




DATE: February 19, 2025

TO: Bethesda Downton Plan Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

FROM: Grace Bogdan, Planner IV, Downcounty Planning   
Atul Sharma, Assistant to the Deputy Director  
Paul Mortensen, Senior Urban Designer, Directors Office

RE: Staff comments for the February 26, 2025 DAP Meeting

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

## Item #1

### 7025 Strathmore Street

Gelman Properties & Kossow Management Corporation, Developer  
Architects Collaborative

- 1<sup>st</sup> Site Plan presentation, focusing on more detailed and developed architectural expression and site design, consistent with the Design Guidelines and determination of design excellence points.
- The DAP reviewed the Sketch Plan in November of 2023 and found that the project was on track to receive the minimum public benefits for design excellence, with refinements at Site Plan based on the following information to be provided:
  1. A section showing the view corridor from Wisconsin Avenue through the pedestrian connection to Strathmore Street;
  2. A section from the curb on Strathmore Street through the building showing the relationship of the ground level patios and building footprint with bays projecting above.
  3. [Sketch Plan submission](#) and [meeting notes](#) available in the provided links.
- The Applicant's resubmission provides the additional sections requested on pages A-19 and A-21 of the packet. The previously proposed ground level patios have been removed from the current design, however street level perspectives of Strathmore Street would be helpful in understanding the proposed changes to the public realm, including the at grade planters, and whether additional furnishings are appropriate.
- The submission is missing the prerequisite landscape drawings and building materials, which would assist in determining the relationship of the building to the public realm at the building entrance and along Strathmore Street.
- The layby that was previously proposed has been removed, and alternatively the Applicant is showing on street parking with an alternative material in the vegetated buffer area near the building's main entrance, which will be determined by MCDOT during application review.

- Staff appreciates the removal of the overhang in the through block connection to open up the space vertically. However, it may be worth discussing if all of the columns are necessary or if some could be strategically removed, or if the pet grooming area could be reduced in order to widen the space horizontally.
- The Applicant is requesting 20 points for design excellence.

**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*