



CARLYLE-EISENHOWER EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

***Block 20 East Condominiums – Concept Design Review
Eisenhower East Block 20 / 2200 Dock Lane***

Application	General Data	
<p>Project Name: Block 20 East Condominiums</p> <p>Location: 2200 Dock Lane (eastern portion of Block 20)</p> <p>Applicant: Paradigm Development Company, represented by Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney</p>	DRB Date:	July 18, 2024
	Site Area:	0.498 acres (21,690 sf)
	Zone:	CDD#2
	Proposed Use:	Multi-unit residential
	Number of Units:	110
	Gross Floor Area:	150,300 SF
<p>Purpose of Application: Design review of a proposed 13-story, approximately 150,300 gross square-foot multi-unit residential building with above and below-grade parking. This is the second design review of the proposed project.</p>		
<p>Staff Reviewers: Robert M. Kerns, AICP robert.kerns@alexandriava.gov Thomas H. Canfield, AIA tom.canfield@alexandriava.gov Nathan Randall nathan.randall@alexandriava.gov Julian Swierczek, AICP julian.swierczek@alexandriava.gov</p>		
<p><u>DRB ACTION, MAY 16, 2024:</u></p> <p>The Board generally found the massing, scale, and architecture of the proposed building to be successful in meeting the goals and intent of the Eisenhower East Design Guidelines. The Board acknowledged the inclusion of the base, middle, top” design language in overall form, the inclusion of underground parking as recommended, as well as the apparent inclusion of high-quality materials on the façade. The Board further noted that the building broke-up the massing of façade elements while maintaining an overall discipline in composition. The building was noted to also generally relate well to the adjacent tower to the west. Overall, the Board expressed it was likely to support a general endorsement of the architecture in the future, but would like to see the following changes addressed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The building does not meet the recommended minimum building height of 150 ft. The height should be increased to meet this. The applicant should further explore the inclusion of 2 additional stories to better transition in height from adjacent buildings. 		

- 2) There should be improved interaction between the building at ground level with Mill Road to the east by adding a building entrance off Mill Road, as well as reducing the scale of the stone wall in favor of expanding transparency (windows) at ground level.
- 3) Explore bringing down to grade portions of the tower skin, perhaps (but not necessarily limited to) along the eastern/northeastern façade on Mill Road.
- 4) Explore color/interaction of brick versus metal tower skin elements in the next submission by clarifying the overall composition and looking at a metal/ brick combination that is of greater contrast than what is currently shown.
- 5) Significant garage screening improvements should be incorporated into the next submission. This should especially include extending the façade over the currently shown gap on the 3rd floor which gives an impression of the building being held aloft/ detached from the base.
- 6) The entrance canopy design should be studied. Consider ways to better integrate its design with the building façade.
- 7) The applicant should explore adding rooftop amenities to the proposed building, including the roof over the 12th floor of the tower. This would provide greater opportunities for recreation for tenants, as well as enhance the building silhouette and contribute to the overall building design.

I. OVERVIEW

The applicant, Paradigm Development Company, represented by attorney Mary Catherine Gibbs, is requesting Carlyle/Eisenhower East Design Review Board (DRB) review of a Development Special Use Permit proposal at 2200 Dock Lane on the eastern parcel of Eisenhower East Block 20. This is the second submission for review to the DRB for this proposed project.

II. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Site Details

The proposed project site is the eastern parcel of Block 20 as identified in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (EESAP). This vacant site, measuring 21,690 square feet in size, is located at the southwest corner of Mill Road and Dock Lane. Block 20 overall is bounded by Port Street to the west, Dock Lane to the north, Mill Road to the east, and a privately maintained drive aisle to the south (accessed via Port Street), with the right-of-way of I-495 to the south of the private road. The western portion of Block 20 is the location of the nearly complete Meridian 2250 at Eisenhower Station multi-unit residential building, another Paradigm Development Company project, which was approved in December 2017 (DSUP2017-0005).

The parcel on which the Meridian 2250 residential building is located also contains the aforementioned privately maintained drive aisle, a utility easement for the overhead power lines that run east-west along the southern portion of this site, as well as two publicly accessible parks and landscaped open space.

History of Block 20

Prior to the current plan proposal, the most recent development approval on Block 20 was DSUP2017-0005, which allowed for construction of the 300-foot tall, 420-unit Meridian 2250 project. This 2017 approval also included preliminary approval of a nine-story hotel on the current project site on the eastern portion of the block. This previous concept for a hotel was not implemented, however, and the site is now the subject of the current proposal for a 13-story multi-unit residential condominium building, which had been submitted for Concept 1 plan review in May 2024.

