



**Design Review Board Case #2011-0003
Carlyle Plaza (Blocks 26A, 26B, and 28)**

Application	General Data	
<p>Project Name: Carlyle Plaza Two (South Carlyle)</p> <p>Location: 760 John Carlyle Street, 1800 Eisenhower Avenue, 340 Hooff's Run Drive (Blocks 26A, 26B, and 28)</p> <p>Applicant: Carlyle Plaza, LLC (JM Zell Partners), represented by Ken Wire of McGuire Woods</p>	DRB Date:	April 23, 2012
	Site Area:	6.23 acres
	Zone:	CDD#11(South Carlyle)
	Proposed Use:	Residential and Office
	Gross Floor Area:	Office: 755,114 sf Residential: 632,056 sf Total: 1,387,170 sf
Purpose of Application		
<p>Concept Plan design review of the proposed Carlyle Plaza development which will include one or two office building(s), two residential buildings, a parking structure with open space on top and a transition area between the street level plaza and elevated open space.</p>		
<p>Staff Reviewers: Tom Canfield, AIA tom.canfield@alexandriava.gov Gwen Wright, gwen.wright@alexandriava.gov Gary Wagner, RLA, gary.wagner@alexandriava.gov Katie North, AICP, LEED AP katie.north@alexandriava.gov James Roberts, james.roberts@alexandriava.gov.</p>		
<p>DRB ACTION, MARCH 15, 2012: The Board reviewed the draft Design Guidelines and the refinements to the transition zone and pedestrian ramp. The Board provided feedback on each of these topics (see attached notes from 3.15 meeting), but overall they were comfortable with the direction the project was headed.</p> <p>DRB ACTION, FEBRUARY 16, 2012: The Board reviewed further refinements of the transition area, the ramp over Holland Lane, the Limerick Street pass-through and the Design Guidelines. Overall, the Board was pleased with the progress of the design of the transition area and is no longer as concerned with enclosing the area in an atrium space. The ramp proposal over Holland Lane seems to be a better alternative to the ramp landing on the plaza as long as the technical issues can be worked out. The Board liked the direction of the Limerick Street pass-through and indicated that lighting will be a key element of the perforated metal fins. The Board also suggested that the alternatives in the Design Guidelines needed to be narrowed down to two alternatives, which define building envelopes/footprints, maximum building heights and massing.</p> <p>DRB ACTION, JANUARY 19, 2012: The Board reviewed options for tower massing and the transition area. With regard to the tower massing, the Board did not have a strong preference</p>		

for one option over another, but did want to ensure that all of the options provide a greater variety in height and the building tops are well articulated. With regard to the transition area, the Board suggested that the area needed to be better incorporated into the buildings (perhaps carrying it inside the building or extending the building out into the space) and the stairs at the ground level should be more inviting. There was also extensive discussion of the benefits of enclosing all or part of this area in an atrium space to make it useable year-round and also to mitigate the negative aspects of a north slope condition.

DRB ACTION, NOVEMBER 17, 2011: The Board reviewed a draft outline for the Design Guidelines and discussed a process moving forward with the review of the development. The next meeting will be a worksession to discuss design alternatives and further details for the Design Guidelines.

I. OVERVIEW

Over the last several months, the DRB has reviewed the proposal for the Carlyle Plaza development in South Carlyle and provided feedback on the various elements of the project. The applicant is now requesting a formal recommendation for the project prior to going to the Planning Commission and City Council in June. The focus of this meeting will be to review the project as a whole and the associated Design Guidelines that have been developed to guide future development on the site. The DRB's recommendation will be forwarded to Planning Commission and City Council for their consideration.

II. BACKGROUND

Project Evolution

During the South Carlyle planning process in 2011, the South Carlyle property owners (ASA and Carlyle Plaza Two, LLC), their consultants, staff, and the DRB developed a conceptual plan that would address the negative aspects of the ASA facility and the above grade parking for the office and residential development. The plan called for a large area of open space on top of the parking structure that would link with the athletic field above the ASA tanks. The residential and office buildings would have entrances on the elevated open space level as well as street level. A Master Plan Amendment was approved by the City Council in June 2011 which transferred density off the ASA property to the Carlyle Plaza Two property to the north and acknowledged the conceptual plan as a possible application of the transferred density.

After the Master Plan Amendment was approved, the Board reviewed the proposal for the ASA portion of the conceptual plan (Blocks 29 and 30-the southern half of the site). This plan included the athletic field above the tank and the southern ramp entrance to access the field and the future open space on the Carlyle Plaza Two property to the north. The DRB met twice during the summer to refine the plan and it was approved by the City Council in October 2011.

