

**CITY OF OLYMPIA
Design Review Board**

**CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
January 22, 2015**

Case: Bayan Trails Multifamily, Case No. 14-0139

Owner Golden Alon Development Co., LLC
PO Box 1068
Olympia, Washington 98507

Representative: Ross Jarvis, P.E.
SCJ Alliance
8730 Tallon Lane NE
Lacey, Washington 98516

Site Address: 607 and 709 Sleater Kinney Road NE

Project Description: Construction of a multifamily development consisting of four senior apartment buildings (168 units), ten townhome-style apartment buildings (70 units), community building, pool building, parking, pathways, raised garden beds, outdoor seating areas and viewing platform. A Category II wetland is located on the western portion of the site.

**Zoning District/
Comprehensive Plan
Designation:** Residential Multifamily – 18 (RM-18)

Design Review District: N/A

Scenic Vista: N/A

SEPA Determination: A threshold determination has not yet been made.

Public Notification: Public meeting notice was mailed in accordance with OMC 18.78 on January 2, 2014.

City Staff: Cari Hornbein, AICP, Senior Planner
Phone: 360-753-8048
E-mail: chornbei@ci.olympia.wa.us

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Existing Conditions, Adjacent Development, and Project Context:

The project site is located at 607 and 709 Sleater Kinney Road NE. The 20-acre site is relatively flat but slopes gently toward a large wetland on the western portion of the site. Except for the wetland, two home sites, and large asphalt parking area, the site is covered in mature trees and vegetation.

Surrounding land uses and zoning are as follows:

- North – single family residence; zoned Residential 4-8 units/acre (R 4-8)
- East – North Thurston High School located in the City of Lacey; zoned Open Space School
- South – single family residences in the San Mar neighborhood; zoned Residential 4-8 units/acre (R 4-8)
- West – Chehalis Western Trail, multifamily beyond, zoned Medical Services (MS)



Description of Proposed Improvements:

The proposal is for the phased construction of a multifamily development, including four senior apartment buildings (168 units), community building, pool building, ten townhome-style multifamily buildings (70 units), parking areas, internal street system, sidewalks and pathways, active and passive recreation areas, raised garden beds, stormwater improvements, and utilities. One of the project goals is to retain as many of the site's mature trees as possible, as well as an existing koi pond and garden between the main house and street. To this end, larger setbacks are proposed along the east and south project boundaries.

Land Use Review:

The project is currently under review by the City's Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) but has been referred to the Olympia Hearing Examiner due to the complex nature of the project relating to critical areas, tree retention, stormwater drainage, street connections, neighborhood scale and character, and transitional requirements between new multifamily development and existing residential

neighborhoods. Preliminary land use review comments from city staff were sent to the applicant on January 8, 2015 (see Attachment 9). Key issues include street design and connectivity to San Mar Drive, grading and retaining walls within required yards and wetland buffer, tree retention, stormwater drainage, utilities, and transitional requirements for large multifamily projects.

Public Comment:

The City received several written comments, primarily in opposition to a street connection between the project site and the San Mar neighborhood. One comment was received that addressed neighborhood compatibility (see Attachment 10).

II. DESIGN ANALYSIS:

The purpose of design review is articulated in OMC 18.100.040:

- 1) To promote those qualities in the natural environment which bring value to the community;
- 2) To foster the attractiveness and functional utility of the community as a place to live and work;
- 3) To preserve the special character and quality of Olympia by maintaining the integrity of those areas which have a discernible character or are of special historic significance;
- 4) To raise the level of community expectations for the quality of the built environment;
- 5) To encourage originality and creativity in site planning and architecture;
- 6) To communicate these purposes to the applicant and to assist the applicant in achieving these purposes;
- 7) To preserve and enhance property value;
- 8) To ensure that new developments maintain or improve neighborhood character and livability; and
- 9) To consider the applicant's needs and goals and the broader public impact of any proposal.

Concept Design Review

Please note that this is a **Concept Design Review**. Conceptual design 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 Guidelines (OMC 18.100.100)" in the Olympia Municipal Code encourages creative solutions in meeting the Design Requirements as long as the solutions **are equal to, or better than**, the guidelines listed below the Requirement Sections.

Please note that for this project, Chapters OMC 18.170, Multifamily Residential applies. City staff has evaluated the project based on:

- 1) Design requirements and guidelines checklist for OMC 18.170, Multifamily Residential; and
- 2) Context plans and elevations, site plan, floor plans, building elevations, grading plan, perspective renderings, landscape plan, and applicant's response to multifamily residential design requirements and guidelines (see Attachment 6).

Design Issues

Key design issues are summarized below. For detailed discussion, see the attached multifamily design checklist with staff's analysis (Attachment 4). The applicant also analyzed the project's consistency with the design standards, which can be found in see Attachment 5.

