



City of Sebastopol
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APPROVED MINUTES

TREE/DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2023
3:30 P.M.

The notice of the meeting was posted on December 14, 2023.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD:

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Langberg called the meeting to order at 3:30 P.M. and read a procedural statement.

2. ROLL CALL:

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| Present: | Lars Langberg, Chair Lynn Deedler, Board Member Christine Level, Board Member |
| Absent: | Melissa Hanley, Vice Chair Marshall Balfe, Alternate Board Member Cary Bush, Board Member |
| Staff: | Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director John Jay, Associate Planner |

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

June 27, 2023

Chair Langberg reported there were not enough Commissioners present who attended the June 27, 2023 meeting and continued approval of the minutes until the next DRB meeting.

4. PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Associate Planner Jay and Director Svanstrom reported that:

- The City Council adopted the Objective Design Standards at its December 5th meeting.
- The Draft EIR for The Canopy, an 80-unit townhome project at the north end of town, was released on December 7th for public viewing. The Planning Commission will meet January 9, 2024 to go over the environmental questions as part of the 45-day public review period. Public comments for the Draft EIR ends on January 22, 2024.
- The Woodmark project is moving forward with construction and pouring the last of their foundations. They anticipate starting vertical construction in January 2024.

- The City recently approved a PG&E required a lot line merger for the Hotel Sebastopol. They are working toward construction in the spring.

The Board asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Christine Level, Member of the Public

My purpose here is to share with the DRB some documents related to items we as the Board have discussed in the past, since I will be leaving the Board. The State of California's ideology is that we have a housing crisis as a result of lack of units and too much cost and that this can be fixed by high-density building in an urban environment. Australia and New Zealand started down this path 20 years ago, and now a study produced by Routledge Taylor & Francis looks at the end result of this ideology in reducing the lack of units and a reduction in price over 20 years. The report is titled, "We Zoned for Density and Got Higher House Prices: Supply and Price Effects of Up-Zoning Over 20 Years." My other topic relates to the RHNA numbers. I studied this document thoroughly, because I was interested to know the final Regional Housing Needs Allocation and methodology and where those numbers came from and what they mean, because the RHNA numbers drive the housing allocations and what we do and plan. There is no methodology based on facts and data whatsoever. Sebastopol is highly targeted for the RHNA numbers and in an area considered "highest opportunity." I have a PowerPoint document here by Amy Kalish of Mill Valley where she discusses how housing laws sabotage affordable unit production and how to calculate the damage. We got lucky with the Woodmark project, because we got to take all our lower rated RHNA numbers and put them on that project, but generally it is done by a 10-20% inclusion. Amy takes the RHNA numbers using 10% and 20% inclusion, and the number of actual housing units she came up with to meet the RHNA numbers is unbelievable, and I believe this is very much worthy of contemplation. I will hand these documents off to the Board and City staff.

6. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None.

7. REGULAR AGENDA:

- A. PRELIMINARY REVIEW: 845 GRAVENSTEIN HIGHWAY NORTH** – The applicant, St. Vincent de Paul, is seeking feedback from the Design Review Board on the proposed project at 845 Gravenstein Highway North for a one-story residential housing development. This item is a preliminary review with the Design Review Board and no decision will be made.

Associate Planner Jay and Director Svanstrom presented the staff report and were available for questions.

Chair Langberg asked for Board questions of staff.

Christine Level, Board Member

Are the trees on the south property line also heritage trees?

John Jay, Associate Planner

Yes, I believe all of them on that side are some species of oak.

Christine Level, Board Member

And then to qualify for heritage status they have to be a certain diameter, so would you guess one, two, five, a lot, not many?

John Jay, Associate Planner

At least the two in the back corner would qualify for it.

Christine Level, Board Member

But what about on the property line?

John Jay, Associate Planner

The front property line? The southeast property line, that whole corner over there where the two onsite ones are; there are additional offsite.

