

INNOVATIVE HOUSING STAFF REPORT

To: Innovative Housing Review Panel

Staff Contacts: Sarah Stiteler, AICP, Senior Planner, 556-2469
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Date: January 14, 2008

Project Name: Bear Creek Cottages

Recommended Action:

- Authorize the applicant to apply for a preliminary plat, consistent with the findings and conclusions of this report.

Principal Rationale for Recommendation:

- The proposal increases housing supply and housing diversity;
- The proposal promotes housing affordability by providing smaller homes and accessory dwellings;
- The proposal promotes elements of green development, such as the use of solar energy;
- The proposal serves as an appropriate transition between existing single- and multi-family uses on Education Hill.

I. APPLICANT PROPOSAL

A. APPLICANT AND CONSULTING PROFESSIONALS

Applicant: Emmett Dolan, Bottrell Pacific Investment Group
Architect: Kathy Zeim & Terry Phelan, Living Shelter Design

B. PROJECT LOCATION

10007 Avondale Road NE, in the Education Hill neighborhood

C. PROJECT SUMMARY

Site size: 1.36 acres
 Underlying zoning: R-6
 Unit count: 12 units + 2 accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
 Unit types: 12 single-family attached
 Unit sizes: ~1,500 sq. ft., and 2 ADUs at 640 sq. ft.

D. DEVIATIONS FROM STANDARD SITE REQUIREMENTS

Item	Standard	Proposed in Project
Density:	6 units/gross acre	8.8 units/gross acre ¹
Maximum units on site:	8	12
Average lot size:	4,000 sq. ft.	2,800 sq. ft.
Minimum lot width circle:	35'	28'+
Interior setbacks:	5' – 10'	4 – 8 ft. between pairs of units; zero lot line within unit pairs
Building separation: ²	15'	8' – 14'
Minimum lot frontage:	20'	0' – some lots do not front on vehicular access
Maximum lot coverage: ²	35%	35 – 39%
Maximum impervious surface area:	65%	38% sitewide
Minimum open space:	20%	~31%
Maximum height:	35'	<35'
Minimum required parking:	2 off-street per unit + 1 per ADU = 26 total	26 total, provided in variety of forms
Minimum road width:	28'	20'

¹The City of Redmond does not count ADUs in density calculations.

²This is the Education Hill neighborhood standard. Lot coverage for this project was calculated on a duplex-by-duplex basis; thus, the 35%-39% figures represent averages for each duplex pair.

E. SURROUNDING LAND USES

In general the site is on the edge of a single-family area of Education Hill that transitions to multi-family as one moves south along Avondale Road, and to semi-rural as one moves east beyond the City limit. To the north and northwest are single-family homes in an R-3 zone. To the south and southwest are multi-family homes in an R-12 zone. Across Avondale Road to the east is the Fairwinds retirement community. To the northeast beyond Fairwinds is a King County-owned natural area preserving a portion of Bear Creek. The site has direct road access only to Avondale Road.

II. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. CONSISTENCY WITH PROGRAM GOALS

1. *Increase housing supply and the choice of housing styles in the community*

Staff concludes that the proposal is consistent with this goal. The proposal would add twelve primary dwellings to Redmond's housing supply whereas a standard development on the same site would yield eight dwellings. The Education Hill neighborhood contains single-family detached homes, apartments, and condominiums. The different styles occupy different parts of Education Hill. The edges of Education Hill along Redmond-Woodinville Road and Avondale Road are developed with higher density housing, while the central portion of Education Hill is generally limited to single-family detached homes. This proposal would be the first subdivision of single-family attached housing on a common green in the neighborhood, increasing choice in home styles. It would also provide two detached accessory dwellings, a housing type encouraged through City housing policy.

2. *Promote housing affordability and greater choice by encouraging smaller and more diverse home sizes and mixes of income levels*

Size

The Bear Creek Cottages proposal features homes in the range of 1,500 square feet, with two accessory dwellings at 640 square feet. In 2006 the average size of new single-family homes in Redmond was 3,095 square feet. While the proposal represents a departure from the norm for new single-family construction in Redmond, the home sizes will not be unique in the neighborhood, as the neighborhood does contain a range of home sizes built over several decades.

Affordability

The applicant proposes to make one of the homes affordable to households earning 80% of King County Median Income; in 2007, 80% was \$62,320 for a family of four. Subdivisions of ten or more lots in Education Hill, which this would be, are required to set aside 10% of new homes as affordable.

Besides designating one of the homes as affordable, the proposal is likely to result in homes that, *all else being equal* (location, amenities, etc.), will sell for less money than a typical single-family home because they are smaller in size than typical new construction. Last, the applicant proposes two detached accessory dwellings. At 640 square feet, these dwellings are likely to be affordable at market rate to a single person or couple earning 80% of area median income. Affordable rent for two people at 80% of median income in 2006 was \$1,216. The average Redmond rent in 2006 was \$1,055.

3. *Promote high-quality design that is compatible with surrounding single-family development*

Education Hill is a largely single-family neighborhood with multi-family edges with homes that range in age from new to several decades old. Thus, there is wide variety in home design, from ramblers and split levels that when they were originally built catered to young couples, to recent two- and three-story homes selling in the high six figures.

