

MEMORANDUM

TO: DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

FROM: GARY LEE, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBJECT: 160th AVENUE SENIOR HOUSING
LAND-2013-01332, Pre-App meeting No. 2

LOCATION: 160th Avenue, north of NE 85th Street, across from the Municipal Campus

DATE: November 21, 2013



This is the 2nd Pre-Application meeting submittal for this project. The site is located on the east side of 160th Avenue NE, north of NE 85th Street, across from the Municipal campus.

This project was before you October 3, 2013. The minutes for that discussion are attached for your reference.

The plan before you now has been modified significantly from the previous plan by moving the ramp down to the garage to the rear of the site. The previous layout posed some significant design challenges and this new layout provides a better street front interface.

Emergency vehicle access to the site is still under review by the Fire and Transportation departments. The building footprint and fire lanes are generally acceptable, however the “pick-up/drop-off” lane along the street is recommended to be extended in both directions in order to provide better emergency vehicle access for aid vehicles, so the fire lanes will not need to be relied upon for medical aid calls.

With regard to the proposed building elevations, staff has the following comments:

- The blank wall section on the ground floor of the south elevation should be treated with a vertical trellis, artwork, or relief in the brick work.
- Consider modulating the roofline more to provide more interest at the top.

Planning Staff finds that the design is moving in the right direction, and is interested in hearing the Architect’s presentation at the meeting, and interested in hearing the Boards comments and directions for the next Pre-Application meeting.

Excerpts of October 3, 2013 DRB minutes

PRE-APPLICATION

LAND-2013-01332, 160th Avenue Senior Housing

Description: 74 units of affordable senior housing with a mix of studio, 1 & 2 bedroom units

Location: 8550 160th Ave NE

Applicant: Dan Landes *with* Shelter Resources, Inc.

Staff Contact: Gary Lee, 425-556-2418 or glee@redmond.gov

Mr. Lee said that the City issued an RFP for this project. Craig Krueger and Mr. Lee reviewed that RFP, and this is the first meeting in the prep process. The project presented is a bit different than what had been discussed before. The design has a driveway ramp in the front of the building on its east side. The building is pretty much the same in shape and form, but the driveway location is different. The City's Technical Review team has not completely evaluated the driveway situation.

Dan Landes with Shelter Resources presented to the DRB on behalf of the applicant. Shelter Resources, along with Providence Health and Services, were selected to be the developer of this site on 160th, which is owned by the City of Redmond. Mr. Landes was excited to start a partnership with the City, and said this was a great site for senior housing due to its proximity to the senior center, library, shopping, and recreation. The applicant is proposing a five-story building over one floor of underground parking. There will be 75 units of studios, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments all for seniors. There will be 8,000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor. Providence will create a program for all-inclusive care for the elderly in that space through a separate permit. The apartment units will be affordable for seniors with low incomes. Mr. Landes introduced Don Doman and Valerie Thiel from SAGE Architectural Alliance for more details on the design.

Ms. Thiel next presented to the DRB on behalf of the applicant. She agreed with Mr. Landes that this was a great site for senior housing. It is located on 160th and to the south is 80th. To the north is 90th. The project is in the Downtown zone. The site is just two blocks from Redmond's senior center. Amenities like a grocery store, medical services, and a bank are nearby. This is a long, narrow site with the longest side along the street. There is a lot of open space around the site. Immediately across from the building is an open parking lot, and there is another parking lot to the north across the street. To the east is a daycare and gym. The public building that is closest is the library, which is diagonally across the street. This area is largely made up of one-story buildings, but some are as high as 20 feet tall. The property immediately to the north of the site is vacant, and is now a parking lot with gravel surface. To the south is a pedestrian path, which is an important element for the site as it leads to the senior center. The applicant says the library will be an important contextual element. The applicant is proposing to express the community common space with brick elements. The massing is very similar to the massing of the library. The idea is to pick up the brick of the library and reflect it in the design of the common spaces.

