

**CITY OF REDMOND  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
August 19th, 2010**

NOTE: These minutes are not a full transcription of the meeting. Tapes are available for public review in the Redmond Planning Department.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Scott Meade, Lara Sirois, Craig Krueger, Joe Palmquist, Scott Waggoner

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Janey Gregory

**STAFF PRESENT:** Thara Johnson, Associate Planner; Steven Fischer, Principal Planner

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Lady of Letters, Inc.

The Design Review Board is appointed by the City Council to make decisions on design issues regarding site planning, building elevations, landscaping, lighting and signage. Decisions are based on the design criteria set forth in the Redmond Development Guide.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Design Review Board meeting was called to order by Chairperson David Scott Meade at approximately 7:15 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**MOTION BY MR. PALMQUIST TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FROM JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2010.  
MOTION SECONDED BY MS. SIROIS. MOTION PASSES (3-0), WITH TWO ABSTENTIONS.**

**PROJECT REVIEW**

**B100266 & 67, Grasslawn Park Shed & Restrooms**

**Shed:** Reroof and reside exterior of existing park operations shed of 256 SF

**Restrooms:** Renovate existing west restrooms and add entry to male and female restrooms. Reroof, add insulation, and replace existing wood siding with metal masonry. Addition of 168 SF to existing 471 SF building.

**Location:** 7031 - 148<sup>th</sup> Ave NE

**Architect:** Wayne Ivary *with* Ivary & Associates, Architects

**Applicant:** Eric O'Neal *with* City of Redmond

**Staff Contact:** Thara Johnson at tmjohnson@redmond.gov or 425-556-2470

Ms. Johnson noted this project involved updating the interior and exterior of the restroom building and storage shed. Both buildings were constructed in 1979, and both need significant repair. The applicant plans to add 43 SF to the entrances to the restroom, which will provide needed space for an additional bathroom stall. That addition will also provide privacy screening from entrance doors, so the restrooms can be used as changing rooms for baseball and soccer players at the park. The proposed design would remove the existing wood siding, trim, and shingle roofing and replace it with horizontal metal siding and roofing. The roofing would match the recently built pavilion and maintenance building that the DRB reviewed in 2006. The exterior of both buildings are to include a base wall of horizontal courses of polished and rough faces of concrete block in earth tone colors and accents. The plan also has a painted stucco upper wall treatment, stained timber framing, and a metal roof system. The applicant is proposing a 48" concrete masonry band at the base of the walls to provide a durable, resistant surface that would also match the wall treatment on the pavilion and maintenance buildings.

Interior renovations include adding insulation to the interior walls and rooms, which will improve energy efficiency. The existing skylight will be replaced with commercial insulated skylights that will provide natural lighting, improve ventilation, and improve the overall energy efficiency of the building. Staff has reviewed the plans, and is of the opinion that the materials, colors, and architectural detailing proposed are nicely designed, and reflect the exterior materials used by the existing primary buildings on the site.

However, staff is concerned about the pitch of the roof relative to the existing pavilion and maintenance building, and therefore would like feedback from the DRB on that issue. In general, staff is recommending approval of the building elevation, colors, and materials, with standard conditions of approval, and any suggested changes from the DRB.

Architect Wayne Ivary presented on behalf of the applicant. He noted that many of the materials on these structures are deteriorating. He hopes to address the repair problems with his project, and tie the project into the rest of the park, in terms of its design. The applicant did not want to change the shape or architecture of the buildings in this project, which is why he did not change the roof pitch. He saw no reason to change the roof in his planning, and was concerned about how such a change would affect his budget. The building was heated in the past through an electric radiant heat system in the floor. It has a very poor ventilation system, which the applicant is trying to improve. The roof design was updated in the 1990's, but the scheme of the geometry remained the same. The roof does have a foot and a half section that is flat, which serves as a transition of the two sides of the building. The other shed is on a foundation, as explained by Eric O'Neal from Redmond Park operations. It is the nerve center for the electric systems of the park.

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS:**

##### Mr. Meade:

- Asked if the applicant could save some costs by cutting out the idea of having masonry bands on at least one of the buildings. He suggested using metal. The applicant says that metal would be less durable than the masonry suggested. He says the mechanical and electrical systems are the biggest budget concerns.
- Mr. O'Neal noted that this was not an identified project in the City Parks Department's 2009 budget. Everything else at the park is in good shape, but this restroom in the center of the park was not dealt with until now. Mr. O'Neal would like to have a durable project lasting more than five years.
- Mr. Meade reiterated the question about lowering costs. Mr. O'Neal says making the materials consistent with the rest of the park were an important concern.

