

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT: Battery Lane District Site C

DATE: July 27, 2022

*The **Battery Lane District Site C** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on July 27, 2022. 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 if it is determined the Project is suitable. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

Attendance:

Panel

George Dove

Brian Kelly

Damon Orobona

Rod Henderer

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

Staff

Gwen Wright, Director of Planning

Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor of DownCounty Planning

Grace Bogdan, Planner III

Adam Bossi, Planner III

Rachel Newhouse, Park Planner

Applicant Team

Nancy Regelin – Shulman Rogers

Robert Graham – Rodgers Consulting

Doug Wrenn – Developer, Aldon Properties

Brian Andrews – Aldon Properties

Robert Graham – Engineer, Rodgers Consulting

Ryan White – Engineer, Rodgers Consulting

Zachary Pawlos – Engineer, Rodgers Consulting

Joanne Trumbo - WDG Architects

Eric Schlegel – WDG Architects



Trini Rodriguez – Parker Rodriguez Landscape Architect
Steven Sattler – Parker Rodriguez Landscape Architect

Discussion Points:

Staff: The project was just recently at the DAP meeting in June and the Panel had some comments for the Applicant to address and return to the Panel before taking a vote on the Site Plan phase. Those comments were outlined in the staff memo.

Panel:

General Comments

- Are you trying to achieve any type of LEED designation or equivalency on this building?
 - *Applicant Response: Yes, in accordance with the County requirements it will be LEED Silver, a unique pilot program being run by the County. The uniqueness is in regards to acoustics, daylighting, energy compliance.*
- The prior scheme had a variety of ways the building was grounded to the site. This updated scheme is definitely more legible and clean, more restrained. At the southern façade of the building, the rear yard, the relocation of the dog park to this location helps solve an issue with making the space purposeful and allows the dogs to have a larger run. The space is more activated.
- I really like many aspects of this project, I like the level of transparency from Battery Lane, I like the veranda, and its asymmetrical design. I think its really interesting. The only reservation is the parking garage in the back and the potential blank walls associated with the green spaces, but I understand the issue and problems you have.
 - *Applicant Response: Thank you, although while not in this presentation, the parking garage will have features to avoid blank walls, such as ventilation areas, panels, potential perforated metal, something more engaging and fun in the expression of architecture.*
- Adding the outdoor furnishings such as tables and chairs and the grill will undoubtedly promote activating the southwest corner green space. But the southwest sun exposure could be an issue. Consider adding shade structures to make the seating more comfortable and attractive.
 - *Applicant Response: We are planning on putting many trees there and the intent is to make it more parklike and natural, maybe some sail structures could provide some seasonal shade.*
- My comment last time was regarding a more iconic expression of the corner tower. The response to the detail particularly on the top helps. I also think simplifying the base allows that corner to be more iconic from the street and in the overall composition of the elevations.
- One minor comment on page 13, the perspective renderings, I'm not sure why you have a thin strip of grass right in front of the curb of the planter. Perhaps the thin strip can be removed for the width of the plaza and the sidewalk could be wider at that location making it more plaza like. This also starts to address public comments regarding a wider

plaza area in front of the building. What I like about this perspective, you've engaged the arcade and plaza out to the front sidewalk, allowing the plaza to be this width. On page 12, this end is not so successful because the plaza is not directly connected to the fronting sidewalk. Similar to the view on page 13, maybe you can connect this end of the plaza so the trees are more in planters within the plaza rather than a separating element. It would feel more public and engaging and would also respond to some of the public comments regarding the width of the sidewalk.

- *Applicant Response: I think we intended to do that, so it is possible that these images may be slightly inaccurate. The plaza is intended to make those moves and be engaging with the public and this rendering may be a miscommunication. The extra connection does make sense.*
- I echo this comment regarding the plaza, those small moves will certainly help with perception that the space is more generous than a boundary.
- What is the vertically brown material on the facade?
 - *Applicant Response: We are still evaluating the materiality based on the building systems, it could be terracotta, masonry, colored metal panel or wood. It hasn't been determined, but we are intending on a restrained palette of colors that's engaging at a human scale with texture.*
 - My reason for asking is in another Bethesda project they used wood as an accent material and that has greyed out over time eliminating the accent intent.
 - *Applicant Response: Interesting, we rarely use real wood, and would not use it here to avoid fading over time.*

Panel Recommendations:

The Applicant is requesting 20 points for design excellence, the Panel voted in support (4-0) of 20 points.

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT: 7340 Wisconsin Avenue

DATE: July 27, 2022

*The **7340 Wisconsin Avenue** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on July 27, 2022. 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 if it is determined the Project is suitable. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

Attendance:

Panel

George Dove

Brian Kelly

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Damon Orobona

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

Staff

Gwen Wright, Planning Director

Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor DownCounty Planning

Grace Bogdan, Planner III

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 – SK&I

Valeria Hochman – SK&I

Marius Radulescu – 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 project was recently reviewed by the DAP in May of 2022, introducing massing changes from what was previously approved on this site for Sketch Plan. Today's presentation responds to the DAP comments from May and also introduces site plan level details for discussion and a request for 20 design excellence points.

Panel:

General Comments

- I am very pleased with how this building has morphed, I think it will be a good end cap for the corner and love that someone has taken the base up appropriately and bent in the façade in a different way than many other buildings while staying in character. I love the scaling of the façade and the materiality and coloration including the bronze/brass component. It adds interest along the continuum of Wisconsin Ave
- I applaud the development of the project and the sophistication of the tower, as you continue to refine the base, I hope you keep the notion of the whiter portions, they offer a cadence at the street level. The base and tower are of the same language, and I appreciate that. There is a language here that I didn't see last time, and that's how you are turning corners, it seems to be a very consistent language that is of value.
 - *Applicant Response: We appreciate that, we've been consciously working towards unifying the base with the tower while differentiating the base in a subtle but meaningful way, with more texture.*
- I really enjoy this project and the site is in desperate need of redevelopment and am supportive.
- The ground floor triangular planter on the Wisconsin facade. Is the planter necessary for the green coverage? From the plan view, the size of the planter is too small to be impactful.
 - *Applicant Response: We are trying to keep the transformers off Wisconsin and the planters are working towards our green cover, as previously stated it is pretty tight on this site and we are doing our best.*

Base Design

- I think the massing is very successful, more sophisticated than the original site and I appreciate the change in materials from 7126 Wisconsin and the shaft as more glass now. The base doesn't seem to have the depth of development that the other project does. It almost seems like it is a façade covering a parking garage, and I think this is just a need for refinement. I'm not sure if balconies would help or just need greater depth.
 - *Applicant Response: Yes, there are projected bays on the project to the south, 7126 Wisconsin Ave. There are different programs and goals, that client wanted more*

masonry and solid wall, this one is more glassy and larger window frames. I think the two differences will set the buildings apart

- I agree with the overall comments, the base compared to the tower just seems 2-dimensional, so some minor manipulation in the base is necessary.
 - *Applicant Response: Is there a way to connect the base to the tower portion at the corner, does that help?*
 - I actually like how it grounds here, I'm speaking more to the base in other areas.
 - *So perhaps we could use that successful treatment elsewhere around the base.*
- Perhaps part of the detail that may help the base is, while I like the vertical nature, I wonder if you could express the horizontal fenestration more so there is more depth to them. This could also be achieved with setting back the windows a little more, which will give the appearance that the vertical has more depth. Your precedent photos show such a depth and maybe this could be expressed more to give more delineation.

Panel Recommendations:

The Applicant is requesting 20 points for design excellence, the Panel voted in support (4-0) of 20 points with refinement of base to be reviewed through the site plan application process.