Site C Battery District – Site Plan No. 820220230
4890-4900 Battery Lane
Design Advisory Panel Submission
June 21, 2022

1. Brief Project Description

Brown Development LLC ("Applicant") is submitting for Site Plan approval for the assembled 4890-4900 Battery Lane parcel designated in the Sketch Plan as "**Site C**" ("**Property**"). Site C is part of the "**Battery District**", a comprehensive plan containing five non-contiguous sites along Battery Lane designated Sites A-E, for which the Applicant received Sketch Plan approval on December 12, 2019. The Applicant subsequently received Preliminary Plan approval dated April 30, 2020 for Sites A, C, D and E. The Site C Site Plan is the **first** site plan of the Battery District Sketch Plan and Preliminary Plan.

The Site Plan proposes an 11-story, 315 dwelling unit, multi-family residential building with unit types ranging from studios to three-bedroom units and unique sidewalk-entry two-level units, with 15% MPDUs, in an L-shaped tower with multiple courtyards, terraces, and roof-top amenity space, structured parking, 35% green space, and two through-block pedestrian connectors ("**Project**").

The vision of the Battery District Sketch Plan is to build on existing neighborhood assets to create a stronger neighborhood identity and enhance access and connectivity, with a more responsible and current interpretation of mobility, land use, energy efficiency, lifestyle, and housing market preference. In order to achieve these goals, the measure of quality design would incorporate high levels of interconnectedness, human-scale spatial relationships, social interaction, and access to recreation throughout the Battery District.

This vision of "Connectivity" is expressed in the Site C Project in every aspect - the architecture with its glazing clad base building that achieves a comfortable openness to the neighborhood; the simple, colorful, yet dynamic middle and tower top designs; the multi-modal mobility of the site design; the spatial relationships of spaces within the building and of outdoor spaces to the neighborhood; the through-block connectors whose pedestrian experience is enhanced with a two-story arrival plaza on the east and human-scale direct sidewalk access two-level units on the west; the engagement of the public realm to a two-story lobby animated with building activity centers and topped with an open-air resident terrace facing Battery Lane; and a "front porch" front yard with seating that engages with its neighbors and street activity along Battery Lane. The exceptional design of the Site C Project achieves the goal of creating a stronger neighborhood identity with visual, physical and social connectivity to the greater community, with clear interconnectedness to the opportunities that Bethesda offers.

II. Background Description

The Property is an assembled lot containing a gross tract area of approximately 2.9 acres fronting on Battery Lane and backing onto commercial properties in the Woodmont Triangle. The Property is zoned CR3.5 C0.5 R3.5 H120 within the Bethesda Overlay Zone.

The Property lies within the Battery Lane District of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan ("**Sector Plan**"), a downtown edge residential neighborhood made up of a mix of garden-style, mid- and high-rise apartments and condominiums built over the decades of the 1950s to 1980s.

The Property is in walkable proximity to the employment, retail, and service uses in the Woodmont Triangle, the Wisconsin Avenue North corridor, the Downtown Core District, the NIH campus and the Naval Medical Center. The Property is located approximately ½ mile north or south to both the Medical Center Metro Station at NIH and the Bethesda Metro Station in the Downtown Core. It is one property east of the Bethesda Urban Park, and just one property south-east across Battery Lane to the Bethesda Trolley Trail. The Bethesda Trolley Trail is a major link connecting Bethesda for cyclists and pedestrians to the up county through multiple regional bike trails and parks, as well as south through Bethesda. The Planning Board has approved the Battery Lane cycle track on the south side of Battery Lane as a part of the Battery District Preliminary Plan approval.

To the east of the Property is Site B within the Battery District Sketch Plan slated for high-rise redevelopment and Montgomery County Public Garage 3. Adjacent to the west is the low-rise Battery Gardens Apartments. To the south are multiple commercial buildings and the District 2 police station. Confronting across Battery Lane is the 10-story Sunrise Senior Living facility, the Cambridge Square Apartments/4901 Battery with a pending site plan for 12-story high-rise MF development, and the low-rise Battery Lane Apartments master planned for high-rise redevelopment. Four additional sites to the north and south are part of the Battery District Sketch Plan and approved for high rise residential development.

