City of Sebastopol
Design Review/Tree Board Staff Report

Meeting Date:	December 17, 2019
Agenda Item:	8A
To:	Design Review Board/Tree Board
From:	Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director Alan Montes, Associate Planner
Subject:	Preliminary review of Woodmark Apartments
Recommendation:	Provide feedback to staff and applicant
Applicant/Owner:	Pacific West Communities, FNC / Ken Koss, Lauren Alexander, Caleb Roope
File Number:	2019-101
Address:	7716 and 7760 Bodega Ave.
CEQA Status:	To be evaluated upon formal submittal
General Plan:	High Density Residential (HDR)
Zoning:	Multifamily Residential (R7)

Introduction:

The project applicant is seeking Preliminary Review and feedback from the Design Review Board/Tree Board (DRB) regarding the proposed project, an 84-unit affordable housing development located at 7716 and 7760 Bodega Avenue. Currently the sites are developed with two single family residences and apple orchards (noncommercial).

Preliminary Review is meant to provide an informal critique and evaluation of a project's design approach. It gives the DRB an opportunity to work with the applicant to achieve a quality project. The DRB will identify relevant issues and significant concerns and provide comments on the appropriateness of the preliminary design and its compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and the Design Review Guidelines.

This staff report provides a project description, staff analysis of the project regarding applicable regulations, public and city departmental comments, and specific areas where staff and the applicant are seeking feedback from the DRB.

Project Description:

The project proposes to merge 7716 and 7760 Bodega Avenue to construct and 84-unit affordable housing project. The units are proposed be constructed in seven (7), 3-story, multi-

family residential structures. In addition to the residential structures a 1-story 3,004 sq. ft. community meeting room is proposed, along with private and public outdoor space for the residents. As proposed the project will require significant site modifications including the demolition of existing structures, grading, the construction of retaining walls ranging from 1'-16', and the removal of most of the existing trees. As the project is in a preliminary stage, site design and the proposed number of units may change, though the use is not anticipated to significantly change.

Site Context:

The project is situated in a unique area in that the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance have designated most of the properties on Bodega Ave. for high density residential. However, the block is still transitioning and is currently made up of an eclectic mixture of development. To the east is a high density (13.1 du/ac) Planned Community consisting of 2- to 3-story multifamily structures and are developed with significant front yard setbacks to minimize the massing. To the south properties are zoned Multifamily Residential (R7) and General Commercial (CG) and the development pattern is a mixture of 1- and 2-story multifamily developments, duplexes, commercial and single-family structures. To the west the properties are zoned Single Family and Multifamily Residential (R6) and Single Family Residential (R4) and are primarily composed of 1- and 2-story single family structures. To the north the properties are exclusively zoned Single Family Residential (R4) and are entirely made up of 1- and 2- story single family residences.

Environmental Review:

Upon submittal of a formal application, the project will be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). After the application is complete, the City will prepare an Initial Study to determine whether the project will have significant impacts on the environment. The Initial Study will determine the type of environmental review required (Mitigated Negative Declaration, Environmental Impact Report). Where potential significant impacts are identified, project mitigation will be required to address, or 'mitigate' these impacts. Detailed mitigation measures will be identified based on the project specific proposal as part of this review.

General Plan Consistency:

Both parcels are designated as High Density Residential land uses. The intent of the High Density Residential (HDR) land use designation is as follows:

> ***High Density Residential:*** *Designates areas suitable for multifamily dwellings at a density of 12.1 to 25 units per acre. This designation is suitable for duplexes, apartments, townhouses, and other attached dwelling units.*

For a parcel this size (3.59 acres), this equates to between 43-89 units. The project as proposed is consistent with the HDR designation in that the project is proposing to build multifamily housing and the combined parcels will be developed at a density of 23.4 units per acre.

The Housing Element of the General Plan identifies sites with the potential for residential development as part of a 'Site Inventory.' The parcel at 7716 Bodega Ave is included in this inventory and recognizes it as an appropriate site for multi-family development.

Zoning Ordinance Consistency:

17.20.020 – Allowed Uses

Both properties are zoned Multifamily Residential (R7) which allows multifamily dwellings uses by right.

