

MEMORANDUM

TO: DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

FROM: Heather Maiefski, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: LAND-2014-00016 – Hotel Sierra Wireless

LOCATION: 15785 Bear Creek Pkwy (7338058888)

DATE: March 27, 2014

REQUEST: APPROVAL OF ELEVATIONS, MATERIALS AND COLORS



PROJECT SUMMARY

AT&T is proposing a new wireless facility located on the rooftop of Hotel Sierra. This project was before DRB at the March 6th meeting. The board was not supportive of the project as it was proposed. It was recommended to come back to DRB with an alternative idea or not approving this application and asking the applicant to go to City Council.

The original proposal included an antenna shroud on the rooftop at each end of the building with an equipment screen and lease area proposed in the center of the rooftop. The antenna shrouds were proposed to be 15-feet tall and the equipment screen is proposed to be 10-feet tall above the existing rooftop. The antenna shrouds and equipment screen are proposed to match the building.

DESIGN REVIEW BACKGROUND ISSUES

The board recalls all the concerns that were addressed from the very beginning when this building was first proposed. One of the biggest concerns voiced by the citizens and the board at the time was the impact this building was going to have on the view corridor.

The antenna shroud proposed on the park-facing side of this building was the main concern discussed at the March 6th meeting. The antenna shroud proposed on the other side would not interfere with the view. The board provided alternatives for the applicant to consider such as painting the shroud, making the coping smaller or sloping the shroud to match the shed roof and reduce the massing of the building. The other preferred alternative discussed in detail was to provide a face mount design which would knock a few feet off the height of the project and match the massing of the building.

The applicant has submitted two options with Option 1 being the original proposal and Option 2 being the face mount design alternative. Both these options have been presented on a series of photosims taken from three different view locations from the park and on Redmond Way.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Redmond Planning staff recommends approval of the Elevation, Colors, and Materials with the following conditions:

1. Colors and materials presented this evening shall be incorporated into the project.
2. Presentation Materials Inconsistencies
 - a) Where inconsistencies between the floor plans and elevations are found after the Design Review Board has approved this project, the elevations approved by the Design Review Board at this meeting will prevail.
 - b) If, after this Design Review Board approval, there are any inconsistencies found in the information provided for the elevations, floor plans, lighting plans, materials and color between the presentation boards and the 11" x 17" submitted drawings, the Design Review Board and the Redmond Planning Staff will review and determine which design version will be followed for the Administrative Modification.

ATTACHMENTS:

**CITY OF REDMOND
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

March 6, 2014

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, Craig Krueger, Kevin Sutton, Scott Waggoner

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Joe Palmquist, Mike Nichols

STAFF PRESENT: Steven Fischer, Planning Manager; Heather Maiefski, Associate 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 7:02 p.m.

PROJECT REVIEW

LAND-2014-00016, AT&T Wireless SB1731 Hotel Sierra

Description: New wireless communications facility on the rooftop of an existing building. The proposed equipment is to be screened from view and will not exceed the maximum height allowed of 15 feet.

Location: 7765 – 159th Place NE

Applicant: Bill Powell with AT&T Wireless

Staff Contact: Heather Maiefski, 425-556-2437 or hmaiefski@redmond.gov

Ms. Maiefski noted that this was the first time this project had been presented to the DRB. AT&T is proposing a new wireless facility located on the rooftop of Hotel Sierra. The proposal includes two antenna shrouds, one on the east and one on the west of the north wing of the building. The proposal also includes one equipment cabinet located in the center of the rooftop behind the existing parapet. The antenna shrouds are proposed to be at the maximum height allowed, 15 feet. The equipment cabinet is proposed to be 10 feet tall, measured from the existing roofline. The equipment screen would be about three feet above the existing parapet. The Redmond Zoning Code identifies several criteria for wireless communication facilities based on a ranking system of 1 through 6. One would be the most preferable site, which is co-location on an existing facility. Six would be the least desirable location, which would be located on residential structures in the R20 and R30 zones. The Code requires that a new wireless facility be located on the highest ranking site unless the applicant can demonstrate that the highest ranking site is not technically feasible given the location of the facility and the network need.

