

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT: 4719 Hampden Lane

DATE: December 10, 2025

Attendance:

Panel

John Tschiderer

David Lieb

Sandeep Walia

Yulia Beltikova

Robert Sponseller

Paul Mortensen, ex officio member

Staff

Elza Hisel McCoy, Chief, West County Planning Division

Atul Sharma, Chief, Design, Placemaking, and Policy Division

Stephanie Dickel, Regulatory Supervisor West County Planning

Sandra Pereira, Urban Design Supervisor, Design, Placemaking, and Policy (DPP) Division

Grace Bogdan, Planner IV, DPP

Adam Bossi, Planner III

Darcy Buckley, Parks Planner

Applicant Team

Matt Gordon, Selzer Gurvitch

Janelle Kausner, Washington Property Company

Charles Nulsen, Washington Property Company

Alyse Talbot, Design Collective

Fiver Soraruf, Design Collective

Discussion Points:

Staff: This is a conceptual level presentation to the DAP with an anticipated expedited review process. This review will focus on high level Sector Plan recommendations, general mass and bulk and conformance with the Design Guidelines.

Panel:



General

- Who owns the property to the east?
 - *Applicant Response: Douglasville, and it was part of the original approvals but ultimately could not move forward.*
- It's a tough site, I never walk on that side of Montgomery Lane because it is so narrow, but it proposes to increase that space?
 - *Applicant Response: Yes, it will be 15 feet of space, and we had negotiated a lot of the issues there in the first round that we would keep here.*
- I think this is a very nice building and it just puts the pressure onto the next property.

Parking/Loading

- I think the building is spectacular, the location and quality will be phenomenal, but automated parking may be the way to go.
 - *Applicant Response: Our parking pressure on buildings closer to the metro are a lot less, and that brought us to this building and the low parking counts. We've discussed automated parking a couple times and each time we've not pursued it due to possible technical issues.*
- Is there a parking standard you are seeking relief from?
 - *Applicant Response: No but we have guaranteed parking available across the street.*
- Is there any way to combine the loading with the parking?
 - *Applicant Response: We did try it, and the loading entrance will be about 8 feet higher than the East Lane entrance.*
- I think the focus should be how the loading is integrated into the building design.
- Are you programming anything on the roof for residents?
 - *Applicant Response: Potentially yes, we are locating amenities throughout the building.*
- What will be programmed on the ground floor at the corner of Montgomery Lane and East Lane?
 - *Applicant Response: Right now, we are showing it as a transition space, there is no retail planned in this project.*

Tower step-back

- For the studios that are setback 10 feet, what is allowed for light and air?
 - *Applicant Response: The units have 45% openings at the elevation. We aim for 40% fenestration for our energy model, but its tight.*
 - The development standards for the zone allows the building to be constructed to the property line, but if there is livable space it must have a minimum 10-foot setback for fire access. There are also recommendations within the Bethesda Design Guidelines for tower step-backs of 45-60 feet, but allow less on smaller sites like this.
- I am OK with the reduced tower step-back of ten feet to the east. If it were to increase, it would only make sense to increase in increments of five feet, and I'm not sure how

that would affect the façade along East Lane. But I am curious to see how the 10 feet is treated architecturally to increase light and air.

- The average unit size is about 700-800 square feet. So, no consideration for condominiums in the future?
 - *Applicant Response: Correct; they are about that size and no, condominiums are not feasible in that size range.*
- There is a rapid development of buildings in downtown Bethesda. The 10-foot separation is tight, and the size of the studio is very small.
 - *Applicant Response: Yes, it's about 500 square feet.*
 - How much light will actually get there? Can the façade be angled? These questions will need to be addressed in the next submission.
- It would be good to see how the fabric will be realized and how does it connect across the street, to the west and south.

Panel Recommendations:

The Panel determined that the project is on track regarding general massing, bulk, and conformance with the Design Guidelines, acknowledging the project's small site size will require a less than recommended tower setback, with alternative treatments to be finalized in the next stage of design.