17.20.030 – Development Standards

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD	R7 Standards	Project Proposal
Minimum Lot Area	8,000	156,270 sq. ft. (3.59 acres)
Minimum Lot Width	80'	482'
Maximum Building Height	30'/2 stories or 40'/3 stories for affordable housing projects.	Approximately 35', 3 Stories
Building Setbacks		
Front	10'	17'
Side – Interior	9'[1]	10'
Rear – Main Bldg.	30'[2]	10'
Lot Coverage	40%[3]	25%
Minimum Res. Density	1 du/3,600 sf (43 Units)	1 du/1,860 sf (84 Units)
Maximum Res. Density	1 du/1,743 sf (88 Units)	
General Plan Density	12.1 – 25 du/ac	23.4 du/ac
Minimum Usable Open Space	50 sf/du (4,200 sf)	673 sf/du (56,546 sf of open space) (4,200 sf of private and 52,346 sf of common open space)
Parking Requirements – Auto	151 Parking Spaces[4]	151 Parking Spaces
Parking Requirements – Bicycle	38 Bicycle Parking Spaces[5]	48 Bicycle Parking Spaces

[1] 10% of lot width, or 5 ft., whichever is greater, not to exceed 9 ft

[2] 20% of lot depth, not less than 20', nor greater than 30'

[3] Planning Commission may approve up to 50% where certain conditions apply

[4] Two- and three-bedroom units are required to provide 2 parking spaces per unit. However, deed restricted affordable housing projects are subject to providing 90% of the applicable parking requirement

[5] Deed restricted affordable housing projects are required to provide 25% of the required vehicles spaces as bicycle parking

17.100.050 – Recycling and Waste Collection Areas

The project as proposed will provide two (2) 15.5'x13' trash enclosures to screen the dumpsters. The adequacy of the trash enclosures has not been reviewed by Recology at this time but will be reviewed as part of a formal submittal.

17.110.010 - General requirements of parking spaces

This section prohibits residential parking in the front setback (10') except in a conforming driveway. The project currently proposes parking within the required front yard setback, approximately eight feet (8') away from the front property line.

17.110.020 - Off-street parking required
The project is inconsistent with the minimum dimensions for parking spaces. The parking space dimensions on the site plan ranges from 8'x14' with a 26' backup requirement to 9'x17' with a 26' backup distance. Whereas the Code requires 8.5'x19' with a 27' backup requirement to 10'x19' with a 23' backup distance. Staff is concerned that the substandard parking spaces combined with the reduced backup distance may be unsafe, inconvenient and lead to an inefficient operation.

17.255 – Affordable Housing Density Bonus
The project is proposing to provide 100% affordability targeting families with incomes ranging between 30% to 60% of the Area Medium Income, defined as Very Low-Income and Low-Income households. By providing deed-restricted affordable housing at this level, the project is eligible to take advantage of the City and State's Density Bonus Law. As proposed the project is entitled to a 35% density bonus, modified parking ratios, and three (3) concessions/incentives, which can be used to reduce site development standards including but not limited to setbacks, open space requirements, or lot coverage, as long as the applicant can show the concessions are needed to make the project financially feasible.

The project at this time has not requested to utilize the density bonus, modified parking ratios, or their incentives/concessions.

17.450 – Design Review
Design review is required for any new development that includes three (3) or more dwelling units. The Design Review procedures allows the City, through the DRB, to review and assess the design to ensure the proposal would be compatible with the neighborhood and with the general visual character of Sebastopol; that the design provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right-of-way; that it will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood; that the design is internally consistent and harmonious; and that the design is in conformity with the City's adopted Design Guidelines. Staff's initial review of the project in relation to the Design Guidelines is included in the analysis section below.

Required Findings
Upon formal submittal, the project will be required to apply for and obtain several planning entitlements including a Lot Merger, Design Review, Tree Removal, and Environmental Review. Findings specific to each planning entitlement will be analyzed upon formal submittal and the analysis will be presented to the appropriate hearing bodies.

