



WORKSESSION
Design Review Board Case #2017-0006
Hoffman Town Center – Blocks 4 & 5

Application	General Data	
Project Name: Hoffman Town Center Blocks 4 & 5 Location: 2410 and 2460 Mill Road Applicant: StonebridgeCarras	DRB Date:	November 16, 2017
	Site Area:	5.08 acres
	Zone:	CDD#2
	Proposed Use:	Residential, Retail
	Gross Floor Area:	1,034,931 sf
Purpose of Application:		
DRB Concept review of the Hoffman Town Center mixed-use retail and residential complex scheduled for public hearings in January 2018 (Stage 1).		
Staff Reviewers: Thomas H. Canfield, AIA tom.canfield@alexandriava.gov Robert Kerns, AICP, robert.kerns@alexandriava.gov Gary Wagner, RLA, gary.wagner@alexandriava.gov Nathan Imm, nathan.imm@alexandriava.gov Bill Cook, william.cook@alexandriava.gov		
<p>DRB ACTION, NOVEMBER 16, 2017: The applicant presented the project submission and subsequent revisions made.</p> <p>Senior Building: Architecture was shown for the first time and the board was pleased overall with the clear architectural direction of a simple grid pattern and warehouse feel. Garage treatments along the building facade and immediately west were received favorably.</p> <p>Podium: The DRB advised exploring more openness and simplification on the upper levels on the eastern facade. The applicant agreed to work on simplifying the upper level composition of the “southern hyphen” along the south anchor tenant frontage. The board and applicant discussed the possibility of eliminating the cream brick treatment at the northwest corner of the podium in lieu of continuing the checkerboard masonry pattern facing Mill Road, and the applicant agreed to discuss the matter internally and with the prospective tenant. An affordable housing building atop the podium at the southeast corner is being considered, which would require DRB review in the future.</p> <p>Condo: Some board members were concerned with the applique effect of the dark vertical treatment of the condo tower on the western facade and directed the applicant to consider better engagement with the building.</p> <p>Landscape: Members questioned the number of pathways, and emphasized the importance of</p>		

lighting on the proposed podium landscape design. The board also suggested exploring a more continuous landscape in lieu of individual separated private terraces, and was concerned about podium amenities being accessible to all residents. It was discussed that an alternate version of the landscape plan would be required in the event that the affordable housing building is implemented.

DRB ACTION, JULY 20, 2017: The Eisenhower East Design Review Board (DRB) unanimously voted to approve the general site plan, building placement and massing. Overall the board was pleased with the development of several aspects of the project such as the brick face of the mid-rise portion of the rental apartment building and revisions to that facade. The board provided feedback regarding several issues to be further addressed by the next DRB submission. Members directed the applicant to simplify and strengthen the lantern features on the sides of the plaza, and explore ways to simplify the architectural treatments used around the base of the plaza. The board was concerned that the renderings and public art placeholder did not convey the vision for the plaza that has been verbally presented by the applicant, and was also concerned that the proximity of parking at the corners could have visual impacts. The DRB suggested addressing the parapet treatment of the podium on the southwest and west facades to reduce visual bulk, and asked the applicant to clarify what glazing was open and what was in the form of vitrines. Open garage facades along Mill Road were a concern and the DRB encouraged further development of the podium façade to better transition with the adjacent senior building. The applicant agreed that senior building architecture would be further developed for the next meeting, and the board also suggested simplifying the high-rise portion of the rental apartment building. The board looks forward to more details about rooftop programming and landscaping, and advised the applicant to consider rooftop all-weather accessibility between the senior building and elevator tower to the plaza.

DRB ACTION, MAY 18, 2017: The applicant was advised to further develop the plaza layout and strengthen the entry element of the rental apartments. The DRB gave further direction that the frame of the Mandeville apartment building façade should continue to develop, and that parking levels on this façade be carefully considered. The Board discussed different possible façade treatments along parts of Mill Road where the building housed mechanical elements, and directed the applicant to bring developed massing for the remaining tower for discussion at the July DRB hearing.

DRB ACTION, MARCH 23, 2017: The DRB directed the applicant to explore expanding the plaza and studying asymmetry within, and to reduce the number of architectural materials and expressions. The Board directed the applicant to bring the rental apartment building façade on Mandeville to the ground, while engaging with the street-level retail to form a consistent vertical pattern.

