

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: 8015 Old Georgetown Road
Sketch Plan No. TBD

DATE: May 22, 2019

*The **8015 Old Georgetown Road** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **May 22, 2019**. 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)
Elza Hisel-McCoy (Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor)
Rachel Newhouse (Parks Department)
Stephanie Dickel (Area 1 Planner Coordinator)

Marius Radulescu (Applicant Team)
Dennis Connors (Applicant Team)
Martin Mankowski (Applicant Team)
Erin Girard (Applicant Team)
Wade Shervin (Applicant Team)
Graham Brock (Applicant Team)
Matt Gordon (Applicant Team)

Herb Estreicher (Member of the Public)
Richard Hoyer (Member of the Public)
Naomi Spinrad (Member of the Public)

Discussion Points:

- Why not develop to the full density?
 - *Applicant response:* It has to do with the right size and market research. The reason not to develop is based on the scale of the surrounding area. We are aware that we are taller than them by a significant amount and we did not want to dwarf them. What was originally proposed was lower than 120 feet and we wanted to use past entitlements to guide the starting point for this project.
- Is the overall density larger than the previous proposal?
 - *Applicant response:* Yes, more FAR, but this proposal generates less traffic.
- How tall is it compared to the adjacent building, how tall is the roof of your project?
 - *Applicant response:* Adjacent building is 110ft, and this project is 85 feet at top of roof.
- With the previous approved project there was significant interaction with the community, have you had any conversations with the community?
 - *Applicant response:* Yes, we have had conversations with community members and we will have a community meeting next week and will continue to engage the community moving forward.
- Is the courtyard at the same elevation as the through-block connection?
 - *Applicant response:* Yes, it is about the same elevation. The through-block connection will have about a 5% grade and large change in elevation. The courtyards adjacent will be level with the grade of the through-block connection.
- The intent is to engage the units at that level without having access?
 - *Applicant response:* The units on the courtyards would have views onto the courtyards, but the units along the street will have active entrances.
- The through-block connection is good, but will it just feel like you are trespassing through the back of the residential project? It is good that the courtyards align with the connection. There may need to be eyes on and engagement with the connection.
- Do you plan to work with the adjacent site for continuation of the through-block connection?
 - *Applicant response:* Yes, we are working with them on the private access lane.
- Old Georgetown is relatively flat along the frontage?
 - *Applicant response:* It is relatively flat, but because it is so long there is some grade change.
- The residential wing on the west side, where is their lobby?
 - *Applicant response:* They will use the main lobby, there will be access points for things like bike storage. There will also be an elevator bank. There will be various exit points from the building.
- The ground floor shows residential at the corner in front of parking. Is that really going to be residential?
 - *Applicant response:* It may be additional amenity space rather than residential.

- Did you have to chamfer the corner because of the ROW?
 - *Applicant response:* yes, and the dedication.
- That corner going back to the residences is a problem to me. What the church did is that by curving around they gave space to the houses. Maybe you could terrace the building back at the corner along the street to allow some light and air and to have a break-down of the scale three-dimensionally. It might also allow more openness for the pathway. That's the only real conflict that I see.
- I am also concerned about the chamfered corner. Maybe you could do a negative corner or extend the corner to the property line.
 - *Applicant response:* Because of required dedication we cannot extent to the property line.
- I think the recessed courtyard along Old Georgetown Road is a good idea. I think the diagonal corner merits additional consideration. Generally, the massing is appropriate at a sketch plan stage. Usually height is a major concern, I think that the fact that you have stayed under the height is positive. I think in my opinion it is within reasonable interpretation of the guidelines. This is moving in the right direction.
- What happens at the north end of the through-block connection?
 - *Applicant response:* What happens today is that people connect through the back of fire and rescue and cut behind the church. We would have to coordinate with fire and rescue to see what is feasible.
- I am concerned about eyes on the through-block connection.
 - *Applicant response:* Dealing with the connection is a crucial element, do we add more buffer to the adjacent neighbors? We have heard from some neighbors that they would like more openness to the connection.
- *Staff:* If you were to add height onto the building would you have to change construction type?
 - *Applicant response:* yes.
- If you took the corner wing off and put it somewhere else, you could still be below the height limit and reconfigure the building.
- *Staff:* There may be some flexibility in the dedication at the corner if there is a good design. The Planning Board approves dedication and so there is some flexibility.
- This is so close to the rest of the Battery Lane development. How does this through-block connection connect to the rest of the Battery Lane District green plan approach? You should check with that design team to make sure these are working together.
- If you cut back the building too much you expose the front yards of the single-unit residential to Old Georgetown Road. I think the building protects the front yards.
- I wasn't suggesting that the entire height of the building steps back but rather the upper floors
 - *Applicant response:* We are trying to engage the corner to have a similar architectural theme that peels away and relates to the neighborhood beyond.
- I think there is one good thing about the easterly courtyard, it allows more southern light to come in.

