



Meeting Summary
February 9, 2022

Attendance

Panel Members: Robert Gorman, Chair
Ethan Marchant, Vice Chair
Dan Lovette
Fred Marino
Larry Quarrick
Vivian Stone

DPZ Staff: Anthony Cataldo and Melissa Maloney

1. **Call to Order** – DAP Chair Robert Gorman opened the meeting at 7:09 p.m.
2. **Review of Plan No. 22-05 Lakefront Residential North, Columbia, MD**
Applicants and Presenters:
Owner/Developer: Gabe Chung (Howard Hughes Corporation)
Civil Engineer: Dan Sweeney and Carl Gutschick (GLW)
Architects: Gary Handel (Handel Architects LLP), Bruno Weber (KPMB Architects), Ryan Kautz (Hord Coplan Macht)
Landscape: Brandon Biederman (Port Urbanism)
Land Use Attorney: Todd Brown

Background

The project is comprised of multiple parcels to be constructed in phases around the new Wincopin Street. Parcels A, B, D1, D2, and E are all zoned NT. The existing parcels will have frontage along Wincopin Street in the Lakefront Neighborhood section of Downtown Columbia. Parcels A, B, and E have frontage and access along Road A and Parcels D1, and E have frontage along Road B. The NT zoning accommodates pedestrian oriented, urban activity centers, with a mix of uses.

Applicant Presentation

Overall

The natural setting of the Lakefront Neighborhood is an inspiration for health and wellness for the neighborhood. Adjacent to the site is Lake Kittamaqundi, the stream and the lake trail network which are great assets to this project and Columbia. The project location is part of a central network of trail systems and civic amenities. The future medical office building, Whole Foods and Lakefront Plaza are just south of the site. East-West connectors will be established at Warfield and Symphony Overlook. The connector at Warfield moves through the Neighborhood Square, a community gathering space, and Wincopin Green sits between parcel B and E, just to the south and acts as a mid-block connector to Wincopin Extended and Road A. The expansion of the street network will better connect the neighborhood to the mall and lakefront. The existing site is underutilized and predominantly paved.

The three buildings (A, D2, and B), the Neighborhood Square, Warfield Promenade, Wincopin streetscape and an intermediate Wincopin Green will be part of phase 1.

Parking

The grade slope from west to east is significant and the buildings are interconnected and built into the grade. Parking will run continuously under building D2, Wincopin Circle and building B and is hidden as much as possible.

Landscape

Concept

The concept of this site is 'urban' (mall to the west) vs. 'wild' (stream, lake and trail system to the east) and has influenced the planting strategy and materials. The planting on the urban side will have a low massing with canopy trees above with more of a refined edge and orthogonal geometry. The natural side will be more textural and layered to give more diversity with rough edges and playful geometric shapes. The four amenity spaces include Wincopin Street (pedestrian oriented street which can be closed), Neighborhood Square (public space), Wincopin Green (local neighborhood park) and Warfield Promenade (multi-use formal pathway that connects to Little Patuxent Parkway).

Plantings\Seating

The applicant will be using native species from the Piedmont Plateau and the mid-Atlantic Coastal plain to create a biodiverse ecology and bring the ravine feel up into the site. When selecting trees, the applicant looked at tree form, leaf structure and fall color. On the western, urban side, the applicant will be a planting large massing of ground cover and the eastern wild side will be more textural and have seasonal interest. In the garden terraced zone there will be a dense understory with herbaceous layers and on the lawn, specimen trees with an ornamental understory will be planted to allow for shade. All trees will be native and approved by MDE and Howard County.

The Neighborhood Square will include wood integrated seating as well as brightly colored loose furniture. The Wincopin Green will be a neighborhood park with integrated seating, a trellis for shade, and an open lawn space for play or fitness, but will be fully developed with building E in a future phase to include a winding path and dog park. Plantings will include an understory ground cover and a few smaller trees.

Circulation\Streetscape

Wincopin Extended is a pedestrian oriented street and traffic for parking and service will be moved to the servicing areas on the perimeter streets. The applicant advised that all primary access will be ADA accessible and the Neighborhood Square will have a sloped walkway with less than 5% grade, terraces, different seating elements and a flexible lawn.

The applicant advised that they are exceeding or meeting all requirements for the street neighborhood design guidelines. Pavers and planters will be used to define the vehicular and pedestrian zones. Catenary street lighting will make the space feel like an amenity, especially when the street is closed. Canopy trees will be able to provide shade and visual interest. The sidewalks will have generous sidewalks. A unified approach will be taken, but the pavers and furniture will reflect the urban vs. wild concept.