The Project facilitates the Sector Plan vision for Battery Lane by providing two (2) through-block pedestrian connectors from Battery Lane to the Woodmont Triangle. Existing development is in place on the adjoining properties on Rugby Avenue with no redevelopment applications pending. Therefore, the design of the two through block connectors on Site C do not preclude future connections to Rugby Avenue. Until the Rugby Avenue properties redevelop, the East through block connector will connect with the existing sidewalk along the 2nd District Police Station to provide access into the Woodmont Triangle. In addition, the Property will dedicate 10 feet of right-of-way along its frontage to widen Battery Lane to its master-planned width of 70 foot. The curb-to-curb of Battery Lane will not change but per the Preliminary Plan approval, the interim phase of the Battery Lane cycle-track will be implemented with permanent medians along the frontage of Site C and painted medians along the length of Battery Lane.

III. Architecture

The design of Site C has evolved into a single tower composition that takes advantage of solar orientation and sculpts the massing with the tallest proportion along Battery Lane tapering down to open up the residential amenity spaces and create low-scale, sky-filled, green areas at the rear for residents and guests.

The base of the building on the street and the east side is animated with residential amenity spaces and the arrival plaza to promote visual connectivity to the public realm. The two-story glass-walled lobby allows visibility into lobby activities and the internal landscaped courtyard. This central landscaped courtyard connects the first floor lobby level to the second floor amenity level and creates a feeling of health and wellness, a connection to nature, and the benefit of natural light for internal amenity spaces, including but not limited to exercise and yoga rooms, and resident wi-fi community workspaces.

The base of the building on the Battery Lane frontage is a composition of metal trellis framing, glass window wall system, and colored panels to create a dramatic two-story base. An open-air verandah area is carved out of the second floor indoor amenity area to further articulate the importance of this two-level building podium. The trellised building base recedes as it moves west to a recessed lobby entrance. The expanded front yard, recessed lobby entrance, and overhang create a welcoming front porch area with a variety of fixed and moveable seating.

The two-level base is accentuated with an important corner on the west side. The base continues on the West with the articulation of the two-level units along the West through-block connector.

The building rises to eleven stories with a simple, clean mix of colors, materials and window systems to provide vertical proportion to the horizontal massing of the building middle.

The tower top is a tapered three-story expression using colors, mixed building materials and the window wall system. The roof-top penthouse amenity space takes advantage of the views in all directions that this site has to offer.

IV. Landscape Architecture

The landscape architecture is designed to support and enhance the “Connectivity” of the Property. Battery Lane is a neighborhood connector street and the streetscape follows the guidelines to provide a pleasant and engaging public realm with a 6 ft planting zone, 6 ft sidewalk, and frontage zone of varying widths with multiple linkages to the sidewalk. The building front, entrance, and residential “front porch” amenity space expands on the connection to the public realm with a variety of seating opportunities in the form of sculptural and more traditional benches, as well as movable seating near the building entrance. A second row of trees

along the building frontage adds to the "Canopy Corridor" with a lush pedestrian environment that enhances the urban ecology of the Downtown.

The Project celebrates the two through-block connections recommended in the Sector Plan along activated building frontages on the East and West side. The two connectors are intentionally designed with different widths, landscaping, and activating uses so each path provides its own unique environment and experience. The East through-block connection provides a key "moment" of urban porosity on Battery Lane aprox. 350 feet west of Woodmont Avenue. The pedestrian experience on the tree lined East path is activated by the Arrival Plaza entrance to the two-story glass wall lobby, the main bike room for residents, the dog run, and landscaped and open green areas. It terminates to an existing pedestrian link into the Woodmont Triangle.

The West through-block connector provides a different experience – one of lush landscaped nodes, small interesting path offsets,, and seating areas along the line of two-story units with their individual entry porches. The West through-block connector terminates in the park-like green area at the building's southwest corner. The landscape design preserves future continuation to adjoining properties fronting on Rugby Avenue when possible.

A sidewalk connects the East and West through-block connector across the rear yard through an open and sunlit green area.

The building is built around a lushly planted open-air courtyard that connects the first floor lobby and amenity space to the second floor resident amenity plaza. The interior courtyard brings natural light and the beauty of nature to the amenity spaces surrounding it. The second floor resident amenity plaza includes a pool, grilling and dining spaces, seating areas, and community gardens.

Overall, the landscape architecture is designed to create an oasis that generates a sense of health and wellness, places for social interaction, access to recreation opportunities, ease of mobility, and connectivity internally as well to the greater neighborhood.

V. <u>Design Advisory Panel Comments from Sketch Plan</u>

The Battery District Sketch Plan DAP submission was reviewed by the DAP panel on March 27, 2019 and May 22, 2019. The panel provided both district and site specific recommendations. Listed below are the recommendations with an explanation of how the applicant has addressed applicable comments in the Site C Site Plan:

March 27, 2019 DAP recommendations:

1. *Provide an urban design vision for the entire street from Woodmont Avenue to Old Georgetown Road. Incorporate opportunities for deeper setbacks, increased canopy*

trees and plantings to create a garden district that differentiates itself from the more urban areas in downtown Bethesda.

