

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT: Hampden East

DATE: March 24, 2021

*The **Hampden Lane** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel at Sketch Plan on June 24, 2020. On March 24, 2021, the Panel reviewed the project for Site Plan. 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 Site Plan stage and the Design Advisory Panel will determine if comments from Sketch Plan have been incorporated and take the final vote for design excellence public benefit points. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

Attendees:

George Dove
Rod Henderer
Brian Kelly
Damon Orobona
Qiaojue Yu
Paul Mortensen, ex officio member, Senior Urban Designer in the Director's Office

Staff

Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director
Elza Hisel-McCoy, Chief, DownCounty Planning
Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor, DownCounty Planning
Grace Bogdan, Planner Coordinator, DownCounty Planning
Emily Balmer, Administrative Assistant III, DownCounty Planning

Applicant Team

Robert Dalrymple, Attorney	Filipa Powell, Architect
Matt Gordon, Attorney	Jennifer Gallaher, Architect
Daryl South, Developer	Nick Auger, Architect
Janel Kausner, Developer	John Neilson, Landscape Architect
Robert Sponseller, Architect	Trini Rodriguez, Landscape Architect
Anna Weber, Architect	Jonathan Bondi, VIKA

No members of the public were in attendance

Discussion Points:



Staff: The Panel first saw this item at the Sketch Plan stage in June of 2020 with favorable support that the Project was on track to meet the 10 minimum design excellence points. At Site Plan stage, the review is focused on more detailed and developed architectural expression and site design, consistent with the Design Guidelines.

General

- I recall back to the original massing from over a year ago, you had proposed three options for the podium which we thought the third, cubist design, was the most favorable. It is becoming clear in the new design that you've taken that cubist design to the next step in the entire building design and I think the massing has progressed very nicely and is very handsome on all three frontages.
- Thank you for the nice presentation. I think the building and articulation has progressed well, I really like this project.
- I think this will correspond well to the Metro Tower design to the south, it will make Hampden Lane a very great and interesting experience.

Outdoor Space

- Are these terraces limited to the office users?
Applicant Response: There are terraces for the residents as well, at the 8th floor (top residential floor) which is envisioned as a screened terrace and then there will be individual unit balconies. We are setting these back from the façade so they act as outdoor rooms and protected spaces, and we are currently determining how many of those should be integrated on each facade. So with those balconies I think they will add a great layer of depth to the building. For the upper level terraces, those spaces will be dedicated to just the office users, not the residents.

Sustainability

- Under the design principles you talk about providing an energy efficient design but I could not really find further description of what that entails, can you elaborate how the project is meeting those goals?
Applicant Response: It turns out the State of Maryland has some very progressive energy efficiency incentives. The efficiency is mostly being achieved through the use of high-performance glazing system with fritted glass, as well as a very efficient energy system for residential and office. At the residential level, we are at less than 50% glass which really helps. For the office level, we are looking at high performance glass and a shadow box design to improve our efficiency. We are currently on target to be well above the base performance requirements. Montgomery County energy performance criteria are really stringent, from both the zoning and building perspective and we are meeting those currently, which is about LEED Silver, and are happy to provide more information on how much we are exceeding these requirements by.
- Since you are requesting 30 points, which is the maximum amount, I think this is a big ask and an important component to consider when trying to achieve maximum points, I think LEED Silver is a low bar.



Materials

- Materials surrounding are lighter materials except to the southwest?
Applicant Response: Directly to our west and south are all masonry grey brick, red brown, and orange brick. To the north we get more precast concrete building material.
- The two buildings to the south have the reddish orange brick and with the plaza that your building is trying to make an important gesture to, with the large roads separating each, if your building went with the warm terra cotta it would identify more with the reddish orange buildings to the south and west. I think it will bring continuity to the plaza and create an urban room and sense of space. This will also be much more unique than the white-grey option that would identify more with the concrete office buildings to the north. The elegance of the residential façade will be a good background, but also stand out by virtue of the articulation and unique pattern with woven irregularity. East Lane, to me, will also provide continuity with the building to the west with a nice slender space. With the ground plane and plaza space, emulating the colors to the southwest help the urban room rather than buildings to the north.
- I agree with the terra cotta at the base, I think the materiality that you are heading towards is the right direction.
- Could there be a play between the proportion between the residential and office so its not so much a pop up but perhaps a variant, genetic continuity, so the tower doesn't feel like it was placed on top of a table. A figure ground reversal, not exactly traditional or nostalgic, but a slender, abstract language.

