height and presents too strongly. The applicant should mitigate the appearance of this additional height by shrinking the rooftop interior community space, setting it back further from exterior walls, and/or lowering the height of this element.