

MEMORANDUM

TO: DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

FROM: GARY LEE, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBJECT: LAND-2013-00203 – Redmond Multi-Family- Pre-App meeting No. 1

LOCATION: NE 83rd Street, between 165th and 166th Avenues (north side)

DATE: March 21, 2013



This is the 2nd Pre-Application meeting submittal for this project. The 1st meeting was held March 21, 2013. Minutes of the meeting are attached for your reference.

ANALYSIS

This second iteration has been modified to address many of the concerns expressed by the Board at the last meeting. The Board expressed concerns about the mass and blandness of the original hipped roof design, the use of the “three” buildings concept, a desire to have more emphasis on the southwest corner of the building as many people will be coming to the building from that side too, and the desire to have a stronger break “between buildings”.

Staff has reviewed these plans and finds the proposed changes greatly improve the look of the building and believes the changes address the concerns expressed by the Board.

Staff likes how the break in the building has been increased per the Board’s suggestion. A minor issue with the breaks, as currently designed, is the distance between the windows that will be facing each other. The privacy/window spacing standards specify that these windows must be a minimum of 15 feet apart, whereas they are currently shown as 10 feet apart. If the rooms with these windows are not suitable for frosted glass, staff is amenable to entertaining a Design Deviation request for this, as staff finds the use of the break provides a superior alternative.

Staff has the following minor concerns with this iteration:

1. Staff finds the stair/stoops to the first floor units on 166th Avenue (east side) to be too massive in terms of concrete and railing, as the stoops project out to the street sidewalk then turn 90 degrees. Staff recommends that the stairs be turned 90 degrees to the street sidewalk, and that the first landing (from the street sidewalk) of any stoop be no higher than 30 inches from the street sidewalk, to minimize the amount of hard massing out of the ground.
2. Staff recommends that the retaining walls in the front yards not be finished poured in place concrete, but that they be finished with brick or decorative block, to compliment the style of the building.
3. Staff also recommends that the next iteration show additional brick detailing at the door and window heads and sills.

Planning Staff 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.

Excerpt of Minutes from March 21, 2013

PRE-APPLICATION

LAND-2013-00203, Redmond Multi-family

Description: Development of a four story, 104 unit multi-family residential building with parking

Location: 8324 165th Ave NE, 8301 166th Ave NE, 8323 166th Ave NE, and 8345 166th Ave NE

Applicant: Reed Kelly *with* DRK Development, Inc.

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

Mr. Lee noted this was the first pre-application meeting for this project. It is located on NE 83rd Street between 165th and 166th, kitty-corner from the recently reviewed Valley Furniture project. Staff is excited about this new project, which is not in the same zone as Valley Furniture. Thus, there would be some different design standards associated with this project. This site is in the Perrigo's Plat sub-neighborhood, and the standards call for architecture that is more compatible with the existing buildings and have period architecture and specific modulation. Staff says this project is moving in the right direction. Staff has included some architectural styles in its report that could be applicable to this project. The applicant is breaking up the project into three buildings, which could mean different roof types and styles to make the buildings look different from each other.

Kent Smutny with Veer Architecture presented on behalf of the applicant. He noted that this project is 105 units and four stories tall. Below-grade parking has been proposed, with 133 parking stalls. That creates a ratio of 1.25 stalls per unit within the parking structure itself. There is also a chance for additional street parking on 165th and on 83rd. The applicant said the site right now consists of many small residential buildings that have all been converted to various businesses. A number of large trees are on the property. A consulting arborist has determined a number of the trees have been topped, and one prominent tree at 165th and 83rd has rot in the trunk. Overall, the trees on the site are not in good condition. The applicant presented a massing plan for the project, which involved a four-story, J-shaped building. The site is surrounded by a number of building sizes, types, and uses, from small residential structures to larger multi-family projects and commercial use.

