



STAFF REPORT

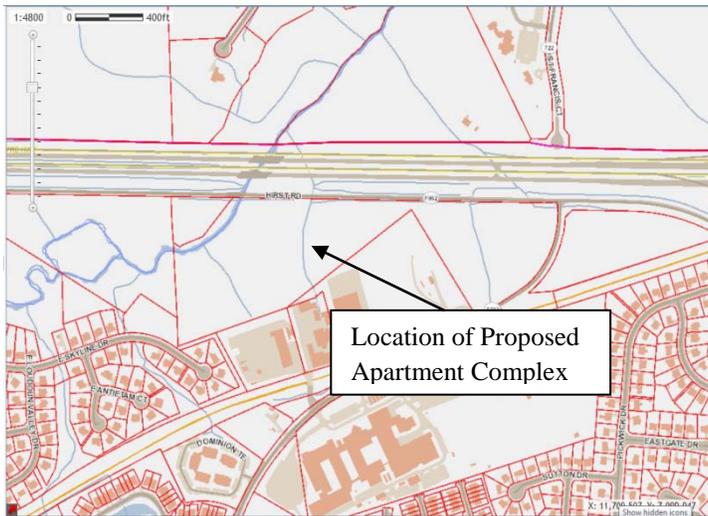
TO: Chairman and Members of the Board of Architectural Review
FROM: Department of Community Development
RE: CDA12-37 Catoctin Creek Apartment Complex
DATE: November 20, 2012

Name:	<u>Catoctin Creek Apartments</u>	Location:	<u>Hirst Road</u>
Project:	<u>CDA12-37</u>	Tax Map Number:	<u>/36////////19A</u>
Address:	<u>N/A</u>	Loudoun County PIN:	<u>452-25-4468</u>
Located in the Historic District?	<u>No</u>	Contributing Structure?	<u>No</u>
Zoning District:	<u>CM-1</u>	Conformity:	<u>No, requires Rezoning</u>

Comments: Construction of new apartment complex and club house

The application is evaluated under the Purcellville Design Guidelines (Guidelines).

BACKGROUND



The applicant is requesting design approval for an apartment complex consisting of 7 three-four story apartment buildings. Two of the buildings are three-stories on the primary side, and four on the back side; the lowest level is referred to as a walk-out basement. There will also be a single story clubhouse that includes an outdoor pool. The development is proposed to be built on 13.7 of the 20 acres of the property which is located on the South side of Hirst Road between the intersection of Maple Avenue and Hatcher Avenue.

The property was annexed into the Town in 2008 and was automatically zoned CM-1. The applicant is in the process of submitting rezoning and comprehensive plan amendment applications.

Therefore, the BAR cannot give final design approval for the development unless Town Council approves the rezoning and Comprehensive Plan amendment.

The applicant is presenting only typical building elevations for this first preliminary review. Once the applicant receives BAR comments, they will create elevations of every building for a second presentation. Section 54-78 of the Town Code, states that "the board [must] approve or disapprove an application within 30 days from the date of the board meeting at which an application was first considered shall be deemed approval of the application as submitted, unless a longer period is mutually agreed." Because the applicant intends to submit revised plans based on BAR comments and the property has not been rezoned to allow this use, both the Board and the applicant must agree to extend the process. Otherwise the Board will be obligated to deny the application, because the current zoning does not allow apartments.

ANALYSIS

The proposed development will be highly visible from Hirst Road and Route 7. The existing wooded area on the west end of the property will screen the development from east Skyline Drive and the north end of Maple Avenue. The apartments will be built on a lower elevation than the existing buildings across from the High School, so they will block the view of most of the apartment buildings from Maple Avenue.

The Hirst Road area of Purcellville is a mixture of commercial, office, industrial and institutional development. However, due to the location flood plains, the wooded area to the west of the site has not been developed. To the east is the single-story Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Center. The building which took design elements from the Town's train station, was approved by the BAR in 2007.

To the South of the site are several industrial buildings and structures that range in height from 1 to two stories. To the Southwest of the site are existing three-story apartment buildings and the Town's 195 foot water tower. West of the site is a cluster of single family homes.

A significant part of the northwest section of the site is in designated flood plain and therefore is protected from most development activity. Also, the developer is proposing to retain the forested area on the eastern portion of the site to serve as screening and as an amenity for residents.

CONTEXT AND COMPATIBILITY

The Guidelines state that “[s]cale, orientation, relationship and character of the built environment make up its context” (Context and Compatibility, pg. 6). This section lays out “rules of thumb” pertaining to conceptualism and compatibility. Subsections (i)-(iii) and (v-vi) are applicable to this development.

- (i) All new construction and development should incorporate those characteristics of the Town that exhibit a positive distinctive architectural style and/or established functional or landscape patterns.

The designs of the buildings have features of many buildings in Purcellville, such as the Train Station, Fire and Rescue building and Maple Avenue Apartments. The buildings have hipped roofs, brick masonry, and vertical board & batten siding, with white trim.