The entry and bistro plazas will face each other at the entrance to Wincopin to make an activated area.

Architecture

Garage

The intent is to create a pedestrian friendly environment while still allowing for cars. Taking advantage of the grade change the applicants have developed one continuous level of parking hidden from view that is underneath parcels B & D and Wincopin Circle. Access points to the garage have been moved to the perimeter of the project and minimized and there are no curb cuts to allow for points of entry for vehicles or truck loading.

Parcel A

Parcel A is located on the northern most parcel and is flanked by 3 roads – Wincopin Extended, Sterrett Place and Road A. Building A consists of a 6-story bar massing that will include internal parking, servicing, amenity spaces and townhomes with individual terraces at the base with green space on the roof. A tower massing is aligned with the northern edge of the neighborhood square and is 13 stories tall and 145 feet high. The material will be brick and will include a 2-story glazed entrance and amenity space. The podium along Sterrett Place and Road A is clad with crimped, perforated metal screen, trees and stepped planters. Loading and servicing has been internalized with one entrance from Road A. Regarding the floorplan, larger bedroom units are placed at the corners and smaller 1 bedroom and 1 bedroom + den units are placed in between.

Parcel D2

Building D2 is an 8-story, U-shaped, mixed-use building with 13,000 square feet of retail at the base and 292 residential units above. The building is in a prominent location next to Wincopin Green. The rectangular boxes seen on the roof are tower forms in the front of the building that look out onto the two parks. The building presents urban street frontage, but on the westside opens to the residential courtyard. The courtyard sits on top of 4 levels of parking, 3 above grade and 1 below grade that connects to the other buildings. The parking has been wrapped almost entirely on all sides of the building and areas that are not wrapped are concealed as much as possible with the building coming down to the ground and the use of architectural metal screens.

The towers have a raised height to draw your eyes upward and include recessed balconies at the top levels. A restaurant and outdoor seating area will be at the base of the tower to activate the pedestrian experience. In between the 2 towers with lighter façade include the primary residential entry lobby and amenity space and will have a more playful, horizontal expression compared to the vertical strength for the tower elements. For materiality the applicants are considering a mix of neutrals with dark and light bricks in the tower and main body elements and infilled with charcoal and gray neutral colored metal panels and spandrels with accent colors of warm wood tones. Retail will wrap around the base and the building lobby will be directly across from the lobby of building B. The garage is concealed behind the retail and there is a pedestrian connection that passes through the left side of the retail to allow quick access. The service area and the garage entrance are located as far away from the pedestrian activity as possible and trucks will be fully enclosed inside the building. The trash service will be handled on level P1 below grade. The units wrap the courtyard and pool which face west to maximize sunlight.

Parcel B

The 9-story Building B is located between Wincopin Green, the Neighborhood Square and Wincopin and will have 8 floors of 208 residential units. The warm, earth tone building has an open C shaped plan and a more randomized façade with eastern wings organized in a series of steps to soften the profile into the lakefront neighborhood. The base of the building is a high ground floor and with the remaining 8 residential stories broken up into 2 story elements with the staggered bay window-like corners fronting on the north and south ends of the project.

The applicant is considering using wood-like Trespa panels with vertical fins to provide some sun shading. The panels and windows will be different sizes to create a pattern along the façade with the

larger windows for living rooms and the smaller windows for bedrooms to create variation and a softer, more natural look. The ground floor will be occupied by pedestrian friendly uses including commercial retail, with a bike entrance, leasing office (serving all 3 buildings) and a lobby.

Staff Presentation

Site 22-05 is located within the Columbia Lakefront Neighborhood and is subject to review according to the Lakefront Neighborhood Design Guidelines. This site includes a variety of New Town zoned parcels (A, B, D1, D2 and E) that have frontage along Wincopin Street, new public streets and public spaces. DPZ would like DAP to focus on the transitions, proposed streetscapes, the public open and amenity spaces that may be designed in relation to the new buildings. Regarding the building architecture, comments related to the size, scale, massing and materiality of the projects would be appreciated as well as any comments or ideas to further advance the design and overall architecture.

DAP Questions and Comments

Site Design

Art

DAP asked if any art such as sculpture or murals will be incorporated into the parks and if there will be community involvement with the selections.

The applicant responded that there is a public art component, but they are still refining how that will be implemented.