III. PROPOSAL

General

The proposed project is for a new 13-story, 159-foot multi-unit residential condominium building. The building would measure 150,300 gross square feet in size and have 110 dwelling units, 15 of which would be junior one-bedroom units, 62 one-bedroom, 29 two-bedroom, two two-bedroom with dens, and two three-bedroom units. Both below-grade and above-grade parking is proposed as described in greater detail below. A rear loading dock is also located at the south end of the ground-level of the building.

Architectural Design

The proposed new building is somewhat rectangular in massing, with an angled footprint that allows for a notable plane change on the building façade. This plane change results in the building

having a reverse “J” shape, with the inside of this angle, on the eastern side, opening toward and roughly following the curve of Mill Road. On the outside of this angle, on the western side of the building, an architectural feature is proposed that extends the building plane past the point where the remainder of the building turns in an eastern direction. The result of this feature is that the new building plane appears to “slip” past the previous one, with the building skin “peeling away” from the building mass.

IV. STAFF ANALYSIS: PREVIOUS SUBMISSION

Overall, staff found the first DRB submission of the multi-unit residential building proposal to be largely successful. The plan showed consistency with the use-related recommendations for the site in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (SAP). The building further demonstrated general consistency with the 2006 Eisenhower East Design Guidelines with its architecture and incorporated certain design elements called for in the 2020 Eisenhower East Small Area Plan. Specifically, Staff found several items to be particular strengths in complying with both the Small Area Plan and 2006 Eisenhower East Design Guidelines. These included the clear implementation of a base/middle/top composition; a street wall being clearly established with particular attention towards following the curvature of the adjacent Mill Road to the east; and the use on the façade of numerous plane changes, inflections, and subtractive elements, such as at the proposed balconies to minimize the use of flat surfaces and add visual depth.

Staff also identified seven items as warranting further study and refinement in order to better comply with both the Small Area Plan and 2006 Eisenhower East Design Guidelines. Those seven topics concerned: overall building height, building visibility at the street level, façade materials, garage screening, the front entrance canopy, and rooftop amenities.

V. STAFF ANALYSIS: CURRENT SUBMISSION

Staff has focused its analysis of the current submission on how the applicant has responded to the seven items from the previous submission that staff raised, and the DRB endorsed, as needing further study. Further details about staff’s previous analysis and its current analysis of how the applicant has responded to these matters is itemized below.

A. Overall Building Height:

Previous Analysis:

The building previously did not meet the recommended minimum building height of 150 feet recommended in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan. Staff recommended that the height should be increased by further exploring the inclusion of additional stories. This would have the added benefit of better transitioning in height from adjacent buildings, better fitting the surrounding skyline.

Current Analysis:

The Applicant has added a new 13th floor to the building with access to an outdoor amenity space. The approximately 14-foot increase in building height in connection with this change (from 145 feet in the previous proposal to the current 159 feet) results in the building now meeting the

recommended 150-foot minimum building height. Staff considers this issue to have been addressed and notes that it also creates some design opportunities, as discussed below.

B. Improve Building Visibility at Street Level

Previous Analysis:

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Staff found that there were opportunities to improve the interaction between the ground-level eastern façade of the building and Mill Road to the east. It suggested adding a building entrance off Mill Road as well as reducing the scale of the stone wall in favor of expanding transparency (through the use of windows) at ground level.

Current Analysis:

Staff supports the addition of a new building entrance on the eastern building façade, facing Mill Road. As previously discussed, this door should be aligned with one of the interior through-passageways that flank the office/reception area. This would ideally in combination with bringing the tower skin all the way to grade, and a possible further reduction in the extent of the stone wall/base element allowing for additional windows along Mill Road.

C. Improve Overall Relation of Architectural Elements

Previous Analysis:

Staff found that the overall architectural composition would be improved by bringing down to grade portions of the tower skin, perhaps (but not necessarily limited to) along the eastern/northeastern façade on Mill Road.

Current Analysis:

Staff continues to believe that the tower skin should be pulled all the way to grade in one area: specifically, along the east façade, from the northeast corner balconies south to the point where the tower footprint “bends” to the east. This would accomplish a number of design objectives: first, help to break the horizontal “gap” separating the tower from its base; second, create a more vertical impression of the tower from this vantage point; third, create a logical endpoint for the stone base, and finally, also allow moving the new resident entry a little further south along Mill Road.

D. Façade Material Composition

Previous Analysis:

Staff recommended exploring color/interaction of brick versus metal tower skin elements by clarifying the overall composition and looking at a metal/ brick combination that is of greater contrast than what is currently shown.