##### Mr. Krueger:

- Says it appears the framing and plumbing are the only things that appear to be saved in the building. The applicant says tearing down the structure and rebuilding would still cost more.
- The applicant says re-framing the roof, as the staff suggested, would push the project into questionable territory between renovating and rebuilding.
- Mr. Krueger says he is concerned that the building will not look as nice as the other, newer buildings on the site. The applicant says this project would be compatible with the rest of the buildings, and introduces some new forms.
- Mr. O'Neal noted that the restroom doors will get new hardware, and will have locking mechanisms like the pavilion building.

##### Ms. Sirois:

- Says the roof edge across the taller vertical form helps alleviate any of the negative that form might have by breaking it up a bit. She does not have a problem with a roof pitch; she believes it is worth it to preserve the form.
- The applicant agreed that the form was modern, and would fit in well with the rest of the park.
- Ms. Sirois noted that if the applicant had to build a new roof, it would be worth it to completely rebuild.

##### Mr. Palmquist:

- Did not have any problems with the project. He says the buildings need a facelift.

##### Mr. Waggoner:

- Confirmed that the colors are identical between the two buildings on the site. The treatments are similar, as well, according to the applicant.
- Mr. Meade asked about the stucco Ms. Johnson had mentioned earlier. The applicant says that treatment is not part of the current plan, due to cost and durability.

- Mr. Krueger noted that a wider fascia would serve the project well. The applicant agreed, and says on top of the trim, there will be a gutter that provides some overhang and weather protection. The applicant will use 4" CMU on the outside of the building, as well.

**MOTION BY MR. PALMQUIST, AND SECONDED BY MR. WAGGONER, TO APPROVE B100266 & 67, THE GRASSLAWN PARK RESTROOM RENOVATION, WITH THE STANDARD PRESENTATION MATERIALS INCONSISTENCIES CONDITIONS. MOTION PASSES (5-0). THE APPLICANT SAID HE WOULD BE WORKING WITH STAFF TO START WORK ON THIS PROJECT SOON.**

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Revision of the Redmond Design Standards**

**Staff Contact:** Steven Fischer, sfischer@redmond.gov or 425-556-2432

Mr. Fisher noted that the DRB does not typically look at the land use code. However, over the past year, the City has started looking at its Community Development Guide which is now 650 pages long. The project to revise the entire Guide has been in progress for almost a year, in earnest, with a Code Rewrite Commission. The CRC holds meetings every Monday night for nearly three hours. This has been going on since September of last year. The section on design standards is coming up. Each portion of Code is reviewed by staff. Staff brings up certain issues, which are reviewed by the City Attorney. Mr. Fischer has given the DRB a look at the revised design standards. The CRC began looking at the design standards three nights before the DRB meeting, simply as an introduction. The CRC will have meetings on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of August, at which time there will be a public hearing. They will continue their work on September 13<sup>th</sup> and by 20<sup>th</sup>, the CRC is hoping to wrap up its discussion on this issue, but there is a chance it may take longer.

Mr. Fischer says the Code lacks some clean purpose statements that would be uniform throughout. The Code is also poorly organized, and can be confusing to people who use it. Citations and definitions have been moved into a definition section. Design-related Code from the Downtown and Overlake areas are not in the design standards. Those pieces of code are in their own sections, and Mr. Fischer believes they should be moved into the design standards. Also, there are some non-design-related items in this section that are better addressed as technical issues. Finally, due to the Anderson vs. Issaquah court case from many years ago, design standards have to be written in such a way that a common person understands what is required. One example might be, *a building will be painted a color that is harmonious, that could blend with the surrounding community*. Those standards sound good, but there is no way for any two people to agree on what they mean, which is the standard set by the Anderson case. The Code, therefore, has to use common language that can be illustrated with pictures, as well.

Mr. Fischer has re-organized the Code into citywide and urban centers. Citywide, he has grouped issues into site planning, context, circulation and connections, community spaces and design concepts. Urban centers are in separate sections, and Mr. Fischer says items that were harmonious have been lumped into similar sections. Thus, there is an urban center piece, a Downtown piece, and an Overlake piece. The Code has a new section on corner lots, as well, which Mr. Fischer has taken from the City of Seattle, specifically in the Pike/Pine neighborhood. The question is what to do with the architectural treatment of the corner of that building to make a design statement. Seven sections have been moved from the Downtown residential section into the design standards, and two sections have been moved from Overlake into the design standards. Also, some items have been taken out of the design standards, including matters of administration, technical lighting issues, open space, tree retention, and signs. The DRB will still look at sign programs, but Mr. Fischer believes Code users would have a better time dealing with signs by going to one section, not two or more.

