

CITY OF OLYMPIA
Olympia Design Review Board

DETAIL DESIGN REVIEW
STAFF REPORT
October 8, 2020

Project Name/Number: South Sound Village Cooperative 19-2860

Applicant: Real Estate Equities Development LLC

Representative: Jeff Bredeson

Location: 1520 Palomino Drive

Project Description: 67 unit senior housing development. The structure will be approximately 130,000sf, three stories of residential units and one floor of partially underground parking.

Design Districts: Multi-Family Residential

Concept Recommendation: Conditional approval

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Public Notification: In accordance with the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) 18.78, public notification was sent to recognized neighborhood associations and parties of record on Monday, September 28, 2020.

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 or Hearing Examiner regarding the adequacy of the projects design. The Boards authority comes from OMC 18.100. Detail Design Review involves detailed design elements of a project and how plans comply with the specific design criteria of the design district. In situations where explicit compliance is not feasible, the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) 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 has provided support materials including design review checklists and the applicants design plan set to assist in the Board's assessment of this project. 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.

Board Review:

The concept design review for the proposed project was held on October 25, 2019. The Board recommended conditional approval and requested specific changes of the preliminary design generally related to ensuring the project design reflected the existing environment and that the building oriented towards the street frontages surrounding the site rather than towards the site interior. The memo summarizing the Board's requested modifications is in attachment 2.

Staff Analysis:

To assist the Board in reviewing the project for compliance with the design criteria, staff has prepared a checklist that includes each of the applicable requirements and compliance analysis by both staff and applicant. As the Board reviews the checklist, staff encourage consideration of the following key issues:

Building Modulation and Screening of blank walls:

At the concept design review the project showed areas where the partially underground garage concrete foundation walls extended above grade and wrapped around the building. At the meeting the applicant noted that the plans did not accurately reflect the anticipated final grade and showed walls that were larger than was intended. It was understood that the concrete walls would not dominate the front façade.

The new plans provided for Detail Design Review show a reduced amount of blank concrete foundation wall facing Yelm Highway, and along the bulk of Henderson Boulevard. This is consistent with the Board's recommendations, however the façade at the intersection of Henderson Boulevard and Palomino Drive has not been modified. Plans show the ground level façade (about 10' in height) as a blank concrete wall designed to emulate a CMU block. The foundation wall spans the length of the building along Palomino Drive, which is approximately 150' in length.

Several of the design criteria relate to the ground floor wall treatments. The Board can, and often does, recognize site constraints and allows the applicant to provide façade treatments that are different but equal to the requirement in terms of meeting the intent of the criteria. The Board cannot waive, nor grant variance from the requirements. The site is burdened by being located on three street frontages and this frontage is the least prominent of the three. Nevertheless, the Board must find that the project design either meets the strict application of the requirement or find that the design alternatives are equal or better at achieving the intent of the code. The Board should discuss options such as site grading, modulation, and screening that could reduce the amount of blank wall along the street frontages. This is particularly important along Henderson Boulevard as it is the building's primary street façade. Staff has included a proposed condition of approval for Board consideration.

Neighborhood Character / Building Orientation:

The Board spent considerable time evaluating how the building oriented to the neighborhood and street network at the Conceptual Design Review Board Meeting. The proposal has been modified to more accurately reflect the character of the adjacent structures and the Pacific Northwest. Of the two primary street frontages, the applicant chose Henderson Boulevard to be the primary street and added a pedestrian entry to this side of the building. Although significantly improved, the entry does not read as the primary entrance to the building. The board should consider if modifications are needed to this entry. Staff provided a condition of approval intended to facilitate a more prominent entry point.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the Design Review Board recommend to the Director approval of the detail design review plans for this project with the following conditions:

1. Revise construction plans by reducing the amount of concrete foundation wall extending above grade to no more than 6' in height in any location. Provide sight obscuring landscaping to obscure the visibility of the walls so that no expanse of foundation wall of more than 30' is exposed along any street frontage.
2. Building permit plans shall be revised to relocate electrical equipment onto walls that do not face a street frontage.
3. Revise building permit plans to provide a more prominent covered building entry to the Henderson Boulevard Façade. Entry should include weather protection/roofing over the patio.

Submitted By: Nicole Floyd, Principal Planner

Attachments:

1. This Staff Report
2. Concept Design Review Recommendation Memo and Staff Report
3. Design Checklist
4. Detail Design Review Packet