

**CITY OF REDMOND
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
September 5, 2013**

NOTE: These minutes are not a full transcription of the meeting. Tapes are available for public review in the Redmond Planning Department.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: David Scott Meade, Joe Palmquist, Mike Nichols, Kevin Sutton (arrived late)

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Craig Krueger, Scott Waggoner, Arielle Crowder

STAFF PRESENT: Steven Fischer, Principal Planner

RECORDING SECRETARY: Susan Trapp with Lady of Letters, Inc.

The Design Review Board is appointed by the City Council to make decisions on design issues regarding site planning, building elevations, landscaping, lighting and signage. Decisions are based on the design criteria set forth in the Redmond Development Guide.

CALL TO ORDER

The Design Review Board meeting was called to order by Chair David Scott Meade at 7:23 p.m.

PRE-APPLICATION

LAND 2013-01475, Redmond Riverwalk Condos

Description: Change to the existing colors and materials

Location: 15825 Leary Way

Applicant: Charles Wallace, Soltner Group Architects

Staff Contact: Steven Fischer, 425-556-2432, sfischer@redmond.gov

Mr. Fischer noted that this project came before the DRB on February 21, 2013. This is an existing condo project that is looking at a re-skinning, and thus new materials, colors, and landscaping are under consideration. This is a collection of five buildings built in 1981, which went through a remodel about ten years ago. The project has undergone a series of water penetration issues. The staff report mentions some of the Code issues in terms of the cladding. Cement board siding has been proposed, as well as board and batten and panels with reveals. The staff report also notes the use of color and what the Code speaks to in that regard. The base of the building is proposed to be a light tan color, while the areas clad in board and batten and the cement panels would be a green color. Metal staircases, decking, doors, and trim are proposed to be a sepia or green-brown color. With the landscaping, all the plantings must meet minimum size requirements for the City, which is standard. The applicant has enclosed a lighting plan. The issue of the adequacy of the lighting, and meeting the lighting standards, will be taken care of by staff as regards compliance to City standards.

Staff is requesting that the DRB review the following items: the adequacy of the proposed design, colors, and materials, the adequacy of the proposed base using cement panels with reveals, the possible need for a base of a different material, such as a cultured stone, and the adequacy of the landscape plan. If the Board wishes to move forward with an approval, Mr. Fischer said, the language for an approval has been provided. In terms of the materials and plans, the project is located just south of Leary Way and east of West Lake Sammamish. Mr. Fischer reviewed with the DRB the previous project that the DRB looked at back in February, which had a mixture of design elements. He compared and contrasted the new and old designs, colors, and materials.

George Singer of Soltner Group Architects presented on behalf of the applicant to the Board. He reviewed the background of this project with the DRB. His company was retained by the board of directors of the condos back in April, based on several concerns the board had with the previous designers, Grace Architects. The main concern was about the adequacy of the scope to address all the issues with the building, especially the exterior envelope. There was also a concern about the adequacy

of the construction documents that were put together and the reliability of the pricing from the contractor. The condo board felt the overall project costs were higher than necessary for the scope of work, and in general, the design and appearance of the project was unsatisfactory. Soltner came on board and found some major things missing, including some structural upgrade requirements demanded by code for life safety. Basically, the building has no straps or tie-downs, as it was built in 1981 and has jib-board walls. Soltner will be providing a structural upgrade to that to meet code. The guard rails, intended to be left on the previous design, cannot remain. They meet code for height and spacing, but do not meet code for strength. Entry stairs and landings shown are in poor shape, and are inadequate and unsafe. All of these concerns had to be included into the scope of the work at significant additional costs.

Soltner also found significant redundancies and a lack of clarity in Grace's design documents and the construction documents, a concern which was noted in the previous DRB minutes from February. Soltner has worked to refine the scope of work so that it makes sense for the building. The materials and exterior components have been simplified. Mr. Singer noted that when Grace Architects had submitted this project to the DRB, the condo board did not know that was happening. The main issue at hand, Mr. Singer said, is that four elements included in the Grace scope are no longer included in the Soltner scope, from an exterior standpoint, including:

1. The faux stone around the base of the buildings.
2. New entry doors throughout the site.
3. Pavers at entry courtyard areas.
4. The curved parapets, corbels, and a variety of accents and accoutrements to the exterior, all of which are beyond what the building had previously.

Mr. Singer said that homeowner associations have strict rules as to what can and cannot be done during these types of projects. Repairing damage is required, and there is plenty of that on this project, he said. Also, there is a requirement to repair the things that have caused that damage. Anything beyond that could be considered an improvement and would require a significant vote of the homeowner's association for approval. The four items noted by Mr. Singer would be considered improvements over the previous design at significant added costs and would have to be voted on by the homeowner's association. Mr. Singer said an approval would be very, very unlikely due to the high costs. The people in this complex would be spending \$38,000 to \$50,000 to get this project done, so adding anything to that is a problem. Again, the condo board had never intended to include any of those elements in any submission.