Christine Level, Board Member

So right now we don't have a record of how many of these would be a heritage tree?

John Jay, Associate Planner

Correct. They haven't done a full arborist report yet. This is just the preliminary stage, but it would be part of their full design review package.

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

Your staff report brought up the fact that nearly the entire lot is paved or waterproofed one way or another, so I wonder how to solve that problem?

John Jay, Associate Planner

I don't believe the entire site is fully paved. I believe it's enough for the RVs to be there temporarily; it's gravel.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Correct, it is gravel, but it's fairly compacted. There is a little bit of strip at the rear property line. I believe the design architect Lisa Gelfand has done and is being shown today would increase that back landscape area, and then the project would include a courtyard in the middle of the site that would also have landscape. The site as it is is gravel, but before that it was also gravel and it's fairly compact, but this project would be subject to the City's low-impact design in terms of drainage and stormwater. Is that your question, how to deal with stormwater on a site that is basically 100% impervious currently?

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

I was really thinking about it looks like 85% of the project is roofed over or concrete or pavement, and that is a fairly high number. I was just wondering before we ask someone to make the road more porous; I don't know if that's practical or not.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

There are some things you can do with asphalt but it is very difficult to maintain. Impervious concrete also needs to be maintained. The City has open space requirements per unit, especially for urban sites in the commercial zone like this site is; it's 50 square feet per unit for this type of housing, so the total provided for 22 units is 1,100 square feet and they're providing 4,500 square feet of usable open space, but that does not include the planting strip at the edges. There are more commercial sites, and shaded parking lots, and dealing with drainage in terms of the low-impact design so that we're not producing more. Bioswales and things that would help with stormwater drainage is what the City looks to have.

Lars Langberg, Chair

Is there a sidewalk on the site that works? Will sidewalk improvements be part of the upgraded site?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

There is currently a sidewalk across the site, but yes, most likely it would need to be replaced as part of the site improvements, and when that is done the driveway would have to be ADA compliant in terms of the lips and thresholds.

Christine Level, Board Member

How wide is the existing street-front sidewalk you're talking about?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

It's either 5 feet or 6 feet. It does meet the City standards.

Christine Level, Board Member

But it's not shown on here, so you have the 5-foot road plus 20-feet and then building. I can't remember, is there street parking?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Yes, there is.

Lars Langberg, Chair

We're looking at the street view and it looks fairly standard; you can park out front. It's probably a 5-foot wide sidewalk, and then lots of pavement. We can see from that image those are a density of trees in that corner.

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

The staff report said there is access to Hurlbut Avenue, but this site plan doesn't show anything. Where is that access?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

There is no access to Hurlbut.

John Jay, Associate Planner

Yes, that might be a mistake in the staff report, but there's no vehicle access from Hurlbut.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

There is no pedestrian access either. There is an adjacent project that fronts on Hurlbut.

Chair Langberg asked for further questions of staff. Seeing none, he asked for the applicant's presentation.

The applicant gave a presentation and was available for questions.

Chair Langford asked for Board questions of the applicant.

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

Is there any storage area on this property?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

If you look at the parking lot we did a fenced enclosure for bicycles, and there certainly is space back there for something else that was outside. Right now the buildings are entirely repetitive, and there is a storage space inside each unit, but there is no garage space.

Lars Langberg, Chair

So you're saying there is fenced-in bicycle store, there is garbage and recycling, and then there is sort of a space in between. Is that also garbage and recycling, or is that more storage?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

That's to be determined. That could be storage, yes.

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

Are they on a common meter for this location as far as utilities go, or do they all have separate meters?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

That's a good question. We are showing a solar array for the whole project, and I'm thinking that solar array could at the very least power the entire site lighting if there is any, and vehicle and bicycle chargers, and it would probably have some kind of house meter.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Lisa, I can answer that question. This is rental housing, so it would have a single utility connection, and utilities would be part of the rent.