The proposed facility has a ranking of 4, which is for structures used exclusively for manufacturing, commercial and office purposes in the Commercial, Downtown, and Overlake zones. The applicant has provided a report from a radio frequency engineer justifying the proposed location. The Code requires that building rooflines are visible from public areas to create a varied and visually distinctive roofline. The existing building has an articulated roofline. Staff is concerned that the tall antenna shrouds will interfere with the existing flow of the roof and the existing skyline. The Code also requires that all screening devices be well integrated into the design of the building. The existing building was originally designed with shed roofs, which are currently being used to effectively screen the mechanical equipment, which again, creates a distinctive roofline. Staff has asked the applicant to look at alternative locations, such as moving the antenna shrouds to the center of the rooftop. However, the radio frequency engineer says that other locations will not work on the rooftop. Staff understands the need for a new wireless communication facility to provide adequate coverage, but prior to moving forward, staff would like input from the DRB and any suggestions to soften the bulk of the antenna shrouds, which would be highly visible at a main entrance to Downtown Redmond.

Mr. Fischer reiterated that the view of the site was a main issue. He noted that the Code would allow the applicant to place this antenna shrouds at this spot. Staff is looking to make the best of this situation, in that it does not appear the antenna shrouds can be moved. The hope is to preserve the visual interest and integrity of the architecture of the building and meet the applicant's needs as well.

Bill Powell from AT&T presented to the DRB on behalf of the applicant. He said the antenna shrouds would match the look and color of the ends of the building with regard to color and siding. Moving the antennas to the center would create a blockage of wireless service by neighboring buildings, and would necessitate building the antennas even taller. The applicant is trying to keep the height down, and thus put the antennas at the end of the building. Mr. Meade asked if the antennas had to be on this building. He noted that this building, when it was originally proposed, raised concerns about blocking views of the Cascade Mountains. He said increasing the height of the antennas would be problematic. He said the building to the south of this site could be used, and would be out of the view corridor.

Ryan Tarrott next spoke to the Board on behalf of the applicant. The location chosen was based on an RF search ring, which presents a circle on a map for optimal antenna placement. This building is within this ring, has a willing landlord, and provides the height needed for the wireless coverage required. A centrally located facility was first proposed, in the middle of the roof. However, that would block the antennas in an unacceptable way due to the structure of the roofline. Mr. Krueger asked if the landlord for the building Mr. Meade was talking about was unwilling. Mr. Meade clarified that he was talking about the Riverpark building, a residential project. The applicant noted that residential buildings are the least preferred, with regard to the zoning. Mr. Meade noted that this building was mixed use, and was also taller. The applicant said the zoning was a factor in the building choice. Ms. Maiefski said the Riverpark building was not in the R20 or R30 zone, and could be considered. The applicant was not sure if there was a willing landlord at the Riverpark building. Mr. Meade noted that this building drew a crowd of concerned citizens when it was first proposed, and adding any more height would be difficult. He said the solution looks workable, but it would be a hard pill to swallow for the public.

Mr. Fischer said that the DRB could make a suggestion for the applicant to explore an adjacent building, but the applicant can still move forward with this proposal, under current zoning guidelines. Mr. Fischer asked if the DRB could make this application as good as possible. Mr. Krueger clarified that the applicant would have to get DRB approval before moving forward.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Meade:

- Said the western piece of the project was the biggest concern. The other side would not interfere with the view. Mr. Meade was not sure what could be done to minimize the impact of the project. He suggested lowering the screening, or perhaps sloping it to match the shed roof and reduce the massing.
- Mr. Fischer noted that the cornice of the proposal could be diminished, possibly.

Mr. Krueger:

- Said the design protrudes up. Mr. Krueger would like to see the project blend in with the shed roof. He said the height could stay the same at one end, but could become more a part of the building and blend it in using a white color, perhaps.
- He also suggested putting some windows on the screening structure to help make it fit.

Mr. Sutton:

- Wanted the proposal to match the profile of the building below it, in that it could feel more intentional.
- Mr. Sutton said a reduced cornice element would help, as well. The applicant asked if the suggestion was to have the project match the width of the building below it.
- Mr. Meade said that widening idea would block even more of the view, and said this would be a big challenge. He asked how low the project could go, such that it would be less visible from the nearby bridge for drivers.
- The applicant said the northwest side of the building showed some eight-foot antennas. The hope was to provide an angular look to the antennas to blend them in with the angles of the roofline. The angling would cut off two antennas, possibly.
- The applicant suggested a faux angle could be placed on one antenna to give it an angular appearance and give the applicant the ability to install the equipment he needs.