More locally, single-family homes in the general vicinity of the proposal were built in the 1990s. Multifamily homes south of the proposal were built in 1985. The majority of single-family homes are two-story, with fewer three-story structures and a small number of one-story structures.

In 2007 the City adopted neighborhood design standards crafted through a public neighborhood planning process. The standards guide site and building design for new development. The table below evaluates the Bear Creek Cottages vis-à-vis the Education Hill neighborhood design standards, as required by the Innovative Housing Ordinance.

Provision	Proposed in Project
Variety and visual interest	Six building footprints for single-family attached homes, porches, awnings, cascaded roofs, recessed garages, trim. ADU structures include cascading roofs, awnings, paneled garages.
Living spaces oriented toward street	Units orient toward center of site which includes access drive, open space, and community building.
Home proportional to lot size	In general the proposal is for 1,500 square-foot homes on 2,800 square-foot lots, an FAR of 0.54. An analysis of 79 North Redmond homes built in the last four years showed that FAR ranges from 0.25 to 0.68, averaging 0.50.
Landscaping as transition space and environmental asset	Open space on west portion preserves hillside; perimeter landscaping provides adequate transition area to neighboring properties; topography aids in buffering development from adjacent properties. Applicant changed location of proposed pavilion in response to neighbors' concerns about proximity to property. Neighbors also expressed trespassing concerns – at present property is vacant and neighbors report late night activity. Staff believes that likelihood of these activities on slope area will decrease once property has

	on-site owners and residents.
Promote LID techniques	Applicant proposes pervious pavement if geologically feasible. Even if geologically feasible, wellhead protection regulations may prevent some implementation of LID techniques.
Encourage public safety through design	Orientation of homes to common space increases “eyes on the street”.

Staff believes that the homes serve as an appropriate transition between single-family lots to the north and west and multi-family homes to the south. The architectural style is compatible with existing single-family homes and the vision for the Education Hill neighborhood. The proposed lots are smaller than is typical in a single-family subdivision, but that is in keeping with the increasing the diversity of single-family living opportunities in the neighborhood.

The commitment to implement green building practices and technologies enhances the proposal. The applicant plans to achieve four-star BuiltGreen certification for each home (which requires independent review), and employ energy-friendly practices like on-demand water heating and providing the option for solar panels.

4. *Allow flexibility in site and design standards while promoting projects that are compatible with existing single-family developments*

The site requirements table in section I.D. indicates that the applicant requests flexibility in: density, average lot size, minimum lot width circle, internal setbacks, maximum lot coverage, and road width.

Increasing density (and by extension reducing average lot size and minimum lot width circle) allows for the provision of smaller homes and single-family attached homes. Without that increase, staff does not believe that the applicant would be able to meet the program goals of providing a range of housing styles and sizes at a range of price points.

Zero lot line homes are allowed under the Education Hill neighborhood regulations, and the applicant proposes to develop using them exclusively. As noted, the applicant requests relief from building separation and maximum lot coverage standards. Flexibility in the building separation standard enables the applicant to achieve increased density on a site that is constrained significantly by a slope on the western portion of the property. Achieving the density is a significant factor in enabling the provision of smaller homes that will sell at lower price points (all else being equal). Similarly, flexibility in maximum lot coverage and minimum lot width circle – while minimal – enables the applicant to achieve increased density on the site. The reduction in private open space that results

from smaller lots is regained in common open space and the protection of the steep slope, two important elements of the proposal.

Reducing road width will tend to reduce vehicle speeds on the site, resulting in a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Pedestrians will be able to use the street for walking and will also be able to use paths through the common area to traverse the site east-west. Staff recommends that the Panel require the applicant to design the road with vertical relief and special texture and/or coloring to further reduce vehicle speeds and to create awareness among pedestrians and drivers that the road is not appropriate for anything other than low speeds.

5. *Help identify a work plan and any zoning code amendments that are necessary to support the development of innovative housing choices within single-family neighborhoods in Redmond*

The proposal experiments with the size-limited home concept using homes that are larger than cottages (limited to 1,000 square feet), but smaller than typical new construction. It also implements a narrower profile for local access roads. If the Review Panel authorizes the proposal and it is eventually constructed, staff and the community will be able to evaluate how varying those factors affected the quality of the development and the neighborhood overall and whether such changes should be considered on a broader scale.

B. PROCESS TO EVALUATE INNOVATIVE HOUSING DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

RCDG 20C.30.62 sets forth the process for reviewing applications submitted under the Innovative Housing Demonstration Program. Under this process, the applicant hosts an open house and the Innovative Housing Review Panel considers the proposal according to the criteria set-out in RCDG 20C.30.62. The Innovative Housing Review Panel is the authorizing body for this process.

III. PUBLIC REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. Neighborhood Meeting

The applicant held a neighborhood meeting on September 13, 2007. Notice was mailed to property owners and residents within 500 feet of the proposed project on August 31, 2007. Five nearby property owners attended the meeting. Notice was also provided on the web and on RCTV.

B. Appeals

Decisions by the Review Panel may be appealed to the City Council pursuant to the requirements of RCDG 20C.30.62.

IV. EXHIBITS

Exhibit A: Criteria Matrix

Exhibit B: Applicant Submittal Package

Robert G. Odle, Director of Planning
and Community Development

Date

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