

**CITY OF REDMOND
INNOVATIVE HOUSING REVIEW PANEL
MEETING SUMMARY
January 14, 2008**

NOTE: This summary is not a full transcription of the meeting.

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT: Judd Black, David Scott Meade, Korby Parnell, Sally Promer-Nichols, Vibhas Chandorkar

STAFF PRESENT: Jeff Churchill, Associate Planner; Sarah Stiteler, Senior Planner

The Innovative Housing Review Panel is appointed by the Mayor to evaluate proposals submitted under Redmond's Innovative Housing Program, as described in the Redmond Community Development Guide 20C.30.62.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was convened at 7:05pm with introductions.

BEAR CREEK COTTAGES

Description: 12-lot residential development on 1.3 acres with 12 single-family attached units, 2 detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) spaces, and a community building. Home sizes would range from 1,500 to 1,800 square feet. The ADUs would be approximately 640 square feet.

Location: 10007 Avondale Road NE

Applicant: Emmett Dolan, Bottrell Pacific Investment Group

Project Team Present: Terry Phelan, Living Shelter Design Architects

Staff Contacts: Sarah Stiteler / 425-556-2469 or Jeff Churchill / 425-556-2492

Applicant Presentation

Ms. Phelan, Principal at Living Shelter Design, presented the project to the Panel. She began by saying that the owner wanted to do something different, and that the project team took some direction from the Conover Commons cottages on Rose Hill. She mentioned in particular that she appreciated how homes were separate from parking in that development. These homes would be bigger than cottages, at 1500-1800 square feet, plus two ADUs at 640 square feet. Like Conover Commons, this project includes a community building.

Ms. Phelan commented that the site plan allows for ample open space, especially the preservation of the steep hillside on the west part of the property. She noted that the site is a small "pocket" between single-family residential development to the north, multi-family residential to the south, and a retirement community to the east. She explained that the project would include elements of Low Impact Development (LID) as long as such measures are consistent with aquifer protection regulations. In particular, she stated that rainwater from roofs would be clean and that the landscaping would use native vegetation.

Describing the variety of homes, Ms. Phelan said that there are six unique floor plans in the development. They all feature a traditional exterior with bay windows, trellises, and front porches.

Mr. Dolan, the applicant and property owner, added that he could have done something quick that was not creative, but did not want to do that.

Ms. Phelan continued that the ADUs provide variety and affordability, and that two units will be accessible – meaning that they will be friendly to those who do not climb stairs.

Public Comment

No members of the public attended the meeting. However, neighbors of Mr. Dolan's property submitted detailed written comments after the neighborhood meeting held in September. Those comments were included in the Panel's packet for the January 14th meeting.

Staff Report

Mr. Churchill highlighted the main points of the written staff report for Bear Creek Cottages. With respect to housing supply and variety, he noted that this would supply twelve homes on a site that would under standard zoning regulations yield eight. He said that Bear Creek Cottages would be the first all single-family attached subdivision on a common green in the neighborhood. He noted that the ADU-above-common-garage arrangement is new to Redmond.

Regarding affordability and size, Mr. Churchill restated that the homes would be 1500-1800 square feet, in contrast to the 3,000-3,100 square foot homes that are typical of new single-family construction in Redmond. He emphasized that 1,500-1,800 square feet would not be atypical on Education Hill given the variety of ages and styles of homes in the neighborhood. He said the affordable unit would be affordable to a family of four earning \$62,320 in 2007, and that the ADUs would likely be affordable at market rates to those earning 80% of area median income.

On high quality design and compatibility, Mr. Churchill repeated that there are six unique home designs, and that the homes are oriented to the common green. He compared the floor area ratio of these homes – estimated to be 0.54, to those of typical new single-family construction – estimated at 0.50. He attributed the higher number in Bear Creek Cottages to the smaller lot size and preservation of common open space, and remarked that he was surprised the difference was not greater. He noted that the hillside provides some privacy for neighbors, and that the area, as Ms. Phelan noted, is a transition area between single-family and multi-family residences. Therefore, he argued, it is an appropriate place for the proposed style and density of development. Finally, he noted that the applicant plans to achieve 4-star BuiltGreen certification, use on-demand water heaters, and wire the homes for solar panels.

With respect to flexibility in site standards, Mr. Churchill noted that the increased density and zero-lot-line style of homes are proposed in order to achieve the desired site plan of attached, smaller homes.

Discussion

Most of the discussion revolved around four issues: parking, the community space, architecture, and the orientation of the ADUs. The summary is organized according to those themes.

Parking

Mr. Parnell noted that there are 26 proposed parking spaces. Mr. Black asked where visitors would park. Ms. Phelan said that she anticipated that some owners would have only one car, leaving some spaces open for visitors. Mr. Parnell commented that a similar situation exists in Avignon (Downtown Redmond). He posed the parking issue as a sale-ability issue for the developer to address. Ms. Stiteler noted that the situation is an opportunity for innovative implementation of parking regulations. Mr. Parnell continued that scarcity breeds innovation. Mr. Meade asked which unit is accessible to understand how far that would be from a parking space. Ms. Phelan responded that Unit F would be accessible.