Response: The urban design vision for Battery District includes a sequence of urban "moments" created by the porosity and views of through block connections and the "Crossroads" where the Bethesda Trolley Trail crosses Battery Lane at Bethesda Urban Park. The approved Sketch Plan provides for varied and increasing setbacks from the curb along Battery Lane starting at 15-feet at Woodmont Avenue to 20-feet mid-block to 30-feet closer to Old Georgetown Road to reflect the more residential character as one moves away from the urban streetscape at Woodmont Avenue. The Battery Lane street sections of the approved Sketch and Preliminary Plans include a proposed double row of trees to increase canopy cover to create a garden district character along Battery Lane that differentiates it from the more urban areas of downtown Bethesda.

The Site C Site Plan takes advantage of two urban design "moments" at both the East and West through block connectors with a combination of interesting building base and tower corners. The East through block connector celebrates both the metal trellis covered two-story lobby facing Battery Lane and the two-story arrival plaza facing the East connector. The West connector "moment" juxtaposes the strong vertical lines to the building top with the pedestrian scale walk along two-story direct sidewalk access units. The Canopy Corridor of new street trees in the planting area of the expanded right-of-way and a second row of trees in the front yard of the building transforms the pedestrian experience along Battery Lane.

2. *Widen the public open space on Site D, the North Bethesda Trail Urban Greenway, as recommended in the plan…*

Response: The widened greenway along the Bethesda Trolley Trail on Site D was addressed in the approved Sketch Plan and will be designed in detail at the time of the Site D Site Plan submission. Cyclists utilizing the Bethesda Trolley Trail will be able to connect to the initial phase of the cycle-track implemented along the full length of the south side of Battery Lane as part of the Site C Site Plan. Cyclists from Site C will have a low stress connection to the Bethesda Trolley Trail to destinations north through NIH and south through the Bethesda Urban Park into Bethesda.

3. *Reconfigure the massing and orientation of the buildings on Site D….*

Response: Applicable to Site D. Not addressed in the Site C Site Plan.

4. *Create a pattern book or selection of materials to provide cohesion for the multiple projects in the district. Make sure to avoid excessive homogeneity while aiming to provide consistency.*

Response: Approved Sketch Plan included an illustrative showing the phased and final cycle-track along the full length of Battery Lane as well as Street Sections showing the recommended streetscape sections with the cycle track median and illustration of the double canopy along Battery Lane. The Sketch Plan proposed a sequence of urban design moments every 200-400 feet along Battery Lane for each pedestrian connection and building corner.

Site C Site Plan is grounded in the overall design vision for the Battery District. Site C expresses the concept of "Connectivity" and the design "moments" at the through-block connectors in its own unique way allowing it be part of the diverse fabric of existing buildings on Battery Lane while strengthening the neighborhood identity and improving the quality of living of the overall community.

5. *Consider making one of the connections on Site C pedestrian-only rather than having a vehicular loop around the site. In addition, study the feasibility of a street connection through site C from Battery Lane to Rugby Avenue.*

Response: The vehicular loop around Site C has been eliminated in the Site Plan providing additional green area. The multiple curb cuts have been consolidated into a single driveway on the east side that provides access to the lobby drop-off/pick-zone, the resident parking, and the loading and service bays.

The approved Sketch Plan identifies two through-block pedestrian connections to the Woodmont Triangle along the common property lines on the West and East of Site C. The through-block connection on the East connects to the existing sidewalk between the Police Station at 4823 Rugby and Garage 35. The width of the through-block connection on East can be expanded on the adjacent Site B Site Plan.

Owners of adjacent privately owned properties on Rugby Avenue at the south-west corner have not indicated any short-term or long-term plans for redevelopment. Nonetheless, a through-block connection on the East connects to an existing sidewalk and on the West the design does not preclude connection in the event of a future opportunity through to Rugby Avenue. The width of the through-block connection on the West common property line to be expanded at redevelopment of the adjacent Battery Gardens site owned by others.

May 19, 2019 DAP recommendations:

1. *Generally supportive of the district vision but there are implementation concerns that should be coordinated with County agencies including the phasing of Battery Lane improvements, drop-off-areas and parking strategy.*

Response: The engineering of the initial phasing of the Battery Lane cycle track as part of the construction of Site C is under review by MCDOT as part of Site Plan review. The initial phase of the Battery Lane cycle track to be completed with the construction of Site C includes the re-allocation of travel lanes, cycle lanes, and on-street parking the length of Battery Lane by combining the existing separated bike lanes to a single cycle track on the south-side of Battery Lane. Along the frontage of Site C, the median separated cycle track will be constructed which will include a bus stop. The Site C Site Plan eliminates all but one vehicular curb-cut on Battery Lane reducing interruptions to the protected cycle-track. The Site C arrival plaza provides for all drop-offs and pick-ups on-site.

