



Silver Spring Design Advisory Panel – October 16, 2024, Meeting Notes

Revised October 21, 2024

This project has already received Sketch Plan and Preliminary Plan approvals. At the time of the DAP meeting the Applicant had not yet submitted the design for Site Plan review.

Project:

8676 Georgia Avenue – Site Plan

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

Attendance:

Design Advisory Panel:

Alice Enz

Praj Kasbekar (virtual)

Qiaojue Yu (virtual)

Note: As Bonstra | Haresign is a member of the Applicant team, Bill Bonstra recused himself from the project discussion. David Cronrath was unable to attend

Staff:

Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor, Downcounty Planning (virtual)

Atul Sharma, Assistant to the Deputy Director

Atara Margolies, Planner III

Adam Bossi, Planner III (virtual)

Applicant Team:

Stacy Silber, Lerch, Early and Brewer

Brian Corcoran, Roadside Development

Trini Rodriguez, ParkerRodriguez

Ronnie Ali, Bonstra | Haresign

Michael Cutulle, Bonstra | Haresign

Eli Perez, Bonstra | Haresign

Andi Adams, architectural historian

Paul Kelmisky, Roadside Development (virtual)

William Ikeler, Roadside Development (virtual)

Brian Bolen, ParkerRodriguez (virtual)

Liz Rogers, Lerch, Early and Brewer (virtual)

Patrick LaVay, MHG (virtual)

Meeting Notes:

Summary of previous DAP discussions:

The Applicant presented changes to the project design since the last presentation to the DAP in October 2023. Key changes include the expansion of the open space adjacent to the diner cab (formerly Tastee Diner), additional shaping of the tower via setbacks and massing refinements, the new design for the amenity levels at the top of the building, and continued development of the façade design. The DAP continues to be concerned about the façade of the garage facing Cameron Street, the façade of the building facing Georgia Avenue both from the ground level and as one approaches the building, and the lack of information about materials that the team is considering. The DAP found the renderings submitted with this application darker, harder to read and less engaging than the images in previous submissions.

Outdoor Space on Cameron Street

The Applicant presented the expanded outdoor space that is between the residential entrance to the tower and the diner cab, along the Cameron Street frontage. The space is segmented into three programmatic areas– residential entry, green buffer space, and outdoor seating area. The DAP appreciated the inclusion of this plaza space and requested the Applicant to further explore means to physically connect and programmatically integrate the spaces. The DAP requested the Applicant to provide further images and details about this space as is noted as the end of these meeting notes. The DAP generally liked the scale of the enlarged space.

Georgia Avenue Façade

As in previous DAP discussions about this project, members of the DAP expressed disappointment that the Georgia Avenue frontage is not presenting as a primary frontage to the building. In addition, ground floor plans now show an elevator core with the blank back wall of the core facing Georgia Avenue. The Applicant explained about the many constraints for the grocer tenant they hope to bring in for the ground floor space, but the DAP reiterated that this is the main north-south road in Silver Spring and that many people will only view the building from Georgia Avenue. It was acknowledged that it is a narrow frontage, and the DAP understands that the main entrances are from Cameron Street, but strongly feel that the Georgia Avenue frontage needs more attention.

In addition, the DAP noted that the views toward the building from the north along Georgia Avenue are quite different than the views from the south. From the north it appears as if the vertical tower is the primary massing element, but from the south it appears as if the long bar along Cameron Street is primary. The DAP asked the Applicant to define more clearly, through materials or articulation of the façade, which massing is primary, and which is secondary so that the building makes a clearer statement. It was also noted that the articulation of the top of the building cannot be seen from Georgia Avenue, which is a primary view that should be considered. The DAP is supportive of the

approach to façade articulation around the other sides of the building and noted that the Cameron Street side is particularly successful with the exception being the façade of the parking garage as explained below.

Parking Garage Façade

The DAP is concerned about the current presentation of the parking garage façade that faces Cameron Street and that “hangs” above the Diner cab. The DAP feels the treatment of the façade that faces Ramsey Avenue is more successful. The Applicant expressed the desire to make a statement and create a “backdrop” for the diner, and the DAP did not disagree with this intent, but asked the Applicant to consider alternate materials, and to relate the design of the “backdrop” to the rest of the building façade more strongly. This portion of the façade appears to be metal panel and mesh screen and the DAP was not supportive of this approach. The Applicant noted during the discussion about the parking garage façade that this garage is designed as an open-air garage but did not go into detail about how that influences the façade design.

Materials

Overall, the DAP felt that it was very difficult to understand what materials the Applicant is considering from the images submitted. The DAP requested that the Applicant bring material samples or at least images of materials to the next DAP presentation.

Panel Recommendation

The DAP agreed that the Applicant needs to return to the panel during the Site Plan process with drawings and 3D views that respond to the comments above and include the exhibits below in addition to what is required for a DAP submission:

- Detailed plan(s) with spot elevations and dimensions of the ground floor of the building, specifically focusing on the Georgia Avenue and Cameron Street frontages and the open space at the Diner cab. Any additional exhibits that help explain why the elevator core is located where it is would be helpful to the DAP.
- 3D views of the open space at the Diner cab from several perspectives so that the DAP can understand the experience in this space and relationships of different program elements.
- Renderings that more clearly represent the design direction of the scheme with regard to materials and colors.
- Material samples, or high-quality images of materials and the overall palettes under consideration.