The applicant said, because of the site's exposure on two streets, there is an opportunity to relate the first floor units to the street. Front stoops are one possibility, as well as landscape walls or steps, to create a relationship with the sidewalk as well as some urban separation. The applicant is working on some ideas for a prominent corner on the project and considering green walls as an option. The idea is to create three buildings on the site. Different contemporary materials are under consideration, which would help create bays or stoops to introduce modulation to the site.

Andrew Ruston spoke next on behalf of the applicant. He noted the three buildings on the site, and said that in between them, there are "green links," or recessed areas that would be celebrated with some green elements and would set off the masses that come forward. The applicant said he was comfortable with abrupt changes in style on the site from one mass to the next. For example, traditional angled bay windows are used on one building with stoops, covered porches, and some pitched roofs, which would contrast with a more contemporary box-bay design for units nearby. An eased edge, soft-curve concept is where the applicant is heading for the prominent corner of the project. The third building would be similar to the first building, breaking down into a traditional scale and similar to a number of other multi-family projects near the project.

From the west, the applicant's idea is to erode the corner of the building and have prominent porches that would give less of an urban feel and more of a domestic, residential look. There is about four feet from the base of the building to the sidewalk, so that provides an opportunity for intensive landscaping with stairs and stoops. On the other side of the site, there will be a garage entrance on two levels as well as a service entrance on 165th. A rooftop amenity has been proposed, though there are some Code limitations. The applicant wants to take advantage of the western exposure and provide some rooftop common space. Street side open space does not count toward the open space requirements for the site. The main common amenities would be provided in the residential lobby. There is a path from that lobby to an indoor

common area and the outdoor courtyard. The applicant would like to link the path back to 165th as an entrance to the project, which could be used quite a bit as a connection to downtown Redmond.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Waggoner:

- Asked about the “green link” term used by the applicant and if that referred to the color, or the use of a green wall. The applicant said a landscape screen would be used, such as a trellis, to create a vertical landscape separation between each of the three buildings.
- Mr. Waggoner asked if some ground-planted material would grow up the sides of the buildings. The applicant said the material would grow up the building and down from the top. Intermediate planter boxes would be used to maximize the coverage and create a true, green, landscape wall.
- Mr. Krueger confirmed that the green wall would be right outside studio apartments. The applicant said those studio units would have Juliet decks and not a lot of outdoor depth, perhaps about a foot to eighteen inches. Planter boxes would be on those decks, as well.
- Mr. Waggoner asked if the general design would be a traditional look, with angled bay windows and hipped roofs. The applicant said the buildings on the ends of the site are more traditional. A more modern building is in the center.
- The applicant said the finished palette would be similar throughout, using cement products, but the way the finish would be trimmed, including the shapes for the bays, would help change the style. The applicant wanted to create three different, separate buildings.
- Mr. Waggoner asked if there was a difference in color, but the same material along the first floor of one building. The applicant said brick would be used at the lower level to provide a strong base for both the traditional building and more modern building.
- The applicant said the brick could run higher on the corner building, but could run lower on the end buildings to indicate a base, center, and top. Cement board finishes and brick would be used at the bases.
- Mr. Waggoner asked if there was any chance to create multi-level stoops to terrace down to the sidewalk, or if there was an issue of height in the garage that would necessitate keeping the slab for the first floor up higher.
- The applicant said that, to make the garage heights work, the same floor level has indeed been used on the end building and the center building to create a common parking garage. The applicant said there would not be enough room for the terracing approach Mr. Waggoner was suggesting, and said that berming was proposed.
- Mr. Lee noted that berming was not the preferred alternative. He noted that the Redmond Square apartments were able to use a terraced approach with a decorative wall at the base. Mr. Lee said staff frowns upon the berming option.
- Mr. Waggoner asked if there were multiple levels of parking. The applicant said there were two levels of parking proposed as the site ramps down from 165th. There are two separate entries to the garage.
- Mr. Waggoner suggested the applicant should study whether the parking level could be sloped under the high end to create more headroom underneath the highest corner of the building. With that, some portions of the first floor slab could be stepped down. He was well aware that the applicant wanted to minimize the excavation depth, but he suggested considering the terraced approach in some way.

