




DATE: June 20, 2023

TO: Bethesda Downton Plan Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

FROM: Grace Bogdan, Planner III, Downcounty Planning 
Adam Bossi, Planner III, Downcounty Planning
Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor, Downcounty Planning

RE: Staff comments for the June 28, 2023 DAP Meeting

This will be a hybrid meeting, attendees can participate in person or virtually.

Item #1

4861 Battery Lane

Architects Collaborative Inc

Vika, Landscape Architect

- 1st Sketch Plan presentation, focusing on high-level conformance of building massing and urban design.
- Located on the north side of Battery Lane directly east of recently approved 4901 Battery Lane, separate from the Battery Lane District Sketch Plan.
- Applicant proposes to replace the existing U-shaped garden style apartment building with one 12-story residential building for up to 453 multifamily units with 15% MPDUs.
- The Proposal would reduce the existing three curb cuts to one access point at the eastern portion of the frontage; with a drop-off/pick-up entry, loading, and parking garage access internal to the site.
- The Proposal places the building 25 feet back from curb as recommended by the Design Guidelines, and proposes a 60-foot base comprising of a two story lobby/amenity space and 4 stories of residential units, with a stepback of 6 feet above the base for a majority of the frontage. Battery Lane is classified as a Neighborhood Connector Street with a recommended stepback of 15-20 feet above the base. The Applicant states that alternative to a further stepback, the bulk has been reduced through modulating and articulating façade, limiting apparent face, and creating a feature top.
- The proposed building setback is at least 20 feet from the western property line to allow additional space along the through block connector provided on the eastern property line of 4901 Battery Lane, and would continue the east/west through block connection at the rear of the Property. The Applicant states they will also be providing a meandering through block connection from the rear of the site through the eastern side of the Property, however a portion of this path is proposed under the building at the site frontage as the proposed massing is elevated at the southeast corner.

- Staff previously met with the Applicant and recommended enhancement of the western façade, perhaps through the inclusion of walk up units, to strengthen the relationship with the through block connection located on 4901 Battery Lane, and noted concerns regarding the proposed underpass along the Battery Lane frontage.
- The Applicant is requesting 20 points for exceptional design.
 - *10 Points: Generally consistent with the Design Guidelines and meets four of the CR Guideline Criteria*
 - *20 Points: 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*
 - *30 Points: Singular design that exemplifies the highest intent of the Design Guidelines and may be considered a top example of design within the Mid-Atlantic region*

Item #2

7749 Old Georgetown Road

Stonebridge, Developer

SK+I Architects

Vika, Landscape Architect

- 1st Sketch Plan presentation, focusing on high-level conformance of building massing and urban design.
- The Property is located at the corner of Old Georgetown Road (classified as an Urban Boulevard) and St Elmo Avenue (classified as a Downtown Mixed-Use Street).
- The Applicant proposes a new 175' mixed use building with ground floor retail and up to 200 residential units.
- The proposed massing includes a tower setback along Old Georgetown Road of 22.5' from the property line, an interwoven 'chevron' design along St Elmo Avenue, and a corner element at the intersection of Old Georgetown Road and St Elmo Avenue.
- While the proposal provides the recommended build to lines on each frontage (15 feet on St Elmo, 25 feet on Old Georgetown), the massing cantilevers over the ground floor on Old Georgetown Road, and a 5' stepback is provided above the base at the 6th floor (Design Guidelines recommend 10-15' stepback).
- The Applicant is seeking alternative compliance for the reduced stepback along Old Georgetown Road and proposes reducing bulk through limiting tower floor plate, providing a unique geometry, varying tower height, limiting apparent face and façade modulation and articulation.
- The Applicant is requesting 20 points for exceptional design.
 - *10 Points: Generally consistent with the Design Guidelines and meets four of the CR Guideline Criteria*

- *20 Points: 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*
- *30 Points: Singular design that exemplifies the highest intent of the Design Guidelines and may be considered a top example of design within the Mid-Atlantic region*

Item #3

4405, 4419 & 4421 East West Highway

SK+I Architectural Design Group

Parker Rodriguez

Transwestern Development Company

- 1st Site Plan presentation, with Sketch Plan Amendment, for this assemblage of properties, focusing on more detailed and developed architectural plans and site design, consistent with the Design Guidelines.
- The DAP previously reviewed, and Planning Board subsequently approved, Sketch Plan No. 320220120, in 2022, for 4405 East West Highway only.
 - The Sketch Plan approved one building not to exceed 355,000 total square feet of density, with up to 348,000 square feet of multi-family residential use, and up to 12,000 square feet of commercial uses on 1.508 acres.
- The abutting properties at 4419 and 4421 East West Highway, at the corner of Pearl Street, are added to the previously approved development program with the Sketch Plan Amendment.
- Total Site area has increased by approximately 0.5 acres and increases the length of frontage on East West Highway from approximately 200 feet to 300 feet.
 - The Sketch Plan Amendment proposes 421,500 square feet of total density, with up to 414,000 square feet of multi-family residential use, and up to 7,500 square feet of commercial uses on 2.0 acres.
 - The building design previously reviewed by the DAP is expanded upon and further refined with the current submission.
- The Applicant's submission includes updated responses to the DAP's May 25, 2022 comments detailing how their expanded proposal addresses design issues raised at that time.
- The Applicant is requesting 20 points for exceptional design.
 - *10 Points: Generally consistent with the Design Guidelines and meets four of the CR Guideline Criteria*
 - *20 Points: 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*

- *30 Points: Singular design that exemplifies the highest intent of the Design Guidelines and may be considered a top example of design within the Mid-Atlantic region*
- [May 25, 2022 DAP Meeting Notes LINK](#)
- [May 25, 2022 DAP Meeting Staff Memo LINK](#)