

Robert D. Brant
(703) 528-4700 Ext. 5424
rbrant@thelandlawyers.com



**WALSH COLUCCI
LUBELEY & WALSH PC**

July 23, 2021

Via E-Mail and U.S. Mail

Anna Kohlbrenner
City of Fairfax
Department of Community Development & Planning
10455 Armstrong Street, Suite 207
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Re: Statement of Design Intent for Certificate of Appropriateness Application
Project Number: Z-18-00359
Applicant: Pulte Homes, LLC

Dear Ms. Kohlbrenner:

On behalf of Pulte Homes, LLC (“the Applicant”), the Applicant in the above-referenced planned development application and contract purchase of an assemblage of parcels in the City of Fairfax that includes the Breezeway Motel, the Fairfax Gardens apartments and four single family homes, please accept this Statement of Design Intent and the enclosed materials as a request for a Major Certificate of Appropriateness for the residential component of the proposed development.

The Subject Property consists of approximately 4.73 acres located in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Fairfax Boulevard and Walnut Street. The property is developed with the Breezeway Motel, constructed in the 1950’s, the Fairfax Gardens apartments located on the north and south side of Cedar Avenue, and four single family homes on Oak and Walnut Street. The Subject Property is surrounded by commercial uses along Fairfax Boulevard, the American Legion and Chilcott Field to the east across Oak Street, and single family homes along Oak Street to the east and Second Street to the south.

The Applicant is proposing to re-develop the Subject Property with a residential community that includes a variety of housing types and publicly accessible open space. The Applicant’s proposal has evolved over the last three years in response to feedback from the community, staff and multiple work sessions with the Board of Architectural Review (the “BAR”), Planning Commission and City Council. The proposal includes 42 townhouses on the south side of Cedar Avenue, 20 two-over-two stacked condominium multifamily units on the north side of Cedar Avenue, a 8,000 – 10,010 square foot commercial building at the intersection of Walnut Street and Fairfax Boulevard, and open space throughout the proposed development. The townhouses, two-over-two units and open space will be constructed by the Applicant, and are the subject of this application. The commercial building will be constructed by others in a

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

703 528 4700 ■ WWW.THELANDLAWYERS.COM
2200 CLARENDON BLVD. ■ SUITE 1300 ■ ARLINGTON, VA 22201-3359

LOUDOUN 703 737 3633 ■ WOODBRIDGE 703 680 4664

future phase, and will be the subject of a separate Certificate of Appropriateness application to be submitted by the developer of the commercial building.

The Applicant presented a previous version of this proposal to the Board of Architectural Review at a work session in September 2020. The Applicant has made a number of revisions to the proposal since that time. Most significantly, in response to concerns expressed by the BAR, Planning Commission and City Council, the Applicant has removed the previously proposed 97-unit age-restricted condominium building and replaced it with the commercial building to be constructed by others as mentioned above. The residential component of the proposed development remains similar to what was presented in the September 2020 work session in terms of layout and unit mix, with the exception of the previously proposed two-over-two units along Oak Street that have been replaced with townhouses. Additionally, the Applicant has made a number of enhancements to the architecture and open space since the work session in response to the BAR's feedback.

The following provides an overview of the revisions that have been made in response to the BAR's feedback:

1. Townhouses – The townhouses have been revised in response to feedback from the BAR.
 - a. Uniqueness – Several BAR members expressed a desire to see a design that is unique, but one that also fits within the fabric of the City. The Applicant believes it has achieved that balance with the current proposal. The elevations of these townhouses, as well as the two-over-two buildings, have been custom-designed for this community. While the quality of construction and building materials will be consistent with the Applicant's nearby Mt. Vineyard community, the composition and vocabulary of the proposed development is distinct through the use of different materials, colors, textures and architectural style. Through the use of a wide variety of materials, colors, textures and architectural features that have been selected, the proposed community will have a colorful and vibrant feel that sets it apart from Mt. Vineyard and other townhouse communities in the City. That said, through the use of familiar architectural techniques and quality materials, the proposed development will fit in with the fabric of the City.
 - b. End Unit Facades – The BAR encouraged the Applicant to focus on the treatment of highly visible end unit facades for each group of townhouses. The Applicant has addressed this through enhancements to the end unit facades by adding additional windows, detailing and improving materiality.
 - c. Rooftop Terraces – Each of the proposed townhouses will include a rooftop terrace to serve as a private outdoor amenity area for the future residents. The terraces will activate the rooftops, while also adding visual interest in the townhouses. At the work session, the BAR provided feedback regarding the locations of these terraces. A privacy concern was raised in response to the rear-facing terraces along the southern border of the property adjacent to the nearby single family homes. The Applicant has addressed this concern by shifting the