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Ensure that the through-block connection is an inviting space for the public to use and does not feel like the back of a building with a single narrow width. Increase the width of the pathway in certain areas so that there is a contrast between narrow spaces and wider spaces that possibly promotes excitement and flow and consider providing active entrances to the building along the path.
2. Reconfigure the southeast corner of the building through strategies such as an inverted corner, stronger corner extending to property line (with dedication flexibility).
3. Address the transition to single-unit residential along Glenbrook Road. Consider stepping back the upper floors from the street and driveway to allow more light and air.
4. Provide shadow studies at site plan.
5. Consider reducing the height of the two northern wings facing single family homes on either side of the back courtyard and then adding a floor along the western edge of the site to reduce mass at the smaller scale homes and add height along Old Georgetown.
6. Public Benefit Points: The project is on track to achieve at least the minimum 10 Exceptional Design points required in the Bethesda Overlay Zone.
7. Straw vote: **5** in support but with conditions to address the above recommendations.

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: Battery Lane District
Sketch Plan No. 320190080

DATE: May 22, 2019

*The **Battery Lane District** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **May 22, 2019**. 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.*

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Laura Shipman (Design Advisory Panel Liaison)
Robert Kronenberg (Area 1 Division Chief)
Elza Hisel-McCoy (Area 1 Regulatory Supervisor)
Grace Bogdan (Lead Reviewer)
Rachel Newhouse (Parks Department)

Iffat Afsana (Applicant Team)
Gary Unterberg (Applicant Team)
Nancy Regelin (Applicant Team)
Dan Rigaux (Applicant Team)
Jef Fuller (Applicant Team)
Zach Lucido (Applicant Team)
Layton Golding (Applicant Team)
Anthony Falcone (Applicant Team)

Doug Wrenn (Applicant Team)
Robert Graham (Applicant Team)

Richard Hoyer (Member of the Public)
Naomi Spinrad (Member of the Public)
Michael Fetchko (Member of the Public)
Holly Clemans (Member of the Public)
Kevie Niland (Member of the Public)
Ellen Witt (Member of the Public)
Amanda Farber (Member of the Public)

Discussion Points:

- It came to mind when you talk about stormwater management, there is a neighborhood in Seattle where the whole area is more of a district where stormwater is captured from the roof and reused and on the street and it is part of the design.
- How is this implemented? Is it all at once or piecemeal?
 - *Applicant response:* We are determining now. This will happen over 10-12 years. There may be a temporary treatment with painting and bollards as an interim treatment. The median will happen as we redevelop over time.
- Right now, the street appears to be very wide, I think removing parking spaces and adding more tree canopy and getting a two-way bike lane is positive. Even if it happens incrementally I think it is a basis for all the properties to respond to. I don't think these need to be amazing architectural statements but the way you are organizing the moments along the linear street is positive. I want to offer my appreciation for thinking outside of the box.
- What will happen to those parking spaces? Will it create any parking issues?
 - *Applicant response:* I don't think so because all of the developments have surface parking that is under-parked. I don't think removing the spaces will be detrimental.
- If a family comes to the park, where will they park? And where do you drop people off? Do you have to drive into the building to drop people off? You may want a space here or there to drop people off.
 - *Applicant response:* We have a ride-share drop-off area where cars can come into the site to drop off.
 - *Staff:* I think it is important to note that this is a public street. And it is not incumbent on the applicant to solve all the questions, it will be a multi-agency implementation.
- You would think that there would be a fund and DOT would implement the plan. I am concerned that everything is straight-jacket. I think this one-size fits all rather than having pull offs.
- I think the aspirations are right. I think there are details to work on. If you are talking about sustainability, you seem to be using old HID fixtures rather than more modern LED fixtures.

- For the larger green space near NIH have you programmed it? It will be the most social space of the neighborhood so you should think about how it is programmed.
 - *Applicant response:* It could be a space for a special event, but we don't want to be overly rigid. Formal and informal activities.
- I think everything that you are showing is a very nice improvement and is showing what this whole district can be one day. The problem that I am seeing is the lack of real connectivity to Norfolk Avenue, because you have massive superblocks. I would suggest that Auburn Avenue be connected through to Battery Lane for vehicles and pedestrians. I think it should be a narrow two-way street with parking. I think we should not prevent that opportunity.
- This morning before I came, I had to drive all the way around and there were no opportunities for right turns.
- Right now it acts like a gated community. And I know the people who live there might prefer that but it really doesn't allow connectivity for the area.
 - *Staff:* The applicant can show a dashed arrow for potential connection to Auburn in the future.
- Sites A&B should come in together for site plan review because it would create a strong gateway.
 - *Applicant response:* The phasing is evolving over time but site B will likely come in later.