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

We have a discrepancy between the pictorial drawings that you have and the drawings you showed up here. Across the front of the property, as far as the sidewalk goes, you have a secondary sidewalk close to the building in the pictorial.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We don't have a survey and so we were working off of Google Maps, and our feeling is that we could consolidate the planting and have the planting be a buffer between anybody walking on the sidewalk and the front of the building, so I'd like to see the planted area be as wide as possible.

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

Good. Would you have security on this property like you do now?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

There are a couple of options and that's something we'll go over with the owner, but the courtyard is nice in the sense that I did put all the unit entrances inside, so we could easily put gates where the paths enter the courtyard and secure all the units that way without having to have an appearance of solid fencing. Now, we do show solid fencing on all the interior property lines, but we don't have a solid fence behind the sidewalk.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Operationally the way this works is it is called permit supportive housing, and so of the 22 units 21 would be rented to lower-income folks and one unit would be a live-in resident manager to provide general supervision. Then on a regular basis there would also be case managers that come to this site, and that is similar to how Park Village works. They don't

have security guard just like most residential projects in town don't, but they do have a resident manager who lives there.

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

You pointed out that entry going into the units from the City sidewalk, and it appears proportionally very narrow; it looked like maybe 4 feet?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

I think it was more like 6 feet, but we can certainly adjust that. I was happy because I think that unit right there would be a really good manager unit.

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

Your site plan doesn't identify what is outside the perimeter of benches that are in the courtyard. Is that going to be grass as well as grass inside?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We would like to see that be of drought-friendly planting. In a sense the courtyard wants to be a place where the community gets together, but also in the front there's a little bit of concern about privacy. I'd like to have planting next to the windows next to the actual unit entrances that gives a little bit of a buffer, so we focused on the inside to where the community gets together, but everybody gets a little front garden.

Christine Level, Board Member

Who is your target for these units?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

This is low-income housing.

Christine Level, Board Member

The units are really small. Are you anticipating families in these units?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Oh, sorry, individuals.

Christine Level, Board Member

So most likely one person per unit?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Correct.

Christine Level, Board Member

On your colorful elevation you show this kind of trellis on the front, but it doesn't seem to go anywhere. It looks like it just goes up to the building and ends, so it seems like it would be a nice thing for people walking up the street to use, but not much use for anything else.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We intend to develop that entrance; that would go with the courtyard.

Christine Level, Board Member

It would stagger past what you're going to call the manager's unit; it would go through there?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

No, we have a circulation space; I'm just saying that as we develop that circulation space.

Christine Level, Board Member

But I'm talking about in the front, on the street. Right now it doesn't really have a location on the building anywhere, so if it doesn't go into the building then it's just sitting on the front of the building, and then it becomes a parklet.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

No, where it sits in the front of the building is where that entrance is into the courtyard. If you were not coming by car, that's where you would come as a pedestrian.

Lars Langberg, Chair

Or if you're visiting somebody and you're parked on the street and that's where you would go into the courtyard; that's marking the entrance to the courtyard.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

Yes.

Christine Level, Board Member

Can you describe what your thinking is with this clock tower thing?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

In our conversations with planners we were asked to create something that had a little more presence on the street. The way that we're going to afford this is it's a very rigorous building, so the only thing I can do is put something on it rather than try to come up with different volumes and so on, because this building is really what it is; so our thinking was that if we had kind of a marker that tells people as they're coming down the street this is where they are going that was more vertical, that that would be a good thing, a marker for the entrance. We did a clock on an elementary school and it was very popular as a sort of monument to the analogue world, and that is part of our affection for it.

Christine Level, Board Member

What exactly do you mean when you say it is a "rigorous building"?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

It's got the same trusses, 2 feet on center, all the way through; and back-to-back identical kitchens and bathrooms; the plumbing is packed together; and the modules are equal, so that the tradespeople can blow through this building, and that's how we believe we can make this budget work.

