

June 2, 2020

City of Salem Planning Division
555 Liberty Street SE
Room 305
Salem, Oregon 97301

Planner Dias,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment regarding the Class 3 Site Plan Review, Class 2 Adjustment and Class 1 Design Review for 1795 Fairgrounds Rd. NE in the Grant Neighborhood. As the record shows, the Grant Neighborhood Association (GNA) has had the opportunity to review Mr. Fahlman's proposal at a couple of different stages and offer some feedback on design and other considerations. However, due to the timing of the application, the GNA has not been able to formally meet with Mr. Fahlman and weigh his project application directly. We have invited Mr. Fahlman to our Thursday, June 4 meeting.

This letter will not express a support or oppose position but instead lays out concerns raised by both GNA board members and neighbors that have come up over the last few months. If the GNA decides to take a formal position on the matter after our June 4 meeting, we will send another letter, even if it is after the June 2 deadline for comment.

First, the record should reflect that we appreciate Mr. Fahlman's willingness to engage with the GNA early in his process. We were able to share our frank assessment of his design early in his process and we note some improvement to his drawings. While Fairgrounds Road is not under a design standard or overlay, there is still value in maintaining some kind of consistency with the surrounding neighborhood.

The application for variances to the Commercial Office zone highlight some of the challenges with developing this unique piece of property and drive both the GNA's and neighbor's concerns with the proposal. In short, they include density, parking, and sight lines.

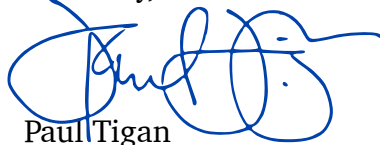
- Sight lines: This project requires special attention on mitigation measures for the six-way intersection of Winter, Fairgrounds, and Jefferson Streets. Specifically, vehicles traveling south on Winter are going to face obstacles in the line of sight for vehicles traveling south-west on Fairgrounds Road. The new building, landscaping, and parked vehicles all pose obstacles to the sight line and should be considered more thoroughly in the design and in conditions by the city. Variances to the required setback should be considered through this perspective as well.
- Density: The requested variance to the lot size based on density, by our calculations, doubles the amount of units that the lot would otherwise be able to support (from 3

to 6). It is the policy of the Grant Neighborhood Plan (Policy #11) that “density per building site in areas designated Multifamily should be no more than permitted by the zone code.” This is a Commercial Office zone, but this policy would apply as the proponent is proposing a multifamily use.

- The impacts of this density are myriad, especially when taking into consideration the recent changes to the multifamily code. Apart from parking, addressed below, this increased density will have an impact on trash collection along Madison Street, delivery vehicles and other commercial services, visitation to the building, and increased traffic.
- Parking: This project is the first in our neighborhood to make use of the revised multifamily code. Specifically, this project offers no off-street parking because it is within a quarter mile of the Cherriots core network. It goes without saying that even though there is no parking required, nor parking offered, residents of this apartment will still own cars and will need to park them on the street. The GNA regularly comments on the impacts of projects on parking and this one is no different. Additionally, we believe that the problematic sight lines will further reduce the amount of available parking.
 - To further ameliorate the lack of parking, and to encourage the use of walking/ biking and public transportation (the underlying purpose of the code changes), we encourage the city to require the developer to fully replace the entire sidewalk infrastructure on the triangle block, including all ADA requirements.
 - Additionally, consideration should be given to improving the crosswalks to the other side of Fairgrounds Road within the vicinity of the project. This is a very wide street with no clearly delineated crosswalks adjacent to the property being developed. Presumably his tenants will need to cross Fairgrounds Road safely to utilize public transit. The developer is saving a great amount of investment by not having to develop and maintain a parking lot - improvements to the walking and public transportation infrastructure should be required hand-in-hand with that benefit.

Thanks again for your consideration of our comments and other neighbors who may have provided their comments as well. In addition to these formal comments I have also provided all of our communications with the applicant.

Sincerely,



Paul Tigan

Land Use Chair

Grant Neighborhood Association



Paul Tigan <paultigan@gmail.com>

Cannery Triangle - 1795 Fairgrounds NE

Paul Tigan <paultigan@gmail.com>

Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 8:30 AM

To: Brandon Fahlman <brandon@kithkinre.com>

Cc: Sam Skillern <sam@salem1f.org>, Jeanne Corbey <cjboat835@yahoo.com>, Eric Bradfield <ebradfield@gmail.com>, Christopher Bechtel <bechtelcr@gmail.com>

Brandon -

Thanks for your thoughtful response to our questions. We appreciate being able to share our concerns and have a dialogue. We are not sure, as a neighborhood association, what our meeting schedule is looking like with restrictions on gatherings. We will be back in touch if we figure out how to make a meeting work in the near future and there is interest in having this project on the agenda. If not May, then likely June.

