

AGENDA ITEM

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

THROUGH: Brandon Opiela, Planning Manager

FROM: Samantha Gleinser, Planner I

SUBJECT: Conduct a Public Hearing to Consider/Discuss/Act on the Request by Legacy Homes, for Approval of a Meritorious Exception for Legacy Homes McKinney Apartments, Being Fewer than 12 Acres, Located Approximately 350 Feet East of Community Avenue and Approximately 180 Feet North of White Avenue

APPROVAL PROCESS: The Planning and Zoning Commission is the final approval authority for the proposed meritorious exception.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the proposed meritorious exception for the proposed building elevations.

However, the applicant is also requesting approval of covered parking structures utilizing exposed steel support columns which Staff cannot support.

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL DATE: January 13, 2014 (Original Application)
January 27, 2014 (Revised Submittal)

ITEM SUMMARY: The applicant is requesting a meritorious exception to the Architectural and Site Standards section of the Zoning Ordinance for Legacy Homes McKinney Apartments, a multiple-family residential development, located approximately 350 feet east of Community Avenue and approximately 180 feet north of White Avenue. The applicant has indicated that the proposed elevations for the multiple-family residential development feature a modern style that utilize a combination of stucco, stone, and brick masonry with various colors and multiple wall offsets. Additionally, the applicant is requesting a meritorious exception in order to allow covered parking structures with exposed steel columns on the subject property.

The meritorious exception is being requested because the proposed architectural elevations:

1. Do not meet the required minimum 50 percent masonry for each exterior wall.
2. Feature covered parking support columns which are not finished in masonry materials.

The applicant has submitted an associated site plan (13-246SP) and preliminary-final plat (13-247PF), which is currently under Staff's review.

COMPLIANCE WITH ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS: The purpose of the architectural standards is to set minimum standards for the appearance of multi-family buildings and corresponding site elements, which are recognized as enhancing property values and are in the interest of the general welfare of the City of McKinney. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed architectural design of the Legacy Apartments satisfies the intent of the architectural standards, however, the covered parking structures featuring exposed steel support columns do not.

The provisions within the Architectural Standards Ordinance regarding meritorious exceptions states that "it is not the intent of this ordinance to discourage innovation. An architectural and site design that does not conform with the specific requirements of this ordinance, but which has merit by making a positive contribution to the visual environment and which is appropriate to the site and use, may be submitted for consideration as a meritorious exception."

The Architectural and Site Standards section of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to granting a meritorious exception states that the Planning and Zoning Commission shall consider the following factors in determining the extent of any exception to be granted:

1. The extent to which the application meets other specific standards of this ordinance;
2. The extent to which the application meets the spirit and intent of this ordinance through the use of building materials, colors, and façade design to create a building of exceptional quality and appearance;
3. The positive or negative impact of the proposed project on surrounding property use and property values, in comparison to the expected impact of a project which could be built in conformance with the standards of this ordinance; and
4. The extent to which the proposed project accomplishes City goals.

MERITORIOUS DESIGN: The intent of the Architectural Standards Ordinance is to set standards for the appearance of multiple family buildings and corresponding site elements, which are recognized as enhancing property values and are in the interest of the general welfare of the City.

Staff supports the meritorious exception due to the innovative and modern design of the proposed building. Although the elevations do not meet the minimum masonry percentages on a per wall basis, the applicant has shown that the elevations do have more than 50 percent masonry on each elevation. Staff also feels that the use of stucco

in key locations helps to accent some of the recesses and offsets on the buildings, and is in keeping with the modern design. Staff is of the opinion that the use of stucco, along with brick and stone, multiple wall offsets, and distinct colors creates visual interest that help to break up the long wall planes, and which Staff feels will enhance the surrounding area.

However, Staff is of the opinion that the proposed exposed steel columns supporting the covered parking areas are not of an innovative or exceptional design and is not comfortable supporting this portion of the request. Section 146-139 (Architectural and Site Standards) of the Zoning Ordinance states that “exposed steel or timber support columns for covered parking structures shall be prohibited and shall be finished with a masonry finishing material to match the building.” Staff feels that utilizing masonry materials on the support columns would create a more cohesive look between the covered parking structures and the buildings on the subject property as intended by the ordinance.

IMPACT ON EXISTING DEVELOPMENT: Staff is of the opinion that the proposed design for the buildings should not negatively impact the existing developments surrounding the subject property.

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION: A meritorious exception shall not be granted to serve as a convenience to the applicant or for reasons related to economic hardship. Staff believes that this is not the case with the proposed architectural design and meritorious exception.

OPPOSITION TO OR SUPPORT OF REQUEST: Staff has not received any comments either in opposition to or in support of this request.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Location Map and Aerial Exhibit
- Letter of Intent
- Proposed Architectural Elevations
- Proposed Covered Parking Structure
- PowerPoint Presentation