Mr. Fischer asked the DRB if the revisions he explained were logical. Members of the CRC would like someone from the DRB to speak to them about design standards on August 23<sup>rd</sup> or the 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Fischer noted this was a daunting piece of Code, and it is still in progress, without any illustrations as of yet. The zoning code will also have a new numbering system. Mr. Fischer has also provided a "crosswalk" to show a link between the old Code and new Code. He would like to hear the Board's comments on the proposed changes, and would also like some input on blank walls, which the CRC has struggled with in the Code. Garden walls, stained glass, and other issues are included in the blank walls code, and Mr. Fischer is

urging some changes. He provided a suggested piece of code from the City of Kirkland on blank walls to get the DRB thinking.

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS:**

##### Mr. Waggoner:

- Likes that the staff has reduced the page count of the Code, in terms of ease of use for the public. Mr. Waggoner believes the table of contents makes sense, especially the split between the Overlake and Downtown standards.
- Mr. Fischer says the design standards, in their current form, are nearly 90 pages.

##### Mr. Palmquist:

- Asked if this revised Code would replace the “binders” often used by applicants, the Code binder and the Comprehensive Plan binder. Mr. Fischer says the Community Development Guide, the big binder, is getting redone. That should be finished in the spring of 2011. The City Council is adopting portions of the Code as the CRC goes through them.
- Mr. Fischer says the Planning Director is asking the CRC to cut the binder down, significantly.
- Mr. Palmquist would like to see a map at the beginning of the Code that would show an applicant every section of the Code he or she would have to look at based on where the applicant’s site is. Mr. Palmquist would like that any specific section that relates to an applicant’s site should be easily identifiable on a map, right at the top.
- Mr. Fischer says such a map will be provided by zone, R-6 for example, that will have an explanation at the top of the zone section about what is needed for applicants. The development community has complained about this issue before.

##### Mr. Meade:

- Asked about color-coded, or numerical tabs, that could help applicants link to different sections they would need. Mr. Fischer pointed out that any word in the definition section would be italicized to help provide reference. Also, electronic versions of the Code would allow users to hover over certain words and link to other parts of the Code. Mr. Fischer said he would consider Mr. Meade’s suggestion.
- Mr. Waggoner said that too many tabs could be confusing, too.

##### Ms. Sirois:

- Asked about seeing the new graphics. Mr. Fischer pointed out that staff planner Asma Jeelani is working on those graphics, and she should have some of those graphics ready for the DRB by the early part of 2011.
- Ms. Sirois says the more graphics, the better, from her perspective.

##### Mr. Meade:

- Noted that this was an interesting situation, in that the DRB would be using this Code as an enforcement tool with applicants, but would also have to help create the Code about blank walls. He would like to see some flexibility in the Code on the blank wall issue.
- Mr. Fischer agreed flexibility is important, but brought up that the CRC has wrestled with this issue too, regarding the need for certainty. With certainty, the Code can be prescriptive, and new, great designs would not be built. The CRC is nine pages into this document, not 30 pages, as Mr. Fischer had expected. Finding middle ground between flexibility and certainty has been difficult.
- Mr. Meade says the blank wall size and scale depends on the scale of the building it is next to. Ms. Sirois added that a blank wall can be iconic, and should not be ruled out.

##### Mr. Waggoner:

- Says he likes the articulated façade requirements for large products, which should have some break-up anyway. He says landscaping could be added as a way to break up the visual massing, as well.
- He likes Item 4 of this part of the Code, which says alternatives may come up as part of the Design Review Process. The majority of the DRB agreed with him, in that such a Code would encourage brainstorming from the DRB, and add more of an artistic flair to building designs.

- Mr. Meade says a quantitative measure in this Code regarding blank walls would be fine, but he would like to see some discretion allowed to the DRB on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Krueger:

- Supported the idea of coming up with a definition for blank wall, but then offer solutions to applicants.
- Mr. Fischer noted that on page 18 of the City of Redmond's proposed Code, it is written that applicants should be trying to reduce the massing of large walls through various architectural and landscape treatments. The design criteria are in place to try to achieve that.
- Some of those criteria include wall treatments, installing vertical trellises, or putting in landscaping or artwork.
- Ms. Sirois asked if the quantitative definition might be percentage based, as a percentage of the total project square footage. That could take care of the scale issue. Mr. Fischer said that could work.

Mr. Meade:

- Says the staff should be the first to identify a blank wall situation, and offer the applicant some remedies to apply. At that point, the DRB could review the project and say yes or no to the remedies. He does not want the staff to have to measure all the possible blank walls for each project.
- Ms. Sirois indicated that if an applicant knew a blank wall was over a certain size, that applicant would have to make a case for it. At that point, the DRB would weigh in.
- Mr. Meade noted that in some projects, a blank wall can actually look good.

