

To: Jay Sheers, Chair, and the City of Beacon Planning Board

Date: August 4, 2017

Re: **River Ridge Views, Subdivision and Site Plan**

I have reviewed a July 25, 2017 cover letter from Cuddy + Feder, July 25, 2017 Subdivision and Site Plan applications, River Ridge Project Narrative and attached exhibits, July 24, 2017 Full EAF, LWRP Consistency Statement, July 2017 Phase 1A Archeological Investigation by Hartgen Archeological Associates, July 25, 2017 Preliminary Subdivision Plat, and 11-sheet Sit Plan set, dated July 25, 2017.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to construct 18 for-sale townhouses on a 2.95 -acre consolidated parcel in the RD-7.5 zoning district and in the Historic District and Landmark Overlay Zone. The project includes a new stairway to Ferry Street and a walkway and pocket park near Beekman Street.

Comments and Recommendations

1. The proposal is located in the Coastal Management Zone as defined in the City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP). The applicant has provided an LWRP consistency justification for the project that appears to address the significant issues, but the river view on page 4 should locate the project site in the photo and include the rendered view mentioned in the text. The Planning Board will need to issue an LWRP Consistency Determination as part of the SEQRA determination for the project.
2. The survey needs to be stamped and signed. Existing major trees over eight inches in diameter that will be saved or removed should be marked on the plans. For example, there are two large locust trees and a 16-inch elm along the south Wolcott Avenue frontage that, if healthy, could be integrated into the site plan.
3. The Schedule of Regulations for the RD-7.5 district has a building length limit of 150 feet. Both rows of townhouses exceed that length and may need an area variance. The table and notes on Sheet 1 should provide the lengths for both buildings.
4. The applicant should be commended for offering to build a concrete stairway on adjacent City property to connect Wolcott Avenue with the end of Ferry Street and the Train Station. Details for the proposed stairway and safety lighting should be provided on the plans. A private internal path and pocket park open to the public is also being proposed near Beekman Street, as well as an offer to work with the adjacent church to clean up the overgrown cemetery.
5. The code requires two spaces per unit or 36 total spaces. The plan has an extraordinary 80 spaces, including 30 in garages, 27 outside the garages, and 23 additional surface spaces. I recommend that at least the 14 spaces in line with the entrance drive be converted to a central green with river views and the relocated gazebo as a main feature. This landscaped green for the residents would be in direct line with the significant view from the Rombout Avenue intersection identified in the LWRP, so instead of overlooking parked cars the public would have a landscaped view toward the river.

6. The applicant should complete a traffic impact analysis for the project, building on recent traffic studies in the area.
7. The applicant will need to provide more information and follow-up with state agencies for additional archeological investigations and EAF question E.2 O regarding endangered species.
8. Sheet 3 needs to include lighting fixture specifications and to clearly mark and number the landscaping species. The existing street lights along Wolcott Avenue should also be shown on the lighting plan.
9. The proposed monument sign should be located on the plans and integrated with the landscaping.
10. The Board should refer the design of the buildings to the Architectural Review Subcommittee. They will need elevations with floor heights, building heights, and materials noted. The renderings on Sheet 6 shows a tower element that may exceed the district's maximum height limit.
11. Since this application involves alterations to a property in the Historic Overlay Zone, the Board will need to consider compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and historic Old Dutch Reformed Church, designed by Frederick Clarke Withers in the 1850s, to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness under Chapter 134, Historic Preservation.
12. The number of below-market-rate (BMR) and bonus units complies with the Article IVB Affordable Workforce Housing provisions, but the applicant should provide square foot calculations to confirm that the BMR units meet the size standards. The Board should consider whether the two BMR units without garages qualify as having comparable amenities to the market rate units, one of which has no garage. The floor plans show BMR Unit 1 with a garage, but not the site plan.

If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact me.

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