Since the ASA approval, the DRB has met with Carlyle Plaza Two several times to review and refine the proposal for their property (Blocks 26A, 26B, and 28-the northern half of the site). The Board has discussed various components of the plan including the transition zone between the at-grade plaza at Eisenhower Avenue and the elevated open space, the pedestrian ramp location, the massing scenarios for the future buildings, and the design guidelines for the project. Since the site is located within Eisenhower East, the Design Review Board is required to review the proposal and provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council regarding the project.

Site Context

Blocks 26A, 26B, and 28 are the northern and eastern development blocks in the South Carlyle neighborhood. The blocks are bounded by Eisenhower Avenue and the Carlyle development to the north, the proposed Carlyle Plaza One office building and the existing Alexan Carlyle residential building to the west, the proposed ASA expansion property to the south, and the existing ASA facility and Hooff's Run to the east. The total area for all three blocks is 6.23 acres.

Project Description

The proposed plan carries forward the intent of the South Carlyle conceptual plan that the DRB reviewed for the entire South Carlyle area in 2011. The total floor area proposed is 1,387,170 sf, of which 755,114 sf is office floor area and 632,056 sf is residential floor area. The development will consist of a one or two tower office building east of the approved Carlyle Plaza One building, a residential building at the northeastern corner of property, and a residential building to the south, across from the existing Alexan Carlyle building. A portion of the northern residential building may be developed as a hotel. A 4-5 story parking structure connects all of the buildings and includes an open space area on the top. Access to the open space on top of the garage is provided by a pedestrian ramp at the northeast corner of the site on the east side of Holland Lane and through the transition zone between the two northern buildings.

The proposal includes specific details about the parking garage, elevated open space, and the transition zone. Although maximum building footprints have been established, the building details are not included with this application. Instead, Design Guidelines have been created to direct the final design of the buildings including the architectural treatment and heights of the buildings. The applicant is requesting approval of the garage and open space portions of the project, as well as the Design Guidelines. If approved, the Board would review the future buildings at a later date using the Guidelines as guidance.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Transition Zone

Although the conceptual plan is centered on the idea of open space atop the parking garage, the transition zone along Eisenhower Avenue will most likely be the first and most memorable component of the project that the public sees. Providing an inviting and interesting way to access the elevated open space from street level, as well as providing spectacular views to the north and east for people who have arrived at the top of the landscaped deck from the playing field or Eisenhower Park, is crucial to the successful implementation of this plan. The DRB and the applicant have spent several meetings discussing this space and the current proposal is a result of this feedback.

The design for the transition zone consists of a series of stacked biofilter blocks that create a green wall with a water feature. A large staircase at the base invites pedestrians to walk up through the cascading planters to a small event space approximately 20 feet above the plaza. The residential building to the east will be designed to have an entrance onto this space from a mezzanine level. Moving west, a pedestrian will be able to walk between the biofilter blocks to a dramatic open staircase leading to a viewing platform approximately 45 feet above the plaza. The platform is 20 feet wide and angles to the northwest, supported by a pair of expressive three-pronged tubular steel supports that land in the wall and in the plaza near the base of the biofilter blocks. From the platform level, the landscaped open space can be accessed to the south. An elevator will be located within the office building to provide accessible connections to all three levels of the transition zone.

Staff is pleased with the proposed plan for the transition zone, as it addresses many of the comments discussed by staff and the DRB over the last several months. The viewing platform provides a signature element for the site that will be memorable and interesting, while inviting the public to explore. The wide staircase at the plaza level, angled to face pedestrian traffic along John Carlyle Street, is a welcoming feature that will encourage the public to climb the wall and discover the open space above. The water feature, proposed to be supported by reclaimed ASA water, provides another positive and instructional link between the site and the wastewater treatment plant functions to the east. Finally, the biofilters will provide a vegetated, sustainable feature for the site that connects the buildings, the plaza, and the upper open space. Per previous DRB comments, Staff recommends that wayfinding signage be incorporated at the viewing platform to explain the views to the north and the open space to the south. Additionally, the base of the three pronged supports should be carefully designed to provide a substantial and expressive connection between the delicate, flying forms of the steel platform, and the massive, earth forms of the transition zone.