DRB ACTION, JANUARY 19, 2017: The DRB reviewed the overall plan, provided feedback, and directed the applicant to demonstrate the relationship of the towers to the podium, explore ways to provide a varied streetwall by modulating the podium mass, and show how the towers will meet the ground. The Board further directed the applicant to develop a conceptual design for the plaza, show retail uses at the ground level, and show how above grade parking will be screened and integrated into the building design.

I. OVERVIEW

StonebridgeCarras is requesting a Design Review Board work session to review the overall direction and progress of the architecture and landscape plans for the Hoffman Town Center Block 4 & 5 project. This project has been discussed before the DRB four times this year (January, March, May and July). As a result of the DRB's comments at these meetings, the applicant has continued to refine plans, and has been meeting with staff as plans develop.

II. BACKGROUND

Project Evolution

Blocks 4 and 5 have been undeveloped and serving as surface parking lots. In the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan, Block 4 is designated for future office and retail, and Block 5 is designated for future residential and retail. A Master Plan Amendment is required to permit the proposed retail and residential uses for both blocks. Public hearings for the amendment are scheduled for January, 2018, and would constitute a Stage I approval for the use and density changes.

The site development plan review process has been split into two stages in accordance with the process for Hoffman properties in Eisenhower East per a settlement agreement of December, 2004. Development Special Use Permit- Stage 1 (DSUP2016-0043) has been scheduled for public hearings in January, 2018. Stage 2 of the plan (DSUP2017-0023) has been submitted for completeness review and public hearings are tentatively scheduled for March, 2018.

Site Context

Blocks 4 and 5 encompass 5.08 acres (221,238 square feet) located south of Mill Road, east of Stovall Street, and north and west of Mandeville Lane. Swamp Fox Road was originally envisioned to bisect Blocks and 4 and 5, but the current proposal would eliminate this right of way, leaving the site as a single, large block. Railroad tracks parallel Mill Road north of the project site, while Telegraph Road and associated ramps are located one block west of the site, and the Hoffman Town Center collector garage fronts it on the east.

Existing adjacent development is found south of Mandeville Lane on Blocks 6a, 6b, and 6c, known as the Hoffman Town Center, and consisting of an office building and numerous restaurants. The AMC Hoffman Center 22 movie theatre is located southeast of the subject properties across Mandeville Lane and Swamp Fox Road. The Eisenhower Avenue Metro station is located approximately 900 feet to the south on Swamp Fox Road and south of Eisenhower Avenue.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project currently consists of three residential buildings atop a podium encompassing the project footprint. The podium rises to 64 feet above street level and features five total levels in

various configurations of retail uses totaling 210,503 square feet, and primarily above-ground parking totaling 1,541 spaces.

The three residential buildings are proposed as three types of residential uses. A condominium building oriented north-south along the Stovall Street frontage is located on the west side of the project, rises 10-stories above the podium (172 feet above grade), and provides a total of 130 units.

In the center of the project is a U-shaped apartment complex that is six stories above the podium along Mandeville Lane, increasing to 12-stories in the center of the site and along the Mill Road frontage. There are 405 apartment units proposed, with the structures totaling 121 feet and 180 feet above grade respectively. The eastern side of the project proposes a senior living building primarily fronting on Mill Road, with 215 units in twelve stories above the podium rising to a total height of 180 feet above grade. There is a fourth building currently under consideration, which would be a six story, affordable housing development, built on top of the podium along the east end of Mandeville Lane.

A 19,160 square foot (.44 ac) plaza is located north of where Swamp Fox Road is proposed to terminate at Mandeville Lane. Retail uses are proposed to front onto the plaza. Site amenities include seating, landscaping, shade structures, special paving, other site furnishings, and a place holder for public art and a plaza-level focal point. Open spaces on the podium roof are provided as amenities for the residential uses, but that programming for those spaces is still being studied.

IV. STAFF ANALYSIS

It has been four months since the project last appeared before the DRB in July, 2017. Staff and the applicant are now meeting every two weeks as the project moves closer to public hearings and multiple phases of city review.

Between the last DRB hearing in July and the current submission, interim design changes were submitted by email to DRB members for comment in August. These changes were responses to comments and requests from the DRB hearing and action on July 20, 2017. Changes to the Mill Road Senior Building façade and adjacent podium are noted below. Revisions to the Plaza include simplification of the "lantern" fenestration pattern and adjacent cornice details, deletion of some window trim from the adjacent residential building, revision of the public art placeholder, and the addition of rendered details such as signage, retail storefronts, landscaping, and human activity.