Public Comment:
On November 21, 2019, the applicant held a community presentation to inform the public of the proposed project and to gather early public feedback. The majority of those who attended the presentation had significant concerns regarding the project and a handful supported the project the primary items brought up at the presentation were as follows:

Concerns:

- Traffic
  - How will the project affect the access to/from 7720 Bodega Ave. and the project site?
  - How will the project affect the traffic conditions?
  - How does the increase of traffic affect side streets?
- Noise/Privacy
  - The play area should be located away from the perimeter to minimize noise and privacy impacts on the neighboring properties.
  - Privacy trees should be provided/retained along the perimeter to protected sight lines and to help baffle noise.
- Site Planning/Conservation/Trees
  - The project is proposing retaining walls up to 16' tall and that there are concerns that the retaining walls may impact the neighboring trees and their root systems.
  - The protected trees should be preserved, and the site planning should be respecting the existing trees.
  - Loss of habitat from the removal of the trees.
  - How will the project accommodate the drainage?
- Phasing
  - How long can the 2nd phase wait before beginning?
- Sewer/Water
  - Is there adequate sewer/water capacity?
- Density
  - The site is zoned for too much density.

Support:

- Housing
  - More housing is a good thing, especially the addition of affordable housing.
  - By providing deed restricted affordable housing it could allow people who have multiple families in existing housing stock to move and alleviate the density/congestion in other areas.

Copies of all written public comments received throughout the public noticing process (including the community presentation) are included as an attachment to this report.

City Departmental Comment:

The Planning Department circulated the application to the following City departments for review: Building and Safety, City Arborist, Engineering, and Fire. The following comments were received:

City Arborist

The City arborist prepared a report (see attached) on November 16, 2019. She determined that the proposal would need to remove most of the trees in the center of the site construction and that many of the property line trees, including offsite trees, which currently provide

screening/privacy, will be significantly impacted by the grading, construction, and wall footings. Additionally, given the detail of the plans at this time the extent of construction impacts on the trees are unclear.

Engineering

Given the complexities of this site and its access onto Bodega Avenue, staff requested the traffic consultant for the project, W-Trans, provide a preliminary review of the plans in addition to the City Engineer. The preliminary assessment from the consultant and Engineer identified the following issues that will need to be addressed as the project moves forward in regards to site access and traffic:

Operational Analysis for Traffic Study

The project will require a traffic study to evaluate the turns into and out of the development on Bodega Avenue; the queuing lengths of driveways; and, traffic impacts on Bodega Avenue (more detail is included below). Mitigations to address these impacts will also need to be developed.

Specifically, the Traffic study will need to evaluate impacts along the Bodega Avenue corridor and nearby side streets, as well as two downtown intersections, at the following intersections: will need to evaluate impacts along the Bodega Avenue corridor and nearby side streets, as well as two downtown intersections, at the following intersections:

- Bodega Avenue/Ragle Road
- Bodega Avenue/Pleasant Hill Road
- Bodega Avenue/Robinson Road
- Bodega Avenue/Dutton Avenue-Jewell Avenue
- Bodega Avenue/South Main Street
- Sebastopol Avenue/Petaluma Avenue

Lastly, traffic signal warrants should be completed for the Bodega Avenue/Robinson Road intersection should be calculated.

Vehicular Access

The southeast driveway (currently serving the townhome development) is not designed to handle the proposed development, and the connection needs to be redesigned to be perpendicular to Bodega Ave, with the other two (2) driveways perpendicular to that. Additionally, the southeast driveway will need to have a grade of less than 5%.

In addition to redesigning the site access points per the City Engineer's comments, the Traffic Study will need to evaluate two access alternatives with full operational analysis, including delay and queuing projections, at both access points to the project. The two scenarios should include:

a) Full Access (ability to turn left and right) at both project access points.
b) Full Access at the eastern project access and Right-turn in/Right-turn out only at the western project access.

For Scenario a), the concern is the potential negative impacts of a full access intersection at the midblock location (western side of the site), including eastbound left-turn queuing extending into the Nelson Way intersection, blocking eastbound through traffic, and need for widening to accommodate the added turning movements. The safety of southbound left-turn movements from the project to eastbound Bodega Avenue also needs to be considered.

For Scenario a) and b) at the eastern entry/exit access point (shared driveway), the primary concern is the need for redesign of the intersection of the project's access with the adjacent townhome development's access. Concerns include both safety and queuing for this shared access point, particularly given the close proximity to the Robinson Road/Bodega Ave intersection. Northbound queuing entering this combined access should be evaluated, as well as queuing for exiting to ensure it works for both residential developments.

Bicycle Facilities

Bicycle lanes have already been designed for Bodega Avenue from Dutton Avenue to Ragle Road. The traffic study should demonstrate that any changes to the project frontage including those created to accommodate the project access points, will allow for minimum 5-foot bike lanes in the corridor.

