



CARLYLE-EISENHOWER EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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

Application	General Data	
Project Name: Block 20 East Condominiums Location: 2200 Dock Lane (eastern portion of Block 20) Applicant: Paradigm Development Company, represented by Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney	DRB Date:	May 16, 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
Purpose of Application: Design review of a proposed 12-story, approximately 150,300 gross square-foot multi-unit residential building with above and below-grade parking. This is the first design review of the proposed project.		
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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 proposal at 2200 Dock Lane on the eastern parcel of Eisenhower East Block 20. This is the first submission for review to the DRB for this proposed project.

II. 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 adjacent to 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.

Immediately to the west of the project site is 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 private road, 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.

Across Dock Lane to the north of Block 20 is the 24-story Parc Meridian Apartment building on Block 19, which is also a project by Paradigm Development Company. Across Mill Road to the east is a four-story apartment complex called Carlyle Mills Apartments, and across Port Street to the west are two undeveloped parcels identified as Blocks 11 and 12 in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (EESAP). Further west of these two parcels is the Eisenhower Metro Station.

History of Block 20

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 12-story multi-unit residential condominium building.

III. PROPOSAL

General

The proposed project is for a new 12-story, 145-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.

Parking Garage

Two levels of underground parking are provided and accessed via the adjoining parking garage of the Meridian 2250 building to the west. An above-ground parking level is proposed on the building's second floor that would also be accessed via a bridge connecting to the parking garage of the neighboring west tower. Consequently, there is no direct vehicle parking access to the proposed building (aside from the loading dock). None of the vehicle parking levels are connected internally to each other in the proposed building, being only accessible via the equivalent parking level of the neighboring building.

Entrance Plaza

The main entrance to the building is oriented toward the existing entrance plaza on the adjacent parcel to the west to mirror the main entrance of the Meridian 2250 building. The plaza functions as a one-way drive-aisle with a separate entrance and exit, both of which are on Dock Lane. The plaza surface is constructed with brick and other enhanced pavement types to create drive court with an aesthetically pleasing, geometric pattern. The proposal includes a large, modern-styled porte-cochere at the main building entrance that extends over a portion of the entrance plaza. Several surface spaces for short-term parking are provided in the plaza as well.

Roof Terrace/Amenities

Level 3 of the building contains a small common outdoor terrace that connects via a bridge to the third-floor terrace at Meridian 2250. That adjacent terrace, containing a pool, lounge area, and other outdoor active recreation spaces, would serve as the primary outdoor amenity space for the current project. Small open spaces are provided on the eastern and southeastern portions of the current site and an indoor fitness center is proposed on the ground level of the new 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.

The ground level of the façade features mostly floor-to-ceiling glass on its northern and portions of the eastern and western facades. Mostly gray/red brick, with more limited window openings, is used on the south end of the ground floor around the proposed loading dock. The ground-level eastern façade, facing Mill Road, has some glass windows but is primarily comprised of a "monumental wall" made of rustic stone. The second level of the building is partially clad in: 1) an upward extension of the monumental wall on most of the eastern façade; 2) an unknown screening material with vertical fins on the northern end and parts of the eastern and western facades, and 3) an upward extension of the brick used on the ground level on the southern and part of the western façade. On all sides, the material does not fully reach the third floor, resulting in a three-foot open-air gap where above-grade parking is proposed. As a result, the above-grade

parking is not fully screened. This design also gives the appearance of the bulk of the tower being held aloft (“floating”) and visually disconnected from the building’s base.

On the upper building floors, the northern and southern ends, the eastern façade, and portions of the western façade are comprised of glass windows surrounded by rectangular gray metal frames one window wide and two windows long. The western façade includes a design break featuring horizontally oriented windows surrounded by small portions of gray/red brick. Certain units at building corners and on the eastern façade are proposed to have balconies with metal and glass railings. Spandrel glass is proposed at the top of the building to screen penthouse equipment. The specific pattern is the same used on a portion of the western façade and on the same plane as those glass windows, giving the impression on that side of the building that the screening is an extension of the architectural expression below. The roofline on the northern, eastern, and southern facades, and remaining portion of the western façade, also includes a short continuation of the rectangular gray metal frames in front of the spandrel glass.

IV. STAFF ANALYSIS

Overall, staff finds the multi-unit residential building proposal to be largely successful. It is consistent with the use-related recommendations for the site in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (SAP). At 145.8 feet in height, however, it is nearly five feet lower than the minimum height recommended in the EESAP and included in the upcoming CDD Conceptual Design Plan request (which was brought to the DRB in January).

Several, although not all, of the building’s design elements are consistent with the 2006 Eisenhower East Design Guidelines and certain design elements contained in the 2020 Eisenhower East Small Area Plan. Staff has provided further details about its review in the remaining portion of this section of the report. A summary of the staff-recommended refinements to the exterior design, particularly at ground/lower levels of the building, is provided in Section V of this report.

A. Overall base/middle/top composition

The design presents a clear example of base/middle/top composition, an explicit recommendation in the 2006 design guidelines. The applicant should revisit the details of this composition in connection with garage screening as discussed in Subsection D below.

B. Establishing a street wall

The street wall is clearly established in this proposal. The extent and character of the heavy stone base, in relation to the expression of the remainder of the building, could benefit from additional study. A more tailored, rather than rustic, stone character may tie in better with the sleek detailing of the tower.

