



Silver Spring Design Advisory Panel – January 27, 2025, Meeting Notes

Revised March 17, 2025

This was the second time that the applicant appeared at the DAP as part of the Site Plan review process.

Project:

8676 Georgia Avenue

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

Attendance:

Design Advisory Panel:

David Cronrath (in-person)

Alice Enz (virtual)

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.

Staff:

Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director

Atul Sharma, Assistant to the Deputy Director

Atara Margolies, Planner III

Adam Bossi, Planner III

Elza Hisel-McCoy, Downcounty Planning Chief (virtual)

Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor, Downcounty Planning (virtual)

Dan Bruechert, Historic Preservation Planner III (virtual)

Applicant Team:

Stacy Silber, Lerch, Early and Brewer

Brian Corcoran, Roadside Development

Daniel Seidman, Bonstra | Haresign

Ronnie Ali, Bonstra | Haresign

Michael Cutulle, Bonstra | Haresign

Brian Corcoran, Roadside Development

Paul Kelminsky, Roadside Development

William Ikeler, Roadside Development
Brian Bolen, ParkerRodriguez

Bill Bonstra, Bonstra | Haresign (virtual)
Andi Adams, architectural historian (virtual)
Trini Rodriguez, ParkerRodriguez (virtual)
Liz Rogers, Lerch, Early and Brewer (virtual)
Sara Grant, The Wilkes Company (virtual)
Pat LaVay, MHG (virtual)

Meeting Notes:

Project Background

The applicant team presented to the DAP in October 2024. At the close of that meeting the DAP requested that the team return at the next opportunity and specifically bring exhibits to illustrate the following: the location of the elevator core and why there cannot be a door on Georgia Avenue, open space design around the Diner cab including dimensions, spot elevations and 3D views, material samples, and renderings that more accurately reflect the design direction of the scheme with regard to color/material.

Georgia Avenue Façade/Elevator Core

The applicant team explained that given the tenant requirements for the large tenant they are negotiating with for the ground floor space, the retail entrance is located on Cameron Street as close as it can be to the corner. The team brought a few options of how to treat the corner façade, given that there is no entrance on Georgia Avenue, but the Design Guidelines prioritize transparency and façade activation, particularly on key Downtown Boulevards like Georgia Avenue.

The 3 schemes varied in levels of transparency. Two options presented fully transparent glass at the corner, and one option included only translucent/frosted glass. Both transparent options included LED lights in different patterns behind the glass to provide a greater sense of activation. In all options a larger and more expressive entrance canopy was included which will draw attention to the retail entrance on Cameron Street. In all schemes the elevator core appeared as a “box” inside the vestibule, which provided an opportunity to treat it with a bright color to lend more interest to the element.

The DAP members were largely in favor of making the corner as transparent as possible. The DAP also suggested that the brick from the Cameron Street base come around the corner somehow to the Georgia Avenue façade, which would make the transparent corner stand out more. There was a general sense that these options improved the design, but there was still too much discontinuity from the base along Cameron Street to the small portion that faces Georgia Avenue.

Parking Garage Façade

There was still a good deal of concern over the darkness and the massing of the garage façade that protrudes from the building above the Diner cab and how the strong horizontal nature of this massing might overpower the small horizontal diner. This concern was echoed by nearly every member of the DAP. The applicant team noted that HPC was supportive of the façade design, however Planning Staff reiterated that HPC's comments on the façade are advisory, and not regulatory because the new building façade is not the historic component of the project.

Panel Recommendation

The DAP acknowledged that the applicant team has worked very hard until this point to move the project along and respond to the DAP. The DAP determined that they would ask the applicant team to return in February but would limit the scope of the discussion at that meeting. The DAP provided the following specific direction to the applicant at the conclusion of the meeting and staff provided a written record of this via email to the applicant team:

- Georgia Avenue corner:
 - Incorporate the brick material from the base along Cameron Street on the base of the Georgia Avenue façade so that it reads as one building base that is broken by the transparent glass treatment at the Georgia/Cameron corner. Proceed with one of the corner entrance options (scheme B or C) that has transparent glass at the corner. Bring the vertical bay expression from Cameron Street onto the Georgia façade as much as feasible.
- Garage façade:
 - If possible, lighten the metal panel garage façade that is directly behind/above the Tastee Diner car. This may be done through a change in material, a change in the design of the existing metal panels, or any number of other strategies. The idea is to lessen the feeling of a dark, heavy, horizontal mass hanging over the Diner.