Thanks again,
Paul

On Tue, Apr 21, 2020 at 10:10 PM Brandon Fahlman <brandon@kithkinre.com> wrote:

Paul,

Thanks for the email.

I will admit that the section of Fairgrounds Rd within the Grant Neighborhood is a difficult stretch of properties from which to take design cues. There are multiple buildings from different eras and there doesn't seem to be even two commercial buildings which match each other in design or decade.

1795 Fairgrounds is also a fairly unique property to develop based on the size, shape, and required building setbacks for the property. A triangular building was the most practical shape to utilize the highest and best use for the land. I thought the flat roof would be appropriate for the neighborhood. I also prefer windows which are typically taller than they are wide. This is a window shape more commonly found in older homes and older commercial buildings. I originally designed the windows on the "Fairgrounds Rd Elevation" on the plans because I thought it would be fun and interesting, but I will likely be changing the windows to match the look of the windows on the "Winter St Elevation" as the fun and interesting look hasn't grown on me.

I love the character of stone and brick buildings - which were common in the 1920's - an era that is reflected in many of the homes in the neighborhood surrounding the subject property. Our City of Salem has been growing rapidly over the last 8 years. The cost of construction has risen considerably. I originally looked into having a brick mason build the exterior of the proposed building entirely out of brick. The "ballpark" quote I received was approximately \$25 per SqFt. That's approximately \$135,000 just to complete the brick on the exterior of the proposed building. I grew up in Salem. I am 34 years old. I do not have an extra \$135,000 to put into this project for the exterior to be made out of brick.

I can understand the initial opposition to steel siding. It's become a signature trend in modern commercial buildings and is non-conforming to your Neighborhood goal to "Maintain the Historical Character of Our Neighborhood." However, I do think that it is a beautiful material and I think that the proposed building would be a positive addition to the neighborhood. I am hopeful that the blending of historic design cues and modern building materials might be a compromise the Grant Association would support.

With regard to the parking situation - Salem adopted code changes to multifamily projects at the end of March 2020. It was adopted that any multifamily development of 3 or more units, if located within 1/4 mile of Cherriots Core Network, need not provide on-site parking. I understand that this would normally present a problem for the Neighborhood as parking issues are one of the most, if not the most, common disputes among neighbors.

1795 Fairgrounds currently is adjacent to approximately 370 lineal feet of available street parking. When using Salem's sizing standards for parallel parking this equates to roughly 17 available parking spaces surrounding this

one vacant triangular property. I have taken almost 2 dozen photos of the property since the beginning of February. I have taken photos on weekdays and weekends and week nights and on weekend nights. Not once has a vehicle been parked on any of the three available street frontages other than my own vehicle. It is my belief that six new units will likely have little to no impact to the neighbors.

Thanks!
Brandon Fahlman

On Tue, Apr 21, 2020 at 7:51 PM Paul Tigan <paultigan@gmail.com> wrote:

Brandon -

On behalf of the Grant Neighborhood Association, thank you for the engagement about your proposed project at 1795 Fairgrounds Rd. Grant NA prides itself on constructive dialog with project proponents like yourself and hope that will continue as you bring your project to fruition.

We have shared the designs you provided with the voting members of the board and we are passing along some consolidated comments. Based on our interaction with the city about a week ago, it sounds like your application is still pending. We have not been given direction from the city on how to meet during the governor's stay at home order. We hope that we are able to meet with you as a group after your application is finalized as is standard practice.

First, the property that you have acquired has been a semi-regular topic of conversation at the neighborhood association, likely due to its undeveloped character and prominence on Fairgrounds Road. Ideas have come and gone (usually geared towards greenspace utilization), but just a note for your sake about the visual prominence of the property.

Grant NA recognizes that there is not a design overlay on Fairgrounds Road and that the diagonal character of the street does not lend itself to consistent development. However, one of the chartered goals of our neighborhood association is to "Maintain the Historical Character of Our Neighborhood." For this street, we look to the type of mid-century storefront character that probably begins with the Columbus Hall building on Shipping (constructed 1950) and the more typical single story hardware storefront across the street (constructed 1956). We would not expect or suggest replicas of those styles, but note them for reference. When property is re-developed in a manner out of character with the neighborhood (see external siding at 1695 Fairgrounds for example), there's no guarantee that the property ever loses it's "sore thumb" appeal.

The city has been doing some work, slowly, to improve the walkability/crossability of the street, including a project this summer to improve the crossing at Norway and Fairgrounds Road. We look forward to the development of the 1795 property bringing all sidewalk facilities up to the city's current design standard. This is true of the visual appeal of the street and we will welcome the landscaping design such as street trees. We do note that your design contains no parking accommodations for the residents of the property and would like to hear more about the rationale behind that decision and if there will be any other mitigations for that additional parking pressure in the neighborhood.

