

**PRELIMINARY PEER REVIEW OUTLINE PRESENTATION:**

23 July 2014

1. Introduction:

- Thank you Mr. Chairman, members of the Board, residents and concerned citizens.
- My name is Ted Touloukian, Architect and President of Touloukian Touloukian Inc. - an Architecture + Urban Design Firm in Boston.
- I am pleased to be back this evening to provide a presentation of our preliminary Peer Review report, and listen to comments from tonight's hearing.

2. Role and Basis For Review:

- As the Peer Reviewer, we are not the design architect for the Project but an Independent reviewer of the design.
- The basis for our review will consist of observations and constructive considerations that would not be considered unusual at this stage in the process for a proposed development of this complexity.
- Our review will incorporate the following:
  - A) The placement of the buildings within the applicant's established lot lines relative to the abutting and nearby properties of the single family neighborhood and the existing Hancock Village Town House context.
  - B) the relationship of the buildings and parking to the topography and natural resources of the existing natural environment and the proposed landscape.
  - C) the review of variables set forth with the site design as described in the Design Parameters established in our 19 June presentation to the Zoning Board of Appeals.
  - D) the identification of questions, considerations and possible adjustments to the site and/or building design that may clarify or improve the overall development and its relationship to the natural and built environment.
- Based on pending feedback, we look forward to an opportunity to further review our comments with the applicant in order to facilitate results that would be more consistent with the design principles.

### 3. Current Status:

- Image 1: Since our last meeting, we have received from Stantec a revised set of design documents and shadow study on 11 July, and a final 3D model on 16 July for the applicant's proposed design. These documents are the basis for our Preliminary Design Review Presentation.

### 4. The Garden Village Model and the Neighborhood Context:

- Image 2: As in any complex project, there are multiple layers to a review that are necessary for gaining an understanding of the appropriateness of the Project design within the neighborhood context.
- We believe that a thoughtful design review, begins with an understanding of the existing context and neighborhood characteristics:
- Our overall Impression is:
- Image 3: The proposed site mediates between the Garden Village model of housing with Greenbelt adjacent to the residential single family neighborhood.
  - There is a beautiful natural topography with mature trees and light filtered canopy intermixed within a residential fabric.
  - The Hancock Village - Garden Village model - and its relationship within the neighborhood is evident from this historical design and its clear movement on the site.
- Image 4: There is a flow that separates pedestrians from automobile traffic by placing parking at its perimeter,
- Image 5: .... leading people to their residential entries along a forecourt,
- Image 6: .... and then directly outwards to an expansive exterior landscape.
- Image 7: The Garden Village Model firmly connects all three elements together in a flow that is inter-related to each other and also extends into the neighborhood context....
- Image 8: .... with its respect for the natural and topographical character that is a part of the varying forms and diverse use of materials unique to the architecture of the surrounding single family homes.
  - The overall context seems to embody a balance between the natural resources and the built environment. Architecture and landscape that is seen as a whole and not separate from each other.
  - Our objective within the existing context is to simply understand the quality and experience, so we can make responsible and informed opinions regarding the appropriateness of the Proposed Project.

### 5. Impact of the Proposed Lease Lot Line on the Proposed Design:

- Image 9: When considering the impact of the applicant's design on the abutting single family homes and Hancock Village context, the proposed 40B lot lines establish the limits of the proposed design scope of work.
  - The proposed project – including the buildings, parking, and landscape - must stay contained within the 40B lot line limits.
  - These parameters create a project site self contained from the 40A site or remaining Hancock Village.

- This distinction is relevant for understanding how the design is proposed relative to its context and how it can be evaluated within our Peer Review process.

#### 6. Proposed Project:

- Image 10: We understand that the proposed project is defined by (4) lot lines
- There are a total of 9 low rise residential buildings with 44 units and 276 surface parking spaces and (1) apartment building with 140 units and 144 structured parking spaces.
- Our Preliminary Peer review presentation will evaluate each Lot Line area and its respective design,,, and we will begin focusing our evaluation on the Beverly Lot.
- The opinion expressed in this location is fairly consistent with the remaining lots. Our questions, considerations and possible adjustments identified here should be applied generally throughout the proposed Project.