Circulation

DAP commented that Wincopin Green drastically terminates at a service road and noted there is also a 20+ foot drop crossing the service road to the ravine. DAP asked what that connection will look like in the future and what is the timeline. DAP also commented that the zig zag path that cuts through the green will act as a channel and asked if that presents any concerns in the interim with the flow of people.

The applicant responded that the intent of the design guidelines is to bring people down from the mall and Warfield neighborhoods to the natural area. There will be integrated seating and amenity pop outs including café tables with umbrellas for residents and community members to make this a place people want to be and not just a pass through. Howard Hughes intends to fulfill the connection to the trail and has been in conversation with Columbia Association and this will be a big focus going forward.

DAP inquired if bus stop areas have been thought about since many people won't have cars.

The applicant responded that the bus stops will be coordinated with the county and may be more accessible along Little Patuxent Parkway.

DAP inquired if there are any areas for kids.

Bailey Playground is north of the Whole Foods neighborhood. Also, Wincopin Green between Parcel B and E will be smaller with program space for different uses such as a children's play area and a dog park.

Architecture

Building A

DAP commented that Building A seems to have very few balconies even though there are nice views of the woods from that location.

The applicant responded that all 4 corners of the tower elements have balconies and the units in between as well as the bar-building have French doors and small step outs.

DAP commented that they liked Building A, and felt this is the most challenging site, but it was addressed well. DAP liked the fact that it doesn't have a base, middle and top and has a very articulated, vertical element with the tower nested into the bar building.

DAP inquired what the green area on the roof will be used for as well as the lobby space that fronts the neighborhood green and commented that they wished there was some retail presence in this building. DAP recommended creating a compilation of all the ground floors for the 3 buildings to identify where all the activity zones and retail will be located.

The applicant responded that Building A will have no retail and the group decided to concentrate the retail in the center of the plan. Regarding the 2-story glazed expression, the large portion will be the entry lobby and the rest will be amenity space that can accommodate larger groups and spill out onto the Neighborhood Square. The second amenity area is on the rooftop of the garage and will have a chef's kitchen, gym, etc. that can spill out onto the roof. The upper roof of the bar building is proposed to have food safety programs and gardening for the residents.

Building D2

Overall

DAP commented that they have a good feel for the scale, massing and proportions as well as the playfulness of the elevations. This is a good architectural transition to an urban feel for suburban Columbia.

Elevators

DAP commented that there seems to be a lack of vertical circulation in the buildings, especially in D2 where there is only 1 elevator bank (with 2 elevators). This will be difficult for residents to carry groceries in from the parking lot to their units. DAP recommended having more than 2 elevators and possibly spreading them out.

The applicant advised they have thought a lot about the location of the elevators and did want to centralize the elevators in the building to be more efficient. It was noted that the service elevator could be used as well.

DAP inquired if an elevator study was done and understands grouping the elevators together to be more cost effective, but elevators do breakdown sometimes and it would be beneficial to determine how many are needed and their location.

The applicant advised that an elevator analysis was done, and it showed the current set up to be adequate.

Loading\Unloading

DAP recommended having an unloading zone for residents to unload their groceries before parking their cars.

The applicant advised they liked the idea of drop off zones near the core for passengers and items.

DAP inquired if the applicant had considered the loading and unloading areas for the commercial sites. Drivers will not want to go around the back of the buildings to park their truck and then deliver to the front of the buildings.

The applicant advised that the drop zones will be large enough to accommodate delivery trucks and there will be access from the loading docks to the storage lockers.

DAP inquired how the applicants will handle all the delivery trucks that will be coming to the area and if there are dedicated pull offs in front of each building or specific loading zones.

The applicant advised this has been discussed and know that it is a large concern since this is a pedestrian focused area. The 3 architects have worked collaboratively using the road system for Road A and B around the perimeter to allow a bigger loading area within that zone. They want the delivery drivers to use the perimeter streets to access the building and deliver to the package locker system. There will be 2 car spaces out front of each building to accommodate uber drivers picking up and dropping off people.

Outdoor Cafe

DAP inquired if there is adequate space on the corner to accommodate for the outdoor café when you factor in planting and walking zones.

The applicant advised there is a bit of a setback on the corner to allow for the café. The applicant also stated that there is a planting strip with a raised planter to make this an elevated seating area with 19 feet in depth which should accommodate 20 tables spaced apart to create a dynamic outdoor area.

