



## TWO MERRIWEATHER | Design Narrative

Crescent Neighborhood  
Columbia, Maryland

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*Howard Hughes*<sup>®</sup>  
THE HOWARD HUGHES CORPORATION

LSG LANDSCAPE  
ARCHITECTURE

**Gensler**

## Context

The Two Merriweather project is the second office building in Area 1 of the Crescent Neighborhood in Downtown Columbia, Maryland. The site is in the northwest corner of the Crescent Neighborhood with Broken Land Parkway to the west, Little Patuxent Parkway to the north, Grantchester Way to the east, and Divided Sky Lane to the south. The site to the east across Grantchester Way is a preserved Natural Area. The previously approved and under construction buildings on the site include *Building A* to the north and a parking structure to the west. Between the two office buildings is a drop-off roundabout and pedestrian plaza. Between Two Merriweather and the garage is a micro-bioretenion feature, public plaza and site stairs. The garage capacity satisfies the requirements for parking of both office buildings at 1,116 spaces with an additional seven parallel parking spaces along Divided Sky Lane. The grading for the site remains primarily unchanged from the previous Area 1 Masterplan approval with the Lobby Level elevation at 358' and the Concourse Level (retail) elevation at 343'.

## History

The previously submitted Masterplan included a 'place-holder' for this project anticipating a future speculative office building. The Howard Hughes Corporation has since identified a tenant who will be involved in the design process enabling a more informed design response in that the product will be more in line with a "built to suit" than traditional spec office. The tenant has a progressive, multi-generational culture that embraces the amenity heavy environment that the Crescent Neighborhood has to offer. The floor plate was enlarged from the place-holder footprint to accommodate the size requirements of the tenant. The building height remains as previously approved at five stories with screened roof equipment and an additional lower level "Concourse" below opening to the lower plaza along Divided Sky Lane.

## Architecture

The building is 130,000 Gross Square Feet including 100,000 SF of office space and 30,000 SF of retail. The massing of the building is informed by the approved Area 1 masterplan footprint allowing 8' pedestrian sidewalks along Grantchester Way and maintaining as much public plaza space as possible to the west and south. The southwest corner is canted out as a prominent corner feature acting as a gateway to the south plaza while also providing "self-shading" to the building from the afternoon sun. The northwest corner is articulated as a cantilevered vertical element emphasizing the main entrance and providing a sense of arrival from the roundabout. A canopy above the vestibule extends below the cantilever. The building defers to Building A in stature while the facade provides a sense of self-identity.

The facade is primarily precast with window wall and "punched" openings. The precast shelf and vertical precast fins provide shading to enhance energy performance and contribute to LEED certification as required by the County. At the corner feature, the precast language dissolves to curtainwall providing maximum daylight and views towards the plaza. Along the north elevation, a second precast language is used to break the monotony of the block. The system for this area of the facade is being studied further; however, the current strategy is that a typical precast spandrel and window wall line the north elevation with a "second skin" outboard of the precast as a floor to floor, vertical screening element. The screening element turns the corners providing shading at the northern portion of the east and west elevations. The north stair is expressed on the exterior as a vertical curtainwall element breaking up the precast spandrels. All glazing is low-E glass with a laminated layer to increase acoustic performance. The overall building glazing percentage is slightly less than 60% within the range of the Crescent Neighborhood Design Guidelines.

The base of the building at the Lobby Level is primarily storefront with a double sided entry vestibule accepting entrants from Building A as well as the garage tower. As the grade of the plaza descends to the south, a decision point is created to continue onto a public terrace or go down the stairs to the lower plaza and Concourse level retail. The layering of plaza and elevated terrace creates a dynamic three-dimensional public space further integrating the building into the site. Retail storefront lines the south elevation of the Concourse and turns the corner along Grantchester Way creating a corner retail opportunity for pedestrians traveling west from Merriweather Post Pavilion and Symphony Woods. The eastern side of the concourse transitions from storefront to solid masonry as the grading rises. Per the Crescent Neighborhood Design Guidelines, Divided Sky Lane is a primary street while Grantchester is a secondary street. The service entrance is therefore located along Grantchester as a recessed opening in the façade to reduce disruption to the streetscape.

The roofing system proposed is a thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) membrane with a light cap sheet for high albedo and reduction of heat island effect. The roof is accessible via the south stair and includes screened mechanical equipment. The screenwall is metal panel set back from the perimeter to reduce visibility from most vantage points.