

April 7, 2025

City of Olympia CP&D
ATTN: Design Review Board
601 4th Avenue East
Olympia, WA 98501

RE: Design Review Narrative for BHR B&B Apartments

The following information is to demonstrate compliance with the City of Olympia's Design Guidelines for the Multifamily and Commercial High Density Corridor Requirements.

Commercial Design Criteria HDC – Chapter 18.130

- **18.130.020 Building Orientation:** The new building establishes a strong street presence, abutting over 60% of the frontage and seamlessly integrating with the pedestrian way. On the east side, the designated parking area remains compact, with only access along State Avenue to maintain an urban-scale streetscape. Thoughtfully designed pedestrian connections enhance accessibility, providing direct access from the public sidewalk to the building courtyard, as well as a secondary route along the parking area leading to an additional entry. To further enhance the public realm, the existing sidewalk along the entire frontage will be replaced and complemented by new street trees, reinforcing a cohesive and inviting streetscape.
- **18.130.020 Building Design:** The façades along State Street feature well defined vertical and horizontal modulation, achieved through articulated elevations and varied siding materials that enhance visual interest. The building's courtyard parti strategically frames the open space, ensuring that no individual wall segment exceeds thirty feet in length along State Street, reinforcing a well-proportioned, inviting presence. The primary pedestrian entrance to the courtyard is clearly defined and prominently visible from the street, further emphasized by a covered entry element that enhances its accessibility and prominence. From within the courtyard, circulation balconies provide direct visual engagement with State Street, fostering a strong connection between residents and the surrounding streetscape.
- **18.130.040 Surface Parking:** Parking lot is located to the east side of building.
- **18.130.050 Historic Building Types:** The structure embraces a historically vernacular design aesthetic, characterized by shed roof forms and a balanced combination of lap and panel siding, with restrained detailing that maintains architectural simplicity across the entire building. Window configurations feature singular or grouped vertical arrangements, thoughtfully oriented to maximize privacy within the project while minimizing visual impact on adjacent residences. A

Staff Markup: It is unclear to staff if the building design exudes vernacular design, however, the corridor does not appear to have consistent identity in surrounding buildings. Board may want to discuss.

Staff Markup:
Staff will be requiring clarification that stall sizes are large enough for short-term bike parking, and requiring a sign at the front entry to the south (could be attached to a pole) stating that bike parking is available as it is not visible from this entry.

Staff Markup:
Landscaping along east property line is not wide enough for tree growth, so will be replaced with shrubs or widened.

Staff Markup:
Open space does not provide a mix of passive and active recreation. Board may want to discuss.

prominent entryway to the courtyard serves as the main entry to the building and is a focal point along State Street, seamlessly integrating with the balcony circulation to enhance connectivity and movement throughout the structure.

18.130.060- HDC 4-Capitol Mall: Not Applicable.

Multi-Family Residential – Chapter 18.170

18.170.010 Grading and Tree Retention: The site only slightly slopes to the North with limited mature trees that are not feasible to retain.

18.170.020 Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation: The site is designed to facilitate seamless access for both pedestrians and vehicles, ensuring convenient connectivity to key features such as unit mailboxes, the courtyard, and parking areas. Long-term bike parking is strategically located at the side entrance, offering direct access to both the building and courtyard for cyclists. Due to the project's mid-block location and compact scale, establishing internal pedestrian connections to adjacent properties is impractical, reinforcing a self-contained and efficiently planned circulation network.

18.170.030 Parking Location and Design: A compact parking lot is situated on the east side of the building, occupying less than 30% of the street frontage to maintain an active streetscape. Thoughtful screening, including fencing and layered landscaping, ensures a visually cohesive transition while providing a buffer between the lot and the adjacent property to the east.

18.170.040 Usable Open Space: The courtyard part of the structure provides usable open space for the residents within the center of the building's footprint and to the north of the building there is additional landscaped open space for the tenant and their pets.

18.170.050 Fencing and Walls: The building's front facade and landscaped terrace maintain a visually open connection to State Street, reinforcing an inviting and accessible streetscape. Where fencing is incorporated, gates have been strategically placed based on feasibility and the preferences of BHR staff to best accommodate tenants' and neighboring properties needs while preserving openness.

18.170.060 Landscape Planting: The project fully meets planting requirements, selecting species suited to available conditions and ensuring trees thrive at their natural mature size without risk of environmental disruption. The proposed landscaping enhances the existing streetscape, using a limited number of species for a cohesive, natural appearance. Tree selection considers mature size, soil characteristics, and planting bed depth. The design prioritizes plants that enhance drought tolerance and support local wildlife. This approach promotes ecological responsibility while reinforcing sustainability and aesthetic integrity.

Staff Markup: Plans will have to show all trees planted 6ft from hard surfaces to allow for critical root zone.

