



**Agenda Item #:** 3

**Project Title:** 353 and 354 Bear Claw Way - Planning Division Referral, Residential Building Complex. 9th Ald. Dist.

**Legistar File ID #:** 78640

**Members Present:** Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Amanda Arnold, Shane Bernau, Christian Harper, and Marsha Rummel

**Prepared By:** Kevin Firchow, AICP, Acting UDC Secretary

## Summary

At its meeting of July 12, 2023, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for residential developments located at 353 and 354 Bear Claw Way. Registered and speaking in support was Kevin Burow, representing Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Chris Sina and Ryan McMurtrie.

In terms of context, the sites are surrounding by senior and family housing. Recently received approvals property to the west and south now under construction.

Lot 2 will be comprised of a four-story building that steps down to two-stories and includes 162 residential units. The program includes underground parking, an indoor pool amenity, and mixture of apartments with some pedestrian connections in various locations. The entry feature elements are mainly for stair exiting and the applicant indicated that the first floor units do not have direct entry for safety and privacy reasons. They intend to break down the building mass to appear as a series of buildings rather than one large mass. Predominant materials are masonry and stone elements with a minimal amount of composite siding.

Lot 3 will be comprised of a three-story building with 59 residential units. Both sites will be served by underground and surface parking. The program includes a pet exercise area, courtyard, outdoor gathering spaces, grilling areas, and pergolas. The plans also include walking paths, berms and screening to the single-family residential to the east and berms along the Spirit Street parking area.

Questions from the Commission:

- The staff report notes concerns with the aesthetic compatibility with the stated plans.
- What is the parking ratio?
  - 1.3 ratio, achieving 1:1 underground while trying to keep the surface parking to a minimum.
- The scale of the buildings. The Comp Plan talked about low to medium residential up to three stories and 8 units, this is so much larger. The four-story building is still troubling to me along Lakota Way. With the scale of the buildings, I wonder if it would be better to orient Building 31 toward Spirit Street versus Elderberry, I'm thinking of the apartments facing the street, that it might be a more peaceful setting out your front window to face a residential street rather than a roundabout.
  - We've laid this out as such for the outdoor gathering space on the southern side wherever possible, and trying to help anchor this corner (it is not a traditional street corner) by providing a contiguous building form along Elderberry, breaking down to a smaller scale along Spirit Street where we transition to smaller scale single-family residential.

- The question for the Commission other than the design of the buildings will be that aesthetic compatibility with the neighborhood, among other things.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Regarding the site plan view and renderings of the park space to the east: I like the network of trails and space as an amenity, but it has such a long boundary on two sides by vehicular circulation. That edge of the park itself along the parking lot really feels like it needs a healthy landscape buffer so you can feel comfortable and get good use out of that space, more separation from the cars. In general I feel like the parking ratio is a little high for the use, and that would certainly help your site planning and outdoor amenity spaces if you had less surface parking. It doesn't need to be a drastic shift, even losing some here and there for better pedestrian connections and crossings, more generous open space seems like something you could afford to do within your overall numbers. Otherwise there's some nice outdoor amenities and it seems like pretty good connectivity between sidewalks and those amenities. Focus on a better balance between the parking and open space, the edges of the amenity spaces.
- I'm struggling with how much is going on. I appreciate the restraint of the materials. There's a lot of roof pitches, this could be improved by simplifying some things; the roofline could be one form. The datum for the stone elements comes and goes, if you use the stone element on one full geometric element rather than try to stop and start it in a horizontal way, it might be beneficial. Same with some of the window forms, the size of the penetrations and the mullion patterning. If you could simplify it I think it would benefit without changing your plan at all or changing the feel of the whole development. It's a little chaotic and random for where things start and stop. The bumped out prowed areas with a heavy cap, if you look at where that interacts, that tension, the edge of the cap wants to hit the roof form coming around (downspout), those are the things that start making it look not purposeful. Clear all that away and start to layer things in a more purposeful manner to give the forms more stability. The arched forms look foreign, maybe if they were squared off, they're starting to look a little institutional, like in a church or campus building.
- Of all these elevations, that four-story component is really out of place with the neighborhood, especially on Lakota Street, considering with what we know is across the street. I'm thinking that if you could take those gabled prowed elements, they would be the masonry units and the recessed portion is where you use some of your residential lap siding so these really start to express themselves as tenant occupied elements, with a form of being more like townhouses rather than a big sprawling building. You could do that to some degree around the entire project. It's not meant to be a one-size-fits-all design solution but to express those units more like a townhouse unit like you might see throughout the rest of the neighborhood. With regard to the site plan, for that Building #3, I agree with Shane's comments but want to be sure the berming of that park along Spirit Street isn't creating an isolated zone that is separated from the neighborhood. One of my biggest concerns is that four-story element along Lakota, and screening as much of that parking lot of Building #3 from Spirit Street, which is much more of a residential street. That's a good corner to try and anchor.

## Action

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.