

MEMORANDUM

TO: DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

FROM: SCOTT REYNOLDS, PLANNER

SUBJECT: LAND-2019-00658; Avalon Eaves Redmond Campus

DATE: September 5, 2019

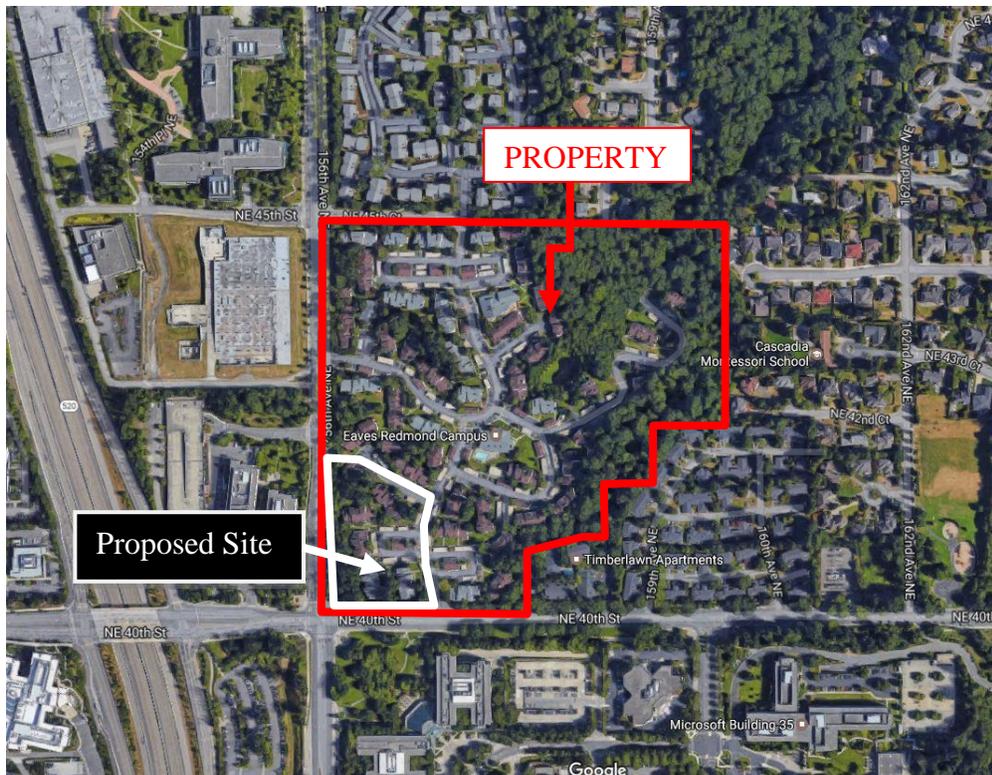
REQUEST: Formal Application Review Meeting

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Design Review Plan Set, dated August 15, 2019
- 2) Color Elevations
- 3) Landscaping Plan
- 4) Design checklist
- 5) Past DRB Minutes

Project Location and Vicinity Map

Project Address: 15606 NE 40th Street; at the intersection of 156th Ave NE.



Project Summary

The project site is part of the overall property which comprises of approximately 48 two-story apartment buildings and three residential amenity buildings. The project site consists of five, two-story apartment buildings with a total of 48 dwelling units and associated parking. All buildings within the proposed project site are planned to be demolished.

The project proposes a seven-story apartment building with approximately 214 dwelling units with two levels of subterranean parking (279 parking stalls).

Current conditions that affect the site plan and location of the building include an existing sewer easement, high-voltage transmission lines (along both NE 40th Street and 156th Avenue NE), fire lane access on the north side of the structure to serve the building and stormwater requirements.

Surrounding Uses, Character and Context

The project site is located in the R-30 zoning district. The Comprehensive Plan land use designation is High Density Residential.

The overall site is bounded on the east and north by R-12 and OBAT on the west and south. Adjacent land uses consist of a multi-family apartment complex to the north and Microsoft to the south and west. The property is diagonally across from the Overlake Transit Center, where a new light rail station is scheduled to provide service starting in 2023.

Overall the Overlake Neighborhood has a good mix of office, residential and neighborhood commercial uses. Microsoft and Overlake Village are major establishments in the neighborhood. The sub-area where the project is located has predominantly single-family and multi-family residential.

Comprehensive Plan Vision

Policies in the Overlake Neighborhood of the Comprehensive Plan that should be considered in the design review of this project include:

OV-12 Enhance the character and environment of the Overlake Neighborhood to achieve the vision. Use neighborhood-specific design standards and other design techniques to help create a character for the Overlake that is distinct from the Downtown.