Revised Ramp Location over Holland Lane

Inviting and functional access to the elevated open space is a key element of this plan. The pedestrian/bicycle path provides an alternative to the more tranquil transition zone route. At the southern end, the path will be installed by ASA at the intersection of Limerick and Eisenhower Park Drive, and integrated with the landscape design of the new playing field. At the northern end, the ramp is proposed to cross over to the east side of Holland Lane before touching down on the eastern terminus of the Eisenhower Avenue axis. Originally, the conceptual plan showed a ramp adjacent to the northern residential building on the west side of Holland Lane and ending in the plaza. However, access issues to that building prompted the relocation to the opposite side of the Holland Lane to allow for a layby/drop-off area. The new location successfully solves the access issue while creating a pedestrian ramp that will feel more public, since it is separated from the building. By landing on the east side of Holland Lane, the ramp provides a connection to the existing sidewalk leading into the African American Heritage Park. It also creates a more visible presence on Holland Lane and Eisenhower Avenue which will help highlight the feature and encourage the public to use it.

The ramp is 14 feet wide at the landing, which is the maximum size the landing can be given its location within an existing RPA. The ramp crosses over Holland Lane south of the existing (north) entrance bridge to the ASA plant. It is carried across Holland Lane and most of the RPA on three-pronged support structures similar to those used in the viewing platform on the transition zone. The railing along the ramp also matches the railing proposed at the platform, which further relates this element to the larger design. This design approach not only ties both circulation features together, but also allows the path to touch down as gently as possible on the RPA.

Staff is comfortable with the direction the design of this feature is headed. Pulling it away from the building is a significant improvement that solves the building access issues, and relating materials and detailing of the ramp with the materials used in the transition zone helps tie the project together. The applicant should continue to refine the design of the landing area to ensure that it is integrated into the existing sidewalk and provides a welcoming presence for the ramp.

Additionally, per previous DRB comments, wayfinding signage should be included at the base of the ramp to explain what can be discovered atop the deck.

Design Guidelines

Since the buildings have not been designed at this point, the applicant has drafted a set of Design Guidelines to direct the future design of the buildings that are part of this project. If approved by the City Council, the DRB would have regulatory authority to approve the building design per the Design Guidelines. The DRB has reviewed the Guidelines at several of their meetings and have provided feedback to strengthen the language.

The latest draft of the Design Guidelines (dated April 2, 2012) responds to many of the comments provided by the DRB, as well as staffs comments. A conceptual diagram providing an overview of the project has been included to provide a graphic representation of the principal ideas that inform the project. The architectural intent section has been expanded to provide separate guidelines for each building type (i.e. residential or commercial) and additional images have been added to illustrate positive aspects to emulate and negative features to avoid. The bulk diagram showing building locations has been clarified to show the maximum tower location zone and applicable heights.

Staff has reviewed the draft Guidelines and is comfortable with the changes that have been made thus far. There are still additional comments that staff recommends being addressed before approval by the City Council to provide further detail. The recommended revisions are included in the conditions for this project.

III. CONCLUSION AND STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, this project has been a successful collaboration between the applicant, the DRB and staff. The improvements that have been made through the DRB process will help ensure that this project is a highly quality development that will be an asset to the City. Staff recommends that the DRB **recommend approval** of the proposal with the following conditions:

1. The base of the platform and path supports that land within the plaza or the RPA shall be carefully designed to provide a substantial and expressive connection between light and heavy structural elements and celebrate the point where structure meets the ground.
2. The design for the pedestrian ramp shall be refined to minimize disturbance and impervious surface in the RPA while providing an inviting landing that seamlessly blends with the existing sidewalk along Holland Lane.
3. Wayfinding signage shall be incorporated at the base of the pedestrian ramp and on the viewing platform.
4. Provide the following revisions to the Design Guidelines:
 - a. Include the ASA tank and field in the Concept diagram on page 6 and the Section C on page 35.

