



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD WORK SESSION

**Design Review Board Case # 20-0001
Block P – 765 John Carlyle**

Application	General Data	
Project Name: 765 John Carlyle Location: Block P – Carlyle CDD Applicant: Carlyle Plaza, LLC c/o McGuireWoods LLP	DRB Date:	June 22, 2020
	Site Area:	Block P – Carlyle CDD
	Zone:	CDD #1
	Proposed Use:	Office / Senior Living
	Gross Floor Area:	To be provided
<p>Purpose of Application: Review of the conceptual architecture for Block P, Carlyle area.</p>		
<p>Staff Reviewers: Robert M. Kerns, AICP robert.kerns@alexandriava.gov Thomas H. Canfield, AIA tom.canfield@alexandriava.gov Nathan Imm Nathan.imm@alexandriava.gov Carson C. Lucarelli carson.lucarelli@alexandriava.gov</p>		
<p>DRB ACTION FROM JUNE 22, 2020 WORK SESSION – SUMMARY: The DRB unanimously approved the concept submission for the north tower and podium at 765 John Carlyle with a vote of 5-0. This project was previously heard by the DRB during 2006 and 2007, receiving approval for the Design Concept in May 2007. Additional approvals were obtained in July and September 2007, for final design of materials with conditions, and for treatment of parking garage and building top accordingly. The project as proposed consists of the entire Block P development site within the Carlyle District and includes two mixed-use towers conjoined by a common podium. The approximately 140’ northern office tower received approval for its general massing, façade and height. The DRB indicated that the north tower may receive final approval upon successfully addressing screening treatments for the podium level garage – which wraps the building from the 2nd through the 5th level. The DRB also requested finessing of the arcade, which bridges the two towers at the podium level. The southern, senior iving, tower was introduced to the board as a pre-concept submission – thus receiving no formal vote by the board. Nevertheless, the board was pleased with the design approach of the pre-conceptual southern tower and encouraged the applicant to submit for an end of summer review.</p> <p>The applicant also delivered an informal presentation to the DRB on the proposed residential (elderly housing), southern tower. The south tower represents a change in use from the previously approved office design, among other revisions – which will require the applicant to file and SUP amendment with the Planning Commission and City Council at a later date. The</p>		

DRB provided informal feedback related to general architectural concepts of the building. However, no formal vote was taken as this was not a formal submission.

Block P – DRB Work Session

Background

This project was previously heard by the DRB during 2006 and 2007, receiving approval for the Design Concept in May 2007 with a number of conditions. Additional approvals obtained in July and September 2007, for final design of materials with conditions, and for treatment of parking garage and building top accordingly. Further design modifications were proposed and accepted in 2008 and 2015.

The project as currently proposed consists of the entire Block P development site within the Carlyle CDD and will include two mixed-use towers conjoined by the common podium. The southern of the two buildings would include a change of use to a senior living facility, whereas the original approval was for both buildings to consist of office uses.

The project will be subject to the Carlyle SUP, and as such will need to conform to the densities, heights, and use restrictions contained therein. Future submissions will need to include information demonstrating this conformance, in table format.

The Applicant's proposal and City staff report is available on the [DRB website](#). An early pre-concept consideration of the northern building was originally scheduled to be presented at the March 19, 2020 DRB Meeting. Materials from the Applicant were provided; however, this meeting was subsequently cancelled in light of the coronavirus pandemic. The presentation and discussion were to have been informal, with no intended action from the DRB. Shortly thereafter, on April 10th, at the Applicant's request, staff provided a memo to members of the DRB with recommendations for the Applicant based on the materials submitted for the north building. DRB members provided input on these recommendations, and these were subsequently provided to the Applicant as informal input.

Proposal

The applicant, Carlyle Plaza, LLC, proposes to construct two towers of varying height on the Block P development site within the Carlyle CDD – 2600' from the Eisenhower Metro Station. The applicant proposes commercial office space within the north tower and senior living development units to the south. The project will also include ground floor retail to activate the adjacent streets. The towers are conjoined at the base by an above-grade parking structure that ascends approximately 4 stories above the ground floor retail and lobby space.

Parking

Due to site constraints, and based on the previous approvals for the block, the applicant will construct a vertical podium that conjoins the two towers along their base. The podium is approximately 4 stories in height and will be vehicularly accessible by a curb cuts along John Carlyle Street in the same locations as previously approved. As noted in the April memo, the applicant proposes one (1) fewer level of garage use than was previously approved.