Pedestrian Facilities

The need for additional pedestrian crossing improvements and impacts of additional pedestrian crossings should be evaluated at the intersections of Bodega Avenue/Nelson Way and Bodega Avenue/Robinson Road. Additionally, this section of sidewalk is not ADA compliant, and will need to be brought up to compliance as part of the project development.

Staff Analysis:

Tree Removal and Preservation

The applicant has submitted a Tree Preservation and Mitigation Report, prepared by Horticultural Associates on October 8, 2019. The project as currently proposed will require the removal of most of the trees on the site. The Tree Preservation and Mitigation Report evaluated all trees 10 inches or greater in diameter, except for Apples and Acacias. The Tree Preservation and Mitigation Report will need to be revised to include all native protected trees with a diameter of 10 inches or greater and all trees 20 inches or greater, which are not exempt (escaped exotics).

The Tree Preservation and Mitigation Report evaluated 76 trees, some of which are either shared trees or are on neighboring property and would require the consent of the owners for removal in addition to approval of Tree Removal Permits. From comments staff has received so far, there are at least some neighbors who have significant concerns about the trees on their property and do not want these removed.

Of the evaluated trees eleven (11) were identified to be potentially preserved. The Tree Preservation and Mitigation Report calls for preserving four (4) Silver Dollar Eucalyptus trees (escaped exotics), one (1) Willow, four (4) Coast Live Oaks, one (1) Valley Oak, and one (1) Douglas Fir. It is also important to note that the Tree Preservation and Mitigation Report did not account for impacts associated with grading, drainage, or utility installation, as the plans are still preliminary.

The Tree Preservation and Mitigation Report identifies 65 trees that will be removed as part of the project due to either poor existing conditions (16 trees) or would be removed due to the proposed development impacts (49 trees). Trees proposed for removal include Black Oaks (Quercus kelloggi), Coast Live Oaks (Quercus agrifolia), Douglas Firs (Pseudotsuga menziesii), Valley Oaks (Quercus Iobate), Almond (Prunus dulcis), Pine (Pine sp.), Oregon White Oaks (Quercus garryana), Monterey Pines (Pinus radiata), Juniper (Juniper sp.), and Glossy Privet (Privet Ligustrum). Specific trees proposed for removal are identified by number on the Tree Location Plan included in the Tree Preservation and Mitigation Report (attached). A summary of the trees is included in the table below.

			# of Trees Proposed for Removal		
Tree Species	**Tree Identification No.**	**Preserved Trees (Tree ID No.)**	**Protected**	**Non-Protected**	**Total**
Black Oak	7, 8, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25, 31, 33, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57	0	13	1	14
Coast Live Oak	3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 49, 50, 55, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 70, 71, 73, 75, 76	4 (49,59,63,65)	28	6	34
Valley Oak	58	1 (58)	0	0	0
Oregon (White) Oak	27, 69	0	1	1	2
Douglas Fir	51, 62, 72	1 (62)	2	0	2
Almond	1	0	Not Identified	Not Identified	1
Willow	67	1 (67)	0	0	0
Silver Dollar Eucalyptus	44, 45, 46, 47	4 (44,45,46,47)	0	0	0
Pine	2	0	0	1	1
Glossy Privet	74	0	0	1	1
Monterey Pine	35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43	0	9	0	9
Juniper	48	0	0	1	1
Total		**11**	**56**	**9**	**65**

As proposed, the proposed grading of the site includes significant excavation, particularly near the site boundaries. Any modifications will need to be carefully assess impacts from grading and other site work as the project evolves.

Staff recommends the DRB/Tree Board review the proposed tree removal due to both the extensive removal of trees on-site, and the potential impacts, as assessed by both the applicant's arborist and the City arborist, to adjoining properties that would likely kill trees on the neighboring properties.

Design Review Guidelines Analysis:

Upon preliminary review staff has identified several areas where the preliminary project design conflicts with the Design Review Guidelines. The primary areas of concern that staff has identified are bulleted below; more detailed analysis of the applicable guidelines, including these areas, follows.

Primary Conflicts

Grading:

The site includes extensive grading, including cut retaining walls up to 16 feet tall, which will impact both the topography and natural site elements including both onsite and off-site trees, as noted above.