Ms. Crowder:

- Appreciated the effort to break up the complex into three buildings, but she said the first and third buildings look like they have massive hipped roofs, which she found not very aesthetically pleasing.
- Ms. Crowder recommended looking at a different option to provide a traditional look without the use of a hipped roof. The applicant said the aerial images may show the hipped roof more prominently than what a person would see from the street. He said that he would bring more street level renderings at the next meeting.
- Ms. Crowder said more traditional items could be used in the material palette, but a contemporary look could still be achieved. She said the current design does not look very contemporary.

Mr. Meade:

- Liked the case study photos and context images the applicant provided. Mr. Meade did not see the need for three building types. He suggested doing one cohesive building type and doing it well.
- Mr. Meade shared the concern of Ms. Crowder's about the hipped roof and suggested using a parapet design. He asked about the design of the 165th end of the building at the top of the third floor, and what appeared to be a white fin design.
- The applicant said the fin would create a cornice line and differentiate the cap of the building. The fin also creates more horizontal surface to allow for larger decks with the top floor units. The applicant said this would create an opportunity for more outdoor space at that level as well.
- The applicant said that a portion of this space would be surrounded by rails. The idea was to create a continuous horizontal band for the cornice element. A portion of it would be usable and a portion of it would be an eyebrow of sorts at that level of the building.
- Mr. Meade asked if shingles would be used at this portion of the roof. The applicant said he was still exploring that idea, and cement board shingles were the option presented. He said the main idea was to differentiate the top level by using a different cladding material pattern.
- Mr. Meade said there would be some merit on putting a cap on the bay elements. On the 83rd face of the project, the balconies on top of the bays are uncovered. He suggested the applicant should put in a roof structure that could cover those spaces, as well.
- Mr. Meade said this cover element could draw on some historic references and also create some cover. He suggested that some roof modulation could occur on this face of this building, too.

Mr. Palmquist:

- Said Ms. Crowder's concern was the most important issue for him, in that the hipped roof would not be successful if it were just a hip. Mr. Palmquist understood using this as a form, but adding other roof elements that would define the bays would be important, in his opinion.
- Mr. Palmquist noted that Bellevue Townhomes, which the applicant used for a case study, would be a good project to emulate if a hipped roof were used. He suggested treating the bays as individual elements and using more roof elements to define the bays.
- Mr. Palmquist asked to see the main floor plan. He noted that the residential lobby was out on the corner of 166th and 83rd, but said that the traffic patterns for pedestrians would be all over the site. He said the lobby is almost a back way out of the project.
- Mr. Palmquist asked the applicant to celebrate all the different pedestrian traffic patterns, as there are amenities on just about all sides of the site that pedestrians would be going to. He said the applicant should find ways that pedestrians could easily move to the northwest, southwest, and southeast, and not just focus on the corner of 166th and 83rd.
- Mr. Palmquist said that on the southwest side of the project, there was an opportunity for a stronger corner element. He said corners can be very difficult. He noted that the applicant was on the right track, and appreciated not seeing the tower elements he has seen on other buildings.
- Mr. Meade asked about the interior outdoor courtyard and if it would see any sun. The applicant said the open site is facing due west, so there would be some sun in the summer.
- Mr. Palmquist echoed Mr. Meade's idea to create one cohesive building design rather than three. He liked the idea of three buildings, which was unique, but he said the separation between the buildings would need to be more deliberate. He suggested not only stepping the building back, but bringing the height of that building down.
- Mr. Palmquist suggested doing a one or two-foot recess going back to a hallway of sorts to create a void that would emphasize the look of creating three buildings. He said the applicant's current design was too subtle.
- Mr. Palmquist liked the idea of the green wall, but noted that other projects near this site have not been successful with green walls. He suggested, once again, a way to define the buildings with something different that would create a serious, definite break of two or three feet. He said that this concept could begin on the second floor and go all the way through the roofline.

