

**CITY OF OLYMPIA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**CONCEPTUAL DESIGN REVIEW STAFF REPORT
June 26, 2025**

Project Name/Number:	B&B Apartments, 25-2227
Applicant:	LDC, CARVE Architects
Location:	2104 State Ave NE
Project Description:	Demolition of seven existing units and construction of 10,115 sq. ft. apartment complex that will include a total of 19 low-income units (eight one-bedroom units and 11 studio units). The new complex will consist of four two-story garden style buildings with a courtyard facing State Avenue.
Zoning District:	High Density Corridor (HDC-2)
Design Districts:	High-Density Corridor (OMC 18.130), Multifamily Residential (OMC 18.170)
Comprehensive Plan Designations:	Urban Corridor (UC)
City Staff:	Casey Mauck, Associate Planner Phone: (360) 753-8048 Email: cmauck@ci.olympia.wa.us
Public Notification:	In accordance with OMC 18.70, notice of the application, neighborhood meeting, and Design Review Board meeting was posted on the site and mailed to adjacent property owners on May 15, 2025.

The Design Review Board meeting is a public meeting and the public is welcome to attend. The meeting is not a public hearing and public testimony or comments, are not taken at the meeting. Written comments for the Board may be submitted to staff prior to the start of the meeting. To allow for processing and distribution, please submit written comments to staff by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Existing Site Conditions

The site includes two lots north of State Avenue between Wilson Street and Sawyer Street totaling 0.37 acres. The project proposal includes a lot consolidation to combine the two parcels into one. The site currently includes seven one-story apartment units in two buildings. The proposal includes demolition of these existing units; the tenants will be relocated to other Behavioral Health Resource units. The site is zoned HDC-2 and is surrounded by a mix of residential and small commercial uses.

Public Comments

Staff have received no written or oral comments to date specific to the design of the project.

Land Use Review

The land use review is currently underway. In addition to design review, the project proposal must meet building, fire, engineering, urban forestry, and other requirements. The Site Plan Review Committee is finalizing the first round of review and will be asking for an updated Soil and Vegetation Report that includes a Soil and Vegetation Protection Area (SVPA). The site plan may see some changes from the addition of an SVPA.

DESIGN REVIEW

Conceptual Design Review

Please note that this is a *Conceptual Design Review*. Conceptual review involves the major design elements of a project which include site analysis and contextual response, site development, and architectural and landscape concepts as they relate to the general Citywide design criteria and the specific design criteria of the design district.

The section called “How to Use Design Criteria (OMC 18.100.100)” in the Olympia Municipal Code provides instructions for meeting the City’s design criteria. Compliance with each requirement is necessary; the guidelines provide methods to achieve compliance with the requirements. Applicable guidelines must be incorporated into the project design except in cases where the proposed design solutions are considered by the Board and/or staff to be equal to or better than the guidelines and meet the intent of the requirement.

Review of Design Criteria

Staff evaluated the project proposal based on:

- A narrative prepared by the applicant and marked up by City staff discussing how the project meets each design requirement (Attachment 2); and
- Design Review Plans received on April 15, 2025 (Attachment 3).

Staff analysis of the design proposal is incorporated in the design narrative (Attachment 2). Staff found that the proposal generally addresses the criteria within the code, though some items may merit further review by the Board. These items are noted in the checklist, discussed below and included in recommended conditions of approval. There were some items noted in the staff markup of the applicant’s narrative that are not discussed below, as they are covered by other areas of the development code (outside of design review).

Areas Suggested for Board Review

Historic building types (OMC 18.130.050): In HDC-1 and HDC-2, buildings shall include similar details to one of the historic building types as found on the corridor and in the adjacent neighborhoods. Historic building types listed in code include craftsman, vernacular, and tudor. The applicant has indicated that the building was designed with vernacular elements. The Board may want to discuss if the design has achieved the intent of this requirement. Staff found that the corridor does not have a consistent identity, and do not recommend a condition of approval.

Pedestrian and vehicular circulation (OMC 18.170.020): Projects must have attractively designed and convenient vehicular and pedestrian connections. The guidelines include providing bicycle parking. Staff will be requiring a sign at the building entrance to the south indicating bicycle parking is available, since the space on the east side of the building is not readily visible to the street. Staff will be requiring this outside of the design review process, and do not recommend a condition of approval.

Usable open space (OMC 18.170.040): Projects shall provide usable open space for use by residents, with a mix of passive and active recreation options. The proposal includes a courtyard with grass and raised planter beds. Staff found that that this satisfied the requirement for passive recreation options, but did not provide active options. Given the small project size, the Board may want to consider requiring that the interior courtyard

triangle planters be used (with signage) as a community garden, or approve the open space as shown. Staff have included a recommended condition of approval.

Building windows (OMC 18.170.130): Projects shall provide relief, detail, and visual rhythm with well-proportioned windows, and minimize window locations where residents from one unit may look directly into another unit. Staff could not tell from the plans if courtyard-facing windows align or are offset for privacy. Staff recommend a condition of approval requiring these windows be offset.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Design Review Board recommend to the Director approval of the conceptual design review plans for B&B Apartments (25-2227), subject to the following conditions:

A. Context Plan: Approve as proposed.

B. Site and Landscape Design: Approve subject to the following condition:

1. Provide active open space by including a community garden in the courtyard, or through another activity onsite. This requirement will be assessed at the time of detail design review.

C. Building Design: Approve subject to the following condition:

1. Offset courtyard-facing windows so that they do not align with neighbors' windows across the courtyard. This requirement will be assessed at the time of detail design review.

Submitted By: Casey Mauck, Associate Planner

ATTACHMENTS

- **Attachment 1:** Conceptual Design Staff Report
- **Attachment 2:** Design Narrative with City Staff Markup
- **Attachment 3:** Design Review Plans