Building B

Overall

DAP commented and had discussions regarding the verticality of the building. Some found it overwhelming and ominous and recommended adding a dark element or slight setback to break it up. Other panel members found it beautiful and Rouse inspired. The backside of the building is elegant, open and airy with the stepped down terraces and open courtyard. The light, simple pallet with vertical pieces, different size windows and having the elements unaligned creates a water-like feel to the design. DAP commented that they wanted to make sure the design wasn't foreboding and commented that the stepped massing and view showcased the elegance of the design.

The applicant responded that the goal of this building was to create something that was not urban or suburban, but to make a natural connection. The light panels are made of Trespa (70% recycled wood fiber panel made from sustainable forests) which has a wood look to create a unique Scandinavian inspired building in the spirit of the Rouse building.

The DAP member commented that the backside is a very compelling elevation and recommended that other 3 sides facing the public investigate a little bit of additional articulation to capture the essence of this elevation.

Parking\Circulation

DAP inquired if most of the parking for Building B is underneath building D2 as there is only 1 level of parking underneath B.

The applicant advised they are looking at the allocation of the spaces throughout the project, but spillover will be under Wincopin. It will be a shared parking space for B, D2 and some commercial uses.

Regarding vehicular circulation, DAP advised there is a huge opportunity to create an uber loop inside the garages to blur the boundaries between the exterior and interior urban experiences.

Retail

DAP liked how retail was sprinkled throughout the street instead of being consolidated. The issue with a pedestrian street is that residents will enter the garages and disappear underground and go to their apartments so anything that can be done to celebrate the street life is beneficial.

DAP asked if there are any retail components in the bottom of B and A. The neighborhood retail will help keep the street fronts and sidewalks active.

The applicant advised there will be a substantial amount of retail in Building B and possibly a café on the corner fronting Wincopin. There is also a larger area that the applicant is working with Howard Hughes to add a community focused tenant as a destination anchor. Buildings A & D are dealing with more constrained sites.

The bike room on the ground floor will be an amenity with work tables where bike experts could give talks on bike tune ups.

Overall Architectural Design

DAP commented that it is intriguing to have 3 design teams create 3 unique buildings with a cohesive vision that are transitional, contemporary and edgy. Columbia started off as an edgy architectural town with 2 early Frank Gehry buildings and it is good to keep pushing the eclecticism.

DAP recommended that the applicants consider the view from Route 29 in the design, especially Parcels B and D2. This could be a huge selling point for the district with a collage of different apertures and lights between the different buildings at night. The back view from the Columbia Mall should also be considered.

DAP inquired if all these units will be rentals.

The applicant advised these will be rental units. Howard Hughes feels there is a strong demand for them with this type of environment and want this to be inclusionary and fill a need for affordable housing in Columbia.

Landscape

DAP commented that they feel the applicants have done a great job and this will become a destination that people will want to visit that is dynamic and beautiful.

DAP commented that it is great to see the details of the plan and likes the use of native plant materials but cautioned that the term “wild” may be interpreted as lack of maintenance by the public and it may be better to use “natural realm” instead.

DAP asked if the street trees will have planting zones around them since trees planted in tree wells do not do as well as in an open planted environment.

The applicant advised that they are working with Silva Cell to create an underground rain garden storm water management system along the street that will help to prevent compaction of the soil, so the roots are able to thrive. This system can also help with disease prevention. The planters are generous in size and permeable paving will also be used to charge the Silva Cells during rain events.

DAP cautioned about making sure the landscape does not create blind areas that could be unsafe and lead to crime, especially down near the wooded areas.

DAP commented that the neighborhood green terminates at a service road and there is a 20+ foot drop as you cross into the ravine. DAP inquired what this connection will look like in the future and what is the timeline.

Regarding the green infrastructure and connection to nature it would be beneficial to have some interpretation for the public, including the labeling of trees in the neighborhood as well as around the trails. This is also an opportunity to teach about the importance of the Chesapeake watershed that would be valuable to the people living there as well as school environmental field trips.

The applicant thinks this is a great idea, especially carrying the theme down into the natural areas.

DAP commented that the greens are small and will be heavily trafficked and recommended not using an artificial turf, but a stabilized turf that can be irrigated and handle a lot of use.

The applicant agreed.

DAP Motions for Recommendations

The DAP had no motions.

3. Other Business and Informational Items

- a. The next DAP meeting will be March 9, 2022.

4. Call to Adjourn

DAP Chair Robert Gorman adjourned the meeting at 9:20 PM