



# MEMORANDUM

<b>Date:</b> January 26, 2024	
<b>To:</b> Brian Froelich, Senior Planner	<b>Organization:</b> City of Capitola
<b>From:</b> RRM Design Group	<b>Title:</b> Design Review Team
<b>Project Name:</b> 38 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Apartments	<b>Project Number:</b> 1783-08-CU24
<b>Topic:</b> 1098 38 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Apartments Design Peer Review	

Dear Brian,

We have reviewed the proposed design for compliance with the City of Capitola Objective Standards (OS) Ordinance, found within Chapter 17.82 – Objective Standards for Multifamily and Mixed-Use Residential Development within the City Municipal Code.

Project documents reviewed include PA0.1 Title Sheet, PA0.2 Amenity Map, PA0.3 Existing Site Context, PS1.1 Boundary and Topographic Survey, PS1.2 Boundary and Topographic Survey, PS1.3 Boundary and Topographic Survey, C1.0 Grading and Drainage Plan West, C1.1 Grading and Drainage Plan East, C2.0 Utility Plan, C3.0 Public Improvements Plan, C4.0 Stormwater Control Plan, C5.0 Off-Site Storm Drain Plan & Profile, PA1.1 Architectural Site Plan, PA1.2 Fire Access Plan, PA1.3 Site Lighting Plan, PA1.4 Unit Mix Plans, PAA2.1 Building A – Floor Plans, PAA2.2 Building A – Floor and Roof Plan, PAA3.1 Building A – Exterior Elevations, PAB2.1 Building A – Floor Plans, PAB2.2 Building A – Floor and Roof Plan, PAB3.1 Building A – Exterior Elevations, PAC2.1 Building A – Floor Plans, PAC2.2 Building A – Floor and Roof Plan, PAC3.1 Building A – Exterior Elevations, PAD2.1 Building A – Floor Plans, PAD2.2 Building A – Floor and Roof Plan, PAD3.1 Building A – Exterior Elevations, PA2.1 Studio and 1-Bedroom Unit Plans, PA2.2 2-Bedroom Unit Plans, PA2.3 3-Bedroom Unit Plans, PA4.1 Design Narrative, PA4.2 Exterior Conceptual Renderings, PA4.3 Exterior Conceptual Renderings, PA4.4 Exterior Conceptual Renderings, PA4.5 Architectural Character – Contemporary California Craftsman, PA5.1 Materials Board, PA6.1 Objective Design Standards, L1.1 Tree Protection and Removal Plan, L2.1 Tree Mitigation Plan, L2.2 Landscape Plan, L2.3 Open Space, L2.4 Fencing Exhibit, L2.5 Landscape Materials Exhibit, L3.1 Irrigation Plan and Schedule, L3.2 Irrigation Notes, L4.1 Planting List, JT1.01 Dry Utility Standards, JT1.02 Dry Utility Intent.

**Neighborhood Character and Patterns**

According to the City of Capitola Zoning Map, the project site is zoned Multi-Family Residential, Medium Density (RM-M). The parcel is currently vacant and located along 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, within a generally single-family neighborhood. The area immediately surrounding the project site is characterized by a variety of land uses, including single-family residential parcels to the north, commercial parcels to the east, and mobile-home residential parcels to the west and the south.

**Project Design Review**

The project proposes to construct 52 units of affordable family housing available to low-income households on a 1.98-acre site. Based upon a review of the project plan set, the applicant proposes an architectural style that most closely resembles “Contemporary Coastal” and will be referred to as such going forward within this review.



