

## SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

**SP #435 2025 Clarendon Boulevard/Wendy's**

**SPRC Meeting #2**

**September 22, 2014**

**Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Erik Gutshall (Chair), Nancy Iacomini, Steve Cole, Jane Siegel, Ginger Brown**

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### MEETING AGENDA

This was the second Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting to review proposed SP #435, a proposed site plan for a 12-story office building with ground floor retail located at 2026 and 2038 Wilson Boulevard.

The following was the agenda for the meeting:

- 4) Building Architecture
  - a) Design Issues
    - i) Building form (height, massing, tapering, setbacks)
    - ii) Facade treatments, materials, fenestration
    - iii) Roof line/penthouse form and materials
    - iv) Street level activism/entrances & exits
    - v) LEED/Earthcraft/Green Home Choice Score
    - vi) Accessibility
    - vii) Historic Preservation (if applicable)
  - b) Retail Spaces
    - i) Location, size, ceiling heights
    - ii) Storefront designs and transparency
    - iii) Mix of tenants (small v. large, local v. national)
  - c) Service Issues
    - i) Utility equipment
    - ii) Venting location and type
    - iii) Location and visibility of loading and trash service
    - iv) Exterior/rooftop lighting

The meeting began with an applicant presentation about the building architecture, including explanation of the necessity for the buildings overhangs because of the small, unusually-shaped site.

### SPRC DISCUSSION

Architecture:

- General agreement that members of the SPRC understand the necessity of the overhangs, but that it is important to distinguish that this case is unique because of the nature of the needed floorplate for an office building, and that the proposed site is unusually small and irregularly shaped. Not a signal that cantilevers over public sidewalk are appropriate everywhere in the County.
- Comment that the Peck site plan buildings, which have overhangs, disguise/soften the overhang by a lower canopy projecting over the pedestrian way. In addition, the overhangs in the Peck building vary in depth and curve, as opposed to the straight, continuous depth the applicant proposes here.
- Recommendation by one SPRC member that cantilever start one additional floor above the current proposal to accommodate Willow Oak trees.
- Would the cantilever cover people from the elements? Or drip water or ice onto pedestrians?
  - Applicant answered that the side (Wilson and Clarendon Boulevard sides) cantilevers are 25-30 feet above street level so would not shelter pedestrians. The facade materials (terra cotta) will not shed water or cause icicles.
- A suggestion that the underside of the side overhangs also incorporate the look of the underside of the overhang over the plaza.
- Recommendation by SPRC that any perspectives always include the actual building in them, complete with actual facades and colors, not gray boxes. It is important to judge the proposed building's relationship to other buildings in the area.
- Question about unused space at corner of Clarendon Boulevard and the proposed alley. Suggestion that part of the unused space be used for retail, or some activating use. Also suggestion that show windows be used to disguise areas on the Clarendon Boulevard side to avoid blank space shielding utility areas.
- General comments that the Wilson Boulevard side was "heavy" and not sensitive to the context of being across from Colonial Village. Other retail facades in the immediate vicinity have brick or masonry. Glass is over used as retail material recently. Make the Wilson Boulevard retail facades more responsive to the Courthouse context.—not necessarily brick or masonry, but something more contextual.
- Applicant presented a shadow study which showed minimal impact on the outdoor cafes across Wilson Boulevard.
- Suggestion that the applicant make more of the "flatiron" location, perhaps more rounded shapes on the sides?
- General agreement that the front was very striking and interesting, is there a way to provide more interest and sensitivity on the sides of the building. Especially the Wilson Boulevard side.
- Suggestions for alternatives to mitigate the placement of the Wells Fargo Bank on the point. Can the bank go two stories and split the space with another retailer? Can a small part of the point retail frontage be split out to create a kiosk style space on the plaza? Suggestion that the applicant needs to press Wells Fargo to consider alternatives that

allow them to have the prominent frontage but respect the community's need to activate the plaza and surrounding streetscape.

- Applicant added that Wells Fargo would close their Courthouse Plaza location to consolidate this one, freeing up a retail space elsewhere in the Courthouse neighborhood.
- Questions about what kind of retail applicant is considering for the other storefronts.
  - Applicant is mostly considering food use.
- General discussion on how to maximize the number of retail entrances on the site.

### Transportation

- Due to the lateness of the hour, the Chair asked SPRC members to identify questions or issues about transportation to follow up at the next SPRC meeting.
  - Would like staff to present what their optimal street cross-section would be for this site. Sidewalk on South side of Clarendon (in front of the 1515 N. Courthouse building) is unusually wide—could that be adjusted if necessary?
  - Is Wilson Boulevard being narrowed?
  - Bike parking information
  - What is the curb space plan for pick-up/drop-off and deliveries? Detail on the retail units' access to parking and loading.

### Wrap-Up

- Nancy Iacomini (Planning Commission) -- Concern about the solid/void ratio on the side facades. Arlington has maybe too much terra cotta used in facades today, and the ground floor retail spaces almost always are glass. Sides and retail facades need to be responsive to area context.
- Jane Siegel (Planning Commission)—Echoed same concerns as above.
- Bill Gerhardt (transportation Commission)—Cantilever seems like it is necessary, but it should not negatively impact the pedestrian experience and the streetscape. Avoid irregularities in the streetscape and sidewalk widths.
- Steve Cole (Planning Commission)—Seems overhang is needed for a viable project. Requested staff to present their proposed street sections.
- Tish Weichmann-Morris (HALRB)—Applicant should always show existing buildings as they are in any perspectives.
- Bill Ross (PRC)—Front of building is very interesting, the sides—not so much.
- Erik Gutshall (Chair)—His sense is that the Committee, and his personal opinion, is neutral on the cantilever, that it's a necessary evil. Also believes the sides of the building need more architectural interest and definition than they currently have. Hopes the applicant will impress upon Wells Fargo the need for some flexibility for a successful plaza, which is ultimately to their benefit.