

# Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

## Meeting Minutes

**PROJECT:** 4405 East West Highway

**DATE:** May 25, 2022

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*The **4405 East West Highway** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on May 25, 2022. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel's discussion, recommendations regarding massing and building footprint as the project moves forward. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

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### **Attendance:**

#### Panel

George Dove  
Brian Kelly  
Rod Henderer  
Damon Orobona  
Qiaoju Yu

#### Staff

Gwen Wright, Planning Director  
Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director of Regulatory Planning  
Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor DownCounty Planning  
Adam Bossi, Planner III  
Rachel Newhouse, Park Planner  
Hyojung Garland, Park Planning Supervisor

#### Applicant Team

Pat Harris – Attorney, Lerch Early  
Chris Huffer – Architect, SK&I  
Yavuz Goncu –Associate, SK&I  
Valeria Hochman – Associate Principal, SK&I  
Marius Radulescu – Principal, SK&I



## 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 first time this project has been before the Panel, Staff has provided a memo outlining topics for discussion related to height, proposed open space, and building massing perspectives

Panel:

### *General Comments*

- The shared use path, is the curb moving along East West Highway?
  - *Applicant Response: Based on conversations with staff, there is no need to move the curb, if it did happen it would move up to the shared use path*
- How does the shared use path transition back?
  - *Applicant Response: In our interim condition we are tapering back at the edge of the property, and if our neighbors ever redeveloped the transition would need to be reconfigured at that time.*
- The open space that is shown in the Bethesda Sector Plan, how does your site address this? If not here, then where?
  - *Applicant Response: Given the site's internal location to the block it was determined that this site wouldn't be the appropriate location for the open space. Our development does not preclude the ability for another more appropriate site to provide it in the future.*
- The residential compatibility standards do not apply here?
  - *Applicant Response: No, the adjacent properties aren't developed as residential detached*
- Is there affordable housing?
  - *Applicant Response: Yes 15%*
- What are the sustainable initiatives other than the green roof?
  - *Applicant Response: Going forward we are going to investigate a LEED certified building, unsure of the levels but how that works with additional aspects of solar. We do not have those details worked out quite yet.*

### *Massing*

- Is this a cantilever you are showing along East West Highway instead of a stepback?
  - *Applicant Response: Our intent was to provide a break along East West Highway with the cantilever, we are already setting the building back to the max and thought that would relieve the need for the stepback.*
- Sheet A-19, I wanted to talk about the undulating façade, I could see it in one of the precedents shown, but the crease works with a certain type of material but not all, more likely to be curtain wall? I have some concerns with it being an idiosyncratic detail at a sketch plan phase but it is difficult to convince this is appropriate without knowing the material.

- *Applicant Response: I think potentially a curtain wall, depends on how the corners are articulated. It could be a masonry or metal panel curtain wall. We want to have this unique geometry that's articulated in a way that breaks up the wall but unified on all facades.*
- There are many balconies along the East West Highway façade but they do not show up on the plans?
  - *Applicant Response: Yes, they are not on the plans yet as we haven't gotten to unit size and details but we know that the market wants more balconies.*
- I'm struggling to understand the element of the tower that you describe and the relationship to the east and west. They look like facades of units but I imagine there is glazing and operable windows there. In the massing diagrams, its important to understand the difference between the east west façade to the east, would it be more of an advantage to wrap it without the tower interruption.
  - *Applicant Response: We did look at that but then it begins to emphasize the length of this long façade. In early discussions with staff it was discussed how we are going to activate this space and make sure it wasn't just a long façade. We thought this would help break it up but have a similar language. As we continue to refine this we can play with the proportions to create a more dynamic piece of the building that doesn't feel separate but create some hierarchy.*
  - I guess I'm wondering if there's a way to get your cake and eat it too. Is there a chamfer rather than an entire extrusion but it also does some of the gymnastics. Right now it just seems like a big stop, a book end placed in the middle. I'm wondering if there is a way to have that more integrated. This is a difficult site, there is not a lot of context to work with and scale with. I can see the stuff you are wrestling with.