#### 7. Lot W1 Design: (Images12-37)

- Image 11: The proposed site plan contains 102 parking spaces with access along Independence drive and 4 buildings with 20 proposed residential units.
- The lighter green trees represent existing trees and the darker green trees represent new tree locations.
- There is a continuous fence between the abutting property along Beverly Road and a bio retention basin generally located in its existing location.
- Image 12: The building placement is generally situated between large groupings of existing mature trees with some loss of mature trees.
  - Questions arise throughout the site as to the size and canopy of the existing trees to remain and what qualifies them for being on the site plan.
  - The applicant should consider minimizing the loss of existing trees through increased attention to the building placement and footprint size of each respective building.
- Image 13: The building placement between the single family residential neighborhood and the existing Hancock Village is spaced respectfully to their respective context.
  - The applicant should consider increased setbacks from property lines, minor alignments and openings between the corner building in order to increase site relationships and minimize the mass of the footprint of the buildings
- Image 14: The visual impact of the buildings from Beverly Road, as shown in the 3D model, is minimal mostly due to the narrow site lines available between the existing single family homes.
- Image 15: The visual impact of the buildings and parking from Independence Drive, as shown in the 3D model, will be significantly different from its existing conditions. This is mostly due to the large percentage of impervious materials relative to the landscape necessary for the proposed number of parking spaces.
- Image 16: The proposed parking spaces and access drive across the Greenbelt has altered the flow of the Garden Village model by disrupting the continuity between the exterior lawns and housing.
  - The applicant should consider increasing the width and number of walking paths across the parking areas with transitional paving materials in order to improve landscape connections.
- Image 17: The visual impact of large areas of parking fields can be minimized with additional tree islands. Questions also arise as to where trash is located for

- the proposed units. Hancock Village currently has trash enclosure adjacent to the parking areas.
- Images 18: When considering the 3 dimensions of the site design, the applicant should consider the existing grading and level changes between the existing site and the adjacent grades of the single family residential context.
  - Image 19: Currently, there is a gentle slope occurring across the site that seamlessly flows between Hancock Village and the grades at the rear yards of the abutting single family homes.
  - Image 20: Based on the proposed site plan, there is significant fill in the greenbelt area that has raised the grade of the parking slope above the natural topography.
    - Raised berms have been designed at the edges of the lots lines and have created significant changes in grading of 4'-8' in some locations. There is also a raised berm and depressed area for the bio retention basin.
    - Questions arise throughout the site as to how much fill is required for the parking access drive and parking areas. What is the amount of standing water that may be in the basin on average? Are there other techniques of site drainage that do not have require as significant a topographical change?
  - Image 21: In general, the raised berm may have an un-natural grade relationship to its edges at the rear yards of the abutting single family home and the existing natural topography.
    - The applicant should consider lowering the grade mostly due to the following resulting conditions:
  - Image 22: The proposed raised berm appears to have raised the level of the parking access and parked cars above the natural grade.
    - This may increase the visibility of vehicular headlights shining into the abutting single family home rear yards.
    - Although new landscape trees help filter vehicular light coming into rear yards, questions arise as to the size of the landscape screens when first planted.
    - Documents show 8'-10' high pyramidal evergreen trees and 3 1/2" caliper deciduous trees. It is unclear what amount of landscape buffer planted adjacent to the fence line will eliminate vehicular headlights shining into the rear yard.
  - Image 23: The proposed fence built along the lot lines are in some locations 4'-6' below the adjacent raised berm set for parking.
    - This difference in height set may set vehicular headlights either within the open top part of the fence or above it entirely.
    - Smaller specified trees and a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees may not provide the proper buffering of light in all seasons when first planted.
    - The applicant should consider reversing car orientation, lowering the grade and providing additional, taller and more dense landscape buffering.
  - Image 24: In contrast to the potential for vehicular lighting effecting the abutting single family homes, the site lighting appears to have respectful light levels.
    - The fixture presented appears shielded to not allow lighting above 90 degrees. The lighting plan conveys 0.0 illuminance in foot-candles at the lot line, and contrast ratios at the parking area appear to be within industry standards.
    - The applicant should consider wall mounted lights at each of the entries that provide safety for entrants and still achieve zero foot-candles at the lot line

