Fort Lincoln Townhomes

Good afternoon,

My name is Matthew Tauscher. I am a registered landscape architect with the firm of Vika Inc. I would like to take a moment to speak about a few of the topics associated with the proposed plan - including:

General layout

Open space / Tree preservation / recreation

Landscaping and lighting

General layout

As you have heard, the general layout of the plan has evolved from a number of circumstances including the parcel configuration, site topography, and surrounding site conditions.

The property configuration, being rectangular in shape, lends itself to a layout, which is oriented in the north south direction. The internal streets take advantage of the length of property frontage to the east and west, and, most importantly, respond to the steep slope of the site from Fort Lincoln Drive down 75 feet to South Dakota Ave. From these conditions, the units evolved along those street networks. This orientation of the units onto the internal private streets is in keeping with the surrounding Fort Lincoln area and complies with the Fort Lincoln Urban Renewal Plan.

As stated above the second circumstance, and probably the main influence on the design, was the extremely severe topography that occurs across the site from east to west. As discussed previously, this topographical condition has lead to the layout of the street network running with the contour of the land. In order to implement this street design the plan will require extensive use of retaining walls, at significant cost, that will create a terrace effect of buildable areas. These terrace areas, however, will still require additional architectural 'relief' in order to obtain a constructable site. This required architectural relief has dictated the unit design, which can only be described as atypical in terms of today's architectural standards for townhome communities.

Because of the steep slopes the units will be a series of "walk up" and "walk out" units. 'Walk up' units will be of a style where the resident can enter the unit from the front lower street level and exit the rear of the unit at the higher second level. The 'walk out' unit will be of a style that the resident enters from the front street level and exits the rear at a lower grade level (more typical of what you may see in a single family detached home with this grade condition).

BZA
Case No. 17192
Exhibit No. 29
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.17192
EXHIBIT NO.29

The lot layout of these unit styles, as well as the third style of slab on grade unit, has been designed to allow for the continued slope of grade thru the rear of the lot. This is why we are requesting the variance to the front yard distance requirements in order to take advantage of the lot's rear yard green space for additional grade slope relief. In conjunction with these architectural designs the project has concentrated development in the middle of the site rather than expand the site development to such a degree as to cover the entire 22 acres. In review of this plan it may appear that the FAR and lot occupancy of some of the lots are atypically high, but in reality, the density of the project is lower than most comparable projects due to the significant amounts of open space, and tree preservation. Thus, the individual FAR and lot occupancy percentages do not express the true low-density numbers of this development.

Finally, in order to create a desirable sense of community and to buffer the new residents from the surrounding road impacts, and nearby commercial uses on South Dakota Ave., the orientation of the units along the periphery has been directed inward, with access to all units being from internal private streets. This buffering will also be enhanced by the proposed landscaping.

Open Space / Tree Preservation / Recreation

Open space will abound on site. Nearly 26 % of the site will be devoted to common open space areas. This is a significant number in today's standards. Again, the reason we have been able to obtain this amount is the need to respect the topographical constraints of the site, tighten up the individual lot designs, and not spread the entire development over the 22 acres. This lot configuration however has brought us to the current design, which requires your assistance in the granting of certain special exceptions and variances to the rules.

As previously noted there will be significant tree preservation. Preservation on site will be approximately 3 acres out of 22 (or 12 %). This preservation has evolved from the severe topographical conditions that have directed the layout to be concentrated and condensed in order to fit within the usable areas. The tree preservation areas will occur on the north and south perimeters with extensive tree preservation located behind and adjacent to the senior living center at our southern boundary. This particular area of tree preservation will serve as a desirable buffer between the two uses, and for the visual enjoyment and enhancement of both properties.

Recreation will be provided on site in the form of two Tot lot facilities. Off site recreation opportunities include the adjacent recreation center directly across Fort Lincoln Drive.

Landscaping and Lighting

Tree preservation will also be enhanced with landscaping to be provided on site. Site access locations will be planted with ornamental trees including Redbud or Cherry (1" – 1.5" caliper) in order to give a sense of arrival to the community.
31st Place will be planted with a column of street trees including Willow Oaks (2.5"-3" caliper) in order to define the community from that road. Internal streets will be planted with a mix of large and medium street trees including Red Maples, Lindens, Cherries and Redbuds (1" – 3" caliper) in order to continue the streetscape into the site and soften the area between the roads and dwelling units. Large open space areas will be planted with similar deciduous and evergreen species in order to increase the overall tree canopy and supplement the tree preservation areas. Evergreen planting buffers including Hemlock and Pine species of 6 to 8 foot height will be provided along the property frontage of Fort Lincoln Drive and South Dakota Ave. in order to screen the undesirable views and sounds of those roadways and their adjacent commercial developments.

Site lighting may be in the form of Victorian style street lamps that convey the feel of the Districts proximity. Those same styles may be carried thru to the open space areas as determined by the final site plan design.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions I will be available for discussion.

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