

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

Date: November 9, 2017

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

I have reviewed the following new material:

- Response letter from Cuddy + Feder, dated October 31, 2017;
- Updated Full EAF Part 1 and Project Narrative, dated October 31, 2017;
- Updated LWRP Consistency Statement, dated October 31, 2017;
- Phase 1 Archeological Investigation from Hartgen Archeological Assoc., dated October 2017;
- An 11-Sheet Site Plan set, with the last revision date of October 31, 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 applicant is requesting the following modification by the Planning Board of the building length limitation and two area variances from the ZBA. The Planning Board will need to issue recommendations to the ZBA on the variances.
 - The RD-7.5 district has a building length limit of 150 feet. The row of townhouses south of the entrance exceeds that length by 19 feet. However, the Affordable Workforce Housing provisions in Section 223-41.10 M allow the Planning Board to modify such dimensional standards to accommodate the permitted bonus unit, which is 24 feet wide. I recommend that the Planning Board approve this reasonable modification.
 - The district requires a minimum separation between buildings of twice the average height of the facing buildings, or 70 feet. The two townhouse rows north of the entrance are proposed to be only 18.9 feet apart. At the October meeting I provided a sketch layout that would comply with the separation requirement, but the applicant prefers to request the variance.
 - The accessory structure linking the two northern rows has a tower element that is proposed to be 50 feet tall, exceeding the district's maximum height limit of 35 feet and requiring a variance. The applicant should further explain the purpose of the tower, its interior functions, and why it needs to be 50 feet high, especially given its close proximity to the historic church.
2. The East Elevation and View from Rombout Avenue renderings on Sheet 6 and other documents should depict an open view through the entrance drive towards the river, consistent with the recommendations in the LWRP, not a wooded backdrop.

3. The proposed red maple and sugar maple shown on the Landscape Plan to the west of the gazebo should be relocated to the east side of the central green to avoid blocking the river view from the Rombout Avenue intersection.
4. There are at least seven large trees outside the proposed path in the western woods that are marked for removal without stated reasons.
5. Before meeting with the Architectural Review Subcommittee, building elevations will need to be prepared with heights, colors, and materials noted.
6. The City's consulting traffic engineer suggested a crosswalk at Rombout Avenue. I agree, especially considering that the neighborhood to the east should have direct access across Wolcott Avenue to the new stairs at Ferry Street down to the Train Station. The next crosswalk to the north will be 600 feet or two football fields out of the way.
7. The Land Use Compliance table on Sheet 1 should show 31 garage parking spaces.
8. Since this property is in the Historic Overlay Zone and within the LWRP boundary, the Board will need to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness and LWRP Consistency Statement.

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

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c: Tim Dexter, Building Inspector
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Arthur R. Tully, P.E., City Engineer
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Aryeh Siegal, Project Architect