

## Jane Rasely

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**From:** Heather Wright  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 29, 2019 4:34 PM  
**To:** Jane Rasely  
**Subject:** FW: Please disregard the DRB's approval of the Winslow Hotel when making your recommendation

**From:** Robin Simons <robin.a.simons@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 1, 2019 10:31 AM  
**To:** Heather Wright <hwright@bainbridgewa.gov>  
**Subject:** Please disregard the DRB's approval of the Winslow Hotel when making your recommendation

Dear Heather,

I know that, as you consider your recommendation on the Winslow Hotel, one of the factors you will consider is the approval of the Design Review Board. *However, that approval was seriously flawed.* It should not be a reason to recommend approval of the hotel. Here is why the DRB approval was flawed:

1. **The DRB overstepped its mandate in considering Living Building Challenge.** The DRB acknowledged in a letter to the Planning Commission dated June 18 that key to their approval was the fact that they believed the hotel would meet the criteria for the Living Building Challenge. However, as the letter acknowledges, “sustainability targets are not part of the current design guidelines.” The DRB had no business considering Living Building elements, much less basing their approval on them.
2. **Conflict of interest.** DRB member Jason Wilkinson works for the Living Building Challenge. At the June 3 DRB meeting Jason spoke at length about how strongly he felt that the building should strive to meet the LBC criteria, saying at one point to Jim Cutler, “The DRB would look very favorably on LBC.” As an employee of LBC, Jason had a clear conflict of interest on this issue. He should have recused himself from any discussions of LBC and the hotel. Instead, he seems to have lobbied the DRB to weight that factor highly as they considered the hotel’s application. Given that sustainability measures are not part of the DRB’s mandate, this seems particularly inappropriate. And while I’m sure Jason’s interest in seeing the hotel qualify as a Living Building is genuine, it’s also easy to imagine that the Living Building Challenge organization would benefit from having the Winslow Hotel become its first LBC hotel. For these reasons, Jason’s participation in the LBC discussions and the subsequent emphasis placed on LBC in the board’s approval make that approval problematic.
3. **Failure to follow COBI design guidelines.** The DRB approved the hotel despite the fact that it does not meet many of the city’s design guidelines. Here are just some of the guidelines the DRB granted a “waiver” on:

Commercial and Mixed-Use Design Guidelines for All Zoning Districts (BIMC 18.18.030)

- Design guideline #7: To reduce overall scale of the building: **Facades over 128’ in length shall be separated by pedestrian passage or open space.** Passages should be at least 12’ wide and two stories in height if covered. Façade setback should be expressed at the roof line by changes in plane. Passage should connect to public open space.

- The east façade of the hotel is over 128' in length yet has no pedestrian passage or open space.
- Design guideline #10: To encourage compatibility of development with both community and neighborhood characteristics: **Building designs should respond to nearby buildings that meet the upgraded design standards by using shared elements elements, materials or massing.**
  - The hotel shares no architectural or design elements with surrounding buildings, all of which have historic design elements including wood siding, pitched roofs, trimmed windows, building mass broken into multiple small sections, setbacks, porches, streetside landscaping, etc.
  - The hotel is far more massive than any building in the vicinity. The large nearby buildings, including those that are 3 or 4 stories tall, have upper story setbacks, sidewalk setbacks, porches, and courtyards that reduce the effect of their mass on the street. The hotel has no similar elements to reduce the effect of its mass on the street.
- Design Guideline #15: To maintain smaller scale commercial buildings. **Buildings in excess of a 10,000 square foot footprint should be visually split into two or more distinct elements.**
  - Although the hotel as a whole is split into multiple distinct elements, the two wings may each be large enough to trigger the 10,000-foot splitting rule.

#### Mixed Use Town Center / Core District Design Guidelines (BIMC 18.18.030)

- Design Guideline #1: Streetscape. To create a streetscape that is safe, comfortable and appealing to people on foot. New development shall promote a green urban environment with visually interesting spaces and connections for people to walk, sit and window shop. **Pedestrian pathways shall be established in order to connect internal and external development. New development and redevelopment shall include passageways that cut through sites and connect to other sites and/or buildings.**
  - The hotel provides no pedestrian pathways connecting internal and external development, and no passageways that cut through the site and connect to other sites or buildings.
- Design Guideline #6: Building Design/Overmassing and Variation: 1. Articulation. **Buildings shall incorporate articulation on all sides.** The street-facing sides shall receive the greatest amount of attention with respect to richness of forms, details, materials, and craft. 2. Variety in form. **Variety in building forms shall be provided rather than regularized repetition.**
  - Currently the east and west façades feature regularized repetition with multi-floor grids of identical windows.
- Design Guideline #7: Building Design / Upper Level Setbacks. To produce a townscape that is highly variegated and diverse, with a wide variety of building forms and massing, with a high degree of activity and interest at the street level that can engage people on foot. 1. **Along Winslow Way building facades shall be stepped back above the second story.**
  - The hotel has no upper story setbacks.

#### Mixed Use Town Center and High School Road Districts / General Design Guidelines (BIMC 18.18.030)

- Design Guideline #2: Outdoor Spaces and Amenities: To establish over time a variety of open spaces within the town center: **New development should provide facilities near or visible from the sidewalk for outdoor public use.**

- The hotel's courtyard is for the use of hotel, restaurant and bar patrons. It is not accessible to, nor usable by, the public.

In conclusion, the Design Review Board approved the hotel despite the fact that it did not meet the city's design guidelines – the guidelines the DRB exists to protect – because they hoped it would meet sustainability measures that were beyond their mandate.

At worst, this constitutes a dereliction of duty by the DRB. At best, it makes their approval misguided and wrong. I hope you will take this into account as you consider your own recommendation on the Winslow Hotel.

Thank you.

Robin Simons  
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