



Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT: 7126 Wisconsin Avenue

DATE: February 21, 2024

Attendance:

Panel

Robert Sponseller

Rod Henderer

John Tschiderer

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

Staff

Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor DownCounty Planning

Adam Bossi, Planner III

Grace Bogdan, Planner III

Henry Coppola, Parks Planner

Applicant Team

Heather Dlhopsky

Andy Czajkowski

Josh Etter

Discussion Points:

Staff: This is the 3rd Site Plan presentation to the DAP following the DAP's September 2023 meeting where they voted to support 20 design excellence points for the project. Since that time, the project has proposed a minor modification to the massing at the western end of the building and to the western façade and is seeking the DAP's approval on the limited modifications.

Panel:

General

- This is a definite improvement to the western façade with the inclusion of windows at the northwest and southwest corners of the building.
- With the additional 10 foot setback, anyone walking up Bethesda Avenue and/or Miller Street will be seeing the building more in the three dimensions with a greater view of the western elevation. Rather than this west elevation looking flat with punched window openings, could there be more articulation or depth where you have a projecting frame at the western corner windows or wrapping around the corners? There was a lot of discussion in the initial design to receive additional points for this architecture from greater articulation. This comment is following that same set of thoughts.
- It could be more interesting architecturally if the bay could wrap the corner.
 - *Applicant Response: We avoided adding the corner bay because of the need for the full 10 foot setback.*
 - You could merge them right? I think you could do it in a way where you wouldn't lose density or project into the 10' setback.
- With the balcony and parapet railing treatment, I have a hard time with these railings. In particular, the ones that project out seem to not be in character with the quality of the façade and take away from the building. Would something like a glass railing with a metal frame be more appropriate?
 - *Staff: This review is focused on the modifications on the western façade.*
- I also want to compliment the additional glass for the MPDU units in the middle of the west elevation.
 - *Applicant Response: Thank you, it was difficult, but we were pleased with the outcome.*

Panel Recommendations:

The Panel voted (3-0) that the modifications continue to remain in keeping with the previously supported 20 design excellence points with the following to be explored at the time of Certified Site Plan

1. Additional articulation for the corner windows of the western façade.