

Department of Planning and Zoning

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TO: Design Advisory Board
FROM: Scott Gustin
DATE: May 23, 2017
RE: 17-1081PD, 451 Ethan Allen Parkway

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Zone: RL Ward: 7N
Owner/Representative: Tim Alles & Bill Ellis / Jon Anderson, Esq.

Request: Final plat review for 9-unit planned unit development and associated site improvements

OVERVIEW:

The applicant is seeking final plat approval of a 9-unit planned unit development (PUD) consisting of 3 detached structures and a new private driveway. The subject property is located just north of Moore Drive. It is heavily wooded with steep slopes and wetlands and is currently undeveloped. The property is located primarily in the non-design control RL zone; however, as a PUD with three 3-unit structures it requires design review. A small portion of the site is zoned RCO which will remain undisturbed.

Preliminary plat approval was granted by the Development Review Board on March 7, 2016. That approval was appealed to Vermont Superior Court Environmental Division. The appeal was dismissed by the court on June 21, 2016. As required, final plat application has been filed within 1 year of the court action.

Preliminary plat approval was granted with the following condition related to design review:

1. Prior to final plat application, revised project plans depicting the following shall be submitted:
 - a. Porch railing details;
 - b. Utility meter screening;
 - c. Consistency between the grading plan and the building elevation drawings;
 - d. Lot coverage confirmation as based on buildable area; and,
 - e. Front yard setback calculations.

Final plat plans contain information to address the above condition. The site layout and building design remain largely unchanged from preliminary plat.

ARTICLE 6: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STANDARDS

Part 1, Land Division Design Standards

Sec. 6.1.2, Review Standards

No subdivision proposed.

Part 2, Site Plan Design Standards

Sec. 6.2.2, Review Standards

(a) Protection of important natural features

Important natural features consist of several large trees and extensive wetlands. Sheet 2, Existing Conditions Site Plan, depicts specimen trees (>30" caliper or 100+ years old) and the wooded area generally. Clearing limits are depicted on sheet 4, Site and Utility Plan.

Much of the property contains mapped wetlands. A State of Vermont wetlands permit has been obtained for the proposed wetland and associated 50' state buffer impacts. During preliminary plat review, information was provided to address the city's wetland review criteria per Sec. 4.5.4 (d). The Conservation Board will review this final plat June 5.

(b) Topographical alterations

The property can be characterized as a wetland bordered by steep slopes. As a result, any development would involve some degree of fill and grading. The proposed development involves substantial fill and grading; however, it is concentrated at the western end of the site and will result in a final grade similar to that of neighboring properties along Ethan Allen Parkway.

Discrepancies in the grading plan versus the grades depicted on the building elevation drawings have been corrected.

(c) Protection of important public views

There are no important public views from or through the property.

(d) Protection of important cultural resources

The site has no known archaeological resources.

(e) Supporting the use of alternative energy

The residential units will be constructed to be "solar ready" for rooftop solar hot water.

(f) Brownfield sites

The property is not included in the Vermont DEC's Hazardous Sites List.

(g) Provide for nature's events

The project incorporates significant stormwater management measures. The driveway, parking areas, and walkways are proposed to be pervious materials. Maintenance of the pervious material must be assured in a written maintenance plan so that the ability for water to infiltrate is not compromised by clogging from sand and sediment. The Stormwater Administrator has been engaged in the development of the stormwater system. The final plat narrative notes a conflict between stormwater management requirements and wetland impacts. This item needs to be resolved. Review and approval by the Stormwater Administrator per Chapter 26, Wastewater, Stormwater, & Pollution Control will be required prior to final plat approval.

Significant erosion is present onsite. The project proposes to correct this erosion. An erosion prevention and sediment control plan has been submitted. It will be subject to review and approval by the Stormwater Administrator per Chapter 26, Wastewater, Stormwater, & Pollution Control.

Sheltered doorways are provided for all of the dwelling units, and there is ample room for snow removal equipment.

(h) Building location and orientation

Two of the three new buildings are located close to Ethan Allen Parkway and reflect the existing development pattern within the neighborhood. The front yard setback has been verified – the front setbacks of adjacent properties have been provided as the basis for the proposed front yard setback. All three new buildings are oriented towards the Parkway with clearly identifiable front entries.

