DRB #2009-0001

Carlyle/Eisenhower East Design Review Board
January 15, 2009

REQUEST:	Review of a revised design concept for the residential and commercial buildings.
LOCATION:	2250 and 2200 Mill Road (EESAP Blocks 19 and 20)
APPLICANT:	Lane Development, LLC by Thomas Andrews
STAFF:	Thomas Canfield, City Architect, Planning & Zoning Natalie Sun, Urban Planner, Planning & Zoning

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BOARD ACTION – JANUARY 15, 2009: The Eisenhower East Design Review Board recommended the application for approval with the following suggested design considerations:
1. provide additional green space area at the southern end of the Block 20 courtyard by restudying and redesigning the drop-off area on Southern Avenue and possibly relocating the water wall feature, with the goal of maximizing the non-paved/green areas in the courtyard;
2. provide a more pedestrian-focused piazza at the northern end of the Block 20 courtyard, with the goal making the area between Blocks 19 and 20 an interconnected entry/drop-off area and focal point;
3. restudy the placement of the Block 20 water wall feature and the tables/chairs in front of it, with the goal of maximizing the non-paved/green areas in the courtyard;
4. enliven the building base by providing color and other accents at the pedestrian level on all buildings;
5. explore the design suggestions in the Block 19 tower study shown in Figure 2 and as discussed in the Staff Analysis (see below).
The Board requested a pdf of the architects' progress on any tower refinement schemes; and
6. explore using a metal-clad vertical wall treatment and more regular column spacing on the north face of the Block 20 buildings as discussed in the Staff Analysis (see below).

Reason: The Board commented that significant progress has been made on the design of this project. The Board also noted that although the buildings are a positive departure from the Carlyle "look," they are compatible with and appropriate for the area.

Speakers:

James Wright, project architect, gave an overview of the design evolution for the project.

Trini Rodriguez, landscape designer, gave an overview of the landscape design.

Steve Sattler, landscape designer, gave an overview of the landscape design details.

Michael Lane, applicant, provided clarification on the need for two auto drop off zones for Block 20.

I. REQUEST

Lane Development, LLC is requesting DRB approval of the building concept design for four proposed residential and office buildings at 2250 and 2200 Mill Road, respectively. This application is being brought forward in conjunction with a DSUP application (DSUP2007-0017) for both sites. The project was deferred by the DRB at the March 27, 2008 hearing and discussed at a DRB worksession on June 18, 2008. The residential project, located on Block 19, was previously approved by the DRB under a different DSUP at the April 27, 2006 hearing but requires reconsideration by the Board due to proposed major design changes and a new DSUP application.

II. PROJECT FACTS AND FIGURES

Project Location

The residential building will be located on a 2.83-acre currently vacant site bounded by Eisenhower Avenue to the north, Mill Road to the east, Dock Lane to the south and Port Street to the west. The proposed office buildings will be located on the south side of Dock Lane, on a 2.85-acre site currently occupied by an office building know as the ATA building that will be demolished. The site for the new office development is bounded on the south by future Southern Street, high-tension power lines and the Capital Beltway. Both project sites are one block east of the Eisenhower Metro Station.

Project Details

The June 2006 DSUP approval for the residential buildings expired in December 2007. The applicant is currently proposing a revised design to the residential project due to market and financial constraints. The proposal consists of two 21-story residential towers on top of three- and four-story expressed bases with designated active use space on the ground floor. The buildings read as two precast-clad vertical slabs with a modulated precast base and glass accents. A variety of vertical fenestration is used throughout the building.

The office development consists of 13- and 15-story buildings separated by an at-grade courtyard that is central to the development. Both buildings are predominantly masonry and metal-clad, but glass accents are proposed on the Southern Street façade, on the west building, and on both walls facing the courtyard. A curved wall along the Mill Road façade of the east building steps up to an embedded cylindrical feature, intended as an accent skyline feature for the project as seen from the Capital Beltway.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

General

The Applicant has continued to work with Staff since the last DRB Meeting, and has resolved many of the design issues that were of concern previously. There are a small number of

additional refinements that Staff would ask the Board to consider at this stage, in order to achieve the highest level of design and expression for this important and strategically located project. Staff also wishes to commend the Applicant for their energetic cooperation during this process, as well as their numerous and excellent illustrations.

Compliance with the *Eisenhower East Design Guidelines*

Block 19 – Residential project

Table 1 in Attachment A details areas in which the design of the buildings does not comply with the *Eisenhower East Design Guidelines.*

Building height – The applicant is proposing two 21-story buildings, at 208 feet tall (218 feet with penthouse). The Eisenhower East Design Guidelines prescribe a 10- to 15-story building or buildings on Block 19 at a 150-foot maximum height. In June 2006, accompanying the DSUP request for Block 19, the applicant obtained an amendment to the *Eisenhower East Small Area Plan* for additional height, raising the height limits to 15- to 25-stories and 250 feet.

Street frontage design principles – Under the *Eisenhower East Design Guidelines*, Block 19 has both "A" (Eisenhower Avenue, Mill Road, Port Street) and "C" (Dock Lane) street frontages. These frontage guidelines outline specific design requirements for buildings and the adjoining streets. "A" frontages define the character and tone of the district.

The Block 19 proposal digresses from the design guidelines in a few respects. Curb cuts are prohibited along "A" streets. The design proposal includes a drive aisle along Mill Road into a small surface parking lot serving the leasing needs of the building. This curb cut concept was approved by the DRB and City Council, as part of the expired DSUP for Block 19. The design of the surface parking lot has been improved to be better integrated into the design of the adjacent open space.

The design guidelines also require 60 to 70 percent of the building face on all "A" street frontages to have 70- to 20-foot setbacks (at 50 to 75 feet in height along Eisenhower Avenue and at 40 to 60 feet along all other streets).

With the exception of the southern elevation at approximately 48 feet above the sidewalk, no setbacks have been provided. The intent of the setback requirements is to ensure that taller buildings have a pedestrian friendly mass and scale. Although the project does not comply with these requirements, the buildings exhibit an engaging and highly articulated base and projecting bays, components that fulfill the intent of the setback requirements.

Finally, for "A" street façades, architectural features may not extend more than 4 feet over the build-to-line and may not exceed 12 feet in width. The bay on the east façade of the east building exceeds the maximum permitted width. However, the bay complements the façade and does not detract from the pedestrian experience. In general, although the Block 19 project deviates from a few guidelines under the "A" frontage requirements, staff is supporting these areas of non-conformance since the design decisions in question give significant merit to the buildings.

Block 20 – Office project

Table 1 in Attachment A details areas in which the design of the buildings does not comply with the *Eisenhower East Design Guidelines.*

Building height – The applicant is proposing two 14-story buildings, at 210 feet tall (242 feet with penthouse). The *Eisenhower East Design Guidelines* prescribe a 10- to 15-story building or buildings on Block 20 at a 200-foot maximum height. As part of the DSUP application for this project, the applicant is also requesting an increase in the 15-foot permitted height for the penthouse to 32 feet, in order to accommodate elevator overrun space for the project's high-speed elevators. Staff is supporting the request for increased height. The mass and scale of the buildings are compatible with the adjacent residential towers proposal and appropriate to be located adjacent to the Capital Beltway, for heighten. Additionally, Block 20 is one block from the Eisenhower East Metro Station, and the *Eisenhower East Small Area Plan* encourages increased height and density closest to the Metro station.

Street frontage design principles – Under the *Eisenhower East Design Guidelines*, Block 20 has both "B" (Mill Road, southeastern end of Southern Street) and "C" (Dock Lane, Port Street) street frontages. These frontage guidelines outline specific design requirements for buildings and the adjoining streets. "C" streets provide a means of access to service entries and parking structures as well as tertiary streets through the neighborhood.

The proposal for Block 20 deviates from the "B" street requirements in one aspect. The guidelines call for main pedestrian building entries to be located along "B" frontages, except where located along "A" frontages. However, the buildings' main entrances are located on Dock Lane, designated as a "C" street. Staff supports this departure from the design guidelines since, with this proposal, the nature of Dock Lane differs from the original Eisenhower East Plan vision. In the Plan, the existing building on Block 20 had a different entry sequence and relationship with adjacent streets. In the current proposal, Dock Lane has a more important function, located at the junction of two large and publicly accessible courtyards. It is anticipated that Dock Lane will have a high proportion of pedestrian activity. For this reason, staff supports locating the main pedestrian entrances along Dock Lane in synergy with the courtyards and adjacent street.

Active use

Designated "active use" spaces are proposed on the ground-floor of all four buildings. Although no retail space is required on Blocks 19 and 20, retail space is permitted on these blocks under the Eisenhower East Plan. Staff is recommending that many of the active use tenant spaces be designed to accommodate future retail tenants, incorporating or accommodating some of the key retail design guidelines for the Eisenhower East District, such as: pronounced entryways, individualized storefronts, 15-foot minimum floor-to-ceiling height, and 75 to 95 percent glazing on storefronts. Design of the façade of active use spaces should anticipate necessary and desired retrofits for retail tenants to allow for prime visibility and individuality of the storefront. Staff recommends that the southeast corner of the east residential building be refined for increased storefront prominence. Similarly, the active use facades in the office buildings along Dock Lane, Port Street, and the courtyard, should envision tenant visibility and identity. Signage proposals should be carefully considered to be well-integrated with the varying base conditions on each of the building facades.

Solid-to-void ratio

The *Eisenhower East Design Guidelines* call for a "balance in the proportion of glass to wall to provide a predominantly solid surface, with windows placed within the wall." This requirement

does not prohibit use of glass curtain wall within the project, provided that curtain walls are used solely as accent. The applicant has provided solid-to-void ratio calculations; however, the calculations are incorrect and incomplete. Revised calculations and diagrams are necessary to confirm the proportion of wall to glass on each building façade. Storefront facades anticipated as retail use may be excluded in the amount of glazed area on each façade, since the *Eisenhower East Design Guidelines* prescribe 75- to 95-percent glazing on retail storefronts.

Building Skin Color and Consistency

As the design has moved away from the typical Carlyle combination of red or brown brick and white precast, to a composition of precast, metal and glass, the overall palette has become very subdued. As a means of communicating that all four buildings are elements in a single composition, this is appropriate, but the color relationships do not seem to be fully resolved. One strategy would be to work with three colors of precast – one each for the office and residential towers, with a third color that is common to both, to allow individual expression within a clearly defined whole.

In working with Staff, Applicant has changed the color of the building base on the two residential towers facing the RPA to a dark precast, which has helped give these buildings more individuality.

Feature Towers Facing the Capital Beltway

As the design of these vertical features has evolved from simple rectangular glass forms to more articulated forms incorporating a metal openwork crown with wind generators, their somewhat arbitrary location, centered on the south facades as add-ons, has seemed increasingly to conflict with the strongly asymmetrical approach that has been carried out so successfully in the rest of the design. As a way to resolve this, and simplify the expression of this important view, Staff is suggesting that Applicant study relocation of these towers to the inside corners of the central space (see plan diagram, below.) This could achieve several goals simultaneously: 1) make sense of the all-glass expression by defining it as an outgrowth of the interior glass skin that flanks the courtyard; 2) engage the towers with the central courtyard, while offering 270-degree views from the rooms within; 3) simplify the building expression facing the Beltway, so the towers have more visual impact; 4) make the exciting curtain wall interior more visible by wrapping it around the south façade; and 5) possibly achieve better airflow by moving these elements farther from the large rooftop penthouses. Staff also recommends some additional study to give the top forms associated with the wind turbines more visual impact, while understanding that air flow issues must be correctly addressed. See Figure 1 in Attachment B.

Integration of Tower Tops with Building Walls, Generally

As the design of the four towers on the north sides of the office and residential towers has progressed, the Applicant has envisioned an open frame and glass top that makes a strong roof form, while creating a subtle transition where the building meets the sky. Staff feels that this is a very strong direction, and suggests two additional refinements to the concept (see sketch, below.) First, to give a more elegant form to the tower tops, consider inflecting or notching the corners to create a stepped profile, which will lighten the top expression. Second, explore embedding the vertical glass elements that result (which in this case would only be two) further down into the tower mass, so that the crown is better integrated with the building form that supports it.

Given the different dimensions and exposure of the residential and office towers, the notched corner treatment may be appropriate only for residential towers, which will be seen from much greater distances, across the open space and RPA. It is also important that these elements form complete enclosures, and read "in the round," as they will be seen obliquely from many vantage points. See Figure 2 in Attachment B.

Building Base Treatment, Generally

At staff's request, Applicant has studied a number of variations in the building base treatment. Change of the residential base facing the RPA to a lower height and dark precast has been carried out and is very successful. Studies of the office base detailing (original vertical precast, simplified precast, and alternate vertical metal clad treatment) were carried out at Staff's request, and the third solution (vertical metal clad) offers an elegant expression that maintains the strong verticality, while lightening the physical and perceived weight of the base. As design issues above are studied, Staff asks that Applicant continue to explore height and articulation of the base, particularly on the two office blocks (for example, studying an open corner treatment if the south towers are relocated.)

Wall Treatment and Column Spacing on North Face of Office Towers

The current skin treatment proposed by the Applicant for these areas seems out of character with the rest of the project, as it lacks the richness and verticality of other skin types on both the residential and office blocks (with the exception of the accent curtain wall, which is intentionally contrasting in both orientation and surface.) Staff suggests using a similar metal clad vertical treatment as is being shown for the interior cantilevered faces of the residential towers. This would have the advantage of reducing the number of exterior wall types, and also adding another common element that could help to integrate the four buildings into a single composition.

In addition, the column spacing along the north facing lease space on both office buildings appears irregular and close, and does not align with the rhythm of the metal wall above. Staff suggests revising this so that the column spacing in the building base would align with every other vertical in the wall above (as currently shown, or every fourth if the above revisions are made.)

Green Building

Staff encourages the applicant to incorporate additional green building measures in addition to the rooftop wind generators on both Block 20 office buildings. Some additional green building options to consider include incorporating green roofs into the project, a measure that can reduce stormwater runoff and mitigate urban heat island effects, among other benefits. Consider using rainwater or gray water for on-site, nonpotable water needs, such as landscape irrigation, and water features, as part of the renewable building strategy for the project.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is recommending approval of the proposed concept designs for both the residential and commercial projects.