- *Grading should be minimized to the extent feasible to reflect existing topography and protect significant site features, including trees.*
- *When designing a grading plan, balancing the cut and fill is encouraged when it does not result in further adverse effects to the natural topography.*

Parking:

- *Parking lots should be located primarily at the rear or side of the site to ensure that the view of parking, garages, carports, and driveways from the public right-of-way is minimized. Parking areas may be considered in the front of the site when site, access, use or other constraints merit such placement, provided appropriate landscaping and setbacks are incorporated into the parking design.*

Building Orientation:

- *Buildings should generally be oriented parallel to the streets they face.*
- *Buildings should relate to the street and should be located on the site so that they reinforce existing street frontages and setback patterns.*
- *The first floor should relate to the street by providing pedestrian-scale elements, design features, and amenities.*

Architecture/Massing:

- *Large structures should be designed to reduce their perceived height and bulk by dividing the building mass into smaller-scale components.*
- *Buildings over two stories high should "scale down" their street-facing facades to reduce apparent height.*
- *Box-like forms with extensive unarticulated facades or large, unvaried roofs should be avoided.*
- *A variety of levels and planes should be encouraged to reduce the massing of larger buildings.*

Analysis of Applicable Guidelines (Guidelines are in italics)

I. Site Planning

A. Neighborhood Context:

1. *Infill development should be sensitively designed to respect existing patterns and reinforce the character and context of existing neighborhoods consistent with applicable development regulations.*
2. *Significant natural site features such as natural ground forms, significant trees, large rock outcroppings, water and significant view corridors should be identified and addressed.*
3. *In areas where there are changes in land use or density, new development should be designed to provide a transition between current and planned future uses through the use of setbacks, site plan, building massing and height, landscaping, driveways locations, etc.*

Staff Analysis: The preliminary project has provided minimal transitioning elements from the current and future developments in the area, in that the 3-story buildings will be in close proximately to 1- and 2-story single family residences. The preliminary project does not recognize existing natural ground forms or significant trees on the site. The preliminary project does propose a significant front yard setback (~70') to reduce the building mass, but in exchange the frontage is used for parking.

B. Building Orientation:

1. *Buildings should generally be oriented parallel to the streets they face.*
2. *Buildings should relate to the street and should be located on the site so that they reinforce existing street frontages and setback patterns.*
3. *The first floor should relate to the street by providing pedestrian-scale elements, design features, and amenities.*
4. *Buildings and landscaping should be located to maximize solar access during cooler months and to control it during warmer months. Natural ventilation, sunlight and views should be maximized for each building and residential unit.*

Staff Analysis: The preliminary project proposes the primary structures fronting Bodega Ave. to be set back approximately 70' from the front property line and to have a section of the parking lot along the street. The Guidelines listed above encourage buildings to generally be oriented parallel to the streets they face to reinforce existing street frontages and setback patterns. This section of Bodega Ave. is somewhat unique in that multi-family development to the east has a 60' setback for the structures and has an access driveway parallel to the street. The developments south of the project do not have a consistent setback or development pattern. Several of the structures to the south provide minimal setbacks with the buildings being located almost on the sidewalk, while other developments have parking lots fronting the street without landscaping.

It is unclear at this time how the orientation of the buildings will impact solar access for solar power as required by the City's ordinance. While some of the buildings include north/south orientation, others are east/west, with lower units set down by pads created by the cut retaining walls. These lower units especially could be impacted with few opportunities for natural light into the units.

The DRB should review the design of the parking along the street frontage, including the placement of the primary structures and parking, and provide direction on whether this configuration is appropriate or if should be modified to better address the street frontage.

C. Circulation and Parking

1. *An access plan should be designed for the site that logically and safely accommodates pedestrians and vehicles, as well as providing visual access to the site from the street. Circulation routes should focus upon main entries and exits and also identify secondary access points.*
2. *Parking lots should be located primarily at the rear or side of the site to ensure that the view of parking, garages, carports, and driveways from the public right-of-way is minimized. Parking areas may be considered in the front of the site when site, access, use or other constraints merit such placement, provided appropriate landscaping and setbacks are incorporated into the parking design.*
3. *In larger projects, the benefits of providing multiple small parking areas in lieu of one large lot should be assessed.*
4. *In residential developments, pedestrian access which is separate from driveways should be provided directly from the sidewalk to the front door.*
5. *Any bicycle parking should be located close to the building in readily visible areas.*