Thus, Soltner was tasked with refining the scope of work and trying to come up with a revised scheme that eliminates any improvements. The scheme Soltner is proposing utilizes many of the basic concepts of the Grace scheme, including lap siding on the main body of the building, a base for the building at the lower floor, and a darker color for the building at the lower floor and on the recessed elements of the building. Soltner has also agreed to use a black rail system. The board and batten siding proposed by Grace was considered to be a good idea as an accent on the pop-out elements of the building. The idea is work the building towards a green tone. The applicant said the base is more of a medium green, not the light tan Mr. Fischer had mentioned earlier. There is a brighter green on the pop-out elements and a green-brown for the trim elements.

The applicant is focused on meeting the requirements of no improvements to the complex, as stated by the condo bylaws, and reducing costs, which is a primary concern for the condo board. He noted that the raised planters on the site have been removed in the current design, as was also proposed by Grace. The applicant is proposing to work on the concrete walls behind the planters so that they meet energy code and so that they may be insulated. A panel system has been proposed in lieu of continuing with lap siding. The applicant said this could be a good tie-in to the accent color above and below.

The applicant put together five color schemes for the condo board to consider. One was a close match to the Grace scheme used earlier, and the condo board did not like it. The board's plan is to give this condo project a new name and some new colors. The applicant has presented a more natural, Northwest color scheme. Overall, corbels and faux stone could be considered a positive element, but the applicant did not think that was the case with this project. He said this was a contemporary Northwest building designed in 1981, which is very geometric. He did not think faux stone and corbels really fit in its design. He said his

design solution is simpler, better, and more cohesive solution than what Grace presented back in February. The condo board has reviewed a color scheme with the homeowners and received approval, and the applicant presented that scheme to the DRB.

The applicant said the revised submission on this project addresses many of the DRB's previous comments and is more appropriate to the site context than the previous proposal. He noted that the original submission was not approved by the condo board and was never intended to be proposed or submitted. In fact, several elements from it could not be done without homeowner association approval, which the applicant said was virtually impossible. He added that this is not a typical developer condominium scenario. The homeowners live in the building and know what they want versus a prospective client who might come in later and would not have any say in what a developer did. The applicant said the changes in materials proposed are cost savings, but those savings are not going to any profit margin or any corporate windfall. They are simply reducing the debt that the homeowners would be paying on their homes, possibly keeping some of the 82 residents in a home they could not afford if the original, more expensive scheme was used.

The applicant said this site was in a prominent location near the 520 interchange. It is fairly hidden from view. It has a green buffer around the buildings. The only views to the site are from driving down Leary. The applicant said the more expensive materials would only benefit the people who live there, and those people do not want that expense anyway. In general, the public would not benefit from faux stone, pavers, or any other of the previously presented improvements from Grace. The applicant said the new color palette presented is a much better fit for the site than the oranges, reds, and brighter colors of the Grace proposal. Finally, the applicant said, with regard to cost, the expense of putting in faux stone, new doors, corbels, pavers, and other accents is between \$400,000 and \$500,000. That translates to about \$5,000 per unit in additional cost for those aesthetic improvements.

Russ Christensen, a homeowner at the condo complex and the president of the condo board, next spoke to the DRB. He said the previous architect told the board that his submittal process was completely preliminary and everything that he submitted was subject to change and non-binding. He assured the board of this many times. He said it was essential that he was able to present to the DRB to find if there were any hang-ups that he was not thinking of. For the board to have construction authority, its bylaws have a requirement that any upgrade to the complex that costs more than \$10,000 requires a yes vote from 60% of the homeowners. Otherwise, the homeowner board has no legal authority to carry out the upgrade. However, if there are systemic issues with regard to living conditions, which there are in this case, there is a requirement to fix them as soon as possible. That safety concern is more important than affordability for the community, Mr. Christensen said. He said he could afford either proposal, but such is not the case for every homeowner. He was concerned that some homeowners might face foreclosure if expensive upgrades were considered.

Mr. Christensen was concerned that the previous architect, Mr. Allen, presented some improvements to the DRB before the condo board approved them. In the end, as the board evaluated different proposals, the only one considered was the paver option, which did not pass in a vote of the board. In summary, Mr. Christensen said Mr. Allen's plan was not something that the board has legal authority to carry out. Mr. Christensen, as president of the condo board, apologized that Mr. Allen's plan was ever submitted to the DRB. Mr. Allen did not act under any authority from the condo community. Mr. Christensen said he was trained to trust the experts hired for the project, and the board made a decision based on information presented by Mr. Allen. When the board found out the situation was different, corrective action was taken, which included changing architectural firms. This was not done lightly and carried a cost with it that is very serious, as well. Insuring the work promised is the work completed is very important to the condo community.

Mr. Christensen said he was appalled when he read the DRB meeting minutes from February. He said Mr. Allen was representing a plan he did not have authority to carry out. Also, the fact that Mr. Allen missed some things, like the seismic upgrades, was considered a bad sign by the condo community as well. Mr. Christensen said the units are not livable right now, and improving them is a top priority. He continued that the Soltner submittal is one that the condo board has full legal authority to carry out if

approved by the DRB. If it is not approved, then there will be units that continue to be in distress until this issue is worked out.