Mr. Waggoner:

- Asked if all the antenna elements were inside the “box” proposed. The applicant said that was indeed the case, but some of the antennas are pointed at right angles to others.
- The applicant showed the DRB a look at the box, and noted that while a roof did not have to be put on it, a roof might help the project blend in.
- Mr. Waggoner asked what treatment would occur on the screen itself, but noted that any such treatment would not address any of the view issues. Mr. Fischer said the more the screen was dressed up, the more attention would be drawn to it.

Mr. Meade:

- Said he could not support this project the way it was presented at this meeting. Mr. Meade recommended the idea of not approving this application and asking the applicant to go to City Council. He did not want the DRB to approve this, in that it would not sit well with the public. He did not want his name on an approval for this project.

- Mr. Meade said if this structure were on the Riverpark building, it would be non-issue. Also, if it were not on the western elevation of the currently proposed building, it would not be a problem either.
- The applicant said the facility was needed, and according to the Code, this proposal was the best option. The applicant was hoping for input rather than simply moving to the City Council.
- Mr. Meade said any attempt to improve this project will simply draw attention to it. He noted that the project blends with the building enough, and is as small as possible. He did not want to be a contrarian, and said the Council would probably approve it with some consideration. But he said this project was a hot button from the beginning, and height was the biggest concern.
- Mr. Meade said he was an AT&T customer, and wanted more coverage, but he had some issues with this project. The applicant said he did not believe his proposal created a major view blockage. Mr. Meade said the view in question was from the bridge above the project, for drivers approaching Redmond.
- Originally, the applicant who presented the application for the Hotel Sierra had to go through multiple iterations before it could be approved by the DRB. Mr. Meade said there was a DRB member at the time who said this building would be put up over his dead body, which Mr. Meade remembers very well. Mr. Meade said he could not support the project.

Mr. Waggoner:

- Asked if the antennas had to be screened, according to regulations. Mr. Fischer said the Code speaks clearly that if there is mechanical equipment on the roof, it must be screened. This would apply for HVAC units or antennas, unless they were mounted on the façade of the structure. The only things that do not have to be screened are solar panels and wind turbines.
- Mr. Meade asked if there were any other alternatives that could reduce the view issues. The applicant did consider doing a face mount design. The applicant said there is not enough space above the windows of the building to fit the equipment required. There is six feet of space on the wall, which would not provide enough room for the twelve antennas needed to be installed on the west end of the building.
- Mr. Fischer reiterated that the park-facing side was the main concern on the project. Mr. Meade asked if a wall-mounted project would still be possible, where antennas would poke through the roof form rather than existing behind it. That would only add a couple of feet of height.
- The applicant clarified that Mr. Meade was asking that the antennas would start just above the windows and then protrude eight feet up, which would knock a few feet off the height of the project. That would match the massing of the building, Mr. Meade said.
- The applicant said that was a potential solution, but the building would not have a uniform appearance. Mr. Meade said that because a person would not see both ends of the building at the same time that would not be an issue. The applicant said this design idea was doable, but he was unclear if the landlord would accept that option.
- Mr. Meade said he could accept that alternative. Mr. Krueger said he would like to see a photo of what the antennas would look like for drivers coming down into town. Mr. Krueger said he also could not approve this project at this meeting based on the current information, but he would like to mitigate the view impact.

- Mr. Meade said the photos from this original building might provide some information the applicant could use. He would like the applicant to come back with another presentation that the DRB could grant approval to. The applicant said he would have to see if the DRB's suggestion would achieve the height needed for optimal wireless coverage.
- The applicant said an alternate design would involve a reinterpretation on his part of the Zoning Code. Mr. Fischer said the Code spoke to the antennas as well as the DRB's interpretation of design standards. He said there should be a happy medium to speak to both sections of the Code. Mr. Fischer said he was hearing from the DRB members that they were not comfortable with the proposal.
- The applicant clarified that the view blockage of the project, not the look of it itself, was the issue at hand. Mr. Fischer said there is a section of the Code that deals with views and view corridors. He confirmed Mr. Meade's story about how a DRB member considering the original building voted against it based on the view blockage issue.
- Mr. Fischer said this proposal could be set aside to see if a lower height option could be presented. That appeared to be the preferred option. Also, the applicant could ask for a vote, which the applicant could appeal to City Council.
- Mr. Fischer noted that the DRB prefers to work with applicants to find a solution. The next meeting for the DRB would be three weeks away, and this issue could be considered on that date. The applicant asked for some time to discuss some options with his team. Mr. Meade called for a short recess.