- b. On the Easement diagram on page 9, revise the open space label in the legend to be “Publicly accessible open space”. Also clarify that the street easement is underneath the open space and not over the deck.
- c. On the Land Use diagram on page 9, carry the dashed red line depicting “retail frontage permitted with hotel use” around the NW corner since there may be an option of retail on the transition zone.
- d. Under the Sustainability chapter, clarify that the LEED rating listed is the minimum level. Provide additional graphics and narrative about the sustainable features, such as a proximity to Metro map, a diagram of how the biofiltration will work, a narrative or image of the reclaimed ASA water aspect, and a narrative about a green roof over the parking. The discussion of the green roof shall include its scale and accommodation of multiple uses, together with the character and extensive planting that is envisioned.
- e. On the Open Space Plan–Bicycle Network map on page 14, revise “bike path, alternative” to read “future additional bike path”. Delete the alternative bike path that runs between the ASA main plant and the cemetery. Also, provide more distinction between the colors in the Open Space legend to clarify the different areas.
- f. In the Streetscape section on page 15, include a bullet noting that the design for the Eisenhower Ave streetscape shall be coordinated with the City’s Eisenhower Ave widening project.
- g. In the Transition Zone section on page 16, include a bullet noting that the materials, water features and planting shall provide an engaging and welcoming civic space during all four seasons with adverse microclimate issues that shall be carefully considered and mitigated for.
- h. In the Planting section on page 17, include a bullet noting the trees within the plaza shall be large deciduous species organized to provide light canopy shade to portions of the paved and seating areas. Planting species and location shall be carefully selected to create a beneficial microclimate for users.
- i. In the Site Furnishings section on page 18, include a bullet noting that seating and site furnishings shall be a visually compatible design family
- j. In the Water Features section on page 18, remove “if employed”. Water features are a key element to the design of the transition zone and shall be included.
- k. Within the Architectural Intent section, include guidelines that address a hotel use combined with a residential building.
- l. On page 24, provide additional or different commercial architecture images which better reflect the massing that is being proposed. For a distinctive form consider using the PTO atrium as an image.
- m. Update the Tower Location Zone and Building Heights diagram on page 30 to show the ramp along Holland Lane.
- n. Provide a separate diagram showing the entrances from the buildings/garage onto the transition zone.
- o. Revise the last note on page 31 to read “Upper level connection of office towers *may be considered*”.
- p. Provide a bullet point on page 34 that discusses treatment of the parking levels within the building at the green deck level. Provide a green line along the eastern wall of the office building in the Parking, Service and Loading diagram on page 35 to show that

- the parking level at the open space elevation will be screened, and illustrate examples of proposed screening techniques.
- q. On page 35, correct the location of the Section C arrows on the diagram to relate to the section provided below.
 - r. Include a Phasing Plan that identifies what portions of the open space would be constructed with each building.
 - s. In the Interim Conditions – Landscape/Plantings section, include more detail on the size of any interim plantings and a narrative which verifies installations shall be according to nursery industry standards, e.g. staking and planting depths. Also, include a narrative that verifies the landscape shall be actively maintained during the interim period, including irrigation, pruning, weeding etc.

DRB – March 15, 2012

Carlyle Plaza Two

Design Guidelines

- Clarify the orientation for all plans with a note and/or North arrow, and try to maintain consistent orientation.
- Provide more information/flesh out the discussion of sustainability, including green roofs and water reuse.
- Building Massing Guidelines - Use a different term and graphic for tower location to clarify that this represents the maximum size/envelope of the footprint.
- Consider moving building massing after architectural intent to set up the goals of the architecture first.
- The guidelines should have a general diagram/parti and/or section that shows the main idea for the project early on in the document.
- Provide more pictures of tower tops which show greater differentiation between residential/hotel and office towers.
- The current examples show tower tops with a strong horizontal datum or “cap”; also include example top designs that show a much stronger verticality.
- Include pictures of what we don’t want for tower tops and materials – specifically addressing that these buildings do not need to meet the 50/50 ratio for glazing.
- Loading location for office – according to the applicant there is no other location for this function. Board suggested extending the paving material and pattern from the corner plaza across the entrance to minimize the appearance.

Transition Zone

- Discussed the enlarged platform at the top with a seating area and elevator access/connection at ground, middle, and upper area of transition zone.
- Need to focus on what happens at upper platform (programming) and how seating is provided.
- Larger space at the end of the platform makes sense.
- Explore whether the secondary bridge under platform should be reinstated; it seemed to give the viewing platform more presence as a whole.
- Study ways to reintroduce a stronger vertical component as part of the flying platform: the previous elevator played a key role in this regard; this could be a larger structural component, a spiral or square stairway, a lighting feature or other element that appears integral to the design.
- Applicant will continue refining the design for the next meeting.

Alternate Ramp

- Need some wayfinding solutions to better tie the upper and lower pieces together and to show ramp is a part of a larger system.
- Explore carrying the paving and landscaping from the plaza across Holland Lane to the ramp. Also carry the paving through the drop-off area for Residential 1.
- Structural supports and fencing for the ramp should relate to other elements in the transition zone – specifically, the “flying platform” and the ramp should have related

design elements so that they clearly relate to each other and frame the transition area and Residential 1.

- Explore whether the trail width could vary along the length of the ramp.
- Clarify the materials for the ramp.

Eisenhower East / Carlyle Blocks

