



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

July 9, 2015

REQUEST: Minor Amendment and Revised Final Design Approval/ Greenspring Center PUD #74 – Skyview Townhomes

RECOMMENDATIONS: Minor Amendment: Approval
Revised Final Design: Approval

STAFF: Anthony Cataldo

PETITIONER(S): Skyview LLC

OWNER: Greenspring Properties LLC

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The site for the proposed residential development is roughly three acres in area. The parcel is generally wooded in character with a steep hill rising from an elevation of 295 feet at the base of the hill behind the west side of the grocery store to 360 feet at the far northeastern corner of the site. The site is zoned M-1-1 and R-6. This entire area has been designated as residential development in the PUD.

General Area: The site is located in the Hoes Heights neighborhood in North Baltimore. Other nearby neighborhoods include Medfield, Roland Park, and Hampden. The area near the development site is generally a combination of rowhouses, garden apartment buildings and narrow detached single family dwellings combined with some small corner retail uses. South of the development site and also in the PUD area is the Greenspring Tower shopping center, which is entered from 41st Street. Other auto-oriented commercial uses can be found on the 41st Street corridor near the PUD area.

HISTORY

- Ordinance #609, approved July 3, 1990 approved the establishment of a Planned Unit Development on the former site of the Greenspring Dairy.
- On January 10, 1991, the Planning Commission gave final design approval to the Greenspring Tower Shopping Center
- On November 11, 1993, the Planning Commission approved the signage for the Greenspring Tower Shopping Center
- On February 24, 2005, Planning Commission approved a minor amendment to the 1020/1040 West 41st Street PUD and gave Final Design Approval to the expansion of the Superfresh grocery store at the shopping center in the PUD.
- On March 9, 2006, Planning Commission approved City Council Bill 05-0309 which added a new parcel and 43 townhouses to the PUD development plan.

- Ordinance 06-295, signed July 28, 2006, amended and renamed the 1020/1040 West 41st Street and 4201 Hickory Avenue Planned Unit Development, adding a parcel and authorizing a residential use.
- On August 10, 2006, Planning Commission approved the Final Subdivision and Development Plan for the 43 Skyview Townhomes at 4201 Hickory Avenue.
- On April 7, 2011 the Planning Commission approved the Minor Amendment and Revised Final Design of the 40 Skyview Townhomes at 4201 Hickory Avenue.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

This project is consistent with the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan: LIVE Section, Goal 1, Objective 1: Expand Housing Choice for all Residents, Goal 1, Objective 5: Increase the City's Population by 10,000 Households.

ANALYSIS

These actions are to revise a previously approved 40 unit townhouse development to the Planned Unit Development created at the former site of the Greenspring Dairy. The site of the proposed residential development parcel is located north of the existing retail portion of the PUD. This site is approximately 3.087 acres.

The entrance to the proposed residential development remains the same to be accessed from the intersection of 43rd Street and Hickory Avenue. The townhouses would be accessed from a single private street with a landscaped median that would serve as a central green space. A second emergency-only access point would be located at the east side of the development near 42nd street. Fencing will surround the site on all but the south elevation, which is steep and highly wooded.

There have been a few minor changes to building arrangements within the residential development and because the subject property is within a PUD, the Planning Commission must first approve the minor amendments and then the final design for the new buildings. The applicant has submitted to the Planning Commission for consideration the updated development plan, landscape plan, and building elevation drawings for the project. These plans make up the formal submittal to the Planning Commission for consideration of the Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval. These actions address the land uses, site plan, landscape and architecture of the proposed residential section of the Planned Unit Development.

Minor Amendment

Since the previous approval in 2011, there has been a change in both potential home builder of the site and the housing market/typology. The proposal seeks to retain the 40 units but produce some slightly larger townhome units. There is also a slight shifting of the building massing that resulted to address some community concerns. This slight shift in footprint necessitates the Minor Amendment.

Site Plan

The layout for the residential development remains consistent with the 2011 approval which includes a minimum of two parking spaces for each unit, including one in a garage and one in the driveway in front of each unit. Some of the wider townhouse units have 2 car garages with

a 2 car parking pad. Additionally several visitor spaces remain near the central green space and in on-street spaces. All other stormwater management facilities, sidewalks, and access remain consistent with the 2011 approved plan.

Building Elevations

The original development was envisioned with a more traditional style of architecture with a mix of brick and vinyl siding on the front, side, and rear elevations. The 40 units were three levels and proposed to be appx. 35 feet in height and step with the grade. The new proposal seeks to build brick front garage townhomes with a maximum height of 43 feet. Homes within development block E and the end unit in Development block D will be limited to 35 feet in height. The penthouses and rears of the building will be a cementitious siding. Rear decks will be optional on only the units identified in the development plan with the deck option. Upper level terraces also exist with some buildings having the option to add an additional bedroom in that location. The size and location of those options exists in the elevations and at no point do they exceed the maximum height established for that unit. The architectural elevations and materials for this project have been reviewed and accepted by Department of Planning design Staff as they consider the Community's bulk and massing concerns as well as address comments made by UDARP in review of previous proposals.

Forest Conservation/ Landscape Plan

As previously approved, the site will be developed only in the more level areas of the parcel with a large portion of the site being designated as forest conservation area. Development block E has been modified in order to allow additional landscape to buffer the new units from the existing alley. The rest of the landscape plan remains consistent with the previously approved plan.

Planning Commission Posting Waiver Request

Due to the somewhat isolated location of this site as well as the high level of community interaction between staff, the Councilwoman's office, and the community leaders, rather than post the site inconspicuously, Planning staff sent direct-email notifications to the Community leaders. Included in the email was a link to all the proposed drawings as well as staff's direct contact information should there be any questions. The Councilwoman's office also emailed notification of Planning Commission date and time. Emails were then sent from Community leadership to individuals for additional notification.

In advance of a hearing on this matter, staff notified the following groups: Hoes' Heights Improvement Association Inc., Heathbrook Community Association, Medfield Community Association, Inc. and Roland Park Civic League, Inc.



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