Christine Level, Board Member

What kind of budget? Do you have like a square footage idea that you're anticipating for this?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We were asked for something in the \$300,000s per unit, and the average for the Bay Area is \$750,000, so that means that we're going to work really hard to make sure that we've made something very simple for the contractor to do.

Christine Level, Board Member

What is your square footage per unit?

John Jay, Associate Planner

Four-hundred-and-thirty-two square feet.

Christine Level, Board Member

Why does it cost so much per square foot to build in California when you could build the same unit for a third of the price in other areas of the country? You come up to \$694 per square foot.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

Thank God. It should be \$1,000.

Christine Level, Board Member

That's pathetic, and you're going to be going in there with really low-end materials.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We will use Hardie siding, but we're not using Texture 111 siding. We're not using really crummy stuff; we're going to be fairly heavily insulated. We intend to have the building be solar, to be all electric, and to use that solar power to bring down the...

Christine Level, Board Member

Which you must do, right? You have to have solar.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We have to be solar-ready, but we really are trying to maximize. There are places where we're really trying to make sure that the quality of windows for the rental units is decent, so I wouldn't say that we are assuming that everything here is builder special. What we are hoping to do is by coming up with a very simple, repetitive plan for all the units, we're able to simplify the construction process.

Christine Level, Board Member

I understand what you're doing, and this isn't meant to be any criticism of you, but why is it so expensive is a question that we need to answer as a society. I see what you're trying to do here, but I understand now that you're trying to do, for example, with your construction process you're trying to minimize the labor, which is a big cost, by having it be repetitive.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

I honestly believe that is how we're going to be able to do it. Another thing we're doing is we can put additional investment into the landscape and come up with a lot of pleasure for people in terms of the environment that they are in, and in a way more than we would if we had a room like this that is used once a week for three hours.

Lars Langberg, Chair

As a commons room, you're saying?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

Yes.

Lars Langberg, Chair

Yes, but if Board Member Bush, our landscape architect, were in attendance he would tell you those plans don't come for free.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

No, they don't come for free. I'm saying we need that space; we want to make sure that we have an ability to invest in it and make sure that we can make it hardy and welcoming. Those are things that we would like to see happen, but I would be silly not to say that a major thing we've been thinking about is just how to make this thing affordable.

Christine Level, Board Member

So for this type of application, if you had two stories—let's just say hypothetically—would you have to have an elevator, or could you legally just do stairs?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We would have an elevator.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Yes, you would need to with building code, being driven by multi-family ADA requirements.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

ADA requirements. We have enough units to kick off all that stuff.

Christine Level, Board Member

So every unit has to be ADA?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

No, every unit has to be adaptable. We don't have to put grab bars and stuff in every unit, and we could put cabinets under the sink in every unit, but if there's an ADA unit you need to be able to remove those and do the other improvements that would make it a truly ADA unit. And when you look at who is targeted in single-occupancy kinds of very-low-income housing, there are a lot of folks who need extra help.

Lars Langberg, Chair

Could you explain a little more of your architectural direction. You mentioned the California bungalow as an inspiration, and then this clock tower is one thing, but could you describe a bit more how you're seeing that for the project?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

In discussions with potential residents of our low-income housing we asked them what they would want to see in terms of imagery or architectural style, and they want to live in something house-like that is recognizable as domestic. We felt this is a comfortable scale similar to houses that doesn't scream multi-family development.

Lars Langberg, Chair

We also have three options that were presented as part of the package. Those are just essentially different versions of that pergola structure?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

Yes. We have the canopies over the doors on the interior courtyard, and so we thought this would sort of be the big version of that, like welcome to our group, just like the canopy over the door on the inside of the courtyard is welcome to my unit, so there is this relationship and the idea between what calls out individual units and what calls out the group.

Chair Langberg asked for further questions of the applicant. Seeing none, he opened public comment.