*Project Location*

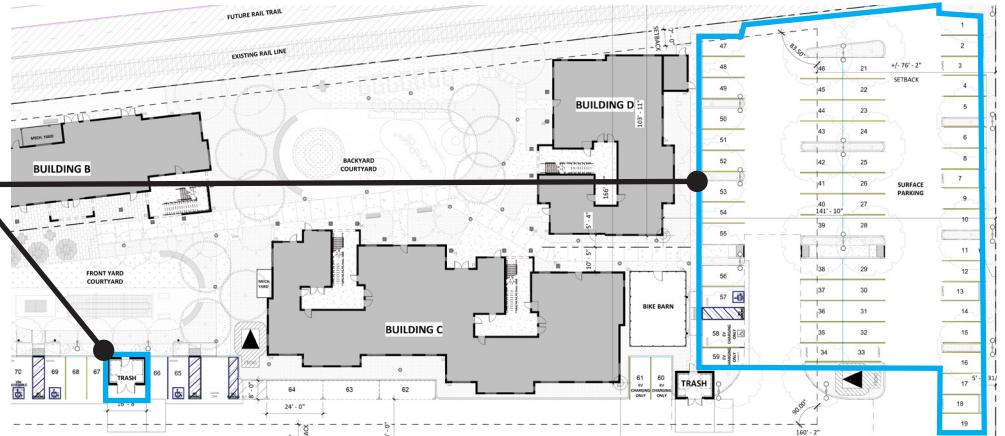
*Site Planning*

Site planning involves an understanding of appropriate building placement and configuration, but also the consideration of surrounding uses, landscape design, adjacent uses, hardscape, and parking. The applicant has successfully designed the site to be consistent with OS 17.82.040.A, by providing attractive transitions from the public to private realm while also engaging the public street frontage. Additionally, the applicant complies with OS 17.82.040.B.1.a, which requires developments located in the Residential Multifamily (RM) and Mixed Use, Neighborhood (MU-N) zones to include a minimum sidewalk width of 6 feet along the public right-of-way. Proposed interior sidewalks are shown at 6-feet which also complies with OS 17.060.B.4, which requires sidewalks at a minimum of 6 feet connecting building entrances with public streets.

In reviewing the Site Plan, the applicant has appropriately provided parking spaces at the rear of the site to conceal proposed parking from the public realm/street frontage (OS 17.82.050.A). In addition, according to OS 17.82.050.B.2, the maximum width of a new driveway crossing a public sidewalk is 20 feet for a two-car driveway. The applicant is currently proposing a 24 feet driveway on the western side of the project site for vehicular access. The applicant should consider reducing this driveway access dimension to 20 feet (OS 17.82.050.B.2), unless public safety requirements dictate otherwise. Additionally, the applicant has successfully incorporated street facing patios and provided a landscaping buffer adjacent to the sidewalk to enhance the public streetscape (OS 17.82-3.B.2).

While the proposed refuse storage areas are appropriately screened from the public view by a solid enclosure, the applicant should reconsider the location of the western enclosure, as it is located near proposed open space. Moving the enclosure to the eastern parking lot will ensure unwanted odors are not impacting the front yard courtyard, assuming this works for trash company and client program.

Consider re-locating trash enclosure to eastern parking lot to avoid conflict with frontyard courtyard.

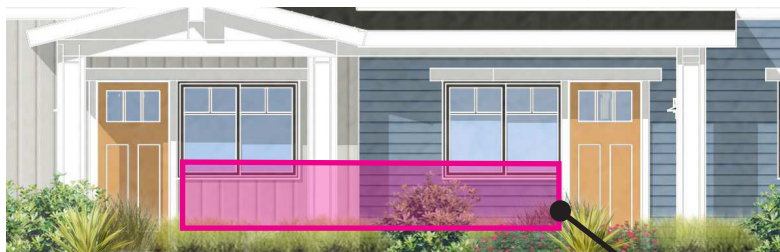


*Proposed Site Plan*

The applicant is currently proposing four street trees along 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, however, there must be at least one street tree for every 30 feet of linear feet of sidewalk. Consider adding an additional street tree as there is a 60 foot gap between the middle street trees provided (OS 17.82.040.B.2.a). Additionally, street trees should be provided within the sidewalk (OS 17.82.040.B.2.a) in tree wells a minimum of 36 inches in width and 36 inches in length (OS 17.82.040.B.2.c).

*Architecture*

The applicant has successfully proposed a project that aesthetically complements the surrounding neighborhood by providing well designed affordable housing units that respect the scale and is compatible with nearby uses. The Western Elevations of Building A and Building B facing 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue successfully offer welcoming building frontages that serve as an appropriate transition from the public realm to the private realm (OS 17.82.060.A). While the proposed project complies with the OS Entry Design standards, the applicant should consider adding railing and/or other design intervention to the public street facing porches to create further definition between the private and public realms (OS 17.82.060.C).



*Building A Porch*



*Railing Example*



*Building B Porch*

Consider adding a railing to the porch to create further separation of the private and public realms.

Building massing, or the way the building is sized and appears, is a primary and important component of building design. The applicant has appropriately provided projecting and recessed elements throughout the project design to break up the façade and minimize a boxy appearance (OS 17.82.070 B.1). In reviewing the Floor Plans, the applicant has appropriately provided a projecting or recessed element of at least 2 feet in depth at every 25 feet or less on the street-facing façades of Building A and Building B (OS 17.82.070.B.1.a). To further enhance the design of Building C and Building D, the applicant should consider adding additional massing breaks on the West, East, or South Elevations to provide greater variation.

