

CITY OF OLYMPIA
Olympia Design Review Board

DETAIL DESIGN REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
July 11, 2019

Case Number: 18-0709

Applicant / Rep.: Glenn Wells

City Staff Contact: Nicole Floyd, Senior Planner P. 360-570-3768
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Site Address: 431 Stoll Rd SE

Project Description: Three story residential building with 48 units. Site improvements include surface parking for 61 vehicles, stormwater and landscaping. This scope is a reduction in scale from the initial review.

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 parties of record on July 1, 2019.

Board Responsibility: The Design Review Board will review the project to determine compliance with the applicable design criteria and make a recommendation to the Director regarding the adequacy of the projects design.

Staff 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 three story building (4 stories at Concept Review) 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 development site. The proposal will demolish the existing single-family residence and orchard and convert the use into a 48-unit apartment building located along Stoll Road, with a surface parking lot behind the building to accommodate 61 vehicles. In order to provide the desired amount of parking for the project, approximately 10,000cy of fill and an 8' tall retaining wall are 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:

Usable Open Space (18.170.040):

The proposal has been revised considerably related to usable open space. The applicant intends to convert an existing shed into a picnic shelter with low mount lighting. The viewing platform has been removed from the project because of potential impacts to the wetland buffer. It has been replaced by a small pedestrian amenity area tucked into the parking lot adjacent to the bioswale. Two picnic tables and a trellis are identified as amenities for the area. The amenity area will have a stamped concrete surface and is aligned with the raised pedestrian pathways to the building. Staff find this to be a workable solution.

Screening of Mechanical Equipment (OMC 18.170.070):

The power vault is located on the northern side of the building and is surrounded by "Sweet Box" which is a low growing shrub. These shrubs will provide some screening, however a taller plant might be more appropriate in this location. Heavenly Bamboo is proposed in various locations throughout the site and might be better suited for screening of the power vault. Staff looks to the Board to make recommendations regarding the adequacy of screening. If modification is necessary, a condition of approval would need to be drafted.

Screening of Blank Walls and Fences (OMC 18.170.090): The code requires the use of vertical landscaping to screen or break-up long expanses of blank building walls or fences and encourages the use of vegetation to do so. The site perimeter along both the north and south property lines will include a combination of 30" tall retaining walls with a 6' tall cedar fence running the length of the development area. On the north side of the property, the fence extends at grade for approximately 130' before jogging inward and then running along the top of the retaining wall. There is landscaping on the outer side of the fence where the retaining wall is proposed, but this portion of the fencing is beyond the 130' of blank fencing. On the south side of the project, the 30" retaining wall and fence are placed at the property line with the landscaping entirely on the inside of the fence/wall. The view from the adjacent properties will be of fence/wall spanning approximately 150'.

Proposed Condition of Approval: Add climbing plants/landscaping to the exterior of the fence to break up the long expanses of fencing as seen from the adjacent properties on the north and south property lines.

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 project design with the following conditions:

1. Add climbing plants/landscaping to the exterior of the fence to break up the long expanses of fencing as seen from the adjacent properties on the north and south property lines.

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).

Submitted By: Nicole Floyd, Senior Planner

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