Max Caruso

In the pergola picture it looked like maybe solar panels on the north side, which would be in the shade. I've seen that in other developments where they are forced to put up solar panels and they are not effective. I was listening to Marketplace on NPR and they closed by saying that there are 6% fewer households now getting government assistance than in 2004 for low-income housing, so in general I support the development.

John Jay, Associate Planner

I did receive a phone call from a member of the public close to the project inquiring about potential traffic concerns with 22 additional units from the project.

Lars Langberg, Chair

Would the applicant be required to do a traffic study as part of the project?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

No, they would not need to. There was a traffic study done in 2016 that analyzed traffic counts for 11 units plus the retail that was assessed and within the parameters. The 22 units that are being proposed, as well as the 23 van units that are on the site currently, all are well below that, so there would be no change to that. We wouldn't anticipate traffic changes beyond what is currently at the site, and the traffic study we have on file tells us that it still is well below that, but also analyzed the actual intersection, the safety of the actual drive, which is not changing. Additionally, the State has adopted vehicle-miles-traveled metrics for any CEQA analysis, and this would screen out as an affordable housing project as being exempt from that.

The Board discussed the application as follows:

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

The project looks eloquently simple and comfortable, and fits the neighborhood really well. However, the front and side that are visible from the street look dark and blank, and maybe some basic trim and color changes in there would get away from the starkness. I think the clock centerpiece is a great addition; it makes it unique and interesting, but the particular modern design could be improved from the hard straight-edged look. It is not your classic clock tower but the structure is very classic, so there is a little bit of disharmony, and I think as a centerpiece, as an art piece, it needs more work, but all in all I'm glad to see that kind of feature that creates some character there. I think a good name for the project is needed. You've got "The Commons," but there are several other locations in Sebastopol that are already called Commons. Find something upbeat, exciting, thrilling, picturesque that gives the project a nicer identify. On the north side of the structure, at least on the left side as you face it; there is a very straight building, a very straight sidewalk, and a very straight strip of land there for landscaping; you've got a 10-foot space there. Perhaps put some grace into that sidewalk instead of making it look so drawing board straight, with big and little planters, stop curves in the walkway, something like that wouldn't cost any more but would make it more personable and interesting.

Christine Level, Board Member

I'm really sympathetic about the cost issue, but I think the project has some unfortunate aspects to it and I don't know how you undo it. First, we have the ideology of having the parking tucked in the back because we don't want to see cars, but an astronomical number of vehicles go down this road, so why are we pretending we're not going to see cars? The issue here for the units up against the road is it's just going to be grinding traffic. It seems like if you could move the buildings back and move the parking forward you would at least give some relief from that traffic. The cars are going to be going by in amongst those chairs,

that's how close that is. That said, you're also going to have to have garbage pick-up. Unless they're going to bring the garbage cans up to the road you've got to have a garbage truck going down there and making the turn and backing up, and if you had something like that closer to the front, that would be easier. I'm looking ahead to try to address these trees and stuff, and what we're doing is everything is asphalt and concrete, and the roofs are asphalt composition, so when you're coming down you're creating a heat sink, and if we can at least try to preserve some of our nature, but in order to do that I think we'll need to eliminate some of the parking spaces. If we have one person per unit and street parking, I would recommend going down to the one space per unit, which is 22 spaces and 28 to try to alleviate that corner. You've got a lot of space taken up with this courtyard and maybe there is a way to reorganize it. The issue with these old European setups with the houses on the front and the courtyard inside is air flow, it becomes a dead air space, so if you're going to do this, how to get a wider space for air to pass through? I feel like there is another way to manage the site given these considerations and make it softer and less abusive from the traffic, more area to plant, preserve the trees, and make it a nicer environment for the tenants. Then we're talking about disabled people living there, so what's with all the bicycles? Maybe we could use some of that space there better. I'm just trying to figure out how to give this whole project some more green space. I would eliminate the clock tower completely, that's a waste of money, but maybe have some trellising that orients the passageway into the center, and wind it up so you get some air flow. I totally appreciate what you are doing here and understand the cost issue; it's terrible. If I am still here when you come back, I will insist on preserving these trees.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

Oh, absolutely. The trees have been brought to our attention, and those parking spaces will be gone. Again, the parking, 22 spaces would be fine with me.

