

**Design Commission Meeting
Gresham City Hall, Oregon Trial Room
November 6, 2019, 6:30 p.m.**

I. Opening/Citizen Comment

A regular session of the Gresham Design Commission was called to order on the 6 of November, 2019 at 6:30 pm in the Oregon Trial Room of Gresham City Hall, located at 1333 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham Oregon. The meeting was recorded and scribed by Jamie Thomes.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Camilla Cok
Rob Cook
Mike McKeel
Tom Orth
Matthew Sugarbaker

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Robert Hayden
Pat Lando

COUNCILOR PRESENT: David Widmark

STAFF: John Heili, Urban Design & Planning
Jamie Thomes, Urban Design & Planning
Josh Williams, Urban Design & Planning

Chair Cook introduced staff and members of the Commission that were present as well as described how public comments could be provided.

II. Yellowtail Townhomes Early Assistance Design Advice: 718, 724, 728, 732, and 736 NE 9th St.

Presentations

Staff and the applicant provided presentations to the Commission concerning the proposed five single-family attached dwellings with associated site improvements.

Questions for staff included:

- The Commission asked for clarification as to the location and dimensions of the shared access drive, which will be 26 feet when constructed.
- The Commission discussed the location of an existing fire hydrant. The location is not problematic as it is within an existing 5-foot setback.
- The Commission encouraged the applicant to meet the Code in terms of utilizing a landscape architect for the landscape design.

Applicant representatives included:

- Jim Raze, Raze Custom Homes
- Bo Robinson, Design Providence, LLC

Design Commission and Applicant Discussion

Discussion Topic 1: Façade Composition and Transparency

The design standards require 25 percent window coverage/transparency at ground floor living units on street facing facades and 20 percent window coverage/transparency total for street facing facades. The proposal includes 17 percent coverage on the NE 9th Street facing façade on the ground level and 15 percent overall window coverage/transparency.

Commission comments included:

- While additional glazing could be utilized, it would likely compromise the appearance of the façade and would appear forced. Minor reductions in Code prescribed transparency coverage in order to achieve a successful façade composition is an acceptable approach.
- The applicant could utilize an element in place of the transparency to break up and add character and interest to the façade as well as to better connect the façade to the street.
- The applicant could consider increasing the number and/or size of the window at the bottom of the stair.
- The Commission and applicant discussed the use and consistency of window mullions, which the applicant felt were appropriate for the front of the homes but not for the remainder of the windows.
 - The Commission encouraged the applicant to consider consistency of window mullions across all facades.

Discussion Topic 2: Building Façade Offsets

The design standard requires an offset every two dwelling units from the next dwelling unit by at least 4 feet in exterior wall offset for buildings two stories or taller and over 50 feet in length. The proposal includes offsets at the ground floor of 2 feet, 5 inches and offsets at the upper floor of 2 feet. There are no offsets along the rear façade.

Commission comments included:

- The Commission felt the front east-facing façade offsets and massing are well designed and meet the intent of the Code requirement.
- The Commission recognized there may be area at the back of the site, approximately 1-foot, 4 inches, that could accommodate some offset in the rear façade and additional offset in the front façade and encouraged the applicant to consider this opportunity.

- The Commission stressed the offset at the front facade is the more important of the two facades.

Discussion Topic 3: Street Facing Entrance

The design standard states that for developments with multiple ground related units, such as townhouses, every unit facing the street shall have an entrance on the street. For the end unit facing NE 9th Street, a projecting entry porch on the private drive facing façade, which is similar to other porches along that façade, is proposed as well as a projecting bay element along the NE 9th Street facing façade.

Commission comments included:

- The Commission agreed this particular condition did not warrant placing the entry on the street facing façade but felt the composition of that façade was lacking the character and interest that would be achieved under the intent of the Code. The following were suggested methods the applicant could consider in better addressing the street facing entrance requirement:
 - Shift the internal storage closet in order to accommodate an element that could be provided at the entrance.
 - Consider a corner transition in lieu of facing the entry to NE 9th Street, such as:
 - Utilize another bay like the west end bay, but smaller, near the east end of this facade.
 - Extend the porch roof around the corner.
- The Commission also noted that landscape design along the façade will be an important element in addressing this Code item.
- The Commission stressed the importance of a well-designed façade composition.

