



**Agenda Item #:** 9

**Project Title:** 4205 Portage Road - Residential Building Complex. 17th Ald. Dist.

**Legistar File ID #:** 72121

**Members Present:** Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Shane Bernau, Jessica Klehr, Christian Harper, Rafeeq Asad\* and Russell Knudson.

**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Summary

\*Asad was recused on this item.

At its meeting of June 29, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a Residential Building Complex located at 4205 Portage Road. Registered and speaking in support were Nick Patterson, representing Interstate Overlook; and Joe Lee, representing T. Wall Enterprises. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Patrick Terry, representing JLA Architects.

The development consists of affordable market-rate units in five multi-family buildings with a clubhouse, complementing the adjacent Hidden Creek development with similar scale and materiality. The Winston will contain a wide range of units from studios to three-bedroom units, and each building will contain lower level parking with electric vehicle charging stations. The buildings are oriented to purposely frame the public streets and create a presence while screening the internal parking. Amenities are centralized to the development with walk-out units to outdoor spaces and parking areas. To address neighborhood plan recommendations, they have included higher density west of Creekwood Lane and lower density east of Creekwood Lane. Being conscious of their location to the Interstate, they are proposing a landscape buffer for noise mitigation. West Creekwood Lane to be designed to public transportation standards and would be later dedicated to the City for future use as needed. A bus stop is proposed on the west side of the site along Portage Road as part of the extension of future public transit. The development will also provide a connection to the existing bike path to the south to serve bike traffic from the future underpass from the American Center. The corner elements are emphasized with substantial balcony elements, with the fifth floor stepping down for a common roof amenity for the residents. Building materials include composite fiber cement siding in three colors, vertical metal panel and dry stacked stone.

The Commission discussed the following:

- In terms of the site plan, consider moving the pickle ball courts closer to the clubhouse area for better shading opportunities and for better proximity. If you make the pool area one with a larger greenspace, you'll have more opportunity for landscaping rather than just a ring to protect it from parking.
- I found my eye bouncing around to all these different elements, there's a lot going on and I don't think it all gels. There's some nice elements but they're complicated by a change of color or change of material, or those timber elements, it's distracting. The overhangs are treated differently, the balconies are different depending on which one you're looking at, it is too much.
- The landscape wall with "The Winston" could be at any building and should tie in more. It needs cohesiveness of a theme which I'm not seeing yet.

- We've seen sloped roofs for many years. If they were flat and some of the other projecting elements were more uniform it might be more palatable than these enormous overhangs and sloped roofs being supported by these large diagonals.
- Consider a foot bridge or pedestrian bridge for better connectivity between building 1 and building 3, an element that would bring a human scale to that retention pond in addition to however it's landscaped.
- The parking and vehicles really separate everything so much, grouping some of those things back together would be really beneficial. Try to get more cohesive larger greenspaces by merging some together.
- I definitely think the heavy timber and amount of structure is way too busy. You have these two angled roofs that your eye bounces between, shooting out energy in perpendicular directions. Maybe they're oriented more in the same plane or direction to help calm things down and simplify where your eye is going to, where you feel that movement is happening. Because there is flat roof between them it feels very busy.
- I was suggesting they both just be flat.
- I appreciate you representing thru-wall HVAC units at this stage. We would look for them to be more integrated into the architecture, having them flat next to a window is something we typically discourage.
- The sloped roofs are a confident move and I applaud that. Go big or go home, it gives a real taste to these buildings that people will remember and makes it a landmark of their home. It will get more detailed but the size is on the right track actually. It's not just anonymous architecture.
- We comment that we want to see different, here we go, this does not look like any other apartment buildings we see, and I applaud that, but maybe there is too much going on. I would say in this case there are too many materials. The corner elements are striking looking, I like them but they're too heavy looking and too much like medieval catapults, maybe it's the metal bracket Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Shane Bernau, Jessica Klehr, Christian Harper, Rafeeq Asad and Russell Knudson ing appearing over powering. The dynamic look of the slope is preferable to a flat roof. I like the echoing of beams halfway down the building, but the hardware involved seems overpowering.
- The base is too light colored, not cohesive with the rest of the materials and looks like it's on a coaster. I would recommend changing that or adding more landscaping to hide that, it just looks like an exposed foundation and takes away from the rest of it. Good job with the amenities. The parking lot could use more islands with trees, but I question some of the angles involved with Fire Department access. It will be very important to have serious evergreen shielding along the Interstate, even if it doesn't cut down the noise from the Interstate, there's a lot to be said for not seeing semis blowing past your residence.
- Striking corner move, very interesting. I agree with a lot of the comments about some refinements that might be nice, and I wonder whether those timbers being reduced to what is structurally required would still achieve what you're trying to. I like the expression of bolt heads coming through without the plates and wonder if plate jointing is needed, that could be a nice simplification. To me the angled roof is in address of the southern exposure. You're getting less depth of projection, I would tend to recommend a flat canopy is still a striking structural reinforcement there, and question the angle necessary to make the move. Excited to see this come back.
- The ground floor units, are you proposing any kind of porches with steps going down to the site? It looks like they're all suspended balconies.
  - It depends on the grade and what side of the building you're on. The ground floor units on DiLoreto and Creekwood will have direct entrances. On the Portage Road building it is set so far back and grade is such that there would be no direct entries.
- Signage would have to come back for a CDR, but the Commission could touch on location and size.
- I don't think you need the vertical wall sign, you've got the nice site wall with landscaping. It's not a hotel. The building will have plenty of character without needing a nametag.
- Maybe just on one face of the wall but I don't like the big vertical on the building. Maybe just one spot on the wall for this type of project seems sufficient.
- I wonder if there's a way to simplify that structure near the top with a single curved structure that reaches out toward the projecting canopy, that might eliminate some of those verticals on the interior.
- A graceful curve out toward the edge of the roof could be nice vs. it looking like scaffolding.

- I applaud the renderings, there's a lot to look at and a lot to talk about.
- I concur with the signage comments.

## Action

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