Purcellville Train Station



Fire & Rescue Buildings



Maple Avenue Apartments

- (ii) New buildings and additions should be sited in a manner that will complement rather than conflict with existing adjacent buildings, landscape, streetscape, parking, and access.

The only adjacent buildings that are visible from the development are the industrial structures to the South. Because of the W&OD Trail are setback from Maple Avenue. The large empty lot on the east side is heavily screened from Maple Avenue. Those buildings are generally oriented towards the street. This relationship to the street is a prominent feature seen throughout Purcellville. Even buildings set back from the road, such as Purcellville Baptist Church and the Inova building are oriented to the street.

The proposed development does have several buildings that address the street, however, most of the buildings face parking lots. The compact, logically arranged clustering of buildings that is a common feature in Purcellville is absent from this development. The parking lots are very prominent in the development. While largely screened by buildings from the road; that provides a pleasant view for passers-by, once in the development, it feels as if the parking arrangement was more important than building placement.

- (iii) Transitions between existing and new buildings or additions should be gradual. The height and mass of new projects or construction should not create abrupt changes from those of existing buildings.

The site is relatively isolated from other development on Hirst Road; the only structure close to the site is the Fire and Rescue building. Because the proposed apartments are the first development on that section of Hirst Road, the buildings will stand out from the surrounding undeveloped property. Even with the twenty foot grade change the 3-4 story buildings will still tower over the landscape. The apartments will be largely screened from view by the 1-2 story industrial buildings on Maple Avenue.

- (iv) Buildings should be oriented to connect with high activity areas, such as restaurant dining areas or major pedestrian areas, in order to create connections and linkages.

Because of the shape of the lot, most of the buildings will be located in the western portion of the site. The site layout is heavily automobile oriented. While sidewalks are present, their purpose is to provide access to the parking lots not to provide a safe means for pedestrians to travel between buildings, to the clubhouse, park, dumpster or to any future commercial development on the eastern portion of the site.

- (v) Loading areas, trash and storage areas, and rooftop or other mechanical equipment in particular, should be screened from view from adjacent properties.

No mechanical equipment is shown on the elevations or site plan. One dumpster pad is shown adjacent to the pocket park. The facilities standards manual requires that dumpsters be screened regardless of where they are located on the property. No details on the appearance of the screen were submitted.

SITE DEVELOPMENT

Street Frontage

The Guidelines “strongly encourages that the front building façade... and the predominant major point of entry shall [be] oriented parallel to” a major or primary street (Street Frontage a & c, pg 8). As noted earlier, the building orientation in the development is towards parking lots and not internal or external streets.

Site Grading

The Guidelines state that “[s]ite grading should be sensitive to the existing natural landscape” to “[p]reserve existing trees” and leveling “leveling of the site with severe cut and fill...is strongly discouraged” (Site Grading, pg 9) The plans show a tree preservation area in the eastern portion of the site both to serve as screening and as an amenity. Additionally, the plans show buildings being adapted to the site contours as much as possible. According to the developer’s architect “because of the topography in certain areas of the site, two of the buildings are three-stories on the primary side, and four on the back side; the lowest level is referred to as a walk-out basement. Additionally, natural stormwater drainage ditches will not be disturbed.

Loading Docks

Loading docks should be located as inconspicuously as possible from public streets. Hardscape areas, planting screens or doors should be used when it is impractical to locate the loading dock away from street view (Loading Docks pg 9)

No loading docks are shown on the submitted plans.

Utility Equipment

Utility equipment such as meters, CT boxes and transformers should be located so that they are not seen from any public street. Screening may be used when locating out of view is impossible. Power from the utility must be buried on the site wherever possible.

No utility equipment is shown on the plans.

Pedestrian Access

The Guidelines state that “[p]edestrian access to the site should be considered equally with vehicular access. Sidewalks and night lighting should be designed to encourage pedestrian traffic..” (Pedestrian Access pg 9). As noted earlier, the development is heavily oriented to the automobile. Pedestrian access is extremely limited both on site as well as off site. Sidewalks shown on the plan serve primarily as means to access parking lots. No pedestrian trails or continuous sidewalks are shown on the plan.

Site Access

The Guidelines state that “[v]ehicular access points from public streets should be kept to a minimum..” (Site Access pg 9). The plans show only one vehicular access point for the development.

Accessory Structures and Fences

Accessory structures should blend and be consistent with the design of the primary structure.

No details of the accessory structures were submitted.

GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Building Form

The Guidelines state that “[n]ew buildings...must be compatible with existing buildings and reflect, but not be required to mimic the architectural styles of the early to mid-twentieth century...and respect Purcellville’s historic architectural styles” (Building Form pg 10). The designs of the buildings have features of many buildings in Purcellville, such as the Train Station, Fire and Rescue building and Maple Avenue Apartments. The buildings have hipped roofs, brick masonry, and vertical board & batten siding, with white trim.

