

CITY OF OLYMPIA
Olympia Design Review Board

CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
October, 25, 2018

Case Number:	18-0709
Applicant / Rep.:	Glenn Wells
City Staff Contact:	Nicole Floyd, Senior Planner P. 360-570-3768 E. nfloyd@ci.olympia.wa.us
Site Address:	431 Stoll Rd SE
Project Description:	New four story residential building with 49 units. Site improvements include surface parking for 70 vehicles, stormwater and landscaping.
Zoning District:	General Commercial
Design Criteria:	Multi-Family Residential
Comprehensive Plan:	High Density Residential
Scenic Vista:	Not Applicable
Critical Areas:	Type I wetland, Important Habitats and Species, and Geologically Hazardous Areas
Notification:	Notice of the Design Review Board Meeting was sent to all property owners within 300', Recognized Neighborhood Associations, and parties of record on October 12, 2018.
Board Responsibility:	The Design Review Board will review the project to determine compliance with the applicable design criteria and make a recommendation to the Site Plan Review Committee regarding the adequacy of the projects design. The Community Planning and Development Director makes the final decision. Conceptual Design Review involves the major design elements of a project as they relate to the general project design and how they comply with the specific design criteria of the design district. In situations where explicit compliance is not feasible, the Olympia Municipal Code encourages creative solutions in meeting the requirements as long as these design solutions are equal to, or better than, the guidelines listed in the requirement sections.

Staff Provided Assistance:

City staff evaluated the project based on the applicable design standards and prepared a variety of support materials including design review checklists to assist in the Board's assessment of this project (see attached). This report focuses on issues that staff recommends for Board discussion. Suggested conditions of approval have been provided for the Board's review and recommendation.

Project Context / Existing Site Conditions:

This site is unique because it is the first property to redevelop in this area. The current development pattern includes mostly single story low density residential housing, but the zoning for the entire area allows a wide variety of high density residential and commercial uses with a height limit of 60'. Transition between the existing low density development and the high density development envisioned for the future is an important factor to consider with this project. The applicant has attempted to blend the proposed structure into both the existing neighborhood scale and the anticipated future scale by proposing a four story building with a variety of design features that are intended to improve compatibility to the existing low density residential scale of the neighborhood.

The site is more than 6 acres in size, but the vast majority is encumbered by a high value wetland system that includes endangered species and geologically hazardous areas. The proposed project occupies just over 1 acre of the site and is situated on the eastern edge of the steep slope area leading down to the wetland.

An existing orchard currently occupies the majority of the site. The proposal will demolish the existing single family residence and orchard and convert the use into a 49 unit apartment building located along Stoll Road, with a surface parking lot behind the building to accommodate 70 vehicles. In order to provide the desired amount of parking for the project, approximately 10,000cy of fill and an 8' tall retaining wall is proposed along the edge of the wetland buffer and edge of slope.

Review of Design Criteria:

This project is required to comply with the Multi-Family Design Criteria (OMC 18.170). Staff has reviewed the project for compliance with these criteria and has provided a detailed analysis within the attached Design Review Checklist. The checklist identifies areas of compliance and deficiency. Recommended conditions of approval are provided for the Board's consideration.

Staff has found that the project design generally addresses the criteria within the code. There are a few issues that staff suggests the Board pay specific attention to, as follows:

Grading and Tree Retention (OMC 18.170.010):

In order to provide the desired amount of parking for the project, approximately 10,000cy of fill and a retaining walls along the north, south, and west of the project. The walls are proposed in order to allow for a flat parking surface. While adequate site parking is important, staff believes the applicant should reduce parking to allow the site

to retain as much existing topography as possible where adjacent to the environmentally sensitive areas. A parking reduction is consistent with the code requirements of the parking chapter. Staff requests the Board to discuss this and other measures potential ways in which the site design could facilitate use of the existing topography.

Pedestrian Amenities (OMC 18.110.050):

A pedestrian pathway to the dumpster enclosure and the wetland viewing platform has been identified. The pathways crossing the parking areas are to be painted, rather than provided through a change in surface material. Staff recommends asking the applicant to modify this to an alternative material because paint is not typically as durable or long lasting. Additionally, the long expanses of walkway adjacent or parallel to the drive aisle may be more inviting to the pedestrian if marked in a way that firmly defines the area as pedestrian space.

Recommended Condition of Approval: Show an alternative surface associated with the pedestrian walkways (not simply paint) where they are adjacent to vehicular circulation routes with the detail design review packet submittal.

Neighborhood Scale and Character (OMC 18.170.110) and Parking Location and Design (OMC 18.170.030):

Plans include a variety of site design features intended to help reduce impacts to existing residences from the project while recognizing the overall transition anticipated in the area from predominately single family to high density residential and commercial development. Staff has evaluated the context plan and the elevations and has found the proposal is generally designed to be sensitive to the existing neighborhood, but looks to the Board to provide feedback related to this topic and the adequacy of the projects conformance to these criteria.

Recommended Condition of Approval: Provide a lighting plan with the detail design review application that demonstrates how the lighting for the parking lot has been designed to minimize impacts to the adjacent residences.

Usable Open Space (18.170.040):

The proposal intends to convert an existing shed into a picnic shelter with low mount lighting. It is unclear if a new foundation and floor will be provided, nor if the structure is intended to be covered. The location, increased intensity of the pedestrian activity and lighting are potentially problematic due to the wetland and habitat functions. Review of the project related to the Critical Area Ordinance may find the use to be inappropriate in the proposed location. The size of open space appears consistent with code because this zoning district does not establish a specific amount of usable open space, required, therefore the design criteria of no less than 10' is the only criteria. If the proposed location is found to be incompatible with the wetland buffer, an alternative location will need to be provided with the detail design review application.

Recommended Condition of Approval: Provide the specific design of the open space feature, such as the type of materials to be used and structural components proposed with the detail design review application.

Written Public Comments:

Although this Design Review Board meeting is open for public attendance, oral testimony or comments will not be solicited or permitted to be submitted at the meeting. Written comments related to project design may be submitted in advance of the meeting.

To date, no written comments related to design have not been submitted for this project. Any comments submitted following the packet distribution, must be submitted to the project planner before 4:00pm on the day of the meeting to allow for processing and distribution.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on review and analysis of the applicable Design Review Code Criteria, staff has determined that the proposal meets the intent of the Design Review requirements. Staff recommends the Design Review Board to recommend approval of the Conceptual Design to the Site Plan Review Committee, with the following conditions:

- A. Context Plan:** Recommend approval.
- B. Preliminary Site & Landscape Design:** Recommend conditional approval as follows:
 - 1. Show an alternative surface associated with the pedestrian walkways (not simply paint) where they are adjacent to vehicular circulation routes with the detail design review packet submittal. (OMC 18.110.050 Pedestrian Amenities).
 - 2. Provide a lighting plan with the detail design review application that demonstrates how the lighting for the parking lot has been designed to minimize impacts to the adjacent residences. (OMC 18.170.110 Neighborhood Scale & 18.170.030 Parking Design).
 - 3. Provide the specific design of the open space feature, such as the type of materials to be used and structural components proposed with the detail design review application. (OMC 18.170.040).
- C. Preliminary Building Design:** Recommend approval.

Submitted By: Nicole Floyd, Senior Planner

- **Attachment 1:** This Staff Report
- **Attachment 2:** Design Review Checklist (Multi-family Residential)
- **Attachment 3:** Concept Design Review application and plans