




DATE: September 18, 2024

TO: Bethesda Downton Plan Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

FROM: Grace Bogdan, Planner III, Downcounty Planning 
Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor, Downcounty Planning
Paul Mortensen, Senior Urban Designer, Director's Office

RE: Staff comments for the September 25, 2024 DAP Meeting

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

Item #1

Lot #25

Torti Gallas Architects

Parker Rodriguez

- 1st Site Plan presentation, focusing on architectural details and comments from Sketch Plan review.
- The DAP reviewed the Sketch Plan twice in November of 2023 and January of 2024 and provided the following comments to be addressed at Site Plan:
 1. Highland Ave: Celebrate the lobby entrance more through removing all or some of parking and allowing wider sidewalk experience. Program Highland Avenue through unit entries, bike storage entries, and/or landscaping. Explore moving utilities farther west to avoid bifurcation of the ground floor.
 2. Greenway: Revise entrance to be incidental and asymmetrical, perhaps closer to the lobby, while maintaining visual transparency from Greenway to the interior courtyard no matter where the entrance is.
 3. Elevations: Overall simplification of language and materials, grounding the bays and enhancement of transparency of the amenity space from the Greenway.
- The Applicant states the major changes in response to the previous comments are grounding the bay elements throughout the building's perimeter and unification of the building's architecture through material and color changes. These changes are demonstrated through side by side comparisons located on pages 17 & 18 of the submission.
- The revised elevations fronting on the Eastern Greenway show the bays grounding with the same material but articulated in a manner that will contribute to the pedestrian realm.
- The layout along Highland Avenue has been updated to include a bike room facing the street with an entrance to address the DAP's previous comments for street activation. An entrance from the street to the parking garage near Wisconsin Avenue and a lobby entrance remains from the Sketch Plan design as well as second story balconies.

- A ground floor landscaping plan is necessary for the areas on the Property, not including the Eastern Greenway
- The Applicant is requesting 20 points for exceptional design.

Resources:

[January meeting minutes hyperlink](#)

[January submission hyperlink](#)

Design Excellence Guide:

- *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*