

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Red Cross/Trenton Street Residential (SP #446)

SPRC Meeting #3

February 1, 2018

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Stephen Hughes (Chair), Elizabeth Gearin, Nancy Iacomini, Jim Lantelme, Jane Siegel, James Schroll

Meeting Agenda

- 1) Community Benefits and Sustainability
 - a) Public Art
 - b) Other

- 2) Construction Issues
 - a) Phasing
 - b) Vehicle staging, parking, and routing
 - c) Community Liaison

SPRC Discussion

Presentations

- The applicant's presentation covered community benefits, affordable housing, project phasing, and construction hauling routes. The presentation also provide updates on tree replacement plans and building architecture.

General Discussion

- A committee member wanted to know if the design team has spoken with urban forestry staff, which was confirmed by staff.
- A member suggested the applicant provide a planting plan showing off-site locations to meet tree replacement.
- A Commission member wants to see as much detail as possible for landscape plan for the Planning Commission meeting.
- A member suggested looking at tree planting in the park at The Madison Apartments.
- A member asked the applicant to consider changing the brick color at the brick course (toward the top of the building) so it ties them more into the Arlington Oaks building architecture.

- A member asked for clarification of guest parking for townhouses, which the applicant confirmed was available in four (4) proposed surface parking spaces.
- A member suggested lighter color brick is less complimentary, and would prefer darker colors as shown on the rendering at the back side.
- A member representing HALRB suggested the applicant could take the center three townhouses and push them back or pull them closer to break up the line of townhouses (possibly allowing preservation of large oak trees at street).
- A member said they would appreciate HALRB comments on brick and mortar colors.
- A member asked about maintenance of a site before construction condition – asking to ensure this works for phased construction.
- Addressing changes to the project since earlier SPRC meetings, the project architect discussed how they: pushed the building down into the ground about 5', so that units on N. Trenton are now basically at grade, changed material color adjacent to Whitefield Commons, lowered the interior courtyard, added brick material at the back side, extended lower-level brick along the side to improve sense of scale, pushed back mass with change in materials, and incorporated additional windows along ground frontage for fitness room amenity space.
- A member asked how many bikes fit in the bike room? The applicant answered probably 30 bikes, in addition to another bike room in the garage and outdoor parking.
- A member suggested there appears to be a missing egress door at the bike room. The applicant will review.
- A member asked about accessible entrances. The applicant confirmed that the sidewalk right of the lobby acts as a ramp to the main entrance.
- A member asked if there are ways to highlight the main entrance. The project architect said they are looking to install pin mounted letters that would highlight the entrance, which was revised to accommodate the lowering of the building elevation.
- A member noted the assumption that there is an expense to lower the building, and asked if anything was lost in that decision. The applicant confirmed they lost units due to the garage door, and mezzanine space was lost to lowered ceiling.
- A member suggested they would like to see shade for the proposed bus stop bench location, preferably closer to a tree.
- A member noted they were still unsure about the stucco used in the building. The architect noted stucco is a robust material, but it's also used to offset the lower level and give a lower sense of scale, and is easier to install at an offset to brick material.
- A member asked a future question for Urban Design staff: Is stucco harder to maintain than brick?

- A member representing HALRB stated that the building's material/color/mass has improved significantly, reduced its appearance in height.
- A Commission member noted they are not a fan of picture frame architecture, and questioned how durable is the metal material, noting that it faces south so it receives full sunlight.
- A member found it discouraging that staff can't recommend block level bike route improvements, in response to staff comments that it reviews bicycle infrastructure as a network rather than block by block.
- A member asked the applicant to work with staff on implementing a preservation easement.
- A representative for Bethel United Methodist Church noted that they plan to sell the property, and Children's International School is interested in purchasing the church property.

Committee Member Closing Thoughts

- Nancy Iacomini: stated lingering concerns about no current agreement for historic easement.
- Carrie Johnson: noted she appreciates meeting the goal of affordable housing, but wish the project included a different housing type like stacked flats or condos that could have been considered to address missing middle population.
- Jane Siegel: appreciates Carrie Johnson's comments, and believe the product has improved.
- Brian Tucker, Arlington Oaks: they appreciate the changes but remain concerned about the density and traffic impacts, and over impacts to Arlington Oaks open space from future residents and pet owners.
- Bernie Berne, Buckingham Civic Association: suggested this is not a good project, that it's too dense, with no open space. Buckingham has too much affordable housing, too many affordable projects have impacted trees and they impact schools; while the townhouses should be pushed back, there should be a bike path on the site, and he would like to see a pollinator garden on the corner.
- HALRB: suggested townhouses could be reoriented to form a court that would be more attractive in terms of scale, since it's a long stretch of building along the street that doesn't fit in as well with the neighborhood.

Next Steps

- Planning Commission will hear the item on April 9, 2018
- County Board anticipated to hear the item on April 21, 2018