Staff has evaluated the current submission and recently met with the applicant to give feedback and to discuss progress. Comments are summarized as follows.

Building Design

General Comments – All Towers

- Establish clear, individual character for each building.
- Differentiate balcony designs for variety and interest.
 - Look at use of asymmetry in balcony and railing design, and projecting balconies through adjacent openings.
- Fully integrate penthouse geometry into building massing.

Affordable Housing Building

Discussions are ongoing with the Office of Housing and other city departments regarding affordable housing contributions associated with this project. A City preferred possibility is the provision of a pad site on the podium to accommodate a six-story building with approximately 75 units, to be constructed and financed by a nonprofit affordable housing provider. The subject area is in the southeast corner of the property, fronting on Mandeville Lane to the south and the Hoffman Town Center collector garage to the east. A new structure would be an addition to the project massing and scale, for which the DRB has already given approval. Therefore, any additional structure will require DRB review.

Additionally, staff recommends the following for future DRB submission(s):

- Show massing and height of proposed building.
- Show points of access, lobby, access to podium amenities and loading area.
- Consider connecting to retail service corridor on Level 1 for access to loading.
- Exterior materials and façade design must be in conformance with the Eisenhower East Design Guidelines (EEDG).
- Integrate into a simplified approach to the architecture surrounding the plaza.
- Carry building façade expression to the ground.

Senior Building at Mill

Since the July submission the design has evolved slightly, first presented in the August interim submission and reflected in the current submission. Previously one side of the senior building base was coplanar and shared façade treatments with the adjacent garage and retail levels to the west. The current design shows further development of a vertical column expression in the senior tower that meets the ground, with a vertical plane change between the tower and adjacent podium. The garage entrance has shifted east, and a more defined retail entry area is placed west of the garage entrance. Garage deck openings have been revised.

The senior building still requires detailed resolution of the architecture and fenestration. Staff discussed possible citywide precedents with the applicant featuring designs with larger glass/solid ratio, simplified color and massing. Additionally, staff recommends the following for future DRB submission(s):

- Bring mullions through garage openings to integrate the fenestration of the facade of the building mid-section with the base.
- Study shadow boxes or vitrines at ground level with artwork/lighting to eliminate blank masonry panels along pedestrian walkway.
- Corner architecture (at least) must come to ground and be integrated into building form.

- Rooftop and penthouse design must be resolved and integrated.
- EEDG must be followed and building will undergo future DRB review.

Exposed Garage

Related to garage area referenced above, staff additionally recommends that the applicant:

- Consider fully exposed garage segments where allowed on “C” street frontages to achieve a greater setback and stronger break between façade sections. Eliminate masonry cladding and utilize stained concrete and cable railing system for greatest setback and maximum airflow. Staff provided sketches to the applicant with suggested locations for simplification.
- At the above locations as well as elsewhere around the landscaped deck, study setting back the landscaped deck above the 5th parking level. Eliminate cladding and recess upper deck edge and associated railings located at the rear edge of planters to reduce the visual bulk of the podium, provide more varied heights, and soften the visual impact of the podium generally.

Parking in the upper podium levels fronting on the Plaza has been an ongoing concern. Staff recommends that four locations fronting the Plaza on garage levels 4 and 5 incorporate full-glass shadow box, with finished, accessible and maintainable space, clear glazing and coordinated lighting and graphics strategy. A sketch by staff was provided and discussed with the applicant. Staff also suggested the applicant consider incorporating the wide unused areas currently shown on parking levels 4 and 5 along the north wall facing the plaza into this effort, or combine it with the proposed artwork to enhance its visual impact.

Multi-Family at Mandeville

Staff recommends that the contrasting vertical wide mullions in white previously shown be reinstated, and that a contemporary balcony design, differentiated from other buildings be studied.

Condominium

Staff suggested and provided manufacturer details for a limestone-like masonry unit to be used for the condominium and major grocer base expression. A local project using the material was cited by staff. Additionally, staff offers the following comments for future consideration:

- Consider shifting loading and trash access for the condominium to the retail service corridor on level one, instead of the current access on Level 5. This will allow for additional parking and greatly improved ventilation on Level 5, which may in turn permit more glass in other critical garage facades (such as at the senior tower)
- Penthouses in the current submission have lost some clarity compared to previous submission, due to changes in height of some elements.

