

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: **4540 Montgomery Avenue**
Sketch Plan No. 320180010

DATE: November 29, 2017

*The **4540 Montgomery Avenue** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **November 29, 2017**. The following meeting notes summarize the Panel's discussion, and recommendations regarding design excellence and the exceptional design public benefits points. The Panel's recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report and strongly considered by Staff prior to the certification of the Site Plan. Should you have any additional questions and/or comments please feel free to contact the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.*

Attendance:

Karl Du Puy (Panelist)
George Dove (Panelist)
Damon Orobona (Panelist)
Rod Henderer (Panelist)
Qiaojue Yu (Panelist)
Paul Mortensen (Panelist, Senior Urban Designer in the Director's Office)

Laura Shipman (Design Advisory Panel Liaison)
Leslye Howerton (Lead Plan Reviewer)
Gwen Wright (Planning Department Director)
Margaret Rifkin (Director's Office)
Neil Sullivan (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)

Pat Harris (Attorney, Applicant Team)
Sandy Silverman (Architect, Applicant Team)
Matt Bell (Architect, Applicant Team)
Rob Eisinger (Property Owner, Applicant Team)



Discussion Points:

- The building addresses development on a compact site very well.
- Is the material a metal panel?
 - *Applicant response:* yes.
- Are you undergrounding utilities?
 - *Applicant response:* yes.
- How many retail bays?
 - *Applicant response:* not yet finalized, likely one tenant.
- It is good that this is a narrow building, but why the symmetry on the east elevation? Give more emphasis to the corner of Montgomery Avenue and Pearl Street. The corner wants to be articulated and asymmetrical.
- Articulate the base of the building to correspond to the base of the air rights building. The base could read as two-stories.
- It is good that the entrance is being pulled back, could imagine once the other side of Pearl Street is developed the southern portion of the shared street could be mostly closed with plaza atmosphere.
- Provide further development of streetscape to include more trees and stormwater management along the street.
 - *Applicant response:* More detail will be provided at site plan.
- Can vegetation be tied in throughout pearl street façade to tie to green roof? Balconies with vegetation could address this issue.
 - *Applicant response:* We were seeking very simple and clean lines, the way the balconies are decorated by users may add some of this texture to the façade.
- Can you increase windows on southern façade?
 - *Applicant response:* Building code issues prevented this.
- If this is to act as a gateway it will be interesting to explore the view of the building coming from the west along Montgomery Avenue, a one-way street.
- Views back to downtown from the corner units will be interesting.
- How has the top of the building been articulated? Consider a different proportion for more emphasis of the top.
 - *Applicant response:* articulation and mullion pattern provide some differentiation of the top, but will explore further.
- Are there only balconies on the second floor?
 - *Applicant response:* they are currently located on the second and top floors, the team is still debating the location of balconies.

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Exceptional Design Points: The design is headed in a positive direction to go higher than the requested 15 points as a creative development solution for a compact site, if there is attention to the recommendations listed below.



2. Give more emphasis to the corner of Montgomery Avenue and Pearl Street.
3. Articulate the base of the building to correspond to the base of the adjacent Air Rights Building.
4. Provide further development of the streetscape to include more trees and stormwater management along the street.
5. Explore the view of the building coming from the west along Montgomery Avenue.
6. Consider a different proportion to further emphasize the top of the building.