18.170.070 Screening Mechanical Equipment: The project thoughtfully positions all utility vaults to ensure they remain fully concealed from adjacent public rights-of-way and nearby residences. The mechanical systems have been designed without the need for exterior at-grade or rooftop units, eliminating the necessity for additional screening. To maintain a cohesive aesthetic, all wall-mounted vents and mechanical accessories will be painted to seamlessly integrate with the building's overall color scheme.

18.170.080 Site Lighting: The project ensures adequate lighting along all pedestrian walkways, balconies and building entrances while preventing excessive illumination on surrounding properties. All lighting is directed away from residential unit windows where it is feasible to maintain privacy and minimize disruption.

Staff Markup: Lighting can be reviewed in more detail at detail review.

Staff Markup:
Staff guess this is intended to be short-term bike parking, and long-term will be provided in units. Clarification will be needed prior to detail review & building permit.

- **18.170.090 Screening Blank Walls and Fences:** The building's scale and articulation prevent monotonous expanses of blank walls, ensuring a visually engaging and well-proportioned façade. Additionally, fencing throughout the project site has been thoughtfully integrated with landscaping that softens its appearance, effectively breaking up visual impact and enhancing overall cohesion within the surrounding environment.
- **18.170.100 Building Orientation and Entries:** The project features a clearly defined entry to the building and courtyard from State Street, ensuring seamless pedestrian access. A distinctive architectural entry canopy with materials and lighting that highlight the entry, reinforcing its prominence. The transition from the sidewalk is thoughtfully designed and integrated with a landscaped area that enhances visual appeal and wayfinding. Additionally, exterior stairways to second stories are located to limit visibility from the street, maintaining a cohesive streetscape. Thoughtfully designed pedestrian connections enhance accessibility, providing direct access from the public sidewalk to the building courtyard, as well as a secondary route along the parking area leading to an additional entry. To further enhance the public realm, the existing sidewalk along the entire frontage will be replaced and complemented by new street trees, reinforcing a cohesive and inviting streetscape.
- **18.170.110 Neighborhood Scale and Character:** The project successfully integrates with the existing neighborhood scale while accommodating the district's larger building allowances. To minimize visual scale differences, the building mass is thoughtfully stepped, and large facades are broken into smaller, well-proportioned segments. Clean, simplified architectural elements reflect the character of nearby structures within three hundred feet, reinforcing continuity along the streetscape. The shed rooflines along the building's perimeter create a smooth transition between the proposed structure and adjacent residential buildings, while the roof slope approximates those of surrounding homes to maintain harmony. Both the wall plane modulation, roof forms and segmentation of the structure divides the building into house-sized segments, fostering a human-scaled presence, and window patterns, vertical orientation, and proportions are consistent with neighboring residential structures. Carefully selected facade materials align with those commonly used in the area, preserving a cohesive aesthetic. Additionally, entryways and the buildings orientation to State Street maintain a strong relationship with the street. This approach creates a context-sensitive design that balances zoning regulations with neighborhood compatibility. **Staff Markup: Neighborhood does not appear to have consistent character (e.g., roof forms).**
- **18.170.120 Building Modulation:** The project effectively incorporates building modulation at a scale appropriate to the neighborhood, ensuring a visually dynamic façade that reduces the perception of large building masses. The structure's design features regularly spaced façade siding variations, sloped rooflines, and façade projections to create architectural interest. Prominent fascia, and soffit details emphasize the building's upper elements, while extended roof overhangs enhance depth and character. The courtyard balconies, and covered entries provide inviting pedestrian-scale features, and grouped and corner wrapped windows further contribute to façade articulation. Additionally, strategically placed light fixtures, courtyard amenities, and architectural lighting help to reinforce a well-balanced and engaging building along the streetscape.
- **18.170.130 Building Windows:** The project ensures a visually dynamic façade with well-proportioned windows that enhance relief, detail, and rhythm. Vertically proportioned windows, which are at least one and a half times their width, are used to maintain balanced aesthetics across the elevations. Varying groupings and windows that wrap the building's corners contribute to the architectural character and create added visual interest. The windows are further emphasized by thoughtfully designing how they are framed and trimmed. The placement of the windows is carefully considered to minimize direct sightlines between residential units, preserving privacy while maintaining a cohesive design.

Staff Markup: It is unclear from plans if courtyard-facing windows line up. Board may want to ensure interior windows do not align.

- **18.170.140 Material and Color:** The project has been designed and uses the incorporated building materials to provide texture and pattern along the building's façade. This includes accented lap siding as well as a consistent and coordinated panel siding pattern that ensures visual appeal. Natural-appearing materials such as the painted horizontal lap siding have been utilized to enhance depth and character. Though the specific color scheme for the project has yet to be determined, the material and color transitions are planned to be carefully coordinated with building modulation, reinforcing a cohesive design. Distinct changes in color and materials are planned to differentiate and provide a more human scale along the building's elevations, contributing to a well-balanced façade.

Staff Markup: Color can be reviewed at detail review.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Michael T. Kershisnik', with a stylized, flowing script.

Michael T. Kershisnik, AIA
Architect | Principal
360.226.1945