Mr. Doman next spoke on behalf of the applicant. He showed the DRB the site plan for the project. He noted that the pre-application process helped with the design of the site. Because of the long length of the building, a north and south fire lane are required. The south fire lane overlaps the pedestrian walkway, which presents some design issues. The plan is for the paving of the path to run through the fire lane, which appears to be okay with the fire marshal, according to the applicant. Another guideline for the project is that the primary common areas, especially the ones on the first floor, should be on the southwest corner facing out to the pedestrian walkway and street. A lobby and informal area is on the southwest corner leading out to the primary outdoor space and a more program-related space. The Redmond Senior Center plans to use part of this outdoor space as well. There is a manager's unit and some administration space in the southwest as well.

On the north end, the fire lane will be used as a ramp down to the garage and for an access spot for two handicapped vans, which are too tall to get into the garage. The ramp is on the street side, primarily to make sure that the building could be pushed as far away from the sidewalk as possible. Other issues

included saving some trees. There is a 32-inch fir on the site which will be saved, and the project has been adjusted in several points to allow for street trees. A drop-off site for emergency services has been provided, which was a concern raised in the pre-application process.

The applicant showed a sketch of the basic volumes of the site design. The plan is to have a brick element on the west side that wraps around the south side of the building. That element will be strongly expressed through the building. Given the function of the first floor, the applicant thought it should have a base, which would be achieved through a material change. A stucco material or other light material has been proposed. The upper floor levels would be expressed through some modulation lines on the building. Some parts of the building have been stepped out and stepped in to create this modulation. The two-story residential common area will link to the elevator and the elevator lobby.

Another major design concept is breaking down the scale of the building to a comfortable pedestrian level. The brick matched between the residential commons and the library across the street would help in that regard. The building steps back from the south and the west, from the street side. It steps back on the north as well. The existing trees help divide and modulate the façade. The landmark tree marks the main plaza, and a clump of Douglas firs conceal the north wing of the building, which is pushed back from the street.

The applicant next showed the DRB some 3-D renderings of the building and how the design attempts to reduce the scale and bulk of the project. Proposed colors will be presented at a future meeting. The top floor has been differentiated from the rest of the building. With the middle block, the base has been extended up two stories. The elevator lobby is set back on the top three floors and has a view of the outside. There is a roof terrace as well. On the north, the first floor would have a tenant with storefront windows. The ramp would be screened in this area with a five to six-foot solid wall that would have a green screen of some kind in front. Some work could be done on the inside of this wall, in that there will be some windows looking out onto it. The applicant said the tenant would be Providence Senior Services, an internalized office on the project. This would be a daytime operation. The first floor would be fairly open, but would need a screen despite the cars and vans parked in front of it. Louvers for cross-ventilation have been provided in this area. On the south side of the building, the applicant showed the walkway area and the brick expression of the senior residence common areas. The hope is to make this area as open as possible. There would be low sitting walls or raised planters in this area to help define the space. The corners of the building have been cut away on the south side, in a sense, and the fifth floor steps back a bit.

The applicant said creating spaces for social connection would be very important for this project as a matter of health for the senior residents. Next to the feature plaza will be a coffee area and fireside lounge. The main entry under a large extended canopy is also adjacent to the plaza. As a person goes through the main entry, the experience is a two-story space overlooked by some exercise equipment and some TV rooms above. The large entry room would be used primarily by residents, but it would be shared with the community center about a third of the time. Seniors would see programs going on this space and would be encouraged to engage with them. An outdoor terrace above would be accessible from a room dedicated to the residents. The large landmark tree provides shade for the south and west exposure. A secondary entrance is located by the pedestrian path that leads to the community center.

The applicant said Juliet balconies would be used. The client has requested that a regular balcony should not be provided. The idea is to encourage socialization, not isolation, on the interior and exterior. The applicant said balconies were not that popular with seniors, and were used more often for storage, which could create a management problem. The trees seen around the site are on the neighboring sites, but they serve to shield the view of the site. The applicant said there would be some experimentation with colors. Mr. Meade asked about the window panel, and if spandrel were being used. The applicant said on the south, west, and north, there were Juliet balconies. On the living room side, the applicant wanted a window that emulated a Juliet balcony. The window would have a spandrel panel that would have the same color trim as the rest of the project. Mr. Meade asked if egress was needed from some of the windows. The applicant said that was indeed the case. The bedroom windows on the east side would be the same as the windows on the west side. The applicant said an eyebrow has been added to the top of

the bays. The hope is to break up the flat roof profile in some way. This is the biggest building in the area, and that should help break up the design.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Meade:

- Suggested the wall element presented by the applicant could be more of an edge than a wall hidden behind landscaping. Mr. Meade was not sure that was the right treatment next to a busy sidewalk. He suggested a more vertical element with penetrations, perhaps.
- Mr. Meade said the building could have more of an urban edge to fit in with the urban shopping available in this area. The applicant said that could be possible, and said there could be some articulation in the wall.
- Mr. Meade said if the wall were close to the sidewalk, it should be taller so that it would not be an unattractive nuisance. The applicant said there would be 10-12 feet from the sidewalk.

Mr. Krueger:

- Said the wall could be transparent fence or railing system that would allow for a view of the facilities behind the wall. Mr. Krueger said the Providence building in the Rainier Valley has a nice street presence, and he suggested this project could do the same, to keep the street interaction lively.
- The applicant said the wall was a bit of a knee-jerk reaction, and he said it could go higher.

Mr. Waggoner:

- Asked about the paving surrounding the site and how it comes right up to the building. Mr. Waggoner said some landscape space could be created along the face to pull the driveway outward to the street, creating a green buffer a few feet deep along the front of the building. Mr. Waggoner said that could provide multiple layers of landscaping between the street and building.
- Mr. Lee clarified that the area Mr. Waggoner was talking about was around the spot where the driveway is. Mr. Waggoner said that landscaping could buffer the more solid end of the podium in this area. The applicant said the plants used would have to be compact. Mr. Waggoner said a compact vertical plant, or vine, would be a good suggestion.
- Mr. Waggoner said the east side of the building could have its sidewalk pulled out and could also have some landscape screening. Where windows are looking out, there would be some privacy and a more layered landscaping look.
- Mr. Krueger asked what the walkway was for on the east side of the building. The applicant said the fire department wanted it, and added that it would be for walking dogs, too. The walkway is near the fire apparatus parking. Mr. Krueger suggested more landscaping could be in this area.
- Mr. Lee said some stepping stones could be in this area, but not too many shrubs and big trees should be added, which would hinder the fire department. He did not think there needed to be a full-length sidewalk to the building.
- Mr. Meade noted that the manager's residence unit provides a landscape opportunity for the building. If the sidewalk moves out, there could be a better view outside the residence unit. The applicant said he appreciated the comments of the DRB on the sidewalk.
- Mr. Waggoner said if there would be any type of retail use on the site, the exposure to the street would not be right. He said the internalized office space would seem more suited to the design as presented.
- Mr. Waggoner asked about the two-story brick element nearest to the street, which does not really indicate a two-story room behind it. He asked if the attention to the outside would provide a view of the interior with a lot of activity or with just a view of empty rooms.
- The applicant said the major multi-purpose room would be in the first floor big block space, which would provide views of events and seniors exercising. The entry does have a small two-story space behind it.
- Mr. Meade asked about the access to the commercial leased space. The applicant clarified that the access point would be off the sidewalk. Mr. Meade suggested wrapping patio around the community space to the north to create one more opportunity for outdoor activity. More hardscape, Mr. Meade said, could help expand the patio to the west.

- Mr. Meade continued that more landscaping here would be unused background, but a patio could become a more active space. The applicant said that could be an option.

Mr. Nichols:

- Asked if one elevator would be enough for all the seniors on the site. Mr. Nichols asked also about the large landmark tree, and said that protecting it during construction would be a challenge.
- The applicant said the large tree would not need a large protective zone, but added that the project team would be careful with it.
- Mr. Nichols asked about the elevator area and what the vertical material would be used. The applicant said it would be different than the surrounding materials.
- Mr. Meade said the east elevation is less detailed than the other sides, and he wondered if there was a way to develop this design further. He asked for more detail on this side.
- Mr. Waggoner said the unit plans were not done and the windows presented are placeholders. He said the southwest and northwest corners are inset. Right now, these are solid walls facing each other, but these would be primary views from the street. These could be areas for glazing to create some more character from the street view for these critical corners.
- Mr. Meade said he would like to see more symmetry to the form rather than taking part of the top story off of the left tower of the building. He said a full tower, like the one next to it, could help simplify unit plans, maximize the space, and provide more symmetry.
- Mr. Meade echoed Mr. Waggoner and said that, on the west or south elevations, there might be opportunities for glazing. That could improve views out of the building and would help the building embrace the corner a bit more.
- Mr. Krueger added that there is outdoor space above the first floor, above the podium building. He suggested putting in some windows rather than having unused, dead space.
- Mr. Meade asked if the entry into the two-story space could use a little more announcement from the west. He said the access pointed appeared a little concealed.
- The applicant said the entry could be extended to be a stronger element. Mr. Lee said the Transportation Department wanted to discourage pedestrian cross-traffic near the City driveway that is across from this site's driveway, mainly because seniors may need extra time to get across the street. The hope is to encourage the use of the crosswalk on the south end of the project site.
- Mr. Lee said the Transportation Department wanted all pedestrian activity moved to the south end, and thus, moving the entry north might not be the best suggestion.
- The applicant disagreed with this assessment, and said that residents of this site would be going to the senior center and other locations via the pedestrian pathway, which would be the shortest way to get there. Going north, seniors would be going to the grocery store.
- The applicant asked for suggestions on addressing the pedestrian issues. Mr. Lee said he would meet with the Transportation Department soon, and would get back to the applicant.
- Mr. Meade asked about the large Douglas fir in the southwest corner of the site. The applicant said it was a landmark tree. The project arborist said it would be helpful this fall to trim the roots on one side to get the tree used to where it has to be in relation to the new building's east side.
- The applicant said that Douglas fir tree root masses do not spread far. Mr. Meade was concerned about all the design work going into this project and the possibility of the tree falling over. The applicant said that the tree was important to the design. He said some focus time would be spent on this tree to make sure it will survive the construction process.
- Mr. Meade said he had saved Douglas fir trees before, only to see them topped and damaged by a strong windstorm. He said a large, quick-growing tree could potentially replace it. The applicant said that would be a worthy analysis. Mr. Meade suggested an ultrasound test should be done on the tree rather than core samples to determine the true health of the tree.
- The applicant asked for any color suggestions. Mr. Meade said it appeared to be early to talk about color, and he would like a clearer picture on materials and massing. He noted that there appeared to be a tripartite organization happening, which he believed made sense.
- Mr. Meade said the Bella Bottega Mall might be a good point of reference for lush colors. He said the project should not shy away from more vibrant colors, which could help create a modern facility for aging people.

Mr. Krueger:

- Said bolder colors on the previous project reviewed by the Board were a good example as well.
- Mr. Krueger suggested the bay windows on the west elevation could be combined so they did not look so repetitive. He said the west elevation was crucial, and he wanted to make sure the applicant took a look at it.
- Mr. Meade said the library this project is trying to emulate is a beautiful building, but the library, in his opinion, missed the mark when it comes to color. The geometry of the library is striking, and the brick is great, but the colors are very pedestrian.
- Mr. Waggoner said the architectural character of the project would need to be refined before a discussion of color could happen. He said he did not hear the applicant explain a character of architectural expression, and he suggested the applicant should work on that.
- Mr. Krueger said some sample photos could help guide the project and help the DRB understand the architectural style is looking for.
- Mr. Meade said the commercial space could have a nice canopy element across the top of its windows, even though it is an internalized office space. He said that would help celebrate what is going on in that space a bit more.
- The applicant said he would explore that idea and others in terms of adding some texture and sun screening to the project.
- Mr. Sutton said he was concerned about the position of the ramp and how difficult it might be for a larger car to make the turns required to get onto the ramp. He said flipping the ramp to the backside would help pull the building forward and create some street presence, which other DRB members spoke to earlier.

The applicant said that might happen, depending on the advice of the Technical Committee. Mr. Lee hoped the applicant could come back in a month's time. The DRB and the applicant thanked each other for their time.