



M E M O

TO: Steve Hall, City Manager

FROM: Catherine McCoy, Associate Planner, Community Planning & Development

SUBJECT: Woodard Lane Co-housing PRD Amendment, Proj. No. 13-0024 – CPD Staff Response to the Letter from Ms. Debra Van Tuinen to the Olympia City Council, dated March 28, 2014

DATE: April 4, 2014

On April 1, at the regularly scheduled meeting Council was scheduled to consider a consent agenda item adopting a resolution granting preliminary approval of the Woodard Lane Co-housing Planned Residential Development (PRD) Amendment, Council File No. 13-0662 (CPD Proj. No. 13-0024). The “Amendment” is to allow two additional units to the previously approved sixteen through the purchase of Thurston County Transfer of Development Rights, as indicated in the Council’s packets for Council File No. 13-0662. On March 28, Ms. Van Tuinen submitted a letter via email to Mayor Buxbaum identifying three issues that she refers to as “Compliance Issues” – relating to building height, parking, and building setbacks. These issues -- related to the original development of the site and indirectly to the modification -- led to postponement of consideration of the amendment.

Over the years City Staff have had many conversations with Ms. Van Tuinen in an effort to address these and related issues, however as indicated in her letter, there are still issues to be resolved. This memo responds to the latest correspondence.

The original development approval, associated with the co-housing development, is still under construction and is expected to be completed by 2015 with the development of the remaining two buildings – a common house and a four-unit residential building. In addition the special PRD approval, all buildings on the site must comply with building, zoning, fire, and engineering codes.

Height and Stories:

Ms. Van Tuinen asserts that the buildings already built exceed the allowable height limit of 35 feet, and include more than the allowed two stories. In the opinion of staff, the buildings include a number of structural features, such sloped roofs, basements and mezzanines, that contribute to the bulk and scale of the buildings but do not result in exceeding either the limits of International Building Code (IBC) or the Olympia Development Code (Title 18, UDC).

- **Building height** is defined as the vertical distance from grade plane (average adjacent ground) to the average height of the highest primary roof surface (OMC 18.02.180.H. The average

height is typically the midpoint of a sloped roof. Thus, for example, according to the construction drawings the taller buildings have a roof peak about 40 feet above the ground, but the height to the midpoint of the roof (the height for zoning purposes) is about 32 feet.

- **Roof projections**, such as antennas, chimneys, ventilating fans, skylights, and other such features, may exceed the standard height limit by no more than 18 feet (OMC 18.04.080.I).
- Some of the buildings include basements. A **basement** is not considered an above-ground story. To qualify as a basement: 1) the finished surface of the floor above the basement must be no more than six feet above grade plane, 2) the finished surface of the basement floor must be below the grade plane for over 50% of the total building perimeter, and 3) the finished surface of the basement floor must be no more than twelve (12) feet above the finished ground level at any point (OMC 18.02.080.S). All basements in the PRD comply with these requirements.
- Each of the three buildings constructed since July 2008 includes a “mezzanine.” **Mezzanines** (a building code term for what might be called a ‘loft’ or ‘dormer,’ are considered a portion of the story below and by both building and zoning code definition do not constitute a separate story (IBC 505.1). To qualify as a mezzanine the floor area may not exceed one-third of the floor area of the room or space below (IBC 505.2).

The combination of these features results can result in buildings that from some perspectives seem to be taller than 35 feet and include up to four stories; nonetheless they comply with the code limitations of 35 feet in height as defined, and two full above-grade stories.

Parking:

Off-street parking for the PRD dwelling units has been provided in the southwest area of the development with access from Woodard Avenue NW. Twenty-seven (27) parking spaces are required for the proposed eighteen (18) dwelling units – twenty-nine (29) are provided.

Ms. Van Tuinen states that “residents park their cars next to their residences on Muirhead and block the turnaround at the end of Muirhead...” Staff conducted an on-site investigation on April 8, 2014, and noted that the width of Muirhead Avenue NW narrows to twenty (20) feet, which means that no parking should be allowed on Muirhead Avenue NW west of Thomas Street. City staff will install “NO PARKING” signs on both east and west bound Muirhead Avenue west of Thomas Street. Please note

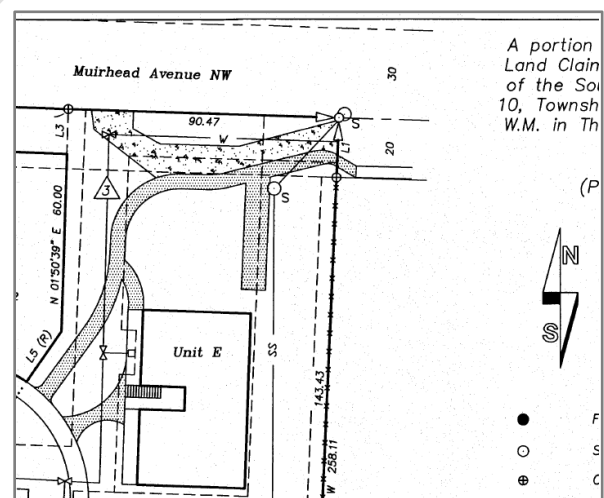


Figure 1 Sheet 5 of 5, BSP 12/20/13.

that it may also appear that the residents are parking on the street because the northeast section of the development site – Woodard Lane Co-housing property – includes a gravel area where residents may park their vehicles (Figure 1).

Setbacks

Ms. Van Tuinen asserts that the side yard setback nearest the east property line is less than the 20 feet required. Construction plans proposed a 25-foot setback adjacent to the single family residences, from the eastern-most building to the property line. A field inspection on April 1, 2014, confirmed that the buildings as built comply with the 20-foot minimum requirement. Thus, consistent with the Staff Report to the Hearing Examiner for the development project (CPD File No. 05-0121, February 11, 2008), and the Hearing Examiner's Finding, Conclusions and Decision, (05-0121, April 17, 2008), the setback requirements for the development proposal were met.

Staff is prepared to answer any additional questions regarding this response to Ms. Van Tuinen's citizen letter as necessary.

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