Large Multi-Family

Staff discussed with the applicant possibilities for further simplifying the design.

- Reduce colors to two; omit the chocolate colored center core.

- Create larger multi-window groupings to simplify façade pattern.
- Omit the projecting white brick window trim if it is kept on Condo and Mandeville buildings.
- Integrate roof and penthouse forms strongly. Sample sketch of one approach to achieve this was provided by staff to applicant.
- Consider a color scheme that provides better differentiation from the adjacent condo building (for example, primary red/secondary light gray).

Mill Road Base

The base expression spanning the western half of the Mill Road podium façade has changed since the July submission. In lieu of the former metal grid panel pattern, the revised design is a similar pattern in contrasting colored masonry.

For this façade and its extension that wraps the corner to the northeast corner of Stovall Street, staff recommends consideration of a strong rusticated masonry base reminiscent of historic infrastructure or industrial buildings. Required openings for mechanical functions could be integrated into the pattern, which could be simpler than the previous or current proposals for this element.

Landscaping and Open Space

This is the first DRB submission to show conceptual programming and design for the podium rooftop. The design shows a network of curvilinear paths and landscaped berms that define active and passive spaces and serve as screening buffers. Planning and Zoning, Transportation and Environmental Services, and the applicant have had several meetings and examined product samples to arrive at an acceptable materials palette and pattern to use in the plaza extension into the Mandeville Lane right-of-way.

In a recent meeting with the applicant, discussion focused on the following:

- Consider placing select amenities closer to the podium-level lobby entries, to give each building a sense of a connected outdoor living room, in addition to common social spaces shown between buildings.
- Provide an alternative landscape plan that shows the affordable housing building and adjusts the program and design of the podium landscape accordingly.
- Consider consolidating dog parks and other small amenity areas into larger usable spaces, with access from all buildings shown.
- Further develop the program and refine the public/private-screening configuration to maximize use of open space.

Staff offers the following additional comments for consideration:

- A connection is shown through the central apartment building that implies that the entire podium landscape is accessible to all residents. Staff supports this concept, but the architecture should reflect this connection, and the accessibility extent or limits should be clarified in the documentation.

- Demonstrate what areas of the podium roof are contributing to storm water management vs. what areas are primarily ornamental.
- Create a stronger gradient effect in the paving pattern as it transitions from roadway to plaza.

Compliance with the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and Design Guidelines

A summary outlining compliance with the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and Design Guidelines was featured in the July 2017 DRB report for this project. There have been no significant changes and the project largely complies. Staff will provide an updated summary of how this project complies with the intent of the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and Design Guidelines when the project next anticipates a DRB vote.

V. CONCLUSION

Status of Previous Comments

Issues identified in the July DRB action, and their status as of the current submission:

Addressed

- Plaza lantern features simplified.
- Plaza base architecture simplified.
- Podium and parapet on grocery façade revised with more glazing, less visual bulk.
- Better senior building podium transition.

Unaddressed or Work In Progress

- Parking screening and visibility at plaza corners, requested shadowbox additions.
- Public art placeholder still insufficient.
- Clarify full glazing vs. vitrines.
- Senior building architecture needs further development.
- Simplification of the large multi-family building tower façade.
- Rooftop landscaping and programming. Podium concept (only) presented.

For Next DRB Submission

In the current submission, the applicant has provided a detailed list of proposed materials, but some of these are keyed into building elevations that have yet to be drawn or reviewed. For this reason, staff asks the applicant to present physical materials in order to achieve general direction from the DRB, but notes that any final material approvals cannot occur until after the project architecture has been completely reviewed and approved by the DRB.

In order to further this effort, staff notes the following areas that need additional study/resolution prior to the next DRB review:

- Detailed architecture of senior tower, including its relationship to grade.
- Presentation of massing and architectural direction for affordable housing component, if proposed.
- Redesign of NW podium base at Stovall-Mill corner.
- Redesign of exposed garage hyphens.
- Redesign of shadowbox elements fronting the plaza.
- Refinements to tower facades and penthouses as discussed above.
- Restudy of loading solutions for condominium and affordable housing towers.

Eisenhower East / Carlyle Blocks