- Developments space buildings to maintain interspersed views of tree lines
- Developments contribute to the creation of an urban place that feels comfortable for pedestrians.
- Facades in the public view are varied and articulated, and
- Buildings do not appear bulky or massive.

OV-15 Encourage the use of green building techniques and low-impact development methods, such as green roofs, bioswales and rain gardens.

OV-68 Design buildings and sites in areas designated Multifamily Urban to have a residential character. Encourage balconies overlooking streets and courtyards.

OV-73 Create non-motorized connections, where feasible, as part of new residential development to support alternative commute modes and provide connections to bus routes, major parks, and between developments.

OV-76 Encourage a variety of tree specimens for use as street trees along significant corridors in the Residential Area, including 156th and 159th Avenues NE and NE 51st Street, to establish and maintain a vegetated neighborhood character and to provide tree canopy.

The Comprehensive plan for the Overlake Neighborhood Residential subarea envisions creating a distinct design separate from Downtown Redmond. The focus is on creating a human scale design that reduces the of bulk or mass of new buildings with specific focus on green design and pedestrian connections.

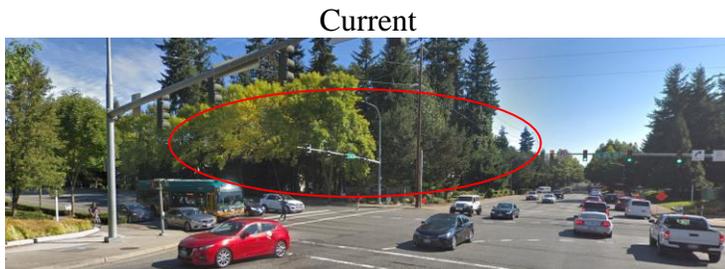
DESIGN REVIEW BACKGROUND

This is the second time DRB has reviewed the project. The past meeting minutes on March 7, 2019 are listed under a separate attachment.

DESIGN REVIEW STAFF ANALYSIS

- 1) **Corner Gateway/Design:** The current northeast corner of NE 40th Street and 156th Avenue NE contains multiple evergreen trees that create a “green wall” for the Avalon Redmond Eaves Apartment complex behind it. The proposal requires frontage improvements and pulling the building close to the intersection, existing green wall is planned to be removed.

With the existing site being fairly wooded; then transitioning to a new midrise as shown below, the building shall command strong design language that is separate look from Downtown Redmond. The design should also complement the work that Microsoft is establishing to the South and East by creating a gateway for commuters, visitors and residents coming from of State Route 520 and the future Redmond Technology Center Station.



- 2) **Massing:** The massing has been updated since the DRB last saw the project. Modulation has been added to part of the façade along 156th Avenue NE. The modulation is a right step to help break up the massing but the slight material changes to the façade still gives the structure and large mass and bulky feeling for both facades on 156th avenue NE and NE 40th Street.

Staff believes the current iteration shows the building corners receiving the same treatment and the façade between them providing similar design language leading long repetitive design. To improve this, mass and bulk could be softened through stronger change in materials, colors, human scale elements and additional modulation between the massing elements shown below. This is applicable to the north, west and south elevations. (RZC 21.60.040.B.2.a.iii & b)

156th Avenue NE View, West and South Elevation



- 3) **Material:** The current design has made improvements on 156th Avenue NE by increasing the grade at the building to hide the podium. The current façade on the east and north façade still has exposed podium adding unfinished concrete to the current material pallet.

Staff believes there are greater design opportunity to increase the integration of material on the exposed unfinished concrete by using other design material already used on the project. (RZC 21.60.040.B.1.a.iv)

- 4) **Blank Walls:** Staff believes opportunities exist to reduce the blank walls on the south and east facades for code compliance. (RZC 21.60.040.B.6)

East Elevation



5) **Mechanical Units:** Lastly, the plans do not call out any detail on mechanical units to confirm if proper screening is needed. As the project comes back to the next Design Review Board meeting, staff will be working with the applicant to ensure code compliance with mechanical screening, RZC 21.60.040.D.

Staff Request

Overall the project is off to a good start. Staff is looking for guidance and feedback from the Board, as this is the first formal submittal for this project. Staff would like the Board to look at the following opportunities:

1. Does the design integrate the efforts that Microsoft is bring forward in advancing the gateway on NE 40th Street and 156th Avenue NE?
2. Design opportunity to soften the mass and bulk through stronger change in materials, colors, human scale elements and additional modulation between the massing elements.
3. Design opportunity to increase the integration of material on the exposed unfinished concrete by using other design material already used on the project.
4. Reduce the blank walls on the south and east facades for code compliance.

It is the applicant's intent to incorporate recommendations and comments from the Design Review Board and return to the next available Design Review Board meeting.