

July 8, 2025

Paul Stoddard
Acting Director, Planning & Zoning
301 King Street, Room 2100
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

**Re: Response to DRB April 10 and June 11 Comments
Block 3, 2425 Mill Road (the “Property”)**

Dear Paul,

After presenting the Block 3 plans to the Carlyle/Eisenhower East DRB (the “DRB”) on April 10 and June 11, staff confirmed the Applicant should address the following seven (7) comments. The Applicant and design team responses are included below each comment in bold italics.

Pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Section 5-611, the purpose of the DRB is to review DSUP development within CDD #2 for compliance with the Eisenhower East SAP (“SAP”) and Eisenhower East Design Guidelines (“Guidelines”). The SAP was adopted on March 14, 2020 and currently, are no adopted Guidelines; there is a draft version as of July 2024. The Staff comments below have been compared to the SAP and not the draft Guidelines for compliance per Section 5-611 as part of the Applicant and design team response.

Comment 1

A flexible approach toward implementing the garage screening requirements would involve only the following sections of façade adhering to the screening recommendations of a “B Street” in the EESAP: a. The eastern half of Pershing Avenue (south façade) b. All of Stovall Street (east façade) c. The eastern half of Mill Road (north façade)

The Applicant has met the SAP urban design goals for Block 3 by activating the first 30-40 feet of the vertical building frontage for the entirety of Stovall Street with active uses, active uses at the corner of Pershing and Stovall with the open space improvements, and streetscape requirements on all three sides of the building. The proposed DSUP shows uniform, aesthetic garage screening on all levels of the above ground garage in a manner that is woven into the overall building architecture.

From a functional point of view, an “Open Garage” as defined by Building Code is necessary to remove the need for mechanical garage ventilation for the top floors of the garage. Requiring glass enclosure garage screening of these floors would necessitate mechanical ventilation of nearly 5.5 acres of garage space with industrial fans, 24/7, 365 days a year and into perpetuity which is in direct conflict with the City of Alexandria Green Building goals of reducing building energy use intensity.

Comment 2

The above noted sections of garage screening façade will still need to comply with the EESAP recommendation of being “indistinguishable from occupied space.” The Board was not wholly convinced that the currently proposed metal panels and lighting scheme would meet this standard and consequently provided several examples of glass with ventilation as alternatives. The applicant should provide further details of the planned garage screening elements and/or look to revise these sections of the façade to be glass.

The Applicant will not be using glass screening of the garage. The Applicant has refined the garage façade to better adhere to the spacing and rhythm of the residential façade by modifying the size, spacing and materiality of the garage precast. Additional lightening of the garage metal paneling has been added to make the façade blend in with the overall building design and be indistinguishable from occupied space at certain times of day. Exact details and more refined images of the garage screening are provided in the attached project documents.

Comment 3

Revise building design to adhere to the recommendation for an “architecturally significant” feature at the southwest corner of the building site at the intersection of Pershing Avenue and Telegraph Road. Specifically, the Board has recommended that the design team look at the stair tower already proposed for this location and explore ways to enhance it architecturally perhaps through the use of glass and lighting, and increasing its height.

The proposed architecture for this project is dramatically different than any other building in the City and will serve the purpose of drawing attention and marking the Eisenhower East neighborhood from those passing by on Telegraph Road. The building itself is a “special building form.” Additionally, on a block scale, the main entrance points of the building are at the corner of Stovall and Pershing, not at the southwest side of the building which is the corner of the garage.

Finally, “architecturally significant” façade in the EESAP was related to the original block design which showed two buildings on Block 3. In that scenario a “architecturally significant” façade of the building on the corner of Pershing and Telegraph made sense. With the revised single building, as approved in the revised CDD, an “architecturally significant” façade in this location no longer makes sense and draws attention away from the main building façade, retail, and open space.

Comment 4

The design of the tower façade seemed to the Board to be somewhat complicated, particularly regarding its glass “zipper” elements, which are used both vertically and horizontally, and disrupt the dominant precast verticals. These breaks in the façade elements seems to work well when done vertically but reduces the vertical impact of the tower when implemented

horizontally. The applicant should therefore look at ways to minimizing the horizontal breaks in the façade, particularly at the midpoint of the tower.

Minimizing horizontal breaks in the building to emphasize verticality is not a guideline in the SAP. Regardless, the Applicant has refined the building façade specifically in the Flag portions of the building to make the building appear more vertical. It has modified the material of the Flag to be precast to better integrate with the rest of the building. The Zipper element remains as an integral part of the building design as it facilitates the change in precast spacing due to the change in column locations in the upper floors of the building. The upper floors have larger units and therefore the column spacing is different. The interior renderings demonstrating the impacts of floor-to-ceiling glass in units with steep sloping columns, creating the need for glass horizontal zippers, thus making the units viable.

Comment 5

The Board recommended that the applicant explore modulating the spacing between the pre-cast elements on the tower portion of the façade to provide further variety and dynamism in the overall composition.

The Applicant's design already has modulated precast spacing. The punched window width that responds to the unit layouts within. These widths vary around the entire building from about 5' 6" to upwards of 10' in response to individual residential unit layouts. Further modulated spacing of the precast would have severe determinantal impacts to the leasing ability of the residential units with reduced windows. Finally, the Applicant can find no precedent for this request anywhere in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan or Design Guidelines.

Comment 6

Relative to the scale of the building height and massing, there seems to be too many façade elements overall. Look to simplify the "skin" of the building, as well as enhance the verticality of the building design. Possible ways of doing this would be to change the ratio of metal vs. pre-cast panels, or by making the metal panel sections feel more vertical, possibly through multi-window grouping strategies or alternate coloration.

The Applicant has refined the building façade specifically in the Flag portions of the building to make the building appear more vertical, including the addition of balconies. It has modified the material of the Flag to be precast to better integrate with the rest of the building. The new Precast materials on the Flag have been lightened in color however, some differentiation is needed otherwise the building appears to be too foreboding and monolithic. Exact details of the building facade are provided in the attached project images. See renderings of prior design studies in accompanying PDF.

Comment 7

Explore alternate formats to the currently proposed building slab as relates to the ground floor retail. As shown, the slab includes a “fold” to accommodate the significant slope along the Stovall Street frontage of the site. While this may be sufficient for a single, larger tenant, the Board is concerned that this will restrict flexibility with the retail space in the future to accommodate a potential need for multiple tenants along Stovall Street.

The Applicant has provided two different Retail footprints in the DSUP submission. One has a larger portion of retail on Stovall and therefore lesser portion on Pershing. Retail Leasing experts at H&R Retail continue to advise that Pershing is the more attractive location for retail tenants and they don’t see Stovall as a multi-tenant retail street. However, the floor elevation of the Stovall retail is slightly below the grade of the Stovall sidewalk, which will allow the Applicant to raise a portion of the retail space to meet sidewalk grade should this space be leased to multiple tenants.

The above comment responses and attached PDF are the Applicant’s final submission to the DRB.

Sincerely,



Kenneth W. Wire



Megan C. Rappolt

cc: Robert Kerns, AICP, Division Chief, Development, P&Z
Nathan Randall, Principal Planner, Development
Julian Swierczek, Urban Planner