rooftop terraces to the north side of these townhomes, facing the interior of the site. Additionally, the BAR expressed interest in seeing rooftop terraces on all of the townhouses that front on the southern portion of the central open space along Cedar. This change has also been incorporated into the design. The Applicant believes that the provision of these rooftop terraces will provide a desirable private outdoor amenity for the townhouse residents, and contribute toward a unique sense of place for this community.

2. Two-over-two Buildings – The Applicant has made a number of revisions to the proposed two-over-two buildings in response to the BAR’s feedback. On the side and rear elevations of the two-over-two buildings, brick material is now proposed for the first two stories of the buildings. The facades and rooflines for each two-over-two building have been re-organized as well to create a more symmetrical appearance. A stone material has been applied to the façade of Lots 15 – 18, which ties to the stone material used on a number of the townhouses across Cedar Avenue to architecturally integrate the two building types. Improvements to the rear elevations of the two-over-two buildings also include the addition of gables at the roofline above Lots 1 and 2 and Lots 11 and 12, and the addition of rear facing second-floor balconies for the bottom units. These revisions enhance appearance of these buildings that face Fairfax Boulevard. The above adjustments are responsive to the BAR’s feedback, and have resulted in significant improvements to the two-over-two buildings.
3. Enhanced Open Space – The BAR made a number of comments at the work session regarding open space. At that time, the final design and programming of the central open space features on the north and south side of Cedar Avenue was still in progress, so a number of BAR members commented that attention was needed to these spaces. The Applicant has since focused on the open spaces to create usable, functional and desirable outdoor spaces. On the south side of Cedar Avenue, the Applicant has proposed a recreational tot lot feature that will provide a play area for children in this community and the surrounding neighborhood. The tot lot is enclosed by a perimeter fence and a row of flowers, shrubs and plantings to create a safe place and a sense of enclosure. The south side of Cedar Avenue also includes a meandering pathway interspersed with seating areas. A hardscaped plaza area with benches is provided at the mid-block pedestrian connection on Cedar Avenue, leading to a similar plaza on the north side of the street. The open space on the north side of Cedar Avenue is similarly programmed with benches, seating and a picnic area, but is slightly more open than the area to the south. The two spaces are complementary, but different, to serve different functions for the future residents.

At the September work session the BAR expressed concern about the open space along Fairfax Boulevard in front of the age-restricted building, due to its proximity to the roadway and potential road noise. While the age-restricted building has been removed and replaced with the commercial building, the Applicant has incorporated this feedback into the current proposal by shifting the open space on the commercial parcel to the rear of the site. This space will serve as a passive open space area, and will be planted with trees and other landscaping to provide a buffer between the residential and commercial

uses. It will be accessible to future residents of the residential community, as well as employees or customers of the commercial building ultimately constructed on Fairfax Boulevard.

In addition to these primary open space features, there are smaller pockets of open space throughout the site at the intersections of Cedar Avenue with Walnut Street and Oak Street, and in the northeast corner of the site. These spaces will be planted with trees and other landscaping to enhance the streetscape.

4. Overhead Utilities – One BAR member commented that the renderings should be updated to reflect the existing overhead utilities to remain. Since the time of the work session, the Applicant has addressed this issue by committing to remove all existing overhead utilities along the property's frontage. As such, no existing overhead utilities will remain upon construction.

Overall, the Applicant has developed a cohesive, well-programmed open space plan that will serve a number of functions for this community.

Through each of the above adjustments and enhancements to both architecture and open space, the Applicant has responded to the feedback to the BAR. The Applicant has worked to design a community that has a unique sense of place, while also remaining compatible with the character of the surrounding area and the City.

I would appreciate the scheduling of a hearing with the Board of Architectural Review at its earliest convenience. Should you have any questions regarding the submitted materials or if I can provide additional information to facilitate your review, please do not hesitate to contact me. As always, I appreciate your assistance.

Very truly yours,

WALSH, COLUCCI, LUBELEY & WALSH, P.C.



Robert D. Brant

Enclosures

cc: Brooke Hardin David DeMarco Amie Evans
Jason Sutphin Rose Sumrall
Albert Frederick Chris Neifert