C. Orientation of building entrances toward largest/ most important street

Although staff might prefer to see the main building entrance oriented toward either Mill Road or Dock Lane, it was agreed during the DRB review of the Block 20 West project that the

building entries for both buildings would face the shared arrival court. The applicant should consider the incorporation of at least a resident convenience door somewhere along Mill Road (toward that street's intersection with Dock Lane) to make the tower feel more approachable.

D. Garage design

1. Underground parking recommended (from 2020 EESAP):
Most of the parking is being provided on two underground levels, accessed via the existing garage levels in Block 20 West.
2. Garage screening (from 2020 EESAP):
There is one above-grade garage level, also accessed from the existing Block 20 West garage, on the second level of the building. In the current proposal it is partially screened roughly to the height of vehicle tops, with an open gap between the garage and the tower. However, the EESAP does not recommend garage screening treatment that includes open-air gaps. Instead, above-grade garages facing "B Streets" like Mill Road should have a façade treatment indistinguishable from active uses. Enhanced architectural screening treatments beyond what is shown in the current proposal are also recommended on the other facades of the building. The applicant should revise its design to incorporate the two types of garage screening recommended in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan (see pages 44-45 of the EESAP).
3. Parking garage intake/exhaust vents should be integrated or concealed
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. Staff recommends that these changes should also be made in the next submission.

E. Base/ ground level should be visually open to the street

The proposed stone base reduces visual openness that could be provided along the Mill Road building frontage. The applicant should study pulling the stone/glass transition point much farther south, at least to expose the full extent of the fitness area.

F. Varied skyline

In terms of overall building proportions, as well as regarding this tower's massing relationship to the east wing of Block 19, the addition of two floors to the middle of the tower would create ideal relationships. The two new floors would also address the circumstance of the proposal not meeting the minimum building height recommended in the EESAP and required in the CDD Conceptual Design Plan scheduled for public hearings soon. Another strategy to create a more varied skyline would be to create a rooftop amenity space that would in turn inform articulation of the tower's skyline.

G. Upper floors should have some design integration with base to avoid appearance of one building on top of a plinth

Overlapping staff's comments in Subsection D above, the visual disconnect created by the open horizontal gap between the second-level garage and tower above is also inconsistent with this design criterion. Historically, the DRB has generally favored tower designs in which a portion of the tower skin is carried down to grade, to avoid the impression of a building sitting on a plinth, as well as to heighten the tower's verticality. Revise the submission to reduce the building-on-a-plinth expression, which should include a study of bringing the tower skin down to grade along the north portion of the east façade, where the first several bays in the tower appear to align with the glazed base.

H. Large unrelieved planes and simple slab-like massing should be avoided

The proposed design, through a number of well-coordinated moves, effectively breaks up the building massing, while maintaining formal discipline. This approach is particularly successful at the northeastern and southwestern corners, where the building grid and glass appear to peel away from each other.

I. High-quality materials and expressions that contribute to the context of the neighborhood should be used

All materials listed meet the quality requirements. It is recommended that proposed strategy for building materials/colors should be presented in the next submission, along with physical samples.

J. Clear glazing is preferred

With the exception of the penthouse areas, clear glazing is proposed throughout. Solid spandrel as proposed or a heavily fritted or frosted (slightly translucent) glass may be preferable for the penthouse/skyline areas.

K. Building exteriors should be developed with details that give modeling and scale and minimize use of flat surfaces without depth or visual interest

The proposed design meets this expectation strongly, with numerous plane changes, inflections, and subtractive elements, such as at the proposed balconies.

L. Additional Architectural Refinements

Staff also recommends that the applicant study alternatives to the proposed porte-cochere at the main building entrance that would be better coordinated with the building design.

V. ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Staff believes that the proposed building design is largely consistent with the review criteria compiled above. It also does not see any major conflicts with the forthcoming new design standards currently being drafted for the neighborhood. Staff recommends that the applicant continue to further refine the seven items listed below and incorporate them in future DRB and DSUP submissions:

1. The overall proportions, as well as the compatibility of the proposed building height with neighboring apartment buildings, such as those at Block 19 and 20, could be improved. Consider increasing the building height by two stories, which would also increase the proposal's consistency with the recommended minimum building height in the EESAP.
2. There should be enhanced interaction between the building at ground level with Mill Road to the east. Consider the following:
 - a. Provide a resident building entrance with sidewalk connection direct to Mill Road.
 - b. Significantly reduce the length of the stone wall along Mill Road and instead replace it with more window space.
 - c. Utilize an alternative type of stone that is less rustic and more in keeping with the overall building architecture.
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.
5. Significant garage screening improvements should be incorporated into the next submission. As previously described, the Mill Road frontage should be screened to be indistinguishable from active uses, whereas the other building frontages should feature enhanced architectural screening as well. Garage intake/exhaust function will also need to be integrated into the screening design or concealed.
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. This would provide greater opportunities for recreation for tenants, as well as enhance the building silhouette and contribute to the overall building design.

VI. CONCLUSION

Staff recommends that the DRB endorse the overall direction of the proposal with consideration for the findings contained in this report. If the DRB agrees with the proposed changes as recommended by staff, the applicant would need to study such changes in the design and incorporate them in future DRB and Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) submissions.