

August 21, 2015

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Anthony Hood, Chairman
D.C. Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW
Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Zoning Commission Case No. 15-02: Revised Plans

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission:

The Zoning Commission set the above-referenced application down for a public hearing at its public meeting on June 29, 2015. The Office of Planning supported the setdown of the application and requested that additional information be submitted prior to the public hearing. The Applicant hereby provides the additional information requested in the Office of Planning's report dated June 19, 2015, and by the Commission at the public meeting on June 29, 2015.

Updated Plans

The Applicant has modified the proposed site plan since its initial submission on March 19, 2015. The revised site plan eliminates one townhome from the string of homes along Jackson Street. As depicted in the rendering attached as Exhibit A, removing this unit opens up views of the Holy Redeemer building to better preserve the building's historic setting while also creating the opportunity to create a pocket park at the corner of Jackson and Seventh Streets.

The elevations and the materials have been substantially refined so that each building façade is fully designed with high quality materials; each façade is considered a "high profile" elevation and treated as such. Accordingly, the rear and side elevations incorporate masonry and exhibit high quality materials to create a cohesive link with the front façade. The elevations are attached as Exhibit A.

Affordable Units

The Applicant is proposing five affordable townhomes: three of which will be available to households with an annual income no greater than 50% of the Area Median Income ("AMI") and two of which will be available to households with an annual income no greater than 80% AMI. The three-bedroom affordable units are now more evenly distributed throughout the site

and the exteriors are indistinguishable from the market-rate units. The former site plan depicted the affordable units as the only units with a depth of 32 feet; the Applicant has modified the site plan so that the affordable units have the same depth of 37 feet as the market rate units. The affordable units now comprise a total of approximately 12% of the total townhome gross floor area, well above the 10% required.

Landscaping Plan

Attached as Exhibit A are detailed landscape plans which have been added since the Applicant's previous submission. The carefully thought out landscaping and hardscaping serves multiple purposes: it provides passive outdoor recreation areas for the residents while also promoting sustainability and facilitating efficient stormwater management. As the attached plans depict, the Applicant is proposing specific areas dedicated for passive recreation spaces for the townhome community residents. The Mews will provide a meandering path lined with an assortment of plantings and occasional benches and is punctuated by a trellis and planter at the far end allowing residents to enjoy the outdoors and socialize. Another gathering point will be the area at the corner of 7th Street and Jackson Street. This landscaped and hardscaped open space will encourage passive recreation such as picnics, bocce ball or other similar activities. Just like the Mews, this lawn will be appropriately landscaped and will provide benches to give residents a common outdoor area for relaxation while fostering community interaction. These areas will serve as important and welcoming outdoor respites for the residents.

The Applicant has also made a concerted effort to maximize the amount of green space included in the project, as well as reduce the amount of impervious area. Per the direction of the Office of Planning, it has narrowed its drive aisles and parking areas to minimize hardscape. In all, it has reduced the proposed paving by approximately 1,800 square feet since the initial filing.

The Office of Planning also directed the Applicant to study the need for its retaining walls with the goal of reducing or eliminating them. The Applicant has reviewed its proposed plan and it is not feasible to eliminate the bioretention facilities or the associated retaining walls. The bioretention areas are required in order to be in compliance with the current stormwater management requirements and the proposed locations are the only feasible locations for these facilities (other than the grand lawn). To make these facilities function properly and meet the stormwater management standards, the grade must be manipulated in order to create a low point to capture the water and create the "fall" necessary for drainage. This necessitates the retaining walls which are proposed to be faced with material selected specifically to complement the façade of the existing Holy Redeemer College building. The retaining wall on the northern edge of the building will not be visible and will essentially be below-grade. The retaining wall on the southern edge of the building will taper with the grade in an effort to minimize its appearance. Both bioretention areas will be heavily landscaped. Additional details regarding the stormwater management facilities are attached as Exhibit A.

Benefits and Amenities

The Applicant has met with the ANC and its Single Member District ("SMD") representative on numerous occasions to discuss its benefits and amenities package. While the package continues to be refined, the Applicant is proposing the following:

- Edgewood signage: at the direction of its SMD, the Applicant has reached out to the Edgewood Civic Association to coordinate the erection of welcome signs at the entrance of Edgewood;
- Parking: the Applicant will preclude homeowners from participating in the Residential Parking Permit Program;
- Landmark designation: the Applicant will spearhead the effort to designate the Holy Redeemer building as a landmark;
- Employment program: the Applicant will endeavor to hire District residents, including residents of Ward 5, during the construction of its project; and
- Landscaping : The Applicant is constructing a pocket park at the corner of 7th Street and Jackson Street for its residents to enjoy.

Conclusion

The Applicant asks that a public hearing be scheduled for the above-referenced case as soon as practicable and it looks forward to presenting its support for this project at that time.

Sincerely,


Christine Roddy

cc: Elisa Vitale, Office of Planning
Steve Callcott, Historic Preservation Office
Debbie Steiner, ANC 5E01
ANC 5E