Mr. Meade:

- Following a seven-minute recess, the applicant noted that the southwest corner of the project has two sectors that could not be dropped down, as is. The applicant said there might not be anything blocking the project to the north. He suggested putting one sector on one end of the project and two sectors on the other, thus possibly reducing the view blockage issue.
- The applicant said he would still have to review this idea with his engineer and the building owner. If the DRB could conditionally approve that, he would revamp the design and see if it could work. Mr. Meade said that an approval with conditions would have to be worked out with staff. He suggested that the applicant come back for another meeting before approval.
- Mr. Fischer confirmed that the DRB's next meeting was March 27th. The one following it would be on April 3rd. The applicant said he would come back on March 27th. Mr. Meade said the applicant could send his plans to Ms. Maiefski, who could then forward them to the DRB members to speed up the process. Staff could guide the applicant toward the primary view locations.
- Mr. Meade said the most prominent view of this site would be on the upslope, west side of the bridge for drivers. Mr. Fischer said the view corridors in question include the views from the park and views for people driving downhill on Redmond Way. The park view on the west side of the river would be a good view for the applicant to consider.
- Mr. Fischer and Mr. Meade showed the applicant some spots on the map from which to consider the view corridor issue. The applicant said getting a clear day over the next few weeks would be a challenge, but he would look to provide some new photos of the site.
- Mr. Krueger said the view is an important issue, but he wanted the applicant to consider the massing and proportions of the building as well so the proposal could blend in. The

applicant said he was open to ideas to make that improvement, but he was simply trying to make it look better.

- Mr. Krueger said creating a more horizontal look to the shroud could help it blend in, as well as using angles that match the pitch of the shed roof. Mr. Meade suggested taking the cap off of the project completely, which simply adds some shadow.
- Mr. Waggoner said having a slope to the project that matched the shed roof would be preferable. That would mean the proposal might not even need a roof itself.
- Mr. Meade asked for a perspective of the project that would provide a good side view of it. He said he appreciated the time crunch the applicant was going through, but he also appreciated the applicant's collaborative approach to this proposal.
- Mr. Meade said the DRB did not mean to frustrate the applicant, but some careful consideration of the views of the site would be important. He said it would be better for the applicant and the DRB to give the applicant an approval that would be acceptable to City Council.
- The applicant said the frustration was not with the input of the DRB, but with the uncertainty of the project going forward. He thought that the project met the conditions of the Code and did not like the idea of having to start over. Mr. Krueger confirmed this was the first meeting on this project, and that no pre-applications were undertaken.
- Mr. Meade noted that the original Hotel Sierra building came in for six or seven meetings before it was approved. Usually, projects come in for a second meeting. The applicant said he had not foreseen the DRB approval would be an issue.
- Mr. Meade said the applicant hit a perfect storm of a building, in a sense, in that its shed roof and location near the street create some significant design challenges for this particular proposal. Mr. Fischer said the applicant was close to an approval, but more work on this project was needed to get everyone to a place where they are happy with this proposal.
- The applicant said he would get rid of the cap. Mr. Meade said the project did not need to be wider, as that would create even more view issues. If there was a way to drop the project down by widening it, that would make sense. But he noted that keeping the proposal as diminutive as possible would be critical. He suggested shrinking the width of the walls, as well.
- Mr. Meade asked the applicant to consider some different colors for the project to make it more recessive and blend it into the building. He said that restrictions like the ones the DRB is suggesting will yield some better, more creative solutions.
- The applicant asked about the west end and how it should be lowered down. Mr. Meade said the project could be lowered as much as possible. Mr. Krueger said the DRB could give better feedback when better views of the project are provided. The applicant and the DRB thanked each other for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. WAGGONER AND SECONDED BY MR. KRUEGER TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:07 P.M. MOTION APPROVED (4-0).

MINUTES APPROVED ON

RECORDING SECRETARY