



Bexley Planning Commission

Planning Staff Report – February 22, 2016

Parkview and Main apartments – Conceptual Review

Application #: 16-000

Location: 2106 E. Main St.

Zoning: Mixed Use Commercial (MUC) District and Main Street (MS) District

Request: The applicant is seeking:

- Review and approval of a new 4-story apartment building including retail space on the first floor.
- Review of riparian corridor impacts in Bexley Code section 1225 and the Alum Creek Preservation District.

Applicant: Michael Lusk Architecture (Parkview & main Apartments)

Owner: Parkview-Main II, LLC

A. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The applicant seeks environmental review for a mixed-use infill project along the Main Street Corridor. As in all projects of this type, there are some complexities involved with developing infill along a mixed-use urban corridor. As such, staff is considering this month's Planning Commission review to be more along the lines of a conceptual review in order to begin the process of understanding a number of issues.

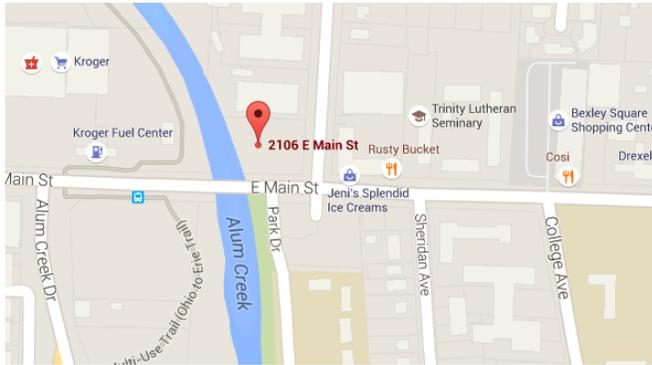
Overall, staff is very supportive of this type of development approach, providing a mixed-use multi-story structure along Main Street. The proposed development follows the fundamental Main Street Guidelines principles, including:

- Building fronting on Main Street with little or no setback from the public right-of-way
- A mix of uses
- Front door access from Main Street
- Avoiding surface parking / visible parking along Main Street frontage

Specific aspects of the project must be discussed and reviewed in further detail and are described in the remainder of this report

B. BACKGROUND

This project is located in a key location on the Main Street corridor, as the first site on the north side of Main Street when entering Bexley from the west. The site of a former gas station, this location has been vacant for many years.



The site at 2106 E Main Street is located immediately adjacent to Alum Creek and the intersection of Parkview and Main Street. Multi-family residential is immediately to the north.

Zoning

Located in the Mixed Use Commercial (MUC) District and Main Street (MS) District this review of the site design and architecture is based on the Main Street Design Guidelines.

1.a Main Street District

As described above, the overall approach of this infill development is very much in keeping with the guiding principles of the Main Street Design Guidelines. As staff is considering initial PC review in keeping with the concept of a conceptual review, more general comments are provided below than the entire Guideline comparison charts that will be provide in subsequent reviews.

Architecture

The approach is more homogenous in character than is typical for mixed-use structures along Main Street. The first floor has a lower height (10') than the typical retail-style first floor storefront. Related, there is not a strong distinction in the character of the first floor from the upper stories as is encouraged in the Guidelines. All remaining floors are also at 10' in height, which gives the building a bit of a squat appearance when coupled with the short first floor. The first floor does sit about 5' above the grade of Main Street. The result is that the building does meet the Guidelines' suggested building height of 50', but staff would encourage adding some height to the structure in order to improve the building appearance, even if an encroachment above that suggested height is the result.

The Parkview elevation involves a ramped entrance to provide access. Planning Commission input on the architectural approach to that first floor elevation will be useful in guiding potential revisions.

Exterior Materials

The applicant has proposed materials that are largely in keeping with the Guidelines. These include brick, glass, metal, and cast stone along with canvas canopies. More specific details including material samples can be provided by the applicant for subsequent review.

1.b Alum Creek Riparian Corridor District

The site is within the Alum Creek Preservation District, which generally calls for a riparian corridor setback minimum of 100' from the center of the creek (1225.07). The current proposal does not meet that setback; however, the code specifically notes that challenges to the development of sites along Main Street might require the consideration of variances to this standard in those locations.

The plans have been forwarded to the City Engineer for further review and analysis, and the relevant code sections are provided below for your reference:

1225.07 RIPARIAN SETBACKS.

Subject to the inclusion of floodplains and wetlands as determined by Chapter 1225, the extent of a riparian setback shall be delineated based upon the following method:

- (a) *The setback distance from the centerline of the stream must be sized as the greater of the following:*
 - (1) *The regulatory 100-year floodplain based on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapping; or*
 - (2) *100 feet from the center of Alum Creek.*
- (Ord. 36-12. Passed 11-27-12.)*

1225.11 PROHIBITED USES IN RIPARIAN SETBACKS.

Any use not authorized under Section 1225.10 is prohibited in riparian setbacks.

