

Design Review Comments

2217 Homestead Road Tri Pointe Housing

11-09-21 meeting with applicant team

Prepared by: Brian Peterson, AIA, Urban Designer, TOCH

Notes prepared 11-18-21

The meeting was to review an initial site concept featuring 100 townhouse units.

Site Design

1. Applicant explained that because of the relatively flat site, grading will be less extensive than on a hilly site, allowing for the preservation of some existing trees. On the site plan, there are several areas of tree preservation that form small park-like spaces throughout the site. Suggested to locate these so that they can be interconnected directly by a pathway system that loops through the site. Suggested furnishing some of the parklets with neighborhood amenities such as a children's play area and other gathering spaces.
2. The concept features a grid street plan which provides good connectivity within the site and also connects to the housing development to the west. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the streets.
3. Suggested making several pedestrian/trail connections to the Carolina North Forest trails on both the east and south sides of the parcel.
4. Along Homestead the homes are set back from the street, creating an opportunity to utilize landscape features to help establish a sense of entrance into the neighborhood. Landscape features in this area can also help contribute to the pedestrian character at the sidewalk edge along Homestead. A few benches or other features could help contribute to the "neighborliness" of the area as one walks along the Homestead sidewalk.
5. The stormwater pond is also located in this vicinity. Suggest designing the pond as an amenity rather than just an engineering necessity. Consider providing a "soft edge" with aquatic plants (more like a wetland environment) and edge features like stone outcrops where one could stand and "watch the tadpoles".

Buildings/Layout

Architectural drawings were not part of the review drawing but some general points were discussed:

6. The units are townhouses, with front loaded garages. Asked if rear loaded units could be provided. The team had looked into it, but the narrowness of the parcel did not leave much flexibility to do this.
7. Since the units will feature the garage in front, the architectural design will be critical to alleviate the sense of garage doors dominating the streetfront elevations. One strategy is to avoid long rows of units, and in this regard is helpful that of the groupings on the site plan are mostly 4 building pods.
8. Discussed the importance of architectural treatment of corners on pod end units. Units on the ends should have building entrances at the corner, with porches, pergolas or other architectural features. The sides of these units should have a composed architectural expression, with ample windows. The elevation character of the sides that face any of the small park spaces are especially important as they will visually prominent.
9. Within each pod, the fronts of the townhouses should be each slightly staggered several feet at least, on order to provide unit differentiation and avoid an overly linear, unbroken street elevation.
10. The garage door can be minimized on the front elevation by recessing it, or providing a visually dominant bay above it.
11. The front entrance to the units should be emphasized with porches, pergolas or other features that extend out to engage the small yard space between units.
12. Noted that these units might be ideal candidates for "Missing Middle" housing: units that are priced to be more attainable than typical market rate housing. Noted that there has been considerable interest from both the Council and the community at large for this type of housing. The housing development that will be built across the street, Bridgepoint, is an example.