**Panel Recommendations:**

The Panel voted (5-0) that the Project is on track to receive the minimum design excellence points with comments to be addressed at Site Plan.

# Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

## Meeting Minutes

**PROJECT:** 7340 Wisconsin Avenue

**DATE:** May 25, 2022

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*The **7340 Wisconsin Avenue** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on May 25, 2022. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel's discussion, recommendations regarding massing and urban design. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

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### **Attendance:**

#### Panel

George Dove  
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Damon Orobona

#### Staff

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Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor DownCounty Planning  
Adam Bossi, Planner III  
Rachel Newhouse, Park Planner  
Hyojung Garland, Park Planning Supervisor

#### Applicant Team

Pat Harris – Attorney, Lerch Early  
Andy Czajkowski – Architect, SK&I  
Yavuz Goncu – Associate, SK&I  
Valeria Hochman – Associate Principal, SK&I  
Marius Radulescu – Principal, SK&I  
Yun Kim – SK&I  
John Beinert – Developer, Greystar  
Niels Theodule – Developer, Greystar  
Anne Fulton – Developer, Greystar  
Mike Goodman – Engineer, VIKA



## Discussion Points:

Staff: The Sketch Plan was reviewed by the DAP in September of 2019. The Applicant and Owner have changed hands and are introducing massing changes from what was previously approved on this site for Sketch Plan.

Panel:

### *General Comments*

- I like the massing better now than when it was a senior living facility.
- I think this iteration is much more interesting and complies with the approved Sketch Plan where it needs to and improves where it needs to at the ground floor plan.
- I was always a little skeptical with the previous proposal for senior living at this scale and this particular location. Changing to residential quite nicely cleans up the streetscape along Hampden Lane.
- For the west façade facing the Hampden East building, I know you are meeting the tower separation, now that this is a residential building how will it get sufficient light and are?
  - *Applicant response: If you remember, the Hampden East building is multi use with ground floor retail and residential up to the 8<sup>th</sup> floor, and the rest will be office. Our building on the west face, while building out the corners will have a fairly significant light well. The tower separation will be 45 feet total per the Design Guidelines recommendation. Further, both buildings will have green roof and create a nice space and quality to them.*
- What was the reason behind the change from senior living to residential?
  - *Applicant response: It is an entirely different applicant, developer, and architect team. The previous owner decided not to move forward*
- The massing is much better, pushing back the center points of the facades and creating a pinwheel motif creates a massing that is holistic and tied to the idea in a much better way. The shift in use has also created a much better ground floor plan compared to the prior use and will be a better pedestrian experience on Hampden Lane.

### Design

- Why didn't you put your other project at Wisconsin and Bethesda in your context drawings? A city is built on a diversity of building types and I hope as you move forward, your material palette creates that diverse quality that differentiates itself from the building to the south.
  - *Applicant response: Understood, it wasn't included just due to file size*
- I like what you are doing with the top, I think you weaken it a little bit showing the line between the penthouse mechanical space, if you delete it as you refine the design it would have more strength. I don't think it needs more mass to it, and I like that you are accentuating the corner.

- I am worried about the thinness of the crown at the very top when the curtain wall extends up, what will that characteristic look like, but I'm sure you will solve that as you move forward
  - *Applicant response: Yes, we will be working on that and I think that goes with the previous comment of differentiating this design from our other project to the south. Some of those details we are working towards but weren't quite ready to share, wanted to get the massing confirmed before we moved too far forward.*
- I do have a concern regarding the retaining wall you described on Montgomery Ave. Does it get higher than 3 feet? I would be more concerned if its more than 3 feet, say 5 feet.
  - *Applicant Response: It won't be too tall, maybe three feet. This image shows how the grade changes, it will be very subtle but the key is it is not a good location for retail. But as we propose it as the lobby and amenity space we think it will appropriately fold in.*

**Panel Recommendations:**

The Panel agreed the changes are consistent with the intent of the previously approved Sketch Plan and the Applicant will return with Site Plan level details for determination of Design Excellence points.