1225.111 List of Prohibited Uses. Prohibited uses are not limited to those examples listed here:

- (a) *Construction. Construction of buildings or structures of any kind or size are prohibited except as provided for in Sections 1225.112 and 1225.13. This restriction applies to new construction, and does not apply to existing residential structures and associated accessory structures.*

1225.13 VARIANCES WITHIN RIPARIAN SETBACKS.

- (a) *The Board or Commission may grant a variance to this Chapter 1225 as provided for in that section of the City of Bexley Zoning Code applicable to the Board or Commission reviewing the application. In addition to the findings required by that Section of the Zoning Code, the Board or Commission must consider the following:*
 - (1) *The native vegetation of the property.*
 - (2) *The extent to which the requested variance impairs the flood control, erosion control, water quality protection, or other functions of the riparian setback. This determination must be based on sufficient technical and scientific data.*
 - (3) *Soil-disturbing activities permitted in the riparian setback through variances must minimize clearing to the extent possible and must include the use of Best Management Practices necessary to minimize erosion and control sediment.*
 - (4) *The degree to which the presence of significant impervious cover, or smooth vegetation such as maintained lawns, in the riparian setback compromises its benefits to any waterway.*
- (b) *In order to maintain the riparian setback to the maximum extent practicable, the Board or Commission may consider granting variations to other area or setback requirements imposed on a property by the sections of the City of Bexley Zoning Code applicable to the Board or Commission reviewing the application.*
- (c) *The City of Bexley recognizes that variance applications may need to be submitted for planned development in the following areas:*
 - (1) *The commercial sites on the north and south side of East Main Street which border the creek.*
 - (2) *Capital University's development and expansion area north of Astor Avenue and south of East Main Street.*
 - (3) *The targeted redevelopment area at Livingston and Mayfield.*

The above represent areas of anticipated future development, and it is understood and expected that variances will be granted for developments in these development zones, provided however that any development plans that require a variance will limit the impact to native vegetation, address flood control, erosion control, and water quality impact.

(Ord. 36-12. Passed 11-27-12.)

1.c Parking

The applicant has proposed a total of 45 parking spaces, located within the first floor of the structure and partially submerged from grade. The applicant has indicated that there may be

some additional spaces available on the property to the north of this site which is under the same ownership group and is planned to provide vehicular access to this site. The applicant has also requested that the potential for on-street parking be investigated.

Use	Guidelines Recommendation	Required
Residential – 26 units	2.0 per unit	+ 52 spaces
Retail – 1,592 square feet	3.0 per 1,000 square feet	+ 5 spaces
	Credit: credit of ½ space for each adjacent on-street space	- TBD space
	Reduction: minus 2 for alley access to parking area	- TBD spaces
		TOTAL: TBD off-street spaces required

The plans have been forwarded to the City Engineer to explore the potential for on-street parking in this location. This includes the option of “bump-ins” to the curblines of Parkview. Any on-street parking along Main Street at this site would very likely require the relocation of a COTA bus stop, so that is another point of discussion/investigation. The potential location of any required handicap-accessible spaces related to the commercial use will also need to be determined.

It should be noted that this is a small site, bordered on both sides by a riparian corridor and street frontage. In order to meet the important goals of the Guidelines regarding site development, building placement, multi-story structures and mixed-use approaches, creative solutions to resolve parking challenges are needed – particularly for commercial uses. The Planning Commission should take this into account when considering the parking approach.

C. CONSIDERATIONS

Site plan

Site access is provided through the building on the lot to the north. This is a somewhat unusual condition, but a creative solution to accessing this property without adding curb cuts along the street frontage. The city staff will work with the applicant to insure that proper access easements are secured to allow this arrangement to work for the foreseeable future of this development.

Details with regard to trash collection and dumpster storage will need to be provided by the applicant.

Landscape Plan

The applicant has provided a landscape plan that will need to be reviewed by the Tree and Public Garden Commission. Much of the landscape plan is in or adjacent to the rights-of-way along Parkview Avenue and Main Street. Also, changes related to potential “bump-ins” along Parkview would require a significant revision to this plan. This review by the TPGC should also include plans indicating the impacts to vegetation along the Alum Creek corridor and riparian setback.

Mix of Uses

This proposal does provide a mix of use, but in a limited approach. With only 1,562 square feet of retail, the PC should work with the applicant to ensure that the street frontage is well activated. The location of the residential amenity space could help with this. Typically, staff would advocate for greater commercial usage on the first floor. We do understand the limitations of this site given its location adjacent to the Alum Creek bridge and limited availability of dedicated commercial parking spaces without creating surface parking.

D. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

No additional comments.

E. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Staff supports generally supports this proposed development, and recommends that the application be tabled until the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting in order for some of the outstanding issues detailed in this report to be further researched and clarified.

Prepared by:

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