Thanks again for the early engagement for your project. We will close out by reiterating that we are excited about your investment in our neighborhood and hope that our input can help you develop a project that is both successful for you and also works well with the context of our neighborhood. We look forward to seeing more detailed plans as part of the city's design review process and providing more feedback when appropriate.

For the Neighborhood Association,
Paul Tigan
Land Use Chair



Brandon Fahlman

Realtor® / Principal Broker (Licensed in Oregon)

Kithkin Real Estate

A 295 Patterson St NW, Salem, OR 97304 **P** [\(503\) 930-2786](tel:(503)930-2786)

E brandon@kithkinre.com **W** www.kithkinrealestate.com



1795 Fairgrounds Rd NE

Brandon Fahlman <brandon@kithkinre.com>

Sat, May 9, 2020 at 9:35 PM

To: Paul Tigan <paultigan@gmail.com>

Cc: Samuel Skillern <sam@salem1f.org>, Jeanne and Corbey Boatwright <cjboat835@yahoo.com>, Christopher Bechtel <bechtelcr@gmail.com>, Eric Bradfield <ebradfield@gmail.com>

Hi Paul,

I will pencil in the evening of June 4th. Just send over the Zoom link when you have it.

I used to live on a private loop in West Salem serving 6 single-family homes. The private loop was narrow and garbage trucks wouldn't come down it. The trash cans ended up on the street in front of my house. My wife and I used to call it "Garbage Can Row" and we dreaded Wednesday mornings.

I've thought about how I might mitigate potential problems with 12 garbage or recycling cans and 6 glass containers being out on Madison St on garbage day. I do not have a perfect solution. I self manage a couple of rental properties. I will likely be self-managing this 6-unit complex for many years. The best I can do is give the future tenants the tools to succeed. I cannot force them to use the tools I provide, but I can provide the tools.

The proposed site plan gives a direct pedestrian garbage route to Madison St from the North side of the building. I plan to advise my tenants to place their garbage and recycling in front of the yellow curbs on Madison. If done correctly I do not believe the garbage and recycling will impact the number of available street parking spaces. These are the "tools" I plan to provide.

When I was brainstorming the layout I had also considered a dumpster. If a dumpster were placed on the North side of the building I would need to improve a driveway for truck access which may damage the root systems of the existing City trees and would likely need to limb up the City trees on that side. Winter St and Fairgrounds Rd currently do not have mature trees or vegetation to "hide" a dumpster. The location and type of garbage areas on which I ultimately settled was a combination of making the garbage area "disappear" as best as possible and also giving what I would think might be a locking outdoor storage area for the tenants. My parents own an 8-plex on Hawthorne Ave in Salem and occasionally you have one tenant filling the dumpster with large items or when they move in or out of a unit and it can be problematic for the other tenants. I hope that individual garbage areas would give tenants a better sense of "ownership" of their own garbage and recycling area and would lead to a cleaner overall garbage area.

I do not plan to provide private open space or balconies. Common open space will be available around the perimeter of the building and I plan to meet current code including a 500 SqFt (with 20' all sides) open contiguous open space at the South end of the development.

Yes! I plan to maintain the site prior to development. I just closed on the purchase on 5/5/2020. They left me quite the grass heap. I was out there today (Saturday) knocking it down with a weed-whacker and will be out there again to finish in the next couple of days.

Thanks and I look forward to answering any questions about the development at the June meeting.

Regards,
Brandon

On Sat, May 9, 2020 at 11:08 AM Paul Tigan <paultigan@gmail.com> wrote:

Brandon -

Hope this email finds you well. The Grant Neighborhood Association (GNA) met on Thursday, testing out how a virtual meeting might suit the group. I shared our correspondence thus far and we would welcome you to our June meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for the evening of Thursday, June 4th. Our virtual meeting went well enough that we are likely to hold the June meeting via Zoom as well.

The GNA generally does not take positions regarding potential issues/land use applications until we the proponent is given the opportunity to share with the group. However, there were a few questions about the design of the project.

- The first was regarding the plan for trash cans on Madison Street. It would seem that if there are separate receptacles for each of the six units, it would be quite the scene with both on street parking and trash pickup. Do you have ideas about how that might be handled?
- The second was about open space/private open space for the first floor apartments. Will there be any incorporated into the design? Similarly, will there be any second floor balconies?
- Finally, the group asked if there was a plan to maintain the property prior to development. When we last looked, it looked like it could use a haircut. Then again, so could everybody else!

Thanks - and do let us know if you would like to bring your project to the association in June. I'm sure by then you will have progressed down the design road further and will have more to share with the group. I think that it would be helpful to us to hear if and how recent changes to the multi-family code facilitated your development proposals. The GNA did not take a position on those changes to the code, but we are interested in hearing how they are impacting development choices within the neighborhood.

Thanks again,
Paul



Brandon Fahlman

Realtor® / Principal Broker (Licensed in Oregon)

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