




DATE: May 20, 2026

TO: Bethesda Downton Plan Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

FROM: Grace Bogdan, Planner IV, Design, Placemaking, & Policy Division 
Natasha Fahim, Planner III, Design, Placemaking, & Policy Division
Sandra Pereira, Supervisor, Design, Placemaking, & Policy Division
Paul Mortensen, Senior Urban Designer, Director's Office

RE: Staff comments for the May 27, 2027 DAP Meeting

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

Item #1

4719 Hampden Lane

Alyse Talbott, Design Collective
Washington Properties, Applicant

- First Site plan level presentation to the DAP, focusing on building articulation, architectural elevations, landscaping, and comments from the Concept level review.
- The Project was reviewed by the DAP in December of 2025 and at that time the Panel determined it was on track regarding general massing, bulk, and conformance with the Design Guidelines, acknowledging the narrow site size will require a less than recommended tower setback, with alternative treatments to be finalized in the next stage of design.
- The massing has been refined into an articulated building that addresses the Panel's previous comments. Along the East Lane frontage is a 6-story base with a stepback above.
- Both loading and garage access has successfully been integrated into the base design.
- The lobby entrance is successful and activates the southwest corner at the intersection of Hampden Lane and East Lane.
- The tower stepbacks are smaller than recommended in the Bethesda Guidelines but they are consistent with what was proposed at concept plan. This elevation has been highly articulated with exposed balconies and deep reveals.
- The Project proposes to articulate the party wall on the east elevation with brick modulation and paneling above. The dark grey paneling material reads as top heavy and is not well articulated. Staff recommends a lighter material color with more horizontal delineation, like seen at the western elevation, and additional lighting to brighten this condition, especially at night.
- The building's design is very frontal to the plaza to the south and west. Staff requests guidance from the Panel to ensure the ground floor responds to that condition.
- The Applicant is requesting 25 design excellence points.

Item #2

7475 Wisconsin Avenue

Chris Huffer, Architect, SK+I

MRP Realty and Prime Finance, Applicant

- First Site plan level presentation to the DAP, focusing on building elevations, building articulation, landscaping, and comments from the Concept level review.
- The Project was reviewed by the DAP in January 2026 and the Panel determined it was on track to move forward, with resolution to the metro entrance and balconies. The Panel discussed two alternatives for the metro entrance, either making the metro entrance more prominent and protected at the corner or locating the metro entrance elsewhere in the base of the building.
- The Site Plan maintains the metro entrance at the corner with a more prominent design. Staff recommends a few considerations to further integrate the entrance into the ground floor and base of the building:
 - Enhance the circular columns by the metro entrance to be more iconic and dramatic.
 - The red vertical elements of the elevation connote the idea of vertical structural pieces and therefore represent weight which terminates above the Metro entrance. There should be some type of horizontal beam-type element that holds up the vertical red members.
 - Include a canopy above the entrance that wraps from East-West Highway frontage and along the Wisconsin Avenue frontage to provide additional weather protection to the entrance and creates a robust lip that holds the corner.
- Staff commends the Project for furthering the building design and refined architectural articulation, particularly along the East-West Highway frontage. However, the detailing and articulated elevational panels seem to resemble other recently constructed buildings along the corridor such as 7126 Wisconsin Avenue and 7340 Wisconsin Avenue. This unique and iconic corner should remain different than the others and elevation treatments may need to be further refined.
- The Applicant is requesting 20 design excellence points.

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*