- 1) Site grading, OMC 18.170.010 – Significant grading and tree removal is proposed within the wetland buffer. This has been identified as a site plan issue due to potential impacts to the wetland buffer, loss of mature trees, and impacts to existing drainage patterns.
- 2) Pedestrian circulation, OMC 18.170.020 – Pedestrian pathways come within a few feet of proposed buildings in several locations, impacting the privacy of ground floor units. In addition, pedestrian areas between the community and pool buildings and adjoining multifamily buildings are very narrow (15 - 27 feet between buildings). These spaces will offer less privacy to the end units, may be shadier, and may feel uncomfortable to residents.
- 3) Parking lot screening, OMC 18.170.030 – Parking areas dominate street frontages along 6th Avenue NE and the east/west street (north of the townhome buildings); no more than 30% is allowed under the guidelines. Revisions to the landscape plan are needed to address screening requirements.
- 4) Fences and walls, OMC 18.170.050 – The fence along the south property line lacks variation.
- 5) Landscaping, OMC 18.170.060 – A detailed landscape plan is needed to determine consistency with design standards, as well as landscape requirements in OMC 18.36.
- 6) Neighborhood scale and character, OMC 18.170.110 – This is the most significant issue for the project and involves consideration of the 18th Avenue Estates appeal in 2009/2010. In that case, which involved a multifamily project next to an existing single family neighborhood, the outcome involved increased modulation and stepped rooflines. In the case of Bayan Trails, staff generally supports efforts made by the applicant to address neighborhood scale and character, but recommends that measures be taken to further improve neighborhood scale and character between the townhome buildings and existing single family homes in San Mar.
- 7) Windows, OMC 18.170.130 – Windows generally meet the design standards except in some locations where residents will be able to see into nearby units. Further study of window placement and floor plans is recommended.
- 8) Materials/colors, OMC 18.170.140 – Use of materials generally meets this standard, but further study of both materials and colors is recommended to better differentiate between floors, define base/middle/upper levels, and provide variation between buildings.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Design Review Board recommend to the Olympia Hearing Examiner approval of concept plans for the Bayan Trails Multifamily project, File No. 14-0139 with the following conditions, as may be modified by the Board (relevant code sections in italics).

A. Context Plan: *Approve with condition.*

1. Based on staff's analysis of neighborhood scale and character under OMC 18.170.110, approve the context plan for the north, west and eastern portions of the site. For the southern portion of the site, require additional measures beyond those included in the proposal (larger setbacks, modulation) to improve neighborhood scale and character between the townhome buildings and single family homes in San Mar. These changes shall be reviewed either by the full Design Review Board or by a Subcommittee prior to the Site Plan Review Committee making a recommendation to the Hearing Examiner.

B. Preliminary Site and Landscape Design: *Approve with conditions.*

1. Provide greater separation between walkways and buildings for greater privacy of the ground floor units. *18.170.020*
2. Increase the separation between the community and pool buildings and multifamily buildings for increased light, privacy of the end units, and sense of comfort for residents. *18.170.020*
3. Provide screening between parking areas and adjacent streets to reduce the visual impact on pedestrians and neighboring properties. Screening shall comply with landscape requirements in OMC 18.36. *18.170.030, 18.36*
4. Variation of the fence along the south property line shall be provided, with details to be submitted at the time of Detail Design Review. *18.170.050*
5. Revise the landscape plan per design standards in OMC 18.170.060 and OMC 18.36 and submit at the time of Detail Design Review. In addition to comments made in the January 8, 2015 preliminary land use review comments, the revised plan shall address the following:
 - a) Increase the width of planting beds along the building foundations for increased screening of blank walls (e.g., on the east and west elevations of the senior apartments where the depth of the bed is approximately three feet).
 - b) Select plants to minimize headlight glare into the ground floor units of the senior apartments.
 - c) Identify how the area between the community and pool buildings will be used, e.g., indicate whether outdoor seating will be provided?
 - d) Clarify vegetation within the townhome auto courts; indicate whether container plants/trellises are proposed.
 - e) Where evergreens are proposed, provide adequate separation from building walls.

C. Preliminary Building Design: *Approve with conditions.*

- a) Move windows or adjust floor plans as needed to minimize opportunities for residents from one unit to look directly into other units. *18.170.130*
- b) Further study the use of materials and colors to better define the base, middle, and upper levels of the buildings. *18.170.140*
- c) Provide variation of material/color schemes throughout the project. *18.170.140*
- d) Modify the south elevations of the townhome buildings to improve neighborhood scale and character (see discussion above under Context Plan). *18.170.110*

Submitted By: Cari Hornbein, Senior Planner
Phone: (360) 753-8048

Attachments:

- 2. General Land Use Application and Land Use Supplement
- 3. Concept Design Review Application
- 4. Design Checklist, OMC 18.170 – Staff Response
- 5. Design Checklist, OMC 18.170 – Applicant Response
- 6. 11 x 17 Plan Set plus Full Size Landscape Plan
- 7. Context Exhibit
- 8. Building Separation Exhibit
- 9. Preliminary Land Use Review Comments
- 10. Public Comment