- Image 25: The raised berms may also have an impact on certain existing mature trees.
  - Some retaining walls have significant changes in the grade along the walkway paths which may cause unsafe and non-code compliant conditions, and some trees appear to be buried into the raised berm that without the implementation of tree wells may impact the health and longevity of the trees.
  - The applicant should evaluate the grading in order to create more natural relationships with existing trees to remain.
- Image 26: The raised berms may also decrease privacy between the rear yards of the single family homes and the applicant's proposed project.
  - The raised berms provide greater opportunity for viewing private space not typically recommended in single family neighborhoods.
  - The applicant should consider lowering the proposed grades, the implementation of a different fence design, and providing additional, taller and more dense landscape buffering.
- Image 27: As you can see, there are multiple impacts presented by the parking access drive, the number of parking spaces and the resulting proposed raised grades or berm above the existing topography.
  - The applicant should consider lowering these proposed grades by – re-evaluating the design of the parking slopes and distribution of parking spaces in proportion to the number of units,,,
  - and reducing the amount of fill brought to each portion of the site.
  - Another consideration is the design of the entry and egress points around each proposed low rise residential building. Currently, the proposed grades are set level around the perimeter of each building in order to satisfy the building layout. Possible layout adjustments should be considered in order to allow for sloped grading to meet the building more naturally around its perimeter.
- Image 28: Upon further review of the typical floor plans, some questions do arise as to the design and compliance of the rear egress.
  - Egress through adjoining spaces - such as bedrooms are not allowed per code.
  - The current rear doors create private access to some of the bedrooms. Questions arise as to whether this is necessary for the project?
  - The egress travel distance at the second floor also appears to be greater than what is allowable by code. These factors could effect the building layout, footprint, and the relocation of the egress and access points.
- Image 29: Considering the grade relationships to the proposed low rise residential buildings, some lessons can be understood from admirable elements of the existing Hancock Village design.
  - The buildings entries, and subsequent building forms step naturally with the topography to create a more seamless connection with the landscape.
- Image 30:When considering the design of the proposed applicants buildings relative to the natural topography, the applicant should consider the lessons of how different Hancock Village would be perceived if the buildings were level and not stepping with the landscape. ? An architecture and landscape design potentially disconnected with each other.
- Image 31: In general, There is a diverse pattern of architecture and landscape that co-exist between the varying architectural styles of the single family

- residential fabric and stepped housing module of Hancock Village that should be further considered in the evaluation of the proposed site design.
- Image 32: Hancock Village has a module that when repeated at different grade elevations, the roof lines and base conditions are symbiotically connected to the flow of the landscape with beauty and respect for the natural environment, to each building, and to the abutting properties.
  - Image 33: and,,,,the single family residential neighborhood has a diversity of forms, materials, details, and roof lines that create a unique set of relationships that should be further considered in the applicant's building design.
  - Image 34: The designs of the proposed low rise residential buildings are modular and repetitive, yet consistent with each other in their forms, materials, details and roof lines.
    - They are all the same....This is unlike both the existing Hancock Village module's stepped repetitive forms and natural connection to the sloping grade,,,,,
  - Image 35: ,,,,,and the diverse architectural quality of the single family residential context.
  - Image 36: Initially, the proposed building has the perception of a single family home. Although the height and general scale of windows are appropriate to this architectural model,,,,The proposed low rise residential building appears to be equal in size to over (2) single family homes. Its relative scale (length, width and depth) are much greater.
    - The applicant should consider the quality of materials, and varying the architectural details to be consistent with the abutting single family homes.
    - Some further design considerations could be implementing the use of architectural asphalt shingles, additional trim details, varying roof lines, and simulated divided lights at the windows.

