



Silver Spring Design Advisory Panel – October 18, 2023, Meeting Notes

Revised October 24, 2023

8676 Georgia Avenue was reviewed by the Silver Spring Downtown Design Advisory Panel for the second time on October 18, 2023. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel members comments and thoughts regarding the design of the project. The DAP agreed to let the project move forward with Sketch Plan and asked the applicant team to return at Site Plan. The DAP outlined conditions they would like to see addressed at Site Plan. For all questions and/or comments please contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.

Project:

8676 Georgia Avenue

Applicant: Roadside Development, with Bonstra | Haresign (architect) and additional consultants

Attendance:

Design Advisory Panel:

Bill Bonstra

David Cronrath

Alice Enz

Praj Kasbekar (virtual)

Qiaojue Yu (virtual)

Note: As Bonstra | Haresign is a member of the applicant team, Bill Bonstra was present but recused himself from the project discussion.

Staff:

Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor, Downcounty Planning

Paul Mortensen, Senior Urban Design in the Director's Office

Atul Sharma, Assistant to the Deputy Director

Atara Margolies, Planner III

Henry Coppola, Development Review Coordinator, Park Planning & Stewardship Division (virtual)

Cristina Sasaki, Parks Planner, Park Planning & Stewardship Division (virtual)

Applicant Team:

Stacy Silber, Lerch, Early and Brewer

Jeff Edelstein, Roadside Development

Brian Corcoran, Roadside Development

Katherine Jacobs, Roadside Development (virtual)
William Ikeler, Roadside Development (virtual)
Ronnie Ali, Bonstra | Haresign
Pradipto Banerjee, Bonstra | Haresign (virtual)
Daniel Seidman, Bonstra | Haresign
Wade McKinney, Bonstra | Haresign (virtual)
Trini Rodriguez, ParkerRodriguez (virtual)
Brian Bolen, ParkerRodriguez (virtual)
Patrick LaVay, MHG (virtual)

Meeting Notes:

Applicant team presented updated exhibits that addressed the comments that the DAP had given the project team at the July 19 meeting. The presentation addressed four main points: the discussions with Historic Preservation staff and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on the location of the Tastee Diner car, the building design and compatibility along Ramsey Avenue, the design of the parking garage floors, and the Georgia Avenue frontage. The applicant team materials included a video that captured the pedestrian experience on Cameron Street from Georgia Avenue to Ramsey Avenue.

Diner car location and HPC:

According to Historic Preservation staff, the project will be presented to HPC on October 25 and the focus will be the location of the Tastee Diner car. HPC's main concern, as explained by staff, is to allow the Tastee Diner to stand out as an iconic element in its own space. In the applicant's proposal, the diner is pushed out so that it fronts onto Cameron Street. The side and back of the car will be reconstructed and it will be connected to the main building via a glass "hyphen" circulation connection. The DAP agrees with Historic Preservation staff that this location appropriately highlights the historic diner and fully supports the proposed location. However, the DAP is not satisfied with the existing partial elevation of the base as presented behind the diner and asked the applicant team to think about the massing and design of the building more holistically. The latest proposed design for the parking podium base above the ground floor includes a horizontal lightweight metal screening that slopes outward over the diner that does not relate to the other podium elevations, where more vertical elements are included to relate to the tower above. The DAP would like to see a façade design that integrates with the overall design of the tower and yet does not overpower the tiny diner in front of the ground floor. The base design will be discussed again at Site Plan as noted below.

In addition, there is also some concern about mitigating the grade change along Cameron Street without a stair so that the gathering spaces around the car and the building entrances are easily accessed at-grade.

Overall building massing and design of the base:

The DAP feels that the overall building massing has not been presented sufficiently. The DAP would like to understand the base-middle-top relationship more clearly, and specifically how the tower and

the top will be shaped and/or sculpted per the Design Guidelines. Initially, no building within downtown Silver Spring will have more impact on the shape of the city skyline from afar than this new tower. This issue will continue to be discussed at a future Site Plan presentation.

The DAP is also concerned that a focus on horizontal elements at the base behind the diner will detract from the diner itself and instead recommends a balance between horizontal and vertical elements that are expressed throughout the base and the tower. The DAP also recommended that the retail lobby and residential lobby be differentiated in a way that responds to their unique programs. The DAP noted that typically retail/commercial entrances are primary and residential entrances secondary in mixed-use buildings and that is not how the entrances are expressed here.

Georgia Avenue frontage and corner at Cameron Street

The DAP would like to see more emphasis on the Georgia Avenue / Cameron Street corner in terms of both massing and materials. Perhaps this corner is an opportunity for something unique to happen with the building façade.

There is still concern about the inner corner fairly recessed at the Verizon building; perhaps art is another way to improve this corner, considering the challenge and lack of ability to change the adjacent building or to provide something projecting into this R.O.W space.

Relationship to townhomes on Ramsey Avenue

The DAP is satisfied with the massing relationship between the building and the townhomes across the street, however they were concerned about lighting from the parking garage disturbing townhome residents. The applicant noted that the townhome community is excited about more people and activity on the street, and they will be able to control the lighting issue.

There was limited talk about materials, but it was agreed that this will be part of the Site Plan discussion.

Project to return at Site Plan

The DAP discussed when to see the project again. It was agreed that the project can move forward with Sketch Plan and that the DAP will see it again at Site Plan, on the condition that the issues below be addressed and/or provided at Site Plan:

- Overall massing of the building, including the design of the tower and the top so the impact on the skyline can be assessed;
- Views that demonstrate the design of all sides of the building. This includes clear views of all sides of the base so the relationship to the context and to the diner car is clear from all angles;
- Full elevations of all sides of the whole building that show overall material palette and how those materials are working together.
- Views from down Georgia Avenue from several blocks away to understand the impact on the context;
- A view from the courthouse towards the diner and tower.

- Design of the corner at Georgia Avenue and Cameron Street in response to the DAP's comment about how this corner should be prominent, along with views that show how it relates to the diner car location and design;
- Plan, elevation and sections that describe how the change in grade from the sidewalk to the public space is being addressed, and
- A ground floor plan that addresses possible back-of-house space for Tastee Diner tenant and how that impacts the façade.