

July 17, 2020
City of Colorado Springs
Planning & Development
30 S. Nevada Ave., Suite 701
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
Attn: Lonna Thelen
Re: Academy Heights Apartments – Conditional Use Submittal

Dear Ms. Thelen,

We are pleased to provide you with our first submittal of the Academy Heights Apartments – Development Plan, Conditional Use, and Variance Application. These plans are submitted on behalf of DPG Properties, LLC. The following team of consultants has been assembled to complete this application:

Owner & Applicant

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Project Intent and Description

Academy Heights Apartments is an infill development of the property located at the northwest corner of Fountain Boulevard and N. Academy Loop. The applicant's intention is to take advantage of the underlying opportunity zone by developing a high-quality workforce rental-apartment community in order to add much needed housing that will support the adjacent community and surrounding businesses.

Site Design

The applicant is proposing to develop a 201-unit workforce rental-housing neighborhood. The project will be comprised of three 4-story 67-plex elevator served buildings and a single-story clubhouse. The neighborhood will provide a mix of 1, 2, and 3-bedroom apartments, all of which have been proven to be attractive to residents in our other communities. The municipal requirement for parking will be met through a combination of surface and on-street parking spaces. This addition to the community will not only help diversify the housing options in Colorado Springs, it will help to synergize and solidify the adjacent neighborhoods.

The buildings have been arranged on-site to take advantage of the unique location. Multiple buildings and amenity spaces will help to break up building mass. An amenity package featuring a Clubhouse, flexible indoor recreation areas, and fitness as well as outdoor amenities such as a pool, community gardens, and a dog run will be included for the residents.

Architecture

The exterior design of the buildings promotes a distinctive multi-family character by incorporating materials, massing, and details that will complement and enhance adjacent land uses. Varied roof forms reduce the bulk of each building. Low awning roofs bring the mass down to a pedestrian scale. The primary entrances are emphasized.

The four-story massing is broken up with varying roof forms as well as carefully placed color and stone to establish a pleasing rhythm on the façade and provide visual interest. Balconies and strategically placed awnings will also help to break up the massing and relate the scale to neighboring properties. The exterior will be constructed of durable materials – including glass, stucco, and decorative concrete block. There will be one common color palette employed throughout the neighborhood to create an authentic and purposefully styled theme.

All building exteriors will be highly detailed with a distinct base, middle, and top to create a distinctly human scaled pedestrian experience. Along with the four-story buildings, the clubhouse will relate to other buildings through similar quality materials, thoughtful massing, and a holistic approach to the overall character of the project.

Landscape Architecture

The plant palette focuses on native and low water plants with a mix of canopy and ornamental trees, deciduous and evergreen shrubs, ornamental grasses, and flowering perennials. The height, spacing and textures of the plantings are designed to frame views, accent areas of interest and provide for year-round interest. The use of sod is minimal to help create a sustainable, water-wise and low maintenance landscape. This allows for a progression from the informal, naturalistic planting adjacent to residential buildings to more formal planting of the clubhouse.

At the clubhouse, amenities for residents and visitors will include pool, community gardens, lawn seating, festoon lighting, and a dog run. The pool deck will accommodate areas for gathering and sunbathing.

Grading and Utilities

The site is proposed to be graded to drain to the southeasterly direction, mimicking existing drainage patterns. Some retaining walls (max 4' tall) will be required at various locations on the site to provide for building pads and other site improvements. A full-spectrum extended detention basin is planned for the

southeast corner of the site to provide for water quality, detain developed runoff from the site and discharge to an existing public storm sewer system in Fountain Boulevard. All on-site storm sewer systems will be private, including the detention basin.

Utility services for the site will be provided by Colorado Springs Utilities with the exception of communication facilities. On-site sanitary sewer and water systems will be private, but will connect to public systems in Inverness Drive and Academy Park Loop. Water will be looped through the eastern half of the site to provide for looped system. Natural gas and electric will be provided to each building per final system design at a later date.

Compliance with Colorado Springs Development Plan Review Criteria

1. Will the project design be harmonious with the surrounding land uses and neighborhood?

The intent of Academy Heights Apartments is to establish a well-designed, innovative development that will be harmonious with the surrounding land uses. The incorporation of this new neighborhood will bring much needed workforce housing and vitality to the adjacent community. The applicant's goal is to revitalize the surrounding area by providing rental housing near established regional and neighborhood scaled facilities.

2. Will the proposed land uses be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood? Will the proposed development overburden the capacities of existing streets, utilities, parks, schools and other public facilities?

The site is planned to take advantage of existing public facilities. As this is an infill site, many of these facilities are existing and already in place. It is not anticipated to place any additional burden on existing streets, utilities, parks, schools or other public facilities, rather that applicant anticipates that the development will provide additional opportunities through the fees and taxes generated.