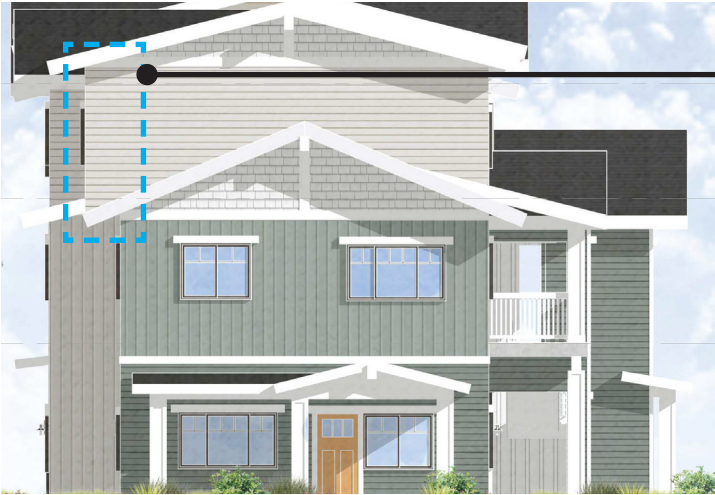
Articulation and detailing are important components to help provide richness and depth within a project design. In reviewing Building A, the applicant has appropriately proposed various articulation elements, such as bumping out sections of the building to provide enhanced visual interest and incorporating setbacks on the upper levels to break up large elevations (OS 17.82.080.A.2). However, in reviewing the North, East, and South Elevations, the applicant should consider adding additional articulation to create more interest at Building A and to break-up blank space to provide architectural integrity on all sides of the structure (OS 17.82.080.A.3).



Incorporate articulation/detailing on elevation to minimize blank space.

*Building A North Elevation*

Articulation and detailing are important components to help provide richness and depth within a project design. In reviewing Building A, the applicant has appropriately proposed various articulation elements, such as bumping out sections of the building to provide enhanced visual interest and incorporating setbacks on the upper levels to break up large elevations (OS 17.82.080.A.2). However, in reviewing the North, East, and South Elevations, the applicant should consider adding additional articulation to create more interest at Building A and to break-up blank space to provide architectural integrity on all sides of the structure (OS 17.82.080.A.3).



Update this elevation as the third floor does not appear structurally sound.

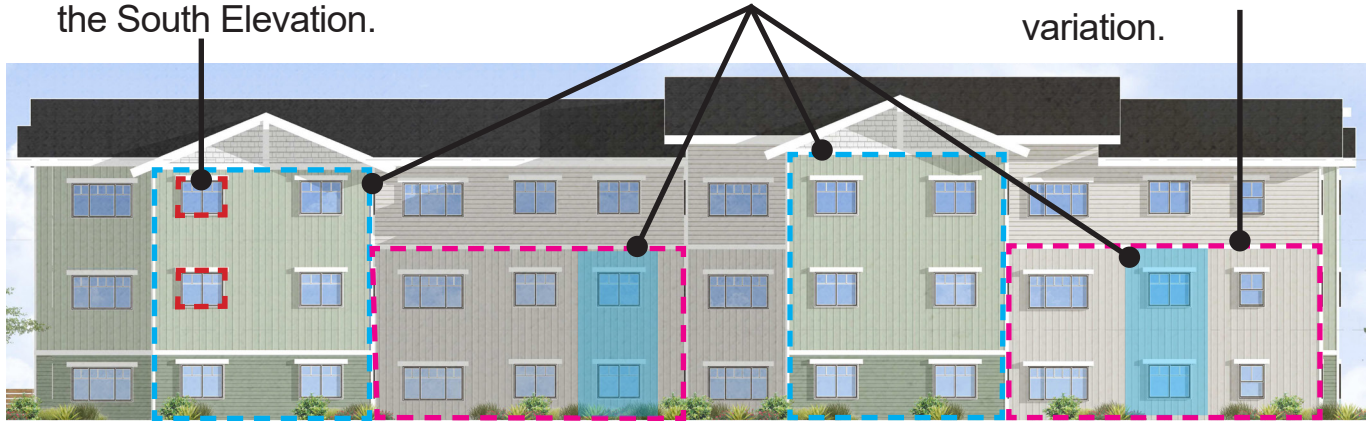
*Building B West Elevation*

In reviewing the proposed elevations for Building C, there are opportunities for further articulation and detailing on the East, West, and South Elevations to enhance the overall building design. Specifically, the South Elevation presents opportunities to utilize two-story massing and vertical articulation elements to break up the three-story wall plane to increase building variation. For example, the applicant may consider extending the lower floors or using setbacks on upper floors as the building currently lacks vertical articulation (OS 17.82.080.A.3). Create additional articulation detailing through proposing a diverse set of window sizes and heights that coincide with varying stacking articulation elements that differ from floor to floor.