Current Analysis:

Staff is not fully satisfied with the relationship of brick to the dominant metal-and-glass vocabulary of this design. In one sense, there is so little brick involved that it begs the question of whether the building might be better without it. A sort of anti-tectonic impression is also created by seeing the brick floating above a lighter-weight tower skin, whether it is the north stair tower or the angled

fin element at the southwest corner. The exploration of a white or light-colored penthouse discussed in (G) below might lead to an answer. Where the brick base picks up moving south from the lobby along the west side of the building and wrapping around the south end, however, the brick feels appropriate.

E. Garage Screening

Previous Analysis:

Staff found that significant garage screening improvements needed to be incorporated into the design for consistency with the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan recommendations and to reduce the appearance of the building resting on a plinth. Specifically, this could be done by extending the façade over the gap shown on the 3rd floor which gives an impression of the building being held aloft/ detached from the base.

Current Analysis:

While some screening has been added to the gap between the tower and base, it continues to not meet the recommendations Eisenhower East Small Area Plan. The screening also still reads as a discontinuity when considering the overall building design. Staff encourages the Applicant to explore the strategy discussed in (C) above, in which a portion of the tower skin is brought to grade, and in the portion where that is done, to incorporate glazing in the openings, to comply with the requirement that garage space be “indistinguishable from occupied space.” Since there is only a single level of above-grade garage, and a portion of it faces I-495, this should be achievable.

Staff further notes that the garage screening enhancements needed on the building façades as described above will likely also necessitate new intake/exhaust venting designs showing them to be integrated with the building design or concealed.

F. Front Entrance Canopy

Previous Analysis:

Staff found that the entrance canopy design warranted additional study by exploring ways to better integrate its design with the building façade.

Current Analysis:

The Applicant has returned with an elegantly minimal canopy design, which draws from the geometry and rhythm of the tower skin above, and provides a strong counterpoint to the main building mass. In a further refinement, the architect has wrapped the contrasting white canopy horizontal band around the north and a portion of the east façade, clearly signaling the presence of the lobby. Since this gesture ends at the point where staff is suggesting that the tower wall should be brought all the way down, it might be valuable to explore pulling it a bit further out in front of the tower skin above, for even greater emphasis. It also serves as an example of how well the addition of some white accents works with the rest of the building’s color scheme.

G. Rooftop Amenities

Previous Analysis:

Staff recommended that the applicant explore adding rooftop amenities to the proposed building, including the roof over the 12th floor of the tower. This would provide greater opportunities for recreation for tenants, as well as enhance the building silhouette and contribute to the overall building design.

Current Analysis:

These recommendation has been incorporated into the current submission and is a significant improvement. To further these benefits, staff recommends that Applicant explore a change in color to the visible penthouse. This should include the use of white, along with some degree of white openwork trellis/shade structure, to tie this tower more closely to the penthouse aesthetic of the other two buildings in the cluster, to express the rooftop use, and to key in with the redesigned lobby entrance canopy.

V. ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Staff continues to find that the proposed building design is largely consistent with the review criteria compiled above. It finds that the current submission successfully responds to previous recommendations regarding: [briefly list out the changes we like from the previous section]. Staff recommends that the applicant further refine the items listed below and incorporate them in future DRB and DSUP submissions:

1. The inclusion of an entrance feature facing Mill Road greatly enhances the visibility and pedestrian interaction along this frontage. Staff encourages the applicant to better line this entrance with one of the interior doors between the fitness area and the main lobby.
2. The extent of the stone wall feature at the base of the tower needs to be reduced, and additional windows facing Mill Road added, to increase visibility.
3. Further refine the façade by looking at the following:
 - a. “Pull” the tower skin all the way to grade. This should be looked at in particular along the east façade, from the northeast corner balconies south to the point where the tower footprint “bends” to the east.
 - b. Incorporate further “white” elements to lighten the overall composition of the materials, mirroring the canopy at the entrance plaza. This should be further reflected by the incorporation of white façade element and trellis/ pergola features at the 13th floor.
 - c. Look at providing a less rustic type of stone at the southeast of the corner of the building that better ties into the overall aesthetic of the building.
 - d. Look to further refine the brick façade elements that currently seem lost in the overall design approach to the façade.
4. Further garage screening improvements are needed. This may be done by extending a portion of the tower skin to grade. Where this is implemented, glazing should be then incorporated in the openings to comply with the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan recommendation that garage space be “indistinguishable from” occupied space on floors above and below.

VI. CONCLUSION

Staff recommends that the DRB endorse the overall direction of the second design proposal and staff’s recommended refinements as discussed in this report. If the DRB agrees with the staff-recommended changes, the applicant would need to study such changes in the design and incorporate them in future DRB and Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) submissions.