Staff Analysis: Tying into the Building Orientation section above, Guideline (C)(2) encourages parking lots be located primarily at the rear or side of the site to ensure that the view of parking, garages, carports, and driveways from the public right-of-way is minimized. Guideline (C)(2) does recognize that in certain situations parking can be considered in the front of the site when site, access, use or other constraints merit such placement, provided appropriate landscaping and setbacks are incorporated into the parking design. The site in its current/natural form does have unique circumstances, such as trees and slope, which may justify locating parking in the frontage. If more of the site's natural state is maintained, this may present challenges to redesigning the parking. However, as the applicant is currently proposing to significantly grade and strip the site of vegetation staff does not find justification for locating the parking in the frontage, as the propose site would be mostly flat with very little remaining vegetation.

The preliminary project provides two (2) entries and exits that are easily identifiable for both pedestrians and vehicles. The project also provides six (6) bicycle parking locations throughout the complex, which would be easily accessible for each residential structure. The Guidelines encourage larger projects to investigate providing multiple small parking areas as opposed to one (1) large lot. It appears the site could accommodate two smaller parking lots, but staff has preliminary concerns that this could create vehicle circulation issues if one of the parking lots is only accessed through the shared driveway if the western access point is not redesigned.

The DRB should review the design and location of the parking lot and provide direction on whether this configuration is appropriate or whether the applicant should investigate alternative parking configurations.

D. Open Space

1. *Each residential household should be provided with some form of useful private open space, such as a patio, porch, deck, balcony, or yard.*
2. *Private open space should be easily accessible – physically and visually – from individual units.*
3. *Screening should be provided to ensure privacy and to help define boundaries between public, common, and private open space.*
4. *Where identified as appropriate or where required by the Zoning Ordinance, development should include public plazas, courtyards, landscaping, and similar amenities or public assembly areas that are accessible and visible from the street. Such amenities should be provided in a scale appropriate to the size and location of the project.*
5. *Required common open spaces should be designed to provide for play, recreation, or other social activities.*

Staff Analysis: The preliminary project has provided each unit with a private deck or patio and has created several outdoor common areas, including two playgrounds, a half-court basketball court, and a covered picnic area with barbeques. Staff feels the centralized common area and community building will provide good adjacency to the residential buildings. However, staff has concerns about the location and design of the playground and court at the rear of the site. These components are located at the base of a 8-16 foot cut retaining wall, and will likely get very little natural light. Additionally, the court's location between a three story building and high retaining wall may result in substantial noise reverberation (echo chamber) to both the on-site adjacent residential buildings, but potentially to adjacent neighboring properties as well.

The DRB should review the locations and design of the common areas, especially the rear play areas, and provide direction.

E. Grading

1. *Grading should be minimized to the extent feasible to reflect existing topography and protect significant site features, including trees.*
2. *When designing a grading plan, balancing the cut and fill is encouraged when it does not result in further adverse effects to the natural topography.*
3. *Terracing should be considered as an alternative to the use of tall or prominent retaining walls.*
4. *Proposed grading under the drip line of protected trees must be clearly identified on plans and will be reviewed by the City Arborist prior to issuance of a grading permit.*

Staff Analysis: The project site includes a gentle slope at the front of the site, which continues sloping up towards the rear and with the highest point being a knoll at the northwest corner of the site where the playground is proposed. There is an approximately 30 foot rise between the front of the site (approx. 155' elevation) and the knoll (186').

The preliminary project, as proposed, would level the site into a few of main building levels (floor elevation levels between 158 and 168) rather than working more closely with the topography, This results in a significant amount of grading and potentially excavation and off haul; removal of most of the site's existing vegetation; and, creates the need for retaining walls up to 16' tall. This is in direct conflict with the Guidelines, which discourages the use of tall retaining walls, significant grading, and unbalanced cut/fill. The Guidelines listed above note that any grading should balance the cut and fill where it would not result in negative impacts to the existing site and topography, and that terracing should be considered as an alternative to the use of tall retaining walls.

Although the amount of off-haul that will be required is not yet known (cut/fill quantities are not required at time of Preliminary Review), additional issues if the grading is not balanced include traffic produced by the additional trucks related to significant export of soils and additional construction noise during extensive grading.