Lars Langberg, Chair

The organizational courtyard idea makes a lot of sense when you have a limited budget and a lot of small units; I think that is a very strong move. I think the fact that it's only one story probably won't have that kind of trapped airflow feeling because it's not that tall. The big struggle here is that it's actually an urban streetscape kind of site, and how do you put the California bungalow onto that? I know these are the early design stages, but it looks more barracks-like than bungalow just because they're put together, and I agree with Board Member Deedler that more detail that would be really helpful, any kind of porch-like thing, trim, different colors that would give it more character. Going from one gable orientation to the next around the courtyard doesn't feel very cohesive, it feels kind of stuck together, so it feels like either these should separate into little bungalows or really be much more connected as a whole roofline in; those kind of transitions feel awkward to me. I like the clock tower form because it gives some presence to the entry, but something other than a clock could go there. I appreciate that you're trying to give some character or direction as to where the entry is to the building frontage, but between the forms and various shrubs and trees it feels like the building is receding. I think it should be a very strong street frontage with street trees, but still have enough of a front yard or landscaping. This should be a two- to three-story building right there and create an urban setting. This site really demands a little higher density, but if the math doesn't work the math doesn't work. There is a lot of good to it, but it feels like it needs a lot stronger character in its architectural expression to hold this site and to hold this part of town as you enter from the north.

Christine Level, Board Member

I believe I read that the maximum density is 24 units on this project, and you've got 22.

Lars Langberg, Chair

If you went higher with 24 units you'd have more open space.

Christine Level, Board Member

I would love that, but that would kill their budget.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We can't do it because of the cost.

Lars Langberg, Chair

Is the cost in the elevator? You're only doing half the foundation if you're going up with two units.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

I'm assuming shallow foundation, no big deal, but we're looking at a really different structure that can do earthquakes and everything else in two stories. The one-story, it's very easy. But the ADA thing and being able to put in a real ADA elevator and the stairwells and the whole business, it's a lot, and then we just start getting into the typical cost per unit, which is a good 25% higher than what we're being asked to do. Like I said, I'm happy to continue studying the actual street frontage. So there is definitely some more development that we're going to do.

Lars Langberg, Chair

I do appreciate your building sections and wall section and what you're trying to achieve with your budget. To have ROCKWOOL insulation and stuff like that is great. Do you know a product called TruExterior? It's known as Boral, so it's a greener version of a Hardie siding. It has fly ash in the makeup.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

To me, indoor air is incredibly important, so we'll try to get a cabinet in there that doesn't have particleboard. There will be materials that may not show, but that are where we really want to make sure that they're the right thing. Again, the north is sort of diagonal, which is why the solar panels are where they are. We think they're where they need to be; they're southwest/southeast. I could certainly see—especially if we lose some of these parking spaces—if we staggered the buildings around the courtyard a little bit more we might be able to get it to feel a little more creative, but I think we'll stick with that approach that to get this place to feel cohesive to the residents in terms of their community.

Lars Langberg, Chair

You mentioned some of the tenants may have accessibility concerns, but it also could be younger people and bicycles. Maybe you don't need that much bike storage, but we have bike paths right out there.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

The building code as gone nuts on bicycle storage.

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

I want to add a little more weight to the fact that you've got that corner back there with a lot of large overhanging trees, and I would make that a private sitting area. The other two sitting areas at the center of your courtyard and in front of that building are not private at all, but they're probably not going to be used that much because of that; they're kind of out in front of everybody, and it's nice to have kind of an outside pretty place where you can read a book, eat your lunch, or just talk to someone.