2. *Develop the approach for programming the park near NIH as an important social gathering space.*

Response: The approach for programming of the proposed park adjacent to NIH will be addressed when the site plan for Site D is submitted.

3. *Show an arrow for a potential future street connection to Auburn Avenue and the Woodmont Triangle District.*

Response: The approved Sketch Plan shows pedestrian through-block connections consistent with the Sector Plan.

4. *Illustrate the connection between each project and the overall vision at site plan.*

Response: An illustrative with the proposed Site C site plan inserted into the Sketch Plan illustrative of the overall Sketch Plan Battery District is provided as part of the DAP submission.

IV. Exceptional Design Public Benefit Points Requested/Brief Descriptions

The Project is seeking a minimum of 20 Public Benefit Points, for exceptional design for its context responsive individual building and site design. The Project earns these points by:

1. **Providing innovative solutions in response to the immediate context.** The Project elevates a mid-block site into a multi-modal connector for the Battery Lane neighborhood. It embraces the cycle-track, a new bus stop, two through-block connectors, improved streetscape, and on-site vehicular Arrival Plaza in a cohesive and creative way with the building architecture of the building front. The strong two-story building base along Battery Lane includes a two-story lobby made up of a composition of metal trellis, glass wall system, and angled front plane which recedes in depth as it moves west to the recessed building front entrance with its "front porch" elements. The building design creates two different pedestrian experiences along the East and West through-block connectors by locating and articulating the Arrival Plaza and other active resident amenity spaces on the East in juxtaposition to the calm, residential journey on the West along the front door stoops of the two-level units and landscaped and open lawn areas on the west side.

2. **Creating a sense of place.** The Project builds on the goal to transform the Battery Lane District neighborhood into one of the most livable urban edge neighborhoods in the County. The Project is a spoke of Connectivity in all directions for the neighborhood – providing access to multi-modal transportation options at the front door, walkable connections to the goods and services in the Woodmont Triangle as well as to nearby jobs at NIH and downtown Bethesda, transit options at or walkable from the door to employment and recreational opportunities throughout the region, paths on which to run into other residents of Battery Lane. The energy from this connectivity vibrates in the mixed façade treatment of colors, building materials and wall systems.

3. **Enhancing the public realm in a distinct and original manner.** The Project proposes to add over 323 linear feet of enhanced streetscape with double canopy of trees on Battery Lane to support its transformation into a Canopy Corridor street. The Project supports the goal to move Battery Lane from its "car focus" with expanded streetscape and sidewalks emphasizing pedestrians, street trees and connections to the new buildings and keeping all drop-off, loading, and parking internal to the site keeping Battery Lane free of obstructions.

   The East through block connection proposed a 6-foot sidewalk within a 13-foot wide landscape zone. The West through block connection proposes a 6-foot sidewalk within a 35-foot wide landscape zone. Both the East and West connectors can be widened when adjacent properties redevelop and enhance the through-block connections on their properties.
4. **Introducing materials, forms, or building methods unique to the immediate vicinity or applied in a unique way.** The size and design of the Property provides the opportunity to create a Project with a feeling of openness, connection to nature, and access to light and air unique in a downtown urban area. The two-story step-back composition of metal trellis and glass wall system front façade with a receding plane leading to a two-story glass lobby entrance, recessed to create a "front porch", uses both architecture and a mix of materials to uniquely engage with the public realm at a human-scale.
5. **Designing compact infill development so living, working, and shopping environments are more pleasurable and desirable on a site.** The Project proposes compact infill development with onsite resident amenities and easy walkability to significant employment opportunities, recreation facilities, shopping, and cultural amenities. The Project proposes significant ground floor lobby, amenity spaces and common areas, a rooftop amenity space, and a second floor pool deck with grilling and dining stations, community garden boxes, and multiple active and passive outdoor courtyards and terraces to enhance the living environment for residents.
6. **Integrating low-impact development methods into the overall design of the site and building beyond green building or site requirements.**
   The Project introduces environmental site design for stormwater management in place of an existing large surface parking lot. Stormwater management consists of a combination of green roof filtering, bio-retention areas integrated into the building architecture and landscape design, and open lawn and landscaping at grade. Structured parking replaces surface parking lots.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully requests 20 Public Benefit Points for Exceptional Design.