



# Memorandum

**To:** Charles Witherington-Perkins, Director of Planning and Community Development  
**CC:** Randy Recklaus, Village Manager  
**From:** Sam Hubbard, Development Planner  
**Date:** 8/16/2017  
**Re:** Early Review – Brian Properties Apartment Development, 400-424 Northwest Hgwy. and 500-550 Northwest Hgwy.

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Please find attached information regarding a rental apartment development as proposed by Brian Properties. Included is an email dated July 6 from Mark Toljanic, who represents Brian Properties on this project, requesting early review by the Village Board. Also included are aerials of the subject property, a conceptual site plan, elevations, and floor plans for the proposed development.

This early review was postponed at the request of the developer in order to address issues raised by staff and neighborhood concerns identified in earlier conceptual plans. The original version of this project included 108 rental units in two 5-story buildings. Subsequent versions of the conceptual plans showed 102 units in a 5-story building and a 4.5-story building, and the plans presented at this time now include 106 units within a 4.5-story building and another 4.5-story building with a recessed 3.5-story portion.

The Early Review Process, instituted by the Village Board in March 2001, allows developers, under certain circumstances consistent with the stated Guidelines of Early Review, to present projects to the Board in order to gauge the acceptability of development proposals. It should be understood that the results of the Village Board Early Review do not commit the Village to approving or denying a development proposal if and when the proposal moves through the review process. It is simply an opportunity for a developer to obtain a degree of preliminary feedback from the Board.

## **Project Background:**

The subject property is comprised of two sites, one located at the northeast corner of Northwest Highway and Walnut Avenue and the other being the northwest corner of Northwest Highway and Walnut Avenue. Each site is approximately one acre in size. The east site is currently occupied by a single story automobile repair business with a rear parking lot for automobile storage and is zoned B-3 (General Service, Wholesale, and Motor Vehicles District). The west site is currently occupied by the multi-tenant Elms shopping center and is zoned B-2 (General Business District).

The applicant is proposing a two-phased development consisting of 106 rental units shared between the two properties. The east side would be developed in Phase I, which would entail 50 units within a four and a half story building that would taper down to three and a half stories at the rear along Fremont Street. Parking for this building would be located on the first floor of the building which would be partially below grade. Additional parking would be located within a surface parking lot situated behind the building. Phase II would be the development of the western side of the site with a four and a half story building consisting of 56 units. Parking for the western building would also be on a partially below grade first floor and within a surface parking lot at the rear of the building.

**Neighborhood Meeting:**

On July 12, 2017, the petitioner held a neighborhood meeting with nearby residents to introduce the project and to understand any neighborhood concerns. A summary of this meeting has been provided by Mr. Toljanic and is included in the packet for reference.

**Comprehensive Plan and Zoning:**

Both the east and west sides of the property will need to be rezoned into the R-7, Multi-Family Dwelling District in order to accommodate the proposed development. It should be noted that all land within the R-7 District must be directly contiguous to the B-5 Downtown Zoning District. Although the subject property is *not* directly contiguous with the B-5 District, it is adjacent to another portion of R-7 zoned property that *is* contiguous with the B-5 District, and when considered altogether, the rezoning results in a unified area of R-7 zoning that is directly contiguous to the B-5 District.

The proposed rezoning is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan on the western site, which designates that property as suitable for "Moderate Density Multi-Family". From a land use perspective, this classification is consistent with the proposed use, however, the proposed R-7 Zoning is more appropriate as "High Density Multi-Family" and therefore a Comprehensive Plan amendment to reclassify the western site to High Density Multi-Family is required. The eastern site is not consistent with the existing Comprehensive Plan designation as "Commercial" (although a small portion of the east side is classified as "High Density Multi-Family"), and therefore an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to reclassify the east site as "High Density Multi-Family" is needed as well. In addition, Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval is required for all developments within the R-7 District. Finally, a Plat of Resubdivision to consolidate both sites, as well as several Variations, are being requested.

**Site Plan:**

Both the east and west buildings appear to conform to all bulk, height, and density restrictions, however, certain variations from setback regulations are required (see Exhibit I at the end of this memo). Staff has worked with the petitioner to increase the building setbacks (from those originally presented) to minimums as deemed acceptable for a building of the proposed size, however, there are several areas of the plan that are recommended for further analysis and revisions as indicated below.

