

DRB recommendation of project denial:

After exhaustive review of the Wintergreen townhouse project , where the applicant had numerous many opportunities to present a final plan that met the Design Standards and failed to do so, the DRB recommended denial of this project. As of this date, none of the 23 Design Standards have been met for this project.

Yet the applicant has continued since the final DRB review to tell City Council members, the public and others that they have addressed some or all of these deficiencies. These statements are not accurate, and not a true representation of events. Since the DRB recommendation of denial, the applicant has not presented any revised, new or additional plans that meet the design standards. The DRB worksheet (50 pages in length) included in the project staff report are accurate representation of the DRB thoughts and decision-making, resulting in a recommendation of denial for this project.

In addition, there are a couple of issues we would like to bring to the attention of the planning commission. They include the following:

Total long-term costs for Affordable Housing:

Bainbridge Island needs affordable housing and the DRB supports these efforts. DRB particularly supports the Housing Vision 2036 and comprehensive goals HO-1 through HO-9. However, affordability should not be based on monthly payments alone but should look beyond just the initial purchase costs.

Each housing unit (31 total) will be burdened by Homeowners Association dues including that for exterior maintenance (roofing repair, gutter and sidewalk cleaning, landscaping, exterior painting, etc.). Each townhouse unit will also carry a share of the routine maintenance cost of the storm water retention system as well as for Wintergreen Lane, as a private roadway (asphalt pothole repair, periodic seal coating, striping, etc.). What will these routine costs be per month/year, and will the Wintergreen Townhouse Association be building a reserve for long term repairs such as reroofing and repainting?

The developer has to date, not presented the proposed CCRs specific to Wintergreen. They did present Wallace Cottages CCRs, but they are NOT applicable to the townhouse layouts. For example, the current CCRs have no terms to address possible maintenance and repairs inside the airspace, located between the respective exterior townhouse wall(s), and the zero lot, property line(s).

Natural Area / Community Space – 17.12.050 A&B: Natural area/community space calculations:

This has been a concern of DRB throughout this project. To our knowledge, the developer has not presented an updated site plan that deletes from these calculations the square footage allocated to required parking lot landscaping as requested by the DRB. Parking lot landscaping is not a natural area or community space and should not be considered as such.

SR 305 Buffer and Setback Confusion:

This has been a long-term concern for the DRB throughout this project. These terms have been used interchangeably by the applicant which has caused great confusion. A natural vegetative buffer does not allow improvements or landscape elements of any kind. A setback identifies the edge of a building but does allow some improvements and landscape elements such as sidewalks etc. While you can locate sidewalks and other landscape elements in a setback you cannot do so in vegetated buffer.

The applicant has consistently asked for a 25 foot LANDSCAPE BUFFER from 305. The DRB has recommended a 50 foot BUFFER. The applicant then includes a BIMC required 10 foot SETBACK from that 25 foot line claiming they are providing 35 feet of area from the SR 305 ROW. Applicant then argues that the applicant and DRB are not far apart; only 15 feet apart in our discussion. This is incorrect and not accurate. The DRB has recommended a 50 foot vegetative buffer and BIMC requires a 10 foot setback for a total for a total of 60 feet of open area from the SR 305 ROW. Thus the difference is 25 feet which the applicant has said is not acceptable to them. The 2013 Visconsi HEX decision specified a 50 foot vegetative buffer. If that was the minimum requirement for a commercial project, it seems illogical to reduce the buffer for residential use where there are children playing and people living in their units 24 hr/day. That was the basis of the DRB recommendation for 50 foot vegetative buffer.

Proposed noise-barrier perimeter fence within the vegetative buffer along SR 305

As part of the discussion regarding the vegetative buffer along SR305 the applicant proposed a noise-barrier, perimeter fence. This fence will restrict wildlife habitat travels between SR-305 area, and the Wintergreen project site. This proposal does not conform to Part IV: Comp Plan Goals and Policies
1A. DRB rejected this proposal as a mitigating technique to reduce the 50 foot vegetative buffer that DRB has recommend.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Dunstan
Chair, COBI Design Review Board.

DRB final comments: Wintergreen Townhouse Project Aug 30, 2021