3. Will the structures be located to minimize the impact of their use and bulk on adjacent properties?

This infill development will be constructed within an existing commercial area. The buildings have been arranged on-site to take advantage of the unique location. Multiple buildings and amenity spaces will help to break up building mass. The buildings will meet municipal height requirements and will be comparable in scale to the existing structures while respecting human-scale and reinforcing pedestrian orientation.

4. Will landscaping, berms, fences and/or walls be provided to buffer the site from undesirable views, noise, lighting or other off-site negative influences and to buffer adjacent properties from the negative influences that may be created by the proposed development?

A landscape buffer, a minimum of 15' in width, has been provided around the perimeter of the site in conformance with City code. The site is buffered at the street level with retaining walls to help vertically separate the proposed residential use from the existing surrounding commercial uses. Landscape plantings are placed along the buffer to screen noise and minimize off-site light intrusion associated with the adjacent commercial development. The site has been designed to take advantage of the existing topography and leverage view corridors. Residential units along the perimeter of the site are situated above the existing street offering mountain views over the adjacent existing commercial development.

5. Will vehicular access from the project to the streets outside the project be combined, limited, located, designed and controlled to channel traffic to and from such areas conveniently and safely and in such a manner which minimizes traffic friction, noise and pollution and promotes free traffic flow without excessive interruption?

Access to the project will be through three entry points. Two full movement access points on Inverness Drive and a right-in/right-out access to Academy Park Loop. Private drives within the site

have been designed to channel traffic to and from outside streets conveniently and safely while providing for fire truck turning movements. Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity will be provided throughout, as well as connections to existing facilities.

6. Will all the streets and drives provide logical, safe and convenient vehicular access to the facilities within the project?

All streets and access drives have been designed to safely and efficiently allow circulation of the site while providing the required access for emergency vehicles.

7. Will streets and drives within the project area be connected to streets outside the project area in such a way that discourages their use by through traffic?

The project will discourage through traffic. Proper access for emergency vehicles will be provided.

8. Will adequately sized parking areas be located throughout the project to provide safe and convenient access to specific facilities?

Both resident and guest parking is to be provided utilizing a variety of parking types dispersed throughout the site. Surface and on-street parking spaces parking will be available to residents. Parking on-site will meet municipal requirements. Generous attention has been paid to providing adequate parking within proximity of each residential building and the Clubhouse. Additionally, the project will provide bike racks, accommodating bicycles parked outside of homes. Parking lots are shielded from surrounding streets by buildings and landscaping.

9. Will safe and convenient provision for the access and movement of handicapped persons and parking of vehicles for the handicapped be accommodated in the project design?

The project will meet all accessibility requirements. An accessible route has been provided from each building to parking, the Clubhouse, and all common amenities.

10. Will the design of streets, drives and parking areas within the project result in a minimum of area devoted to asphalt?

The project has been designed to provide as little impervious surface as possible while providing adequate access, parking, etc. Amenities, landscaping, and open areas are the main focal points of the site layout.

11. Will pedestrian walkways be functionally separated from vehicular traffic and landscaped to accomplish this? Will pedestrian walkways be designed and located in combination with other easements that are not used by motor vehicles?

Pedestrian circulation to and through this site is of the utmost importance. The site plan includes pedestrian connection to parking, the Clubhouse, and all common amenities as well as connections to existing walkways adjacent to the site.

12. Does the design encourage the preservation of significant natural features such as healthy vegetation, drainage channels, steep slopes and rock outcroppings? Are these significant natural features incorporated into the project design?

As this is an infill redevelopment site, there are not many significant natural features to respond to. The site does need to accommodate some grade which will be handled using a combination retaining walls and slope.

Compliance with Colorado Springs Conditional Use Review Criteria

The Planning Commission may approve and/or modify a conditional use application in whole or in part, with or without conditions, only if all three (3) of the following findings are made:

PROJECT STATEMENT

- A. Surrounding Neighborhood: That the value and qualities of the neighborhood surrounding the conditional use are not substantially injured.

The addition of an affordable residential use within the existing community will not only add rooftops and population to support the surrounding commercial uses but will also work towards revitalizing an important and unique Colorado Springs neighborhood while contributing to a thriving economy.

- B. Intent of Zoning Code: That the conditional use is consistent with the intent and purpose of this Zoning Code to promote public health, safety and general welfare.

Residential uses are permitted in a PBC zone as a conditional use. As a multi-family residential community, Academy Heights Apartments will meet all the standards outlined in the R-5 zone district while contributing the greater health, safety, and welfare of Colorado Springs.

- C. Comprehensive Plan: That the conditional use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the City.

Academy Heights Apartments is consistent with PlanCOS in numerous ways. This addition to the community will:

- Work to complete an unfinished development area
- Add to the diversity of housing stock provided within the City
- Provide an affordable housing option to the City's growing workforce
- Contribute to a thriving economy
- Maximize existing infrastructure by redeveloping an infill site

We are excited about the prospect of building this creative, high quality neighborhood in Colorado Springs. DPG Properties and the design team look forward to working with city staff throughout the review process.

Thank you for your attention and consideration,

KEPHART

Adam Kantor
Associate Principal