Façade Articulation

The Guidelines state that “[l]ong, blank, unarticulated ...facades ... are prohibited. Walls should be divided into a series of structural bays...breaks...windows and door openings or ...placement of balconies” (Façade Articulation pg 12). As seen on the building elevations, the design of the buildings include differing materials, balconies, windows, varied rooflines, landscaping and prominent entryways to break up the façade and add visual interest to the buildings.

WINDOWS

The Guidelines state that “a building with plenty of window area coupled with articulations such as shutters, holdbacks, substantial window cornices and sills is far more inviting and provides a sense of quality and permanence” (Windows pg 15). The building design shows many windows on all four elevations of the buildings. Windows that are located in the brick portion of the building have brick lintels. According to the application, typical dwelling unit windows will be one or a pair of single-hung 3'-0" wide, 5'-0" tall insulated glass units in a white finish with divided upper sash lights. Balcony French doors will match the windows. Typical clubhouse windows will be a pair of 3'-0" wide, 6' -0" tall insulated glass units fixed units with divided upper sash lights, also white. All windows and vertical siding will be trimmed with white 4" wide (nominal) cellular PVC.

DOORS

According to the Guidelines “Doors should be accentuated with simply detailed, high quality hardware” (Doors pg 17). The doors on the balconies will be insulated doors with French outswing with a fixed leaf and single hung windows. The doors to mechanical rooms (located on the sides of each building) will be steel. Drawing details of the doors were not included in this submission.

ROOFS

According to the Guidelines “appropriate building designs ... exhibit full roofs with the gable ends facing the primary street and [t]he visible portion of sloped roofs should be sheathed with a roofing material complementary to the architectural style of the building and other surrounding buildings” (Roofs pg 17). The proposed buildings have articulated rooflines including elements of hip and gable roofs. The roof material for the clubhouse and entry ways is charcoal gray metal standing seam and all other roofs are Certainteed Weathered wood 3-tab shingles.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The Guidelines state that “it is desired that time honored materials, present at the beginning of the twentieth century...[n]ew buildings should use materials consistent with those used on significant adjacent buildings and reflect the characteristics of the town. Materials are divided into “encouraged” and “discouraged” categories.

According to the application the exterior finishes shall consist of brick masonry with soldier coursing at window heads and transitions to siding materials above; vertical commercial grade vinyl siding, Kynar-finished standing seam metal roofing at the ground floor entrances and outset stair towers. Supplemental areas of white fiber cement board paneling provide a frieze beneath the deep roof overhang in certain areas, add detail to roof gable ends, and articulate a separation between building sections. Eave, soffit, balcony ceiling and balcony edging will be white cellular PVC. White painted wood eave braces trim each stair well tower at the eave line; the roofing will be textured fiberglass shingles. The basis of the vertical siding design is Certain Teed's board and batten product, in 8" wide panels consisting of a 6 ½" board and a 1 ½" batten. Balcony railings will be black anodized aluminum in a traditional vertical balustrade design. The buildings will have CMU foundation walls, concrete foundations and brick at visible exterior.

The fiber cement board, brick and standing seam roofs are both preferred materials while the CMU, Vinyl siding are discouraged materials.

EXTERIOR COLUMNS

According to the Guidelines, “traditional Tuscan or Doric round columns are encouraged for any visible porch and entranceway” and the column widths should be in the range of 1/8th to 1/12th the columns total height, have a traditional base and capital expression and should be seen to hold up a wrapped beam that supports the load above.

The buildings elevations show the use of piers; similar to those on the Fire and Rescue Center, rather than columns. No details were submitted with the application, but they appear to generally follow the design guidelines.

SCREENING

No details on screening were submitted with this application.

FINDINGS

- 1) The property is not currently zoned to allow apartment buildings, therefore the BAR cannot approve the Certificate of Design Approval until/unless the property is rezoned to a zoning district that allows apartments.
- 2) The preliminary application does not include details on loading docks, utility screening, doors, windows columns, or exposed exterior basement walls.
- 3) The proposed buildings are generally consistent with the Guidelines. However, some of the materials proposed to be used on the buildings (CMU, Vinyl siding) are on the discouraged materials list.

- 4) The building layout that has the apartments oriented towards parking lots and not streets is not in line with the character of most of the current or historical development in Purcellville.
- 5) Pedestrian access does not comply with the Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the BAR not approve the application, but rather review the application and offer suggestions to the applicant on how the development can be changed to be in more compliance with the Design Guidelines. This will give the applicant time to consider changes and resubmit revised plans with additional details at a later date.

ACTION:

One of following sample motions should be used:

“I move that the BAR, with the mutual consent of the applicant agree to delay action on CDA12-37 Catoctin Creek Apartment Complex until the property is rezoned to a zoning district that allows apartments and the applicant resubmits the application for approval by the Board of Architectural Review. If the property is not rezoned to a zoning district that allows apartments, the BAR requests that the applicant formally withdrawal the application for a Certificate of Design Approval”

-Or-

“I move that the BAR not approve CDA12-37 Catoctin Creek Apartment Complex for the following Reasons:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)