*Appearance of Building Along Northwest Highway*

At the request of staff, the developer has lowered the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of both buildings to be 50% below grade, which will help to reduce the mass of the structure and screen the blank walls along Northwest Highway. The Petitioner has proposed to raise the grade at the front of the buildings to screen their base so that the foundation would begin approx. 4' below grade along Northwest Highway (see elevations). Further analysis on the feasibility of this grade change is needed as 20' of space may not be adequate to accommodate such a grade change. In addition to this change, staff recommends the inclusion of dense landscape plantings in the greenspace along Northwest Highway to further enhance the appearance of the building along this heavily trafficked corridor. Finally, the developer has proposed an enhanced southern entry to the west building, which will help to break up the massing of the structure.

*Stormwater Detention*

The Petitioner will be required to provide on-site stormwater detention as part of their preliminary Engineering submittal. The subject property is located within a combined sanitary/storm sewer area and all plans must conform to both Village and MWRD requirements for stormwater management.

*East Building Entry Area*

In response to staff concerns, the petitioner has recently revised the entry area of the east building to provide a more defined front entry. This has caused the garage entry to shift to the north elevation of the building, which enhances the flow of automobiles throughout the site. As the garage entrance will now face to the north, a heavy landscape screen

should be added along the northern property line to shield the homes to the north from the glare of headlights in the evening. In order to enhance the open space by the front entry, a robust landscape program in this area should be incorporated into the landscape plan.

#### *Fire Department Access*

Both the Building Department and Fire Department have provided a preliminary review of the proposed site plan. Based on this preliminary review, access to the both buildings appears adequate; however, the petitioner will need to examine the location of any overhead wires within close proximity to the building. Any overhead wires that could hamper emergency service operations must be buried as part of this development, which will enable a ladder truck the ability to access the upper floors of the building during emergency situations. It is recommended that all overhead utilities be buried in connection with this development.

#### *Sidewalk and Landscaping*

As noted above, dense landscaping should be incorporated along Northwest Highway to provide a buffer for the building and to enhance the appearance along this major arterial street. The petitioner should also provide dense plantings along the rear of each parking area to screen their appearance from the residential areas to the rear. Previous iterations of the plan showed a carriage walk on the western site where the property abuts Northwest Highway. At the request of staff, the petitioner has relocated this sidewalk to provide a parkway in-between the sidewalk and Northwest Highway. An easement to the Village for any portion of the public sidewalk that overlaps onto private property must be granted in conjunction with this development. IDOT approval will be needed for the proposed drop-off area in front of the west building, which will also need further evaluation.

#### *Building Height*

In a response to neighborhood concerns, the developer has lowered each building by approximately four feet. Additionally, the east building has been tapered down along the rear where the building extends out towards the primarily single-family residential area to the northeast. Originally, this section of the building was proposed at 5-stories in height and is now proposed at 3.5-stories. The developer should note that overall building height (from a zoning perspective) will be measured from the average grade at the sidewalk adjacent to the front yard to the top of the roof, and not from the elevation of grade at the top of the berm to the top of the roof.

#### **Traffic and Parking:**

A traffic and parking study will be required for this project. Currently, the provided parking falls just short of the number of required off-street parking as outlined within the R-7 District regulations, which requires 1.5 parking spaces per unit (1.44 spaces per unit are proposed). Additionally, staff notes that no guest parking has been provided. The parking study will need to address the adequacy of the provided parking and guest parking in relation to similar developments. Finally, the proposed drive aisle width on the western site is 22' where code requires a 24' wide drive aisle.

The developer has proposed the landbanking of nine parking stalls on the Arlington Garden apartment site located immediately north of the west building, which apartment complex is also owned by the developer. When factoring in these landbanked spaces, the site conforms to all parking requirements. In order to provide the landbanked parking, additional landscape islands may be needed within the proposed parking lot to comply with code requirements, which may cause the elimination of an additional one or two parking spaces.

While staff supports the provision of a contingency plan outlining additional opportunities for on-site parking in the event of a parking shortage, the location of the landbanked parking is not optimal and would diminish the open space and landscaped area within the Arlington Garden site. Squeezing the code-required parking onto the Arlington Garden property is not a suitable solution, and both the east and west buildings should accommodate the code required parking on-site. The developer should explore alternative locations for additional parking spaces, a revised site layout that

would allow for more parking, or a reduction in the number of units to conform to all parking requirements. Along with the landbanked parking, the developer has indicated that two surface spaces, as well as two dumpster enclosures, will be located on the Arlington Garden site. These elements will require a permanent easement should the Arlington Garden site come under separate ownership at any point in the future.

