

**CITY OF OLYMPIA
Olympia Design Review Board**

**DETAIL DESIGN REVIEW 2
STAFF REPORT
April 18, 2014**

Case: Fern Street Apartments, File No. 13-0055

Applicant: David Meissner
BV Funding III, LLC
16541 Redmond Way #277
Redmond WA 98052

Representative: Steven Hatton
Hatton Godat Pantier
3910 Martin Way E, STE B
Olympia WA 98506

Location: 1000 Fern Street SW, Olympia WA

Project Description: Construction of 11 2 and 3 story multi-family buildings, with 135 units on 5.96 acres; off-street surface parking for 228 vehicles; 3500 sq.ft. recreation building and pool. Project includes a pedestrian and bicycle pathway extending from Fern Street SW to 11th Avenue SW.

Zoning District: Residential Multifamily 24 (RM-24)

Critical Areas: N/A

SEPA Determination: A SEPA Determination of Non-significance was issued on March 27, 2014.

NOTIFICATION: In accordance with the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) 18.78, public notification was mailed on or before March 14, 2014, to the Parties of Record and the Recognized Neighborhood Association(s).

**SITE PLAN REVIEW
COMMITTEE DECISION:** The Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) granted conditional Land Use Approval and SEPA Determination of Non-significance on March 27, 2014.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Adjacent Development and Site Conditions

The development site is located in the South Westside neighborhood, south of 9th Avenue SW, between Fern Street SW and 11th Avenue SW. Surrounding development consists of multifamily residential housing west and south of the site, and single family (further) east and north of the site. The development pattern corresponds with the underlying Residential Multifamily (RM-24) zoning district which abruptly changes to lower density residential zoning immediately east of the site (R 6-12 and R 4-8).

The site is 5.96 acres in area and consists of two parcels. The western parcel is developed with two four-plex housing units with attached garages, and unfinished site improvements including pervious pavement, parking, and takes direct access off Fern Street SW. The east parcel, adjacent to Decatur Woods Park, remains mostly vegetated except for an unfinished gravel/dirt access roadway through the mid-section of the lot. Decatur Woods Park, 6.2 acres in size, is adjacent to the development site. The Park contains several trails, an open space area, and a playground.

Design Proposal

The design proposal consists of the addition of 135 multi-family residential units to the 8 existing units constructed as part of the Little Tuscany development (CPD File No. 05-0194). Off-street surface parking will be provided for 228 vehicles in the form of open parking spaces, carports, and garages. The design program includes an on-site recreation building and pool, and a bicycle and pedestrian trail that extends along the entire south property line from Fern Street SW to the unimproved 11th Avenue SW (646 linear feet).

The eleven (11) “Garden Style” residential buildings extend three stories in height and include external hallways and recessed stairways. Some of the units include small balconies and ground level patios (hence the name “Garden Style” apartments), and all share a common wall. Each building has a deeply recessed common stairwell under which will be located bicycle parking racks.

Direct vehicular access to the site will be from Fern Street SW. An additional access for emergency vehicles will be provided at the southeast corner via a 20 foot wide gated emergency vehicle access aisle. To achieve this additional access point, the development will include an extended 11th Avenue from Decatur Street ending in a cul-de-sac at the southwest corner of the development site.

Additionally, a ten (10) foot wide public pathway will extend from Fern Street east to 11th Avenue SW – 11th Avenue will be extended west in a cul-de-sac to meet the east end of the public pathway. The pathway is approximately 600 feet in length and runs along the southern boundary of the development site. The pathway will gently wind around some of the existing mature evergreen trees, will be landscaped with native vegetation, and will include “public pathway” signs and lighting at each end.

DESIGN ANALYSIS

The section called “How to Use Design Guidelines” in the Olympia Municipal Code encourages creative solutions in meeting the requirements as long as the design solutions **are equal to, or better than** the guidelines listed below the Requirement Sections (OMC 18.100.100).

As a multifamily development proposal with greater than 20 units, the project requires Board level design review (OMC 18.100.060(A)(5) and 18.100.090(A)(3). For this project Olympia Municipal Code Chapter 18.170, Multifamily Residential Design Criteria, applies.