Mr. Krueger:

- Said there was a project in Seattle, just south of the Eastlake Bar and Grill, that has a look of building breaks that is similar to what Mr. Palmquist is suggesting.
- Mr. Krueger echoed Mr. Palmquist's point that pedestrians will access this site from many sides. He suggested emphasizing the southwest corner of the site, as well.

- Mr. Krueger spoke about the four-foot stoops and finding different ways to avoid using the berms the applicant has proposed. He said a project just to the southwest of this site found a different solution for a height differential without using a berm.
- Mr. Krueger asked about the setback for this site at the corners. The applicant said that distance was fourteen feet on 83rd and eight feet on 166th. Mr. Krueger said, with that amount of distance, some terracing should be possible.
- Mr. Krueger liked the idea of three buildings, but said the designs between the three did not have to be completely different. He suggested using more vertical elements to create a distinct look between the buildings.
- He likes hipped roofs, but said the ones presented in this project are massive and need to be mitigated. He liked the concept of the Bellevue Townhomes that Mr. Palmquist suggested.
- Mr. Krueger asked about the softened edge on the corner element, and said he was nervous about the stucco used in this area. He said this could potentially have a very flat look, and suggested using some brick in this spot to echo other parts of the building.
- He asked if the building was within the height limits of its zone. The applicant said he was indeed within those limits. The building is four stories with some common recreation space on top of the building. Mr. Krueger said he would encourage the use of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to achieve higher height limits.
- Mr. Krueger asked if the recreational space on the roof fit within the Code. Mr. Lee said he would check into that, and said the applicant may need to use affordable housing credits for the upper floors, or TDR's, or the green building program, to use that recreational space. There is a possibility that roof area might be considered another floor of the building.
- The applicant said that the roof recreational space would have to be smaller than what has been presented. The area would be limited to 750 square feet, because creating assembly occupancy could not happen at the roof level. Mr. Krueger confirmed that the 750 square feet would cover the indoor and outdoor space.
- Mr. Palmquist made another query about the berms suggested for the front of the building and confirmed that the applicant was working with a landscape architect. Mr. Palmquist suggested involving the landscape architect at this point in the project. A similar project, the old VFW building, was successful recently by using a landscape architect early in the process.
- Mr. Meade asked the applicant to look to improve the green wall element.

Mr. Sutton:

- Said he was also not a fan of the different styles used between the three buildings. He liked the idea of breaking up the design, but did not think two different styles was the way to go. He asked why the contemporary style-building was closer to traditional buildings surrounding the project and not located closer to downtown.
- Mr. Sutton said the hipped roof comments were well taken, and noted that such a roof would be an unfortunate thing to look down on from the common roof space.
- Mr. Sutton was concerned about how the different styles of the buildings would come together on the back side of the project.
- Mr. Meade asked about the penthouse piece on the site. The applicant said this area was proposed to be an interior common space. The idea was to have indoor and outdoor space at this level, but it would be smaller in scale, based on the Code limitations for upper level common space.
- Mr. Meade applauded this idea and said this could be a hidden secret for the residents rather than something visible by pedestrians from the building edge. He suggested pulling this element back so that it does not fight with the massing of the building below.
- Mr. Krueger noted that the roof area would definitely be smaller, based on the 750 square foot limitation noted earlier. The applicant said 500 square feet inside and 250 square feet outside was one option under consideration.
- Mr. Meade suggested making this roof area more of an amenity. The Nintendo site in Redmond could be a model, where the applicant had some modulations in foam and green roof elements that surrounded the roofscape area and gave it a creative sense of place.
- Mr. Meade said this was a great, important site and he looked forward to seeing the next iteration of the design. The applicant thanked the DRB members for their time.