

## Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes

**PROJECT:** 4702 Chevy Chase Drive

**DATE:** September 24, 2020

---

*The 4702 Chevy Chase Drive project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on July 22 and September 24, 2020. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel's discussion, recommendations regarding design excellence, and the exceptional design public benefits points. The project is in the Sketch Plan stage and will need to return to the Design Advisory Panel at the time of Site Plan to review comments provided and determine final vote for design excellence. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

---

### **Attendance:**

#### Panel

George Dove

Rod Henderer

Damon Orobona

Qiaojue Yu

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

#### Staff

Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director of Planning

Elza Hisel-McCoy, DownCounty Division Chief

Stephanie Dickel, DownCounty Regulatory Supervisor

Grace Bogdan, Planner Coordinator

Matt Folden, Planner Coordinator

Hyojung Garland, Park Planning Supervisor

Rachel Newhouse, Parks Planner

Dominic Quattrocchi, Parks Planner

Emily Balmer, DownCounty Administrative Assistant III



### Applicant Team

Pat Harris, Attorney

Luz Del Mar Rosado, Lessard Design

Jon Fitch, Landscape Architect, Landscape Architecture Bureau (LAB)

Hans Schmit, Winthrop Management

Ulises Montees De Oca, Lessard Design

Lyn Wenzel, Landscape Architecture Bureau, LLC

Tim Longfellow, GLWPA

Ricardo Tovar, Lessard Design

Max Gross, Winthrop Management

### Members of the Public

Michael Zajac

Naomi Spinrad

Daniel Ben-Zadok

Jacob Isserman

Janice Soreth

Jorge Mariscal

### Discussion Points:

Staff: The project is at Sketch Plan and the review is focused on massing, urban design with respect to design quality and conformance with Design Guidelines. This is the second time this project has been before the Board and the Applicant was requested to return with focus on the following: explore options for massing along Chevy Chase Drive that better conform to the Design Guidelines; explore options for loading and configuration along Nottingham and Chevy Chase Drive; explore façade improvements on Nottingham Drive; and develop a park connection from Chevy Chase Drive.

Panel:

- You should be commended for modifying the project based on previous comments made, particularly along Nottingham Drive and removal of the trash.

#### *Chevy Chase Drive frontage*

- The drawings show the curb being moved back on Chevy Chase Drive, is that not true? We received one comment from the Chevy Chase West association, can you explain the parking along Chevy Chase Drive being eliminated, is that true?
  - *Applicant Response: You are correct the curb is shown being moved, but based on the DRC comments, the curb will not move. The parking along Chevy Chase Drive will eliminate one or two spaces, but with other changes being made, other spaces may be created. So the on street parking will be shifted but not entirely be removed, but this is based on DRC comments and that's an ongoing process.*

- I really appreciate the connection from Chevy Chase Drive, but I am also interested in how this façade will be developed to provide for a great pedestrian experience, with attention to landscaping. I also appreciate the façade changes along Chevy Chase Drive and the removal of the column at the entry, and removal of trash from Nottingham Drive.

#### *Loading*

- The loading dock is only 30' deep, where will they park a 55' truck?
  - *Applicant Response: What we've found with these urban projects is that the smaller trucks are more often utilized and so we did not provide for a 55' truck.*
- I appreciate the loading being integrated into the building and façade, that is a great improvement.
- I still have some concern how the loading will work off Nottingham Drive given the small street, similar to the neighborhood concern, we asked for you to explore the loading off Chevy Chase Drive and we haven't seen that.
- I do believe moving the loading to Chevy Chase Drive would negatively affect that frontage, but I do think it should be further explored.
  - *Applicant Response: Thanks for your comments. We have researched similar condominium buildings in downtown Bethesda and based on that data we anticipate low turnover, further reducing loading impacts.*

#### *Nottingham Drive frontage*

- Neighborhood concern on lighting on Nottingham. Not sure what the right approach is. Proper shielding is probably better than motion-activated lighting.
- I see you have the building stepping down to patio area along Nottingham. You could have maximized space with retaining wall, just a thought for Site Plan review.
- I think Nottingham Drive is a residential street and great to walk on, so I think that adding the appropriate details to the pedestrian environment at the time of Site Plan will be very important.

