


DATE: September 13, 2021

TO: Bethesda Downton Plan Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

FROM: Grace Bogdan, Planner Coordinator, DownCounty Planning   
Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor, DownCounty Planning

RE: Staff comments for the September 22, 2021 DAP Meeting

We had anticipated having our September meeting in person, however that decision has been delayed for now. We have two items for discussion at this month's meeting which will occur virtually.

## Item #1

### 4901 Battery Lane

SK&I Architects

WC Smith Development

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sketch Plan presentation, focusing on high-level conformance of building massing and urban design.
- Located on the north side of Battery Lane, separate from the Battery Lane District Sketch Plan.
- Applicant proposes to replace two garden style apartment buildings with one 12-story residential building for up to 399 multifamily units with 15% MPDUs.
- The Proposal would reduce curb cuts along Battery Lane from two to one, which will be located on the eastern portion of the frontage; with a drop-off/pick-up entry, loading, and parking garage access internal to the site.
- The proposed building massing would be setback 25' from the curb, and would line the Battery Lane frontage with a 3-story base then provide a building stepback of 8' and a second stepback above the 10<sup>th</sup> story. Battery Lane is a Neighborhood Connector street and the Design Guidelines recommend a 15-20 foot stepback above the 3-5 story recommended base.
- As the massing moves into the site the building will become linear, providing courtyard space along the western property line, while the eastern ground level will predominantly serve as a through block connection, loading, garage access and drop-off/pick up. The massing again becomes wider at the rear of the Property, and will provide a 45 foot setback from the east/west pedestrian connection in the rear.
- The Sector Plan recommends multiple north/south through block connections on the north side of Battery Lane connecting to an east/west pedestrian connection in the rear of the properties between Woodmont Avenue and the Bethesda Trolley Trail. Staff determined that not all the north/south through block connections that are shown on the northern side of Battery Lane are necessary (see page 29 of the Design Guidelines), and the locations are conceptual in nature. For this particular site, staff recommended the Applicant provide a through block connection on the east rather than the west side of the Property.

- The Applicant requests 10 design excellence points, which is the minimum points allowed for projects within the Bethesda Overlay Zone that are generally consistent with the Design Guidelines and meets four of the CR Guideline Criteria.

**Item #2**

**4725 Cheltenham Drive**

Eric Colbert & Associates

Community Three

- 1<sup>st</sup> Site Plan presentation, which focuses review on more detailed and developed architectural expression and site design, consistent with the Design Guidelines. [Sketch Plan meeting minutes available here.](#)
- At the May 27, 2020 DAP meeting, the Panel voted that the Sketch Plan was on track to meeting the minimum design excellence points with the following to be addressed at site plan:
  - *Relationship of building to park – submit section analysis to determine the nature/treatment/functionality of alley*
  - *Articulation of massing at entry with regard to future development of property to west*
  - *Treatment of western façade to be more 3-dimensional and potential to extend northwest corner units to increase light and air.*
- The proposal maintains a maximum density of 80,000 square feet for up to 110 units, 8 of which will be live work units within a 90-foot building.
- The submission includes a section as requested showing the relationship of the building to the park (page 25). The proposal does not physically connect to Cheltenham Urban Park, rather engage a relationship through first floor patios and upper story balconies overlooking the Park.
- The Applicant seeks 23 points for design excellence, which would achieve a superlative design that in a uniquely compelling way meets the Design Guidelines or overcomes a significant site or similar constraint, a top example of design within Montgomery County.