Mr. Palmquist:

- Asked if the Code had to suggest the remedies for a blank wall to satisfy the Anderson vs. Issaquah requirement. If those remedies were listed, then more cookie-cutter projects would be created. Current projects are using a lot of trellises, for example.
- Mr. Fischer says some direction will have to be provided. The blank wall term will have to be defined, and remedies would have to be noted, as well. He does not want to see landscaping used as an excuse for bad design, in the case of covering blank walls.
- Mr. Meade noted that landscaping, or trellises, are relatively temporary solutions to deal with blank walls.
- Mr. Fischer says there are confusing restrictions regarding blank walls, including how and where windows are placed, and their height. He would like to work off of a piece of Kirkland code, which says blank wall alternatives would be explored as part of the design review process.
- Ms. Sirois wants to make sure that an applicant can make a case for having a blank wall, in some situations. Not allowing those blank walls could encourage projects to be all too similar.

Mr. Waggoner:

- Mr. Waggoner asked if different standards should apply to different building types regarding blank walls.
- Mr. Fischer asked if any blank wall able to be seen from a public right-of-way would need to be screened, as is called for in the Kirkland code, or if screening should apply to all sides.
- Mr. Palmquist says making this rule specific to different sides of the building would make most sense. In some cases, backsides of buildings he has worked on are so broken up in terms of massing; they can become targets for criminal break-ins.
- Mr. Palmquist would support Item 4 from Kirkland's code, which would ask applicants to show the DRB some alternatives with regard to blank walls. He says that is part of the DRB's job, to guide designs on projects like this.
- Mr. Waggoner added that such a code would encourage applicants to come up with several different design options, and hopefully a better overall design.

Ms. Sirois:

- Would like to make sure applicants have an "out" that would allow them around some of the standards in place, which could encourage better design as well.
- Mr. Meade noted that the hope is that each applicant would have a unique site which would force them to create an interesting design, but that is not always the case. He added that the DRB has dealt with this issue before in the historic downtown area.

- Mr. Fischer asked if 400 SF, the number from Kirkland, was the proper number for the size of a blank wall in Redmond. Mr. Meade said yes, in that it would help add some consistency between the cities. Mr. Waggoner said yes; that number would allow a wall two-stories high and a room or two wide.
- Mr. Krueger supported the 400 SF number. That would cover a two-car garage, in his opinion.
- Ms. Sirois spoke again about the issue of asking for multiple design options from an applicant. That can be onerous for applicants in terms of design fees, and can create useless paperwork. Mr. Waggoner suggested having that multiple design requirement in areas of downtown, but not necessarily in the suburbs. Mr. Fischer said he would consider that.

Mr. Palmquist:

- Asked about how applicants would learn what they would need to do to bring a project to the DRB. Mr. Fischer is working on a DRB handbook with user-friendly terms to define that process. That should be ready next year.
- Mr. Palmquist would like the DRB to serve as a forum for issues regarding the Code, especially regarding code flexibility.
- Mr. Fischer says he would like to see that, as well, but admitted that many applicants are not reading the Code at all, mainly due to its size.

Mr. Meade:

- Would like to establish a DRB awards program to honor professionals and builders. He would like to recognize good design and good projects. He believes that could serve as good marketing for those companies, and make them more willing to work with the Code.
- Mr. Fischer says the City of Redmond did have a design awards program, developed around 2001. Three awards were given out, including one for Mr. Waggoner for an Eddie Bauer building project. Time and budget limitations have forced the awards program to end, though Mr. Fischer would like to bring it back.
- Mr. Meade would like to see it, too, to show off the great things happening in Redmond. Such a program could attract good designers, as well.
- Mr. Krueger noted that there is a Quality Growth Alliance Recognition program that exists now that can help projects gain better financing or government approval. He believes that could help create recognition with a lot less work for staff.
- Ms. Sirois asked if the DRB could hand out awards informally, based on presentations to the Board. Mr. Palmquist asked if a few projects could be voted on, quarter by quarter, by the DRB to reduce Mr. Fischer's workload. Also, the architectural firm could send photos in to help the process.
- Mr. Fischer asked the Board to send him more comments regarding code revisions the CRC should consider, from any local city. He added that there may be a meeting on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, which Mr. Krueger may not be able to attend.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION MADE BY MR. KRUEGER, AND SECONDED BY MR. PALMQUIST, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MOTION PASSES (5-0).**

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**MINUTES APPROVED ON**

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**RECORDING SECRETARY**