#### *Connection to Norwood Park*

- The pedestrian connection from Chevy Chase Drive, you are showing trees on the fire station site, have they agreed to these offsite trees?
  - *Applicant Response: Yes we've been coordinating with the fire station site.*
- The connection from Chevy Chase Drive to Nottingham Drive is great but I do hope that a balanced relationship can be achieved that doesn't make the patio too private.
- Park comment: We appreciate the connection to the Park along the Property but we will continue to pursue the completion of the sidewalk connection on the north side of Nottingham Drive to Norwood Park.
  - *Applicant Response: Residents further west along Nottingham, currently there is a significant landscape buffer and to extend the sidewalk would eliminate that landscaping.*

## Public Comments

- The setback from Nottingham Drive, I understand there is a 20' guideline, but Nottingham Drive is Chevy Chase West and most of us have a 25-30' setback and haven't seen that in any way. If the loading here is the best approach then can we come up with a loading management plan to ensure only 30' trucks are used?
- Thank you for making many of the changes previously requested. In terms of the loading dock, we do have concerns of precedents it may set for future development. The loss of parking spaces here may result in more spaces to be removed, these spaces are used for guests of the building and visitors to the park, so the on-street parking is limited. Concern of sidewalk width in conformance with the Bethesda Design Guidelines, looks undersized. The sidewalk connector from Chevy Chase Drive to Nottingham Drive should be 8-12'.

*Applicant Response: In terms of the Nottingham Drive sidewalk, yes we will increase the sidewalk to 6' unless there can be relaxation of the County standard to allow for more landscaping. In terms of 8-12 feet for the connector, that is for public through block connection points which we are not requesting, so we believe the 5' connector as proposed is appropriate.*

- I appreciate all the work the architects have done on this proposal. I agree with many of the concerns regarding parking, loading, and setbacks. I would like to not see any parking spaces lost and overflow parking for Norwood Park on our street is constant. I don't understand how the Bethesda Plan can dictate changes outside the Plan Boundary (south side of Nottingham). The setback on Nottingham Drive should be increased to allow for proper loading. I love the connection and I love the units fronting Nottingham Drive.
- We would appreciate the sidewalk completion on the north side of Nottingham Drive. Is there now enough room for the trucks to go inside the loading dock?

*Applicant Response: The whole intent is that the loading will be fully enclosed in the building.*

- How do we get a loading management agreement enforced for when 30'+ trucks inevitably conduct lengthy moves while sitting on Nottingham? These are "when" questions not "if" given management companies lack of attention to detail and oversight of moving companies. How do we get truck turning analysis to ensure trucks can properly turn in?

*Applicant Response: My experience has been that Bethesda projects commonly have loading management plans. We can certainly identify basic parameters of the loading management plan at Preliminary or Site Plan. The truck turning analysis is part of the development review process during preliminary plan.*

**Panel Recommendations:**

The Panel voted (4-0) in support that the Project is on track to receive the minimum 10 points for Design Excellence with the following to be addressed at the time of Site Plan:

- a. Address loading access design and operation to relocated or limit potential loss of parking on Nottingham Drive;
- b. Explore further enhancement of the pedestrian environment on Nottingham Drive including completion of the sidewalk to Norwood Park on the north side of Nottingham Drive.

## Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes

**PROJECT:** Update to DAP Procedures

**DATE:** September 24, 2020

### Attendance:

#### Panel

George Dove

Rod Henderer

Damon Orobona

Qiaojue Yu

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

#### Staff

Elza Hisel-McCoy, Area 1 Division Chief

Stephanie Dickel, Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor

Grace Bogdan, Planner Coordinator

Rachel Newhouse, Parks Planner

Emily Balmer, Area 1 Administrative Assistant III

---

Changes to procedures include:

- *Voting members*, if only 4 members are able to participate and the Panel is split 2-2, to avoid the deadlock the Senior Urban Designer may cast the deciding vote.
- *Reconsideration Requests*, the DAP will only entertain requests to reconsider votes from the Planning Board

Members were all in support of the proposed procedural changes.