



Agenda Item #:	8
Project Title:	9503 Elderberry Road (formerly 354 Bear Claw Way) - Planning Division Referral
Legistar File ID #:	80366
Members Present:	Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Jessica Klehr, Shane Bernau, Rafeeq Asad, Marsha Rummel, Wendy Von Below, Christian Harper and Russell Knudson
Prepared By:	Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of November 1, 2023, the Urban Design Commission made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission for **FINAL APPROVAL** of a residential building located at 9503 Elderberry Road. Registered and speaking in support was Kevin Burow. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Christopher Sina, and Ryan McMurtrie.

The applicant presented updates to the exterior architecture, location of materials, treatment of the façade in regards to entry elements, placement of materials and any accents with regard to creating more prominence for main entries as opposed to secondary entries. The site plan has been modified to provide additional screening along all the parking lot areas, more dense landscaping and screening around the interior of the courtyard spaces for screening of those vehicles. Focusing on Lot 2 the building does transition in height going from two stories in the north transitioning to three stories. Placement of the stone element is now more consistent across the base of the façade. Some of the accent siding colors have changed. The four-story element now appears less prominent along the street as three dormer looking elements, stepped the building back and lowered the roof elements. Original archways over secondary entrances have been simplified and squared off. Window colors have changed from black to beige to blend into the residential character of the neighborhood. Southeastern corner eyebrow element is simplified to a pitched roof to tie into a more subtle detail. The arched elements have been squared off. The material palette is a predominantly masonry, and two different colored bricks to break down the mass of the building to have the character read separately from one another.

The Commission had the following questions for staff and the development team:

- It's a Planning Division referral, we're looking to see and make a determination that the building is creating an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability that compatible with the existing and intended for the area. In looking at the staff report the big concerns were the mass and scale of the four-story building, the orientation to the street and the fact that some of the residences are oriented toward internal parking lots.
- The staff report did note concern for mitigating glare for the units that are oriented towards the parking areas. Can you speak to that?
 - We have increased plantings along the foundation in this area which serve as screening between the parking area and those residents.
- Can you describe those plantings, are they low, high?
 - This rendering is lower detail, but the full planting plan is in there – around the building is a mix of shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses. Our goal was where those residential patios are facing, anywhere, they are surrounded by plantings that are going to provide a level of screening and separation not only for headlight glare but also a sense of security as well.
- I'm thinking nighttime headlights driving by is fine, it's more about the parking lots as people are parking.

- In both of those locations we have a level of planting between the patio and parking lot. We do have a level of plants that will have some height and separation, not a full hedge, we don't want to wall it in, but we did want to create a barrier there. The species vary, but depending on how much room it's either generally a more upright shrub or ornamental grass.
- To follow-up, what we are looking for is where it says 'courtyard space' or 'pet zone,' it feels like there should be something taller to define that edge that hold that space to protects it from the front end of cars. I do not think there is anything more robust or taller in the full landscape plan right along that edge, but it seems like there should be something there that really encapsulates the people space and protects it from the car space.
 - I think that is something we can consider. The pet zone on the lower portion would be fenced in. The upper courtyard, that is open currently with no separation between the sidewalk and turf lawn. In this particular lot and that particular space, it's one of our few areas of open lawn space, and we did want to keep some open flat grass area. I understand the merits of having that, it's a tradeoff worth considering, happy to take another look.
- Maybe it's a continuation of the pet fence along that edge, something to just consider. It doesn't need to be as wide, robust plantings, and I understand protecting some open lawn space. Just some protection from the cars, something to consider.

Discussion by the Commission:

- Mass of the four-story building, the orientation to the street, and the internal parking lot stuff that was discussed.
- I guess I would point out that initially, the first go around I was disturbed by the four-story too. It did seem overwhelming. The more I see the adjustments, which are not dramatic, I think the changes they made did help from a visual standpoint. When I look at the other buildings around there, and what will be built on the other nearby vacant lots, the same issues we have with adding more housing of all different types, we're pretty cavalier about having extra floors all over the City. To me having the fourth floor certainly does not rise to a level of aesthetic disfigurement of the neighborhood and surrounding properties by any means, I'm fine with that. I still find it is a convoluted building, and feel for folks that will have to find their way around that serpentine parking lot, it looks like a maze. Those interior courtyards are going to be remarkably hidden once the landscape matures. There is really no way in projects like this, you are going to have some light pollution on the ground floor levels. Being a plant guy I did go over the planting plan and they did a pretty good job of selecting plants that will mitigate light trespass. The people living in those units will want to see out, it's a nice balance and selection of perennials, plantings and shrubs. Overall the landscape design is exemplary. I think of other projects that have come before us with 500 perennials specked on the plan and maybe six varieties. This is really a top level landscape design and planting schedule, I think the whole project is has come to a really nice place.
- I agree about the four-story element, I think there's an improvement made here where the four-story element mass is pretty small, tall and narrow, but it is not one big four story wall up against the sidewalk and it certainly does not dominate the overall development. There is a staff concerns about to the orientation to the street, there are no entrances to the units from the street. Some other projects we've looked at, the one on Sherman Avenue, where there were patios there were extension of those patios and some walls. I think it could be improved, instead of a big berm of bushes outside the first floor patio there could be a garden wall to enclose it. You're trying to bring activity to the street, not necessarily the front door, but the living space and activity closer to the street and I think a small, simple feature like that could make it less suburban and help address the street. I think they have done a good job of screening the parking lot and simplifying the materials.
- Overall, the project is simpler. You don't have to put landscaping in the rendering because it hides a lot of architecture, the details that we're looking for as we look at the new design. I would caution you away from doing that.
- With exception of some of the stone around some entries and on the columns or pilasters, it's a pretty nice design and some of that could be worked out. A trimmed square space or entry and a brick that doesn't touch it

but is on both sides. There's a lot of different entry elements, it doesn't have to be consistent, but looking at how that stone goes up, where it goes up, where it stops. Overall it's a nice improvement.

- Thank you for pointing out some of the elements done to make it less suburban. I think the height is fine, I don't even see that it's four-stories, it's surrounded by roofs almost as tall as four-stories. People who are so aghast at four-stories, how would you even really tell without stopping and counting?

A motion was made by Von Below, seconded by Asad, to make a recommendation for Final Approval.

Discussion on the motion:

- Add plantings to delineate between the parking and the courtyard space on the west side. The pet area is surrounded by a fence, some plantings don't necessarily do that well next to fenced pet areas. I am fine with delineating the courtyard space on the west side from parking, but I did hear that they wanted to keep that as a fairly open space because there is limited open space.
- The patio walls; that seems like it could be a lot of walls, there are a lot of patios. Are we clear as to where we're talking about, or is it everywhere? Do we need more specificity?
- My understanding is it was the patios on the street edge, addressing the staff comment about the building orientation.
- I was primarily referring to the ones that are outlined on the site plan, not necessarily all of those internal because we do see building entrances mid-block, so really it's primarily the ones on the corners that are outlined on the site plan.
- I like that comment a lot, I think it's a good idea, I just wanted to make sure of the location.

Action

On a motion by Von Below, seconded by Asad, the Urban Design Commission made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission for **FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion passed with the following conditions:

- A garden wall shall be added at the ground level exterior patios for those patios located at building corners.
- Add plantings to delineate between the parking and the west side of the courtyard space.

The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (7-0).