Applicant Response: Thank you for that comment, we have been working on that actually, creating an office façade with slightly more character. We didn't want a glass box, we are looking at mullion patterns (depth and shape) that are more traditional and nostalgic just for the strong sense of rhythm of pattern on the base. We are putting a decorative metal spandrel which will read as a raked metal texture behind the glass. We can't commit to more solid but we can certainly increase the articulation.

Corner of East and Montgomery Lane

- I could not find any perspectives of this area and it seems there is no setback on Montgomery Lane?
Applicant Response: We can show you the views, to your question about setbacks, we were aligning the base on this façade since this is narrower. When you are coming in Bethesda from the north they are more formal, but to the south and west there are more opportunities for the building to change and be sculpted and provide the open areas at the base and above.
- To your point, yes, Metro Tower has a similar treatment which is a good justification. I like the proportions shown in the rendering, thank you for the additional perspectives.
Applicant Response: Yes, that was our feeling as well, and we took advantage of the opportunity to sculpt the building to the south and west towards Bethesda Row and the Purple Line.

Landscaping

- The landscape rendering looks really great, with the trees that are proposed on the very high floors you should be careful with the trees proposed and the wind load on the upper floors.



Applicant Response: Thank you that's a very good comment. We worked with our Landscape Architects to provide a generous pedestrian environment along all frontages to allow ample areas for tree pits and planting with consistent spacing along each of the frontages.

Panel Recommendations:

The Applicant is requesting 30 points for design excellence. The Panel voted 5-0 in support of 25 points with the Project as proposed, however if the Applicant were to commit to a Site Plan condition to pursue a minimum of LEED Gold certification, the Panel supports the full 30 points requested.



Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT: Avondale, Site Plan submission

DATE: March 24, 2021

*The **Avondale** project Site Plan submission was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on January 27, 2021 and March 24, 2021. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel's discussion from March 24, recommendations regarding design excellence, and the exceptional design public benefits points. The project is in the Site Plan stage and the Design Advisory Panel will determine if comments from Sketch Plan have been incorporated and take the final vote for design excellence public benefit points. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

Attendance:

Panel

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Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor, DownCounty Planning

Grace Bogdan, Planner Coordinator, DownCounty Planning

Emily Balmer, Administrative Assistant III, DownCounty Planning

Applicant Team

Soo Lee Cho, Miller, Miller & Canby

Kevin Park, SJ Investment Corp

Brett Swiatocha, Perkins Eastman DC Perkins

Pat LaVay, Macris Hendricks and Glascock, P.A.

No members of the public were in attendance.



Staff: This is the Project's second presentation at Site Plan, at the first meeting, the DAP was pleased with the direction the architecture was moving in however requested the applicant team to further develop the landscape design to address the street and accessibility from the sidewalk to the building entry.

Discussion Points:

Landscaping & Building Entry

- I appreciate that you've consolidated the landscape area at the front, it looks much more organized. What is the total grade change and width of the handicap ramp?

Applicant Response: It is two feet total drop and the runs and landing are five feet.

- Does it need to be five feet? If it could narrow to four feet on the runs, the planter area could be larger

Applicant Response: If we did that, the landings would still need to be five feet so there wouldn't be much gain.

- I think the revised plan has addressed our previous comments very well. The way it was divided up before, this is much more coherent.
- It is too bad that the ramp and the stairs share the walkway and entrance, but I think it works well.
- Has the team thought about addressing the grade inside the building as opposed to the exterior? It could become a unique interior entry.

Applicant Response: Yes, actually we did look into that after our January meeting as one solution, but given the minimal size of our lobby space it became incredibly tight. We also looked at the elimination of the ramp and grade entirely by bringing the entire lobby up to grade, but became challenging to achieve the necessary floor to floor height above the lobby. Ultimately, we would end up losing an entire floor.

Façade

- Corner façade turn on the east side has evolved nicely with the blind windows, thank you for taking our comments into consideration.

Panel Recommendations:

The Applicant is requesting 20 design excellence points, the Panel voted 5-0 in support of 20 points with no conditions.