Staff has concerns about the amount of grading and modification of the natural topography, and its impacts on the natural elements of the site, including the trees as discussed above, and the relation of the development to adjoining properties. The adjacent townhome development to the east also has an upward slope, particularly at the rear of the site, but was able to design a project that stepped the buildings up the hillside to work with the slope instead of modifying it.

Staff is requesting the DRB review this overall site strategy and provide direction to the applicant and staff.

G. Noise and Privacy

1. *The location of the building(s) on the lot, windows, orientation, building height, and location of on-site open spaces should consider preservation of the privacy of adjacent development.*

2. *Private yard or common open space areas, bedrooms, decks, and other main living areas should be oriented away from high noise sources and should take advantage of view opportunities and solar orientation.*

Staff Analysis: In terms of privacy to adjoining properties, the site currently has a number of mature trees at the property lines, if these can be preserved they will provide a large amount of screening to adjoining neighbors. As proposed, the project would require the removal of most of these trees, which then presents an issue regarding screening, especially along the north and northeast (and, to some extent, the southwest) areas, where the buildings are close to the property lines. In other areas where parking is near the side yards, there is a low planting strip proposed. If trees or taller shrubs could be introduced to this planting area, this would help with

the preservation of privacy to adjoining development as well. Note, the project is proposing privacy fencing along the side and rear lines, however the 3-story structures will have sight lines for the upper stories to areas beyond the site limits.

As noted above, staff has concerns about the relation between the playground area and the proposed residential buildings adjacent to these components as well as to private yards of adjacent properties given the potential for noise adjacent to both private yards of neighbors and bedrooms and main living areas of residents on the site. The basketball court especially has the potential for noise from bouncing balls to echo. It is unknown if the hours of this play area will be limited (and how that is enforced), which may be a concern if it is relocated elsewhere on the site as well.

II. *Architecture*

A. Relationship to surrounding architecture

1. *Architectural design should be compatible with the developing character of the area and should complement the unique aspects of the site. Design compatibility includes complementary building style, form, size, color and materials. Consider architectural styles of existing structures on the site, as well as other structures in the area when designing a new building and provide for a harmonious integration of the new improvements*.

Staff Analysis: The proposal is in an eclectic neighborhood that does not have a predominant design character. The proposal appears to be placing an existing design into a neighborhood and does not take into account the existing building styles, size or form.

The DRB should provide comments on the appropriateness of the project in relation to the surrounding architecture.

B. Massing

1. *Large structures should be designed to reduce their perceived height and bulk by dividing the building mass into smaller-scale components.*
2. *Buildings over two stories high should "scale down" their street-facing facades to reduce apparent height.*
3. *Box-like forms with extensive unarticulated facades or large, unvaried roofs should be avoided.*
4. *A variety of levels and planes should be encouraged to reduce the massing of larger buildings.*
5. *Multiple buildings on the same site should be designed to create a cohesive visual relationship between the buildings.*
6. *When possible, individual, street-oriented, ground level entries to commercial tenant spaces and dwellings should be provided.*
7. *When feasible, provide each building and residential unit with its own visual identity and individual address.*

8. *Façades of horizontal buildings should be broken up into smaller components by utilizing vertical elements.*

Staff Analysis: The preliminary project proposes that all seven (7) residential structures be 3-stories. The structures are somewhat monolithic, with minimal articulation above the ground floor and little differentiation between the units. The Guidelines encourage large structures to be designed to reduce their height and bulk by dividing the building mass into smaller scale components, avoiding large unarticulated facades and large unvaried roofs. The Guidelines also encourages buildings over two stories to "scale down" their street-facing facades to reduce apparent height. The 3-story multifamily development to the east of the project is a good example of breaking up the massing while defining the units by staggering the structures and articulating the rooflines.

The DRB should review the placement of the structures, including if there are ways to provide a better transition between the development to the east (60' setback) and the development to the west (approx. 15' setback across Nelson Way). Additionally, staff would like the DRB to review the overall massing and building articulation of the structures, and entries especially those facing the street and those visible from adjacent properties.