Discussion Item 4: Primary Materials

The design standard requires that buildings shall utilize primary materials for no less than 65 percent of each building façade area. Primary materials are brick, stone, stucco, glass and glass block, metal panels, and wood. Fiber reinforced cement siding and panels are classified as a secondary material which is limited to 35 percent of each façade.

The proposal includes upper floor exterior finishes that are rough-sawn plywood panels with wood battens. The lower level and rear siding material have not been determined at this time. If cementitious siding is utilized, then the rear elevation and possibly the side elevations likely would not comply with the Code standard for 65 percent of exterior finishes to be a primary material calculated for each façade.

Commission comments included:

- Durability of finish materials is an important factor.
- The Commission and applicant discussed material composition, including:

- Vertical cedar siding should be limited to emphasizing the unit entries and might also be used to accent the bay extension on the north façade. Otherwise, maintaining the board and batten material at the garages and other areas of the east façade as proposed is recommended.
- All corners should be wrapped with the same material. Not extending the materials around the entirety of the building, and especially at the corners, will be noticeable and not visually authentic.
- Consider replacing the asphalt shingles on the porch roofs with the metal roofing proposed over the garage entries.
- Simplifying the material approach and maintaining a consistent architectural language across all facades is more important than not quite meeting the Code prescribed primary materials coverage. The offsets in the building façade may inform these logical material and pattern transitions.
- The applicant confirmed that the window trim would be painted black vinyl.

Additional Discussion Items

The applicant asked about the required 24 square-foot storage unit. The Commission noted that the storage unit could be detached rather than attached. Further, any storage unit will need to be thoughtfully integrated into the overall appearance of the home. The applicant noted that an attached storage unit would encroach into the setback. The Commission encouraged the applicant to continue to work with staff to resolve the location of a storage area for outdoor items as prescribed by the standards.

The applicant also asked about garbage receptacles and the difficulty in integrating the receptacles into the site for storage. The Commission and applicant discussed locating the receptacles in the garage, which may not allow for adequate space for vehicle parking. However, staff noted there is not a Code requirement for cars to park within the garage, and that cars could park in the driveway rather than the garage. The applicant noted the need to discuss the proposal with the Homeowners' Association to ensure that allowing cars to park in the driveway rather than the garage would not be prohibited. The Commission encouraged the applicant to continue to work with staff to resolve the location of waste receptacles either within the garage or onsite where screened from view.

The Commission asked the applicant about the anticipated plan for venting the building. Tentatively, venting will be located at the roof where feasible but may also need to be located on the rear and south wall if necessary. The Commission encouraged the applicant to show all venting when a design review file is submitted. The applicant noted that high efficiency gas would be desired for the units. Another Commissioner noted that moving the buildings to allow for the offsets would also provide spaces to allow for venting.

III. Other Commission Business

Staff Check-in

Staff reviewed the Design Commission schedule for the remainder of the year, including a hearing and Code discussion scheduled for November 20. Staff noted there were multiple items tentatively scheduled for both December meetings.

As a follow-up to a previous discussion with the Commission, staff noted a recent meeting with PGE to discuss overall placement of transformers onsite. Staff noted that PGE had provided direction on spacing requirements, how access to the transformers will need to be derived, and what can be done to screen the transformers. Staff will begin to work with applicants early in the application process to encourage applicants to consider where such utility units will be located and perhaps to reach out to utility companies to better determine where such units would be required. Staff noted that the Design Commission may want to begin to question applicants about transformers no matter the stage of the project being reviewed.

October 16, 2019 Design Commission Minutes

Commissioner McKeel moved to approve the October 16, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Orth seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Chair

Recording Secretary

Date

Date

For more information, please visit: www.GreshamOregon.gov/DesignCommission.