Related to parking, Mr. Black asked how one could prevent garage areas from becoming de facto storage units. He asked whether it would be possible to require vehicle-only storage in those spaces. Ms. Phelan suggested that storage could be built into the garages to lessen the chance that the vehicle area would be used for other storage. Mr. Meade suggested regulating on-street parking rather than the garages. Mr. Black suggested open garages (carports) to discourage storage. Ms. Nichols commented that ultimately it is the developer, not the City, taking the risk on parking. Ms. Phelan suggested that the community building could accommodate storage.

The Panel concluded that the developer should add at least four parking spaces to provide for visitor parking.

Community Space

Mr. Parnell said that p-patch gardens breed a sense of stewardship and ownership among the community, and that he was excited to see one proposed. Mr. Meade noted that the community building changes the price structure for the developer. He offered that an alternative to a community building could add value for the developer while increasing the affordability of all the homes. Mr. Parnell commented that he would hate to see the community building experiment disappear before it gets off the ground. Mr. Meade, speaking of the p-patch, said that it should have 12-month appeal, having seen others look bleak in the winter.

The Panel concluded that the developer should consider exploring alternatives to the community building in order to increase affordability of all units. In doing so, the applicant should continue to meet the goal of the Innovative Housing Ordinance that the development contribute to a sense of community

ADU Orientation

Mr. Meade clarified that one of the elevations in the applicant's submittal package showed an ADU over a three-car garage when it should have shown a four-car garage.

Mr. Meade and Mr. Black asked how the ADUs would be related to their primary units. Ms. Phelan explained that having ADUs not be immediately adjacent (but on the same lot) as the primary units had been done in Issaquah Highlands. Mr. Meade said he did not believe that was the case in Issaquah Highlands. He asked how the arrangement of the garage building would meet fire code, since there was no setback proposed from the lot line. Ms. Phelan replied that one solution would be to move the lot line away from the edge of the structure.

Mr. Meade asked where the entrances are to the ADUs. Ms. Phelan replied that they are indoors, adjacent to the courtyard between the ADU buildings.

Mr. Chandorkar suggested flipping the westernmost ADU building so that the ADU is in closer physical proximity to Unit B (its corresponding primary unit). Ms. Phelan noted that this may create height issues since the site is sloped up toward the west. Mr. Meade suggested flipping both ADU buildings and internalizing the parking space between them, creating a more attractive end elevation on Avondale Road. Ms. Phelan said placing the easternmost ADU closer to Avondale Road could create noise issues.

The Panel concluded that the developer should consider re-orienting one or both ADUs to achieve closer connections with primary units and an improved end elevation on Avondale Road.

Architecture

Mr. Black asked Ms. Phelan to explain why she chose the particular architectural style that she did. Mr. Phelan replied that she gravitated toward that style – that it was traditional. Mr. Dolan added that he wanted development with character. Mr. Black stated that the architectural drawings to date need to be a starting place, not an ending place, and that some elements were needed – perhaps details and materials – to unite the buildings.

Mr. Meade asked what kind of materials would be used. Mr. Dolan replied that the drawings were not yet that far along. Ms. Phelan said that, although she had not yet talked this over with Mr. Dolan, she would suggest lap siding, perhaps stucco, shingle detailing, and vertical board and batten. Mr. Meade suggested that the buildings be clad with indigenous materials and to stay away from stucco because of its complexity. Ms. Phelan allowed that the elevations for Units A and B were more challenging than C

and D due to their taller and narrower profile. Mr. Meade suggested that she take steps to unite A and B architecturally. Mr. Black suggested that the project team visit Woodbridge in Southeast Redmond to view the triplexes built there. He said they are good examples of united buildings.

In discussing public and private space, Mr. Parnell recalled a home in the Green Lake (Seattle) neighborhood that has a rounded reading nook on the corner of the home. He noted that it brings a private space into the public realm. Mr. Meade and Ms. Nichols thought that the porch concept could be expanded in Units C and E where there is more front yard to use. Mr. Meade suggested flipping the living space in Unit E to the front. He was seconded by Mr. Black.

The Panel concluded that the developer should work to unify the architecture on the site. In particular the Panel suggested flipping the main floor plan of Unit E, using native materials, and expanding the porch concept where space is available such as for Units C and E.

Closing Comments

Mr. Black closed by saying that he likes the site plan: it is logical but not predictable. He argued that the way to address the community space is to first determine how the units will energize the space, and then work to program the space. With respect to architecture, he asked the architect to help the units talk to each other architecturally.

Mr. Meade said that the architecture needs fine tuning. He suggested staying away from stucco and instead using indigenous materials. He said that the community building is a nice building, but questioned whether it was necessary and suggested that it could add unnecessary costs to the project. He recommended looking at the new development in Roche Harbor (San Juan County).

Mr. Parnell said that for him, function is 90% of the development while looks are 10%. He believes that the proposal meets the intent of the Innovative Housing Ordinance, and especially likes the number twelve. He commented that Jim Soules, developer of Conover Commons in Redmond, once remarked that when there are more than twelve units the garbage doesn't get taken out, as everyone assumes that it is someone else's job. He emphasized the need for the City to provide for the movement of people across Avondale Road. He suggested that the developer look for opportunities to provide shared parking. He acclaimed the inclusion of pre-wiring for solar panels because it showed a breadth of innovation. He appreciated the use of concrete forms for noise reduction. He recommended providing a special amenity for the affordable unit to go above and beyond the 10% affordable requirement.

Recommendation

The Panel recommended that the project move forward, consistent with the conclusions noted above.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.