#### 8. Lots E1 and E2 Design: (Images 38-44)

- Image 37: Similar Text as per Lot W1. To be completed.
- Image 38
- Image 39
- Image 40
- Image 41
- Image 42

#### 9. Lot E3 Design: (Images 45-51)

- Image 43: Similar Text as per Lot W1. To be completed.
- Image 44:
- Image 45:
- Image 46:
- Image 47:
- Image 48:
- Image 49:

## 10. Lot E2 Design: (Images 52-62)

- Image 50: The existing topography along Asheville Road is diverse and heavily wooded with an abundance of rock outcroppings, mature trees and other natural resources.
  - There is a sloping grade from the top of the hill that gently slopes around the perimeter of the site to meet the public way along Russett Road.
  - Considering the importance of landscape in the context of this Project - Questions arise as to why the survey does not include the locations of any mature trees like other lot locations?
- Image 51: The approach from Russett Road is residential in its character and maintains a strong balance with the mature trees and other natural resources.
- Image 52: The residential scale is consistent and the site lines to the adjoining Lots from Russet Road are a back drop to the residential fabric.
- Image 53: The natural resources are most abundant here. The topography is beautifully varied, and the tree canopy provides a sense of privacy between Hancock Village and the Asheville Road abutting residences.
- Image 54: The applicant is proposing a 140 Units and 144 structured parking spaces in this location.
  - In order to achieve this, - within this blue area - almost all of the trees will need to be removed, and a majority of the rock outcroppings will need to be blasted.
  - There will be a tremendous amount of fill created that will need to be shipped off-site or into a new location on site. - Questions arise if whether all of the fill material created from this blasting is necessary for efficiently grading the surface parking lots or if it is being relocated to these locations in order to understandably assist with the economics of the Project.
  - There is fire truck access at the rear of the site and (2) structured parking entrances along Asheville Road. Questions arise as to whether there are safe site lines and which is entry and exit?
  - The proposed apartment building is 5 floors above two levels of structured parking. The total height is unclear from the drawings but it appears that the top of the roof (not including mechanical screening) is at the approximate elevation height of 252'.
  - The difference in height along Asheville Road varies between approximately 76 to 87 feet above Asheville Road. The height of the proposed building is approximately 47' above the top of the hill. This is relatively much taller than the other Hancock Village buildings and the single family residential context.
  - In General, the applicant should consider lowering the height and scale of the proposed apartment building and increasing the landscape screening and buffering to the neighborhood site lines.
- Image 55: Due to its height, the applicant should consider moving the building back from Asheville Road in order to minimize the perception of a wall like effect along the Road. Setting back the building may also assist in saving mature trees at the street edges.
  - Removing the smaller surface lot to the north of the apartment building could assist in concealing the approach from Asheville road. - This will also help save some large mature trees that could buffer the building.

- As per our earlier examples – any opportunity for additional tree islands in existing mature tree locations will further increase the opportunity for the surface parking to feel like it is in a natural setting.
- Questions arise as to how the current location for snow storage will not damage screening and plantings?
- Image 56: Many of these ideas are further understood in the section. The perception of the building height may also increase depending on how the mechanical systems are screened.
- And....as you can see from the profile, the building requires a lot of rock, earth and trees to be removed from the site.
- Image 57: The building elevation is very long and repetitive.
  - The applicant should consider breaking up the length of the building into smaller segmented buildings and consider using different materials from the low rise residential buildings.
  - Questions arise as to the architectural quality of the two story base entry.
- Image 58:
- Image 59:
- Image 60:
- Image 61:

11. Conclusion:

- Image 62: