

Innovative Housing Review Panel Report

To: Technical Committee

From: Innovative Housing Review Panel
David Scott Meade, Chair (member of Design Review Board)
Korby Parnell, Vice Chair (member of Planning Commission)
Judd Black (member of Technical Committee)
Vibhas Chandorkar (member of Planning Commission)
Sally Promer-Nichols (Chair of Design Review Board)

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Date: February 7, 2008

Project Name: Bear Creek Cottages

Applicant: Emmett Dolan, Bottrell Pacific Investment Group

Review Panel Recommendation: Authorization to proceed consistent with this report and its exhibits

Project Summary:

Site size:	1.3 acres
Location:	10007 Avondale Road NE
Neighborhood:	Education Hill
Underlying zoning:	R-6
Unit count:	12
Unit types:	Single-family attached (12), detached accessory dwellings (2)
Unit sizes:	1,500-1,800 square feet (ADUs ~640 square feet)

Summary of Important Project Components: In addition to looking at the project as a whole, the Review Panel identified several project components – discussed in more detail later in the report – that it concluded are particularly important to the project’s success under the Innovative Housing Ordinance:

- Adding at least four additional parking spaces for visitors
- Considering alternatives to the community building
- Re-orienting one or both ADU buildings
- Completing architectural work in a way that unifies the buildings

Recommended Findings of Fact

1. *Public Involvement and Notice*

a. **Neighborhood Meeting Date**

The applicant hosted a neighborhood meeting on September 13, 2007.

b. **Notice**

The neighborhood meeting was advertised to property owners and residents within 500 feet of the proposed development and on the City's website.

2. *Public Comments*

The Panel received oral and written testimony in connection with the neighborhood meeting on September 13th. Six residents attended the open house in September. Written comments are attached as Exhibit B, and all testimony is summarized below.

❖ **Consistency with Innovative Housing Ordinance Goals**

Neighbors testified that the proposal meets the goals of the Innovative Housing Ordinance of improved housing choice, high quality design, compatibility with surrounding development, and housing affordability. Neighbors expressed specific concerns with respect to compatibility that are noted below.

❖ **Pavilion and Walking Path**

Neighbors testified that “the stairs, pavilion, and walking paths at the back of the site should be dropped from the plan”. They stressed privacy, trespassing, and partying concerns. With respect to trespassing, they noted that there is no public access from the site to nearby NE 100th Ct. They wrote that trespassing would lead to long-term problems in neighborly relations and long-term complaints to the police. Neighbors requested that if the pavilion and paths remain on the plan that the developer include a “high quality and permanent fence” on the western and northern border of the property.

Neighbors also desire to retain trees and vegetation on the steep slope and between this property and the Avalon neighborhood. They testified that constructing stairs, paths, and a pavilion would require removal of trees and vegetation that now act as a “valuable natural privacy and noise barrier” in addition to reducing erosion and providing local wildlife habitat. Last, neighbors testified that such infrastructure would require much long-term maintenance to remain desirable.

❖ **Noise from Avondale Road**

Neighbors testified that it will be very important to provide a noise screen from Avondale Road. They wrote that “A well designed entry way that provides privacy and a feeling of being ‘off the street’ will go a long way to sell the units and provide a long-term quality living environment”.

Recommended Conclusions

1. Key Issues Discussed by the Review Panel

❖ Parking Quantity

The applicant proposes 26 parking spaces – two for every primary unit and one for every accessory unit. Panel members agreed that this would not likely be enough to accommodate guests. Panel members noted that because of the narrow street width, no spaces could be added as parallel on-street spaces, nor is there availability for overflow parking on adjacent streets for guest parking. The Panel and the applicant agreed that there is room on the site for more spaces. The Panel recommended that the applicant find room for at least four additional spaces.

❖ Community Building Alternatives

The Panel applauded the applicant's attention to community amenities in the development, particularly the collection of common space in the center of the development. There was discussion that the applicant consider alternatives to the community building, in part to contribute to improved affordability of the homes. Among the suggestions were to: incorporate storage, replace it with an open-air shelter, replace it with a primary or accessory dwelling¹, or use part of the space to add parking. The message from the Panel was that alternative arrangements of the community space may benefit both the developer and future homeowners; the panel left it to the applicant to decide how best to proceed.

❖ ADU Orientation

The Panel discussed orientation of the accessory dwellings for two reasons: 1) it seemed that the westernmost ADU was not closely linked to its primary dwelling (Unit B), and 2) the orientation of the easternmost ADU did not present the best end elevation onto Avondale Road. The Panel noted that flipping the westernmost ADU would bring the unit closer to its primary dwelling. Flipping the easternmost ADU would result in a more attractive end elevation onto Avondale Road, and provide for an opportunity to move the one parking space near Avondale to the interior of the development. On the other hand, the Panel noted that flipping the easternmost ADU could result in noise concerns from future residents. The Panel recommended re-orienting one or both ADUs to achieve the objectives identified in this paragraph.

❖ Architecture

The applicant and architect explained that the homes are meant to be traditional in architectural style, with the applicant emphasizing that he did not want to build something plain and uncreative. The Panel considered renderings submitted by the architect to be a starting point and made the following recommendations: work on the building details and materials to unify the architectural concept across the site, simplify building elements, use native materials and avoid stucco, and visit triplexes in Redmond's Woodbridge development for good examples of multi-family homes that appear as single-family homes.

¹ Staff noted that only 12 primary dwellings are allowed by the Innovative Housing Ordinance.

To this end, the Panel recommended expanding the porches of Units C and E as semi-private spaces, and flipping the main floor plan of Unit E to bring more living space to the front. Panelists noted that functional porches that act as semi-private spaces were instrumental to the success of similar developments.

❖ **Other Issues**

At its meeting, Panel members expressed enthusiasm for wiring homes for solar panels. After the meeting, a Panel member suggested considering rainwater harvesting for the community garden, in keeping with the spirit of innovation and sustainability.

The Panel discussed a variety of other aspects of the development. A written record is attached as Exhibit C.

2. Recommended Staff Conclusions

The conclusions contained in the Staff Report as shown in Exhibit A should be adopted.

3. Innovative Housing Review Panel Recommendation

The Review Panel unanimously recommended authorizing the applicant to proceed with a subdivision application consistent with the applicant’s description of the proposal as shown in Exhibit B to the Staff Report, subject to the recommendations of the Review Panel noted above.

List of Exhibits

- Exhibit A: Staff Report with Exhibits (includes Applicant Submittal Package)
- Exhibit B: Public Comment
- Exhibit C: Innovative Housing Review Panel Meeting Summary, January 14, 2008

Robert G. Odle, Planning Director

Date

David Scott Meade, Innovative Housing Review Panel Chair

Date

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