C. *Elements*
   1. *Design elements and detailing should be continued completely around the structure. Such design elements should include window treatments, trim detailing, and exterior wall materials.*
   2. *Separate structures on the site should have consistent architectural detail and design elements to provide a cohesive project site.*
   3. *Building facades should be articulated by using color, arrangement, or change in materials to emphasize the facade elements. The planes of the exterior walls may be varied in height, depth or direction.*
   4. *Elements such as bay windows, balconies, porches, arbors, awnings, arcades and courtyards should be utilized to add variety and break up facades.*
   5. *Trim, fascia, rafter tails, etc. should be of a sufficient dimension to create visual interest.*
   6. *Building entries should be prominent and visible.*

Staff Analysis: The preliminary proposal includes some minor design elements along some of the ground floor elevations, such as the window/entry trellises, and the use of stone/brick cladding along the base of the buildings. However, the plans only show these details on a few elevations for each building, indicating that they would not wrap around the entire building. It is also indicated that these details do not continue above the first floor. The project attempts to add some detail to the 3rd story by changing the siding from horizontal clapboard to vertical batten on the 3rd story.

Staff would like the DRB to review and comment on the elements proposed on the structures and whether they contribute to a high-quality design that creates visual interest.

D. Materials

1. *Building materials and color should be complementary to the design and to the surrounding area.*
2. *Exterior materials should be durable and of high quality.*

Staff Analysis: The preliminary project proposes to clad the buildings with brick veneer, limestone, cementitious clapboard siding, and cementitious board and batten siding. The color selection are primarily earth tones ranging from brown, grey, and tan.

The DRB should comment on appropriateness of the materials and color selection in terms of building articulation and how it fits in with the surrounding area, as well as the quality of the materials.

E. Roofs

1. *Large, flat roofs should be avoided. Instead, rooflines should be varied vertically and horizontally to provide greater visual relief.*

Staff Analysis: The preliminary project did not provide a roof plan, but it appears that the project proposes a gable roof with a shallow slope and several minor horizontal and vertical articulations.

The DRB should provide direction on the roof form and whether steeper slopes should be utilized along with more pronounced horizontal and vertical articulation.

III. Landscaping

A. General

1. *Landscaping should be designed to complement the architecture and create and define both public and private spaces.*
2. *Landscaping and/or architectural treatments should be provided to screen unattractive views and features such as storage areas, trash enclosures, transformers, generators, and other similar elements.*

Staff Analysis: The preliminary project proposes to plant 124 trees throughout the site. The location of the trees tend to mark entrances, screen the trash enclosures, and to line the perimeter of the community areas. However, there are few trees and shrubs utilized at the side yards which could help with screening and privacy to adjoining properties.

The DRB should evaluate the appropriateness of the species and location.

As this is a preliminary review, some items have not been included in this analysis as the level of detail in the drawings does not yet show these elements, including but not limited to storm water management, utilities and mechanical equipment, accessory structures, and site lighting. However, the City has both Design Guidelines and Standards related to these elements. When

the project is formally submitted additional analysis will be conducted on these items to ensure these issues are addressed.

Technical Considerations:
In addition to the design and engineering elements discussed above, as the project progresses, other items that will need to be resolved / include the following technical issues:

- Undergrounding of utilities
- Traffic study and frontage improvements noted above
- Stormwater management and site drainage
- Construction management plan (access, phasing, etc.)
- Phasing considerations if the project is phased as proposed (such as breakdown of phased elements; contingency if 2nd phase is never completed; impacts of construction for new residents of phase 1 during construction, etc.)

Recommendation:
Currently, the applicant is presenting the project for Preliminary Review. This provides the applicant with an opportunity to identify any design options as it relates to site planning, tree preservation and removal, and design of the structures for the Board to provide feedback. This also provides the Board the opportunity to make comments on the application and seek clarification on any components that may be unclear.

The Board does not take any votes under Preliminary Review. However, the applicant is seeking a general consensus or direction on the proposed site strategy, design, and tree removal, to the extent feasible. This would allow the applicant to gain a general understanding, regarding the design of the project as it relates to the removal of protected trees and any recommended revisions that should be considered.

Staff recommends that the Board receive a presentation from the applicant, hear from any interested members of the public, and provide comments on the project.

Specific questions posed by staff include:

- The appropriateness of the amount of tree removal
- Whether the extent of grading and potential off haul is supportable
- Whether the board is supportive of the use of tall retaining walls (up to 16')
- The appropriateness of locating the parking along the frontage
- Whether the amount of parking lot landscaping is adequate
- Appropriateness of the design and massing of the structures

Attachments:

1. Application Materials
2. Tree Preservation and Mitigation Report, dated October 8, 2019
3. City Arborist Report
4. Public Comments