(i) Vehicular access

A single driveway from Ethan Allen Parkway will serve the development. Driveway width is acceptable under this criterion at 18' wide. Comment from the Fire Marshal calls for 20' width. The wider width could be allowed as a private street. Seemingly, the additional width would cause further wetland encroachment. This item needs to be resolved prior to final plat approval.

The Department of Public Works has reviewed sight distances at the intersection of the project driveway and Ethan Allen Parkway. The Department found sight distances to be acceptable (300' to the north, and 190' to the south).

(j) Pedestrian access

The six dwelling units in the two front buildings will have direct access to the public sidewalk by way of new front walkways. The units in the rear building are not afforded this direct access but will be served by a new walkway running parallel to the driveway. Pedestrians using this walkway may cross the driveway and access the walkway out to the street and public sidewalk.

(k) Accessibility for the handicapped

Walkways will be accessible, but the dwellings will not be. Accessibility standards are administered by the city's building inspector. It is the applicants' responsibility to comply with all accessibility standards as may be required.

(l) Parking and circulation

Parking is provided behind and within the new townhouses. There is sufficient circulation room to maneuver vehicles so as to avoid backing out onto Ethan Allen Parkway.

(m) Landscaping and fences

A landscaping plan has been provided and consists of fairly typical residential plantings. A variety of trees and shrubs are proposed and are used as foundation and accent plantings. Relatively dense plantings are proposed at either side of the development to provide screening for neighboring properties to the north and south. No new fencing is evident.

(n) Public plazas and open space

None proposed.

(o) Outdoor lighting

Exterior lighting is limited to front entries and garage doors. A photometric plan has been submitted and depicts acceptable lighting levels (average of 0.57 footcandle). A lighting cut sheet has been provided that depicts an acceptable lighting fixture that is consistent with the photometric plan.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design

A dumpster pad and associated enclosure are depicted on the plans. They will be located at the northern end of the development, in a corner of the driveway. The enclosure will consist of 6' tall stockade fencing with a gate. A detail drawing has been provided.

Part 3, Architectural Design Standards

Sec. 6.3.2, Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment

1. Massing, Height, and Scale

The massing, height, and scale of the proposed buildings remain unchanged from preliminary plat. The proposed buildings consist of three separate triplex townhouses. While this configuration of units is unusual for this neighborhood, the overall massing, scale, and height of the buildings is not out of character. The units themselves appear to be relatively small, particularly when viewed from the street, and the overall mass and scale are consistent with the array of home sizes in the immediate neighborhood. Perceived building height is substantially limited by the grade which slopes away from Ethan Allen Parkway.

2. Roofs and Rooflines

The townhouses will have gable roofs with eave ends facing the street. Gable roofs are common in this residential neighborhood.

3. Building Openings

Proposed windows are double-hung 6-over-1 units and are appropriately scaled for the homes. Door styles relate to the window styles. The overall fenestration pattern is typical and appropriate for these residential units.

(b) Protection of important architectural resources

Neither the subject property nor neighboring properties contain historic resources.

(c) Protection of important public views

There are no significant public views from or through the subject property.

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge

All of the new homes will face the street with prominent front entries. They will all include front porches and other architectural details to add visual interest. The units are slightly differentiated, particularly by way of their porches. Differing colors among the units are depicted. Building placement along Ethan Allen Parkway is consistent with the existing streetscape.

(e) Quality of materials

The townhouses will be clad in fiber cement clapboards and trim. Asphalt shingles will be used on the roofs, and clad wooden window units will be installed. These materials are of acceptable quality for this new construction. Railing details have been provided as required.

(f) Reduce energy utilization

All of the new homes must comply with the current energy efficiency standards of the city and state. They will all have ample solar access and will be plumbed for installation of optional solar hot water panels.

(g) Make advertising features complimentary to the site

No new signs are included in this proposal.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design

Utility meters are depicted on the building elevations. They must be screened. Mail boxes are depicted as well. Utility lines will be buried.

(i) Make spaces safe and secure

All of the new homes must comply with the city's current egress requirements. Consideration should be given to sprinkler the units. Fire Marshal comments relative to driveway width and emergency vehicle access must be resolved prior to final plat approval.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Forward to the Development Review Board subject to the following conditions:

1. Resolution must be achieved between stormwater management standards, emergency vehicle access standards, and minimization of wetland impacts prior to final plat approval.