Regarding the color scheme, Mr. Christensen said that Mr. Allen told the condo board that he would not be using the bright colors he actually presented to the DRB. He emphasized that the colors he proposed would help the 3-D elements of the buildings pop out on a 2-D printout. He was directed to convey the message that the colors would be different to the DRB. The newly proposed color scheme that the condo board did select was done with great care and in collaboration with the Soltner architects. A lot of time was spent by condo members to evaluate several color schemes in outdoor lighting, in rain, in sun, and in clouds. Mr. Christensen thanked the DRB for listening to his concerns.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Meade:

- Noted that Mr. Sutton had arrived late to the meeting, but was present and made the DRB quorum complete.

Mr. Palmquist:

- Said he was okay with what was presented. Mr. Palmquist asked if the green panels in the front of the design were the areas where the planters used to be. The applicant said that was indeed the case and noted that when the planter comes down, a concrete wall would be revealed. The panel would go out about three to four inches to account for insulation and cladding.
- Mr. Palmquist said the tan color might be better for these panels. He said the green color proposed is too prominent and takes away from some of the other design elements. Mr. Meade asked about the module of the panel. The applicant said it was approximately two by four.
- Mr. Palmquist said he would be okay with the lap siding going all the way around the panels. He said, in looking toward a Northwest contemporary design, the base, middle, top idea does not really work. He would like to see the belly band go up a bit and create a 50-50 split rather than the split into thirds.
- Mr. Palmquist said that 50-50 split might be tough on a three-story building, but he was looking to make this an easy, acceptable fix. He said the front wall with the panels should not be green, and suggested that the applicant bring the brown siding around to complete the base.
- Beyond that, Mr. Palmquist said that if this is what the homeowners want, he was okay with it and did not want to step on their toes.

Mr. Sutton:

- Apologized for being late. Mr. Sutton said the panels stood out to him, too. He said if they were green, they should be a darker green to anchor the project a little. He suggested using the siding, as Mr. Palmquist suggested, or going to the brown color to stay with the base of the building.
- The applicant asked if using the green-brown color he proposed earlier for the trim would be acceptable for the panels. He would like to see some measure of contrast between the lap siding around the base and the popped-out elements.
- Mr. Sutton said he would suggest using that green-brown trim color on the panels. Otherwise, he liked the design better than what the DRB saw in February. He said a small tweak on the color adjustment was all that was needed.

Mr. Nichols:

- Empathized with Mr. Christensen for what his condo community has been through, and understood that this was a major undertaking. Mr. Nichols asked if, on the re-skin, this was going from the studs out, on the exterior. The applicant said that was indeed the case, as the cladding currently is right over gypsum sheathing, with no plywood. The gypsum is damaged and must be removed. The old insulation will be taken out and replaced, as well.
- Mr. Nichols also had concerns about the panels. He confirmed with the applicant that the two by four panel element is bounded by a one-inch trim piece.
- Mr. Nichols said he was fine the colors proposed, but would support a darker color as well.

Mr. Meade:

- Asked about the spacing on the board and batten. The applicant said it would be 12 inches on center with nailable sheathing behind it to allow for closing spacing.
- Mr. Meade asked about the window trim and its color. The applicant said that trim would not be on the board and batten areas, where the batten runs right around the windows. In the lap siding areas, there would be some window trim of a white color to tie into the vinyl windows. That look would be consistent around the site, with a four-piece wrap.
- Mr. Meade agreed with the rest of DRB that the concealment of the concrete wall could be downplayed. If the detail remains the paneling, Mr. Meade said it should either mix in with the body color or become a darker color so it is recessed. Or, the lap siding could continue over that wall.
- He said that this design is much better than what the DRB had seen in February. He said the applicant had toned the project down significantly and that this was a step in the right direction towards normalcy.
- Mr. Meade said he understood the constraints of the condo board, which the DRB has dealt with before.
- Mr. Christensen clarified what direction the DRB was taking with regard to the concrete wall. Mr. Palmquist said a darker color, like the green-brown sepia tone, should be used. Mr. Meade said he wanted let the pop-out element be separate.
- Mr. Meade said making the wall a more recessive color or using the adjacent material, the lap siding, would help this wall element go away, basically. Then, the board and batten detail would stand alone as a color and a detail.
- Mr. Singer said he could support going with the darker, sepia color. He did not like the idea of using the lap siding. Mr. Christensen clarified what color the wall would be and Mr. Meade called for a motion.

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. PALMQUIST AND SECONDED BY MR. NICHOLS TO APPROVE LAND 2013-01475, REDMOND RIVERWALK CONDOS, WITH THE STANDARD INCONSISTENCIES CONDITIONS AND THE CONDITION THAT THE PANEL PRODUCT, WHERE THE PLANTERS ARE BEING REMOVED, WILL BE EITHER THE SEPIA TONE TRIM COLOR, OR THE LAP SIDING'S TAN COLOR. THIS COLOR WILL BE WORKED OUT WITH STAFF. MOTION APPROVED (4-0).

ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. SUTTON AND SECONDED BY MR. PALMQUIST TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:04 P.M. MOTION APPROVED (4-0).

October 3, 2013
MINUTES APPROVED ON

RECORDING SECRETARY