The east building includes a driveway entrance onto Freemont/Park Avenue that is restricted to emergency vehicle traffic only in an effort to reduce travel on this local residential street. The parking study will need to evaluate if this restriction will be effective, or if it is likely that cars will simply turn out onto Walnut Ave. and then proceed to Freemont Street. The study should also address the viability of the development as having no loading spaces. The provision of loading spaces is required by code.

#### **Affordable Housing:**

The Villages' Multi-Family Affordable Housing Policy requires that all new developments maintain a certain percentage of their units as affordable or provide a fee-in-lieu of providing these units. The developer, who also owns the Arlington Garden apartment complex that abuts the west site on the northern side, has indicated that 76% of the units within that apartment complex are leased at rates that conform to the Village's affordable housing policy. Therefore, they believe that the existence of those units should be acceptable in lieu of providing any affordable units or payment in lieu of affordable units within the proposed development.

The purpose of the Multi-Family Affordable Housing Policy is, in part, to insure that at a minimum the Village continues to meet State of Illinois affordable housing goals by including affordable units in *new* and substantially amended multi-family Planned Unit Developments. Therefore, the existence of affordable units within the Arlington Garden Apartments, although owned by the petitioner, does not conform to the purpose of the Multi-Family Affordable Housing Policy as it is meant for all new development to provide these units since new developments increase the overall amount of housing stock within the community. Staff believes that the petitioner should provide the affordable units as per the policy, or pay a fee in lieu of providing these units at a level comparable to similar developments. Developers of a recent comparable development have proposed \$25,000 per required affordable unit not provided. A response to the Village's Affordable Housing Policy should be submitted for staff and the Housing Commission review.

#### **Conclusion**

It is recommended that the Village Board evaluate the conceptual plans and preliminary information available at this time and provide preliminary feedback regarding the proposed development.

**Exhibit I – Zoning Analysis**

<b>East Building</b>			
	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Variation Required</b>
Height	58'-4"	60' Maximum	
Setback			
East (Side)	10'-10"	Approx. 34'	X
West (Exterior Side - Walnut Ave.)	15'	20'	X
North (Rear - Fremont St.)	52'-6"	30'	
South (Front - Northwest Hwy)	20'	44'	X
Density (Minimum Lot Size)	44,213 sq. ft.	34,800 sq. ft.	
Longest Building Length	165' (along east side)	N/A	
Bedroom Mix	34 1-BR Units, 16 2-BR Units	N/A	
Total Number of Units	50 units	N/A	
Minimum Unit Size (1 BR)	748 sq. ft.	600 sq. ft.	
Minimum Unit Size (2 BR)	882 sq. ft.	750 sq. ft.	
Maximum Building Lot Coverage	35.36%	45%	
Impervious Surface Coverage	Unknown	No limit	
Maximum F.A.R.	127%**	200%	
Parking	77 (1.54 spaces per unit)	75 (1.50 spaces per unit)	
<b>West Building</b>			
	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Variation Required</b>
Height	58'-4"	60' Maximum	
Setback			
East (Rear - Walnut Ave.)	15'	30'	X
West (Front - Ridge Ave.)	47'-11"	Approx. 46'-4"	
North (Side)	37'-1"	Approx. 31'	
South (Exterior Side - Northwest Hwy)	19'	20'	X
Density (Minimum Lot Size)	42,647 sq. ft.	39,000 sq. ft.	
Longest Building Length	224' (along Northwest Hwy)	N/A	
Bedroom Mix	38 1-BR Units, 18 2-BR Units	N/A	
Total Number of Units	56 units	units	
Minimum Unit Size (1 BR)	616 sq. ft.	600 sq. ft.	
Minimum Unit Size (2 BR)	896 sq. ft.	750 sq. ft.	
Maximum Building Lot Coverage	35.4%	45%	
Impervious Surface Coverage	Unknown	No limit	
Maximum F.A.R.	129%**	200%	
Parking	77 (1.38 spaces per unit)	84 (1.5 spaces per unit)	

\* Building Height must be confirmed.

\*\* Needs to factor in non-garage related space on 1st floor.

This is a preliminary analysis and is subject to change upon review of a detailed submission. Required setbacks may change depending on final height of building.

Date: 8/15/201