Staff Discussion

Comments are framed in relation to the concept design that was circulated to staff and the DRB for preliminary comments, and not in relation to the previously approved all-office development.

In general, the recent refinements to the new design have been positive. More specifically:

- Removal of one (1) level of parking has improved the overall building proportions. Given the site's immediate proximity to the metro station, staff strongly encourages the applicant to consider further reductions and or sharing agreements, with other nearby or future towers. Also consider pulling the face of parking back far enough from the face of the building to allow fully glazing one or more faces (particularly that along Eisenhower Avenue)
- Recessing the center "connector" has improved the vertical read of both sections – now more important given the different uses of the north and south towers.
- Simplification resulting from removal of arbitrary curtainwall portions and office bays at the top levels has resulted in a cleaner, more contemporary expression, along with the proposed change from the previous brick-like warm tones to a cool gray and off-white palette.

Subsequent submissions for DRB review must include the following:

- Complete floor plans, zoning tabulations and all other checklist requirements.
- Complete architecture of the south tower – this project is a single building in terms of zoning and needs to be reviewed as such.
- Detailed information on green building systems and approaches for both buildings.
- Preliminary information on Affordable Housing allocations, with a focus on providing on-site units for the Senior Living.
- Initial considerations of the on-structure landscape plantings/design. See previous comments regarding the integration of the landscape design into the architecture of the building.
- Detailed floorplans at street and parking level(s). Also include information regarding loading and drop-off/pick-up of residents and workers.
- Building upon the above: Given the proliferation of eCommerce and shared-mobility, the applicant should consider integrating curbside management into the overall site design. Consider ways in which to integrate these services within the site/building itself and/or in coordination with the City of the curbside area for such deliveries and pick-up/drop-off while preserving the integrity of adjacent/future bicycle paths, roadways and sidewalks.

Recommendations

A. Scale, Height and Massing

Staff finds the contrast in scale, height, massing, and general articulation between the two towers to be a positive move – explore how to further individualize the two. This differentiation may also include treating the above-grade parking very uniquely for each of the two buildings to minimize the impression of a mega-block development.

B. Parking

The studies which explore the use of a metal mesh or perforated metal to create screening for the parking are a positive starting point. However, they do not fully disguise that these levels are unoccupied space, and due to this, Staff would like to see a stronger integration of the parking façades into those of the towers above.

Option #1: One potential technique is to carry some percentage of glazing and other cladding from the occupied levels above, down through the parking skin. More specifically, a narrower glass panels on the north tower, and the ladder-mullioned side panels on the south tower. Examples of this are shown below, the first from the previous approval for this site (“Block P”) and the second from the recently approved and now under construction Previous Design for Block P – Integration of Glazing into Garage Levels (**Figure #1** below):



WMATA Virginia HQ office building (**Figure #2** below)

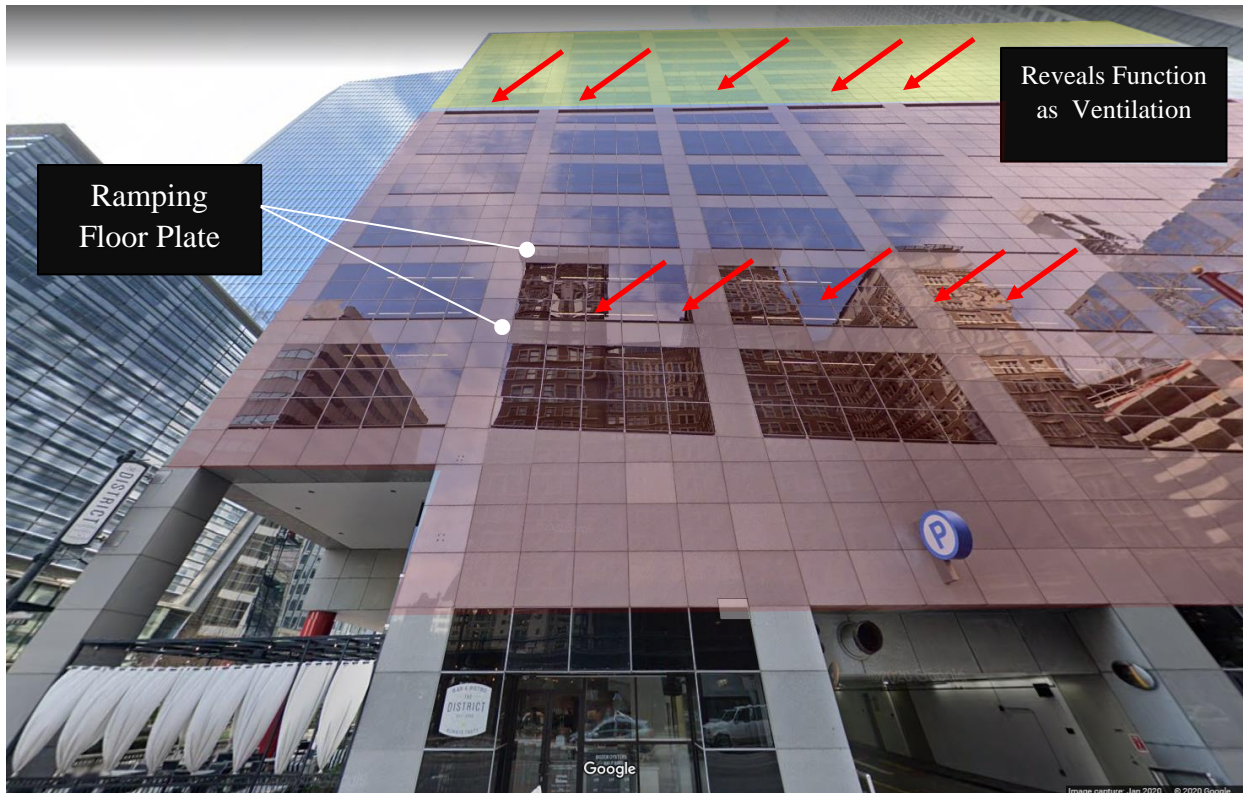


In both of these examples, the garage function is legible, but its presence is suppressed visually through the continuation and integration of high-quality façade elements from the main body of the tower above into the parking level facades.

Option #2: If the parking footprints can be reduced sufficiently, consider treating these portions of the façade with similar curtain wall, as depicted below. Whatever approach is settled on, staff finds the ideas of integrating an abstract pattern into the garage screening to be an interesting one. Precedent images and a hyperlink are offered below.



601 Travis Street | Houston, Texas | (Figure #3 above)



601 Travis Street Garage | Houston, Texas (Figure #3-4 above)

Hyperlink: <https://www.hines.com/properties/601-travis-houston>

Option #3: The applicant may also consider expressing the horizontal band created by the levels of parking with linear public art, green-screening, geometric/scored tensile materials or others that relate better to the proposed translucent and vibrant green conference center glazing. Precedent images and ideas are offered below.

In short, staff would like to see creative design approaches towards masking its presence, whether through the use of pattern, color, or other strategy.



Edificio Consorcio | Santiago, Chile | Green Screening (Figure #5 above)



Architectural Treatment Parking Screening



Architectural Parking Screenings | Eisenhower East SAP | (Figure # 6 above)

C. Glazing

Staff appreciates that the design team has taken an asymmetrical approach with the glazing, mullions, and slab edge cladding in the two-story office façade openings, while utilizing a more traditional symmetrical approach for the senior living tower. This helps to distinguish between the two buildings and uses, which are still connected visually through the use of a two-story

window ganging in both.

D. Podium/Base

The dark brick frames – apparently superimposed on the south tower base to relate to the lower base datum line on the north tower – detract from the existing strong base of the south. Staff recommends removal of the frames to reinforce the idea of the massing stepping *up*- from north to south. A more successful approach may be to introduce greater richness in brick/masonry detailing to reinforce the design's verticality.

The more symbolic added base element along the John Carlyle Street frontage of the north tower seems more successful. However, it needs to be better integrated into the other forms and materials of the building behind, see illustration on **Page #13** of the submitted package. This view highlights the challenges of integrating the connector with the two very different architectural languages.

E. Graphics

It is not entirely clear in the submitted perspective views what is glass and what is solid, particularly along the John Carlyle and Eisenhower retail level on the north tower, and the floor(s) immediately above.

Eisenhower East / Carlyle Blocks