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. The panel is generally supportive of the district vision but there are implementation concerns that should be coordinated with County agencies including phasing of Battery Lane improvements, drop-off areas and parking strategy.
2. Develop the approach for programming of the park near NIH as an important social gathering space.
3. Show an arrow for a potential future street connection to Auburn Avenue and Woodmont Triangle District.
4. Illustrate the connection between each project and the overall vision at site plan.
5. Public Benefit Points: The project is on track to achieve at least the minimum 10 Exceptional Design points required in the Bethesda Overlay Zone.
6. Straw vote: **5** in support but with conditions to address the above recommendations.

Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

FROM: Laura Shipman
Design Advisory Panel Liaison

PROJECT: 7000 Wisconsin Avenue
Sketch Plan No. 320190090

DATE: May 22, 2019

*The **7000 Wisconsin Avenue** project was reviewed by the Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel on **May 22, 2019**. 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.*

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Rachel Newhouse (Parks Department)

Bob Dalrymple (Applicant Team)
Matt Gordon (Applicant Team)
Todd Jacobus (Applicant Team)
Tim Eden (Applicant Team)
Marius Radulescu (Applicant Team)
Dennis Connors (Applicant Team)

Richard Hoyer (Member of the Public)
Naomi Spinrad (Member of the Public)
Michael Fetchko (Member of the Public)

Holly Clemans (Member of the Public)
 Kevie Niland (Member of the Public)
 Ellen Witt (Member of the Public)
 Amanda Farber (Member of the Public)

Discussion Points:

- So, the two buildings to the south, are they both at 80 feet right now?
 - *Applicant response:* The Adagio is an 8-story building and pops up, the other is 90 feet.
- Are you proposing below grade parking, where is the access?
 - *Applicant response:* Yes, below-grade and access from the alley.
- How wide is the alley?
 - *Applicant response:* Property line to property line it is 20 feet, there is approximately 10 feet of additional space on the other property.
- Is the alley one way or 2-way?
 - *Applicant response:* We have done the turning movement measurements, and trucks will have to exit via Bradley Boulevard. The alley is two-way.
- I am concerned that we don't have the drawings showing the turning movements and dimensions and where the choke points are. It is quite congested back there.
- Last time you had sketch-up showing the potential for the alley. Why are you proposing the through-block connection on the south side rather than the north side?
- I am troubled by the lack of adherence to design guidelines, the setback the tower separation. When you go below 120 feet you are supposed to mitigate that with alternate means. I have to say that I am very troubled by this project.
- What is the footprint? Is the project not working is that why you are not proposing it?
 - *Applicant response:* approx. 22,000 gross sf. It is a tight site and the guidelines are intended more for taller buildings. We cannot meet all the guidelines because we would not have feasibility. If you go from a unit that is 30 feet deep to 40 feet deep then you get an unattractive unit. It is a wholistic approach from inside out.
- I don't like either design, all I see is the middle. You should lower the base. The design guidelines call for the base to be 30-70 feet, and it's better lower. Make a base and building on top of it.
 - *Applicant response:* If you interject a midblock condition that is different from the adjacent buildings it would be different from the others.
- You are setting the precedent for the future buildings and it should be done right.
- If you were to do that could you achieve the same density?
 - *Applicant response:* If you have all of the service areas you do not have enough space.
- We are not talking a 15ft change but rather a 5 ft change.

- *Applicant response:* With the heights along Wisconsin, a 35ft base is too small comparatively. It would be a residential in nature base compared to other buildings.
- The reality is the whole block on the east of Wisconsin will also be redeveloped and there will be continuity.
- You can have the low-rise that is “historic Bethesda”
 - *Applicant response:* But this is a high density, high traffic street.
- Because the building is lower the base should be lower to be proportional, with at least a 10 ft setback of upper floors.
 - *Applicant response:* Having a 10 ft setback will have pressures on the location of columns you will end up with a lower quality building.
- From a density stand-point I don’t see how it would really affect you.
- The point is that at a lower height if you do not have a step-back then you should have alternative treatments.
- I am concerned about tower separation and the alley.
- There needs to be a clear drawing showing the connections with the alley and the dimensions, turning movements, other elements.
- What does the traffic study say about the number of cars?
 - *Applicant response:* It is less traffic impact than the current retail use.
- Is there concern about tower separation?
- At 120 feet do not see a problem with tower separation.
 - *Applicant response:* The through-block connection is a significant contribution to the public realm.
- Will there be an obligation for future projects to continue the through-block connection?
 - *Applicant response:* The Sector Plan will provide the guidance and requirements for future projects.
- The alley may be an opportunity for a table-top crossing and special paving to reduce traffic speeds.

Panel Recommendations:

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the Staff Report.

1. Design a lower base height of approximately 35-45 feet to be in proportion to the height of the buildings and step-back the floors above the base no less than 5 feet, with 10 feet step-back recommended.
2. Provide a clear drawing of the alley connections, dimensions and turning movements for trucks.
3. Provide a landscaping plan to illustrate how the site design works.
4. Public Benefit Points: The project is on track to achieve at least the minimum 10 Exceptional Design points required in the Bethesda Overlay Zone if these recommendations are met.
5. Straw vote: **4** in support but with conditions, **1** does not support