Christine Level, Board Member

They're going to eliminate some parking over here; create a little park area in that corner to save the tree?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

Yes.

Lars Langberg, Chair

I think the point where the garbage is picked up is a big one. Board Member Level suggested not having the garbage trucks come all the way to the back of the site but to create a little structure that sits in the corner up front. Staff asked us to also talk about HVAC equipment location. Lisa, I don't know if you've looked at that yet.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We haven't looked at it, but I think we could do it with very simple, through-the-wall kinds of units, or there is an attic that comes with this kind of gable.

Christine Level, Board Member

You're going to have a heat pump unit, so where is the heat pump unit going to be?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

The outside piece, there are a number of places. They make noise, so I think they're going to go somewhere in the parking lot on the back between the buildings.

Christine Level, Board Member

This is like car torture for me. You've got the trucks going up here, the cars coming back here; vehicles surround you.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

What's nice about this unit is that it does have windows front and back, so we can take the ones that are on the street and have a non-operable window on the front and make it really acoustic.

Christine Level, Board Member

It is an issue, and to have no escape from that, because it goes all the time, and everybody who lives on that street tells me the gravel trucks start at 5:00AM.

Lars Langberg, Chair

You're living on a highway, so you can't avoid that noise, but a well-designed interior courtyard space could be a refuge from that if it's a nice, well planted space. I think slipping of these units would start to take it out of what I called the barracks, or even a little more separation could create a sense of character and variety, so you're taking the courtyard form and giving it some other life that could be unique for the site.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

I resisted linking the buildings because it would be more issues, but unlinking them in a way and sliding them past each other, I think we could get something a bit more lively.

Christine Level, Board Member

I think you do need to think about those heat pump units, because you don't have anywhere really to put a heat pump unit in Buildings C and D, and I imagine you're going to have multiple of those heat pumps.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

I actually think we might look at the attic space above the units and make a little well to the outside.

Christine Level, Board Member

My other question is regarding the tankless water heater. My understanding is you can only do that now if it's all-electric?

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

It will be all-electric.

Christine Level, Board Member

Everyone is going with the heat pump water heaters now.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

The units do have ventilation front to back, so what we want to do with ones that face the street for sure is make sure those windows can be just closed, not left closed. We used to do a ton with natural ventilation, but I now try to make sure that my system can operate on wildfire days and have a filter, because we will have bad air days, so depending to much on only natural ventilation could be a problem, so I need to have some air handler.

Christine Level, Board Member

With these common walls here, typically in a condo kind of a thing you have to run the fire separation all the way up to the roof.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We're so small that for sure we don't have to fire separate. We do have to have acoustic separation, but we don't have a ton of firewalls.

Lynn Deedler, Board Member

It seems like you really need an out building for storage. There will be common tools, things that get lost, signage that gets put away. A complex this big has to have a storeroom. The last little thing is I believe they make clocks that are self-setting and keep time.

Christine Level, Board Member

If you're going to go with that tower, just do some unique thing up there.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

I was going to talk to Jack the owner about whether there is a public art program we could do. I absolutely see this as a public art opportunity.

Lars Langberg, Chair

I'm on the Public Art Committee.

Lisa Gelfand, Architect/Applicant

We would like to have it be a sense of pride, but we also try to ensure that what we think is interesting and lively are also how residents will feel, if they feel like they just want to come home and don't want to be a big point of attention.

Lars Langberg, Chair

That's a good point, there is a public/private question, and you're on a highway so it is a very public home. I think there is an obligation to the residents to be private and

comfortable, but then there is also an obligation from the architect to the City to make something that really has some power to it. It's a great challenge.

Christine Level, Board Member

I totally agree with you, Lisa. I think there is the consideration for the residents and having some privacy.

8. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES: None.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Langberg adjourned the meeting at 5:03 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Tree/Design Review Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at 3:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

X 

John Jay
Associate Planner