Conceptual Design Review

This project came before the Design Review Board for Concept Design Review on June 27, 2013. The Board recommended approval contingent upon a number of conditions (Concept DR Memo). The following items are conditions that are yet **INCOMPLETE**:

1. Work with the Lead Planner and Urban Forester to develop an inviting, safe, and comfortable pathway along the south property line that includes appropriate signage at both access points and is designed to support current and future non-vehicular use.
2. Show the location of mechanical equipment and utility vaults in the architectural plan set, and on pertinent sheets throughout the project plan sets, i.e., civil, structural, and architectural plans. Ensure that the equipment and infrastructure are adequately screened from view.
3. Locate mechanical equipment and utility vaults on the least visible side of the building and/or site.
4. Screen at-grade mechanical equipment utilities with vertical plants such as trees, shrubs or ornamental grasses.
5. Each building shall have a discernible base, middle, and top. Reconsider the color schemes and building materials to provide more simplicity, including roof pop-outs.
6. Minimize wall-pack lighting in favor of site lighting that shields the light source and facilitates better vision at night.
7. Provide full details of the trail along the south property line from Fern Street SW to 11th Ave. SW, including but not limited to materials for construction, profile information, and design details.
8. Provide cut sheets of all light fixtures and bicycle parking structures.
9. Provide a complete materials and colors board.

Detail Design Review 1

The Detail Design Review meeting was held on March 27, 2014. The Board recommended approval contingent upon a number of conditions (DETAIL DR Memo-1). The following items are conditions that are yet **INCOMPLETE**:

10. The fence shall be visually penetrable in the form of a lattice design, vinyl colored chain-link, or other;
12. Minimize wall pack lighting.
13. Use changes in colors or building materials to differentiate the ground floor from upper floors of the building.
 - a. **See also the CONCEPT Design Review Conditions above:** *Each building should have a discernible base, middle, and top.*

14. Provide colored elevations of stairwells.

15. Simplify the color layout.

- a. **See also the CONCEPT Design Review Conditions above:** *Reconsider the color schemes and building materials to provide more simplicity, including roof pop-outs.*

Detail Design Review 2

This review focuses on three (3) key issues that the Design Review Board asked the development team give more time and attention. The basis of staff recommendations is derived from a revised plan set received by the Department on April 8, 2014. Detailed information and analysis of the design program is provided in the Design Criteria CHECKLIST-OMC 18.170.

Fences and Walls, 18.170.050

Staff Response: The pathway design now shows a six (6) foot tall fence, "solid style fence", and a six (6) foot tall "open style fence". The mix of fencing includes a cedar man gate as an extension of the sidewalk east of building ten (10).

*The Community Planning & Development Department along with Public Works and the City's Parks and Recreation Department feel that **no or low** fencing along the pathway – if used, no taller than four (4) feet in height – is a vital component of an inviting, safe, and comfortable pathway along the south property line. Fencing, if used at all, should positively support current and future non-vehicular use, and should be a beneficial amenity to the surrounding community.*

Staff Recommendation:

16. The fence, if fencing is to be used along the pathway at all, shall be no taller than four (4) feet in height.
17. The fence, if fencing is to be used along the pathway at all, shall not extend across the entire length of the pathway – the fence shall be placed along the pathway intermittently.
18. The fence, if fencing is to be used along the pathway at all, shall be visually penetrable.

Site Lighting, 18.170.080

Staff Response: The site lighting plan should show all development lighting options.

Staff Recommendation:

19. Add the deck and patio lighting specifications to the site lighting plan.
20. Replace wall pack mounted lighting with low low-intensity landscape lighting along walkways, fixtures with directive shields, or other such lighting that directs lighting away from windows of residential units and cuts down on light pollution and light trespass.

Colors and Materials, 18.170.140

Staff Response: The applicants have not revised the color palettes as conditioned by the Design Review Board at the Concept Design Review stage and at the first Detail Design Review meeting.

Staff Recommendation:

Conditions 5, 13, 14, and 15 apply (above).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Design Review Board recommend to the City of Olympia Building Official that **only when the following conditions are satisfied and depicted in the Architectural Plan Set** shall building permits be issued for the development proposal.

CONDITIONS 1-20 ABOVE.

Submitted By:

Catherine McCoy, Associate Planner
360-570-3776, cmccoy@ci.olympia.wa.us

Attachments:

1. Detail Design Review Staff Report
2. Revised Site Plan
3. Concept DR Memo
4. DETAIL DR Memo-1
5. Design Criteria CHECKLIST-OMC 18.170
6. Land Use Approval w/DNS 032714