ATTACHMENT A

Table 1. Areas of building design non-compliance with the *Eisenhower East Design Guidelines.*

Block 19 – Residential project			
Guideline #	*Guideline Name*	*Requirement*	*Proposal*
4	Boundary & Block Assignments	Maximum building height: 10-15 stories, 150’	21 stories, 218’ (208’ without penthouse)
6	Building Setbacks	Min. 7’ setback at specific heights above the sidewalk	Setbacks provided only on south façade
9	Street Frontage Design Principles	“A” Street Frontages: No curb cuts or service alleys shall be visible along “A” street frontages	Curb cut along Mill Rd.
		7’-20’ setbacks along (30-40% of street frontage may be exempt): Eisenhower Ave at 50’-75’ All other streets at 40’-60’	No setbacks provided except on south façade (both buildings) at 48’ elevation.
		Façade: Architectural features may not extend >4’ past the build-to-line and may not exceed 12’ in width	Bay on east façade of east building extends more than 4’ past build-to-line and exceeds 12’ in width
10	Architectural Concept Design: Massing	Setbacks: • Eisenhower Ave: 7’-20’ setback above 50’-75’	No setback provided
		• Other streets: 7’-20’ setback above 40’-50’	No setbacks provided on Mill Rd or Dock Ln facades
10	Architectural Concept Design: Architectural Expression	Balance in proportion of glass to wall to provide predominately solid surface, with windows placed within the wall	Unclear solid-to-void calculations provided by applicant
Block 20 – Office project			
Guideline #	*Guideline Name*	*Requirement*	*Proposal*
4	Boundary & Block Assignments	Maximum building height: 200’	210’ without penthouse
9	Street Frontage Design Principles: Street Frontage Plan	“B” Street Frontages: Main pedestrian building entries shall be located along “B” frontages, except where located along “A” frontages	Main pedestrian building entries located on “C” frontage (Dock Ln)
10	Architectural Concept Design: Architectural Expression	Balance in proportion of glass to wall to provide predominately solid surface, with windows placed within the wall	Unclear solid-to-void calculations provided by applicant

ATTACHMENT B

Figure 1. Design study of Block 20 form/envelope concept showing relocated wind turbine towers.

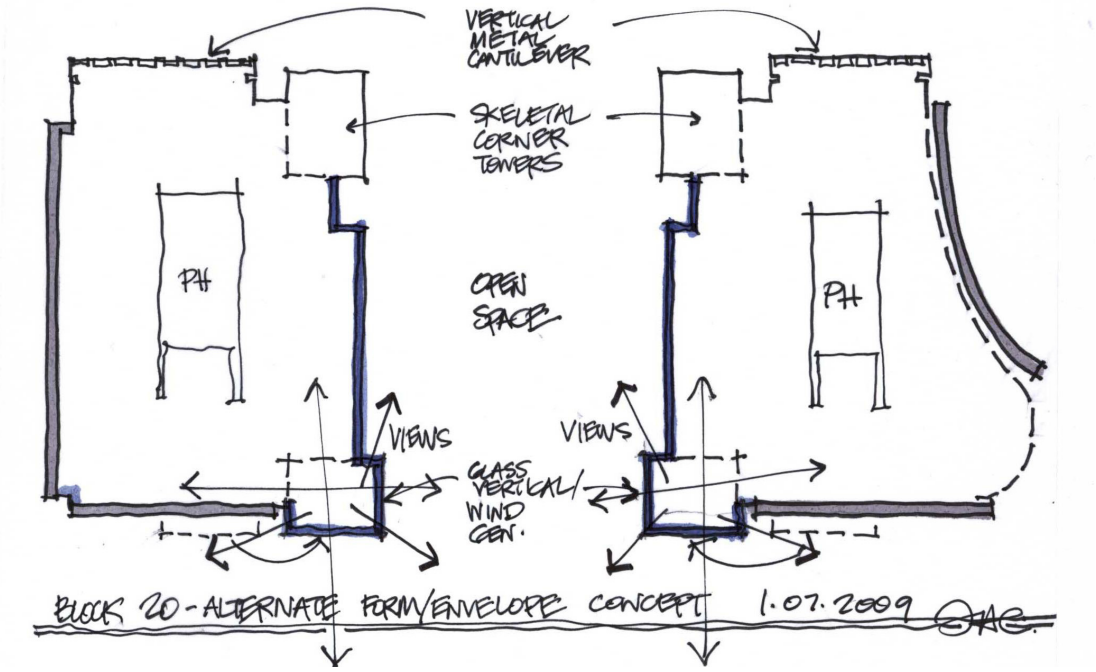

Figure 2. Design study showing tower tops integrated within building walls.