Modify window sizes and locations to provide variety across the South Elevation.

Explore opportunities to enhance the project through pop-outs or upper floor setbacks.

Extend lower floors to add vertical articulation variation.



*Building C South Elevation*

Building D has similar opportunities as Building C to further enhance the design of the structure by adding further articulation and detailing to the North, East, and South Elevations (OS 17.82.080.A.3).

Roof forms are important in conveying the architectural style and providing visual interest within a project. In reviewing the project design, the applicant has appropriately proposed gable style roof forms, which are considered appropriate with the proposed architectural style. The Western Elevations of Building A and B have successfully proposed roof eaves projecting at least two feet from the street facing building wall (OS 17.82.080.B.4.a), however, the applicant should consider raising the pitch of the roof above each patio space and raise the overall height of the patio to enhance the prominence of the entry way along the public realm and to ensure consistency within the roof design and proposed architectural style.



Consider raising the pitch of the roof and raising the overall height of the patio to enhance the entryway.

*Building A West Elevation*

Generally, the applicant has successfully proposed stylistically appropriate windows throughout the project design. The applicant should ensure door styling and windows with divided lite details are carried throughout project submittal and final construction. In reviewing the Building Elevations, the applicant has appropriately proposed various window sizes to enhance visual interest on Building A and Building B, however, explore opportunities to provide differing window sizes, heights, and consider pairing window variety with stackable elements on the South Elevation of Building C to improve the project design. Roof and Window Details are provided on Sheet PA4.5 with the intention that wood trim would be applied at window headers only. The applicant should consider extending the wood trim around the entire window, similar to the door approach shown at the Entry Porch Detail. In addition, the applicant should consider modifying the proposed column style to more closely reflect the image shown on Sheet PA4.5, depicting columns with stone base to add greater variation to the materials being utilized within the project design (OS 17.82.080.A.1).

Extend window trim around entire window, similar to the example below.



*Window Detail*



*Example of Window Trim*

Consider updating columns to the example shown below.



*Proposed Columns*



*Example of Columns*

The applicant has successfully proposed primary building entryway designs that feature covered elements that are visible from the public realm/street and are also connected to the public sidewalk (OS 17.82.060.C.1.a). However, the applicant should explore ways to further enhance the prominence of the entryways through inclusion of additional design interventions such as, raising the height of the primary entrance or recessing the entryway.

Colors and materials provide and add visual interest to a building design. In reviewing the proposed color palette Balmy, Secret Cove, Kind Green, Rockwood Blue Green, Jardin, Greenfield, Dockside Blue, and Smoky Blue, are consistent with the selected architectural style (OS 17.82.080.B.3.h). The proposed material palette of Asphalt Shingle, Board and Batten, Lap Siding, and Shingle Siding are appropriate for the “Contemporary” style (OS 17.82.080.B.3.i). On the Roof and Window Detail the materials transition on the outside corner, the applicant should ensure that materials transition at inside corners instead of outside corners. Separately, on the North Elevation of Building B and the West Elevation of Building C, there is a wood railing material proposed that is not used anywhere else on the project, consider removing or using similar railing styles. Overall, the applicant has proposed an appropriate color and materials palette that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood uses and the coastal aesthetic of the City.

*General Comments*

Consider extending the proposed trees along the southern property line to cover the entire boundary line to further screen the project from adjacent uses.

## **Design Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made to better respond to the proposed “Contemporary Coastal” architectural style and to enhance the overall project design.

### *Site Planning*

1. Consider reducing driveway access dimension from 24 feet to 20 feet (OS 17.82.050.B.2).
2. Explore ways to relocate western trash enclosure to the eastern parking lot to maintain proposed open space.
3. Consider adding an additional street tree to remove 60 foot gap between the middle street trees provided (OS 17.82.040.B.2.a).
4. Provide street trees within the sidewalk (OS 17.82.040.B.2.a)
5. Street trees must be in wells that are a minimum of 36 inches in width and 36 inches in length (OS 17.82.040.B.2.c).

### *Architecture*

6. Consider adding railing to the public street facing porches to create further separation from the public realm (OS 17.82.060.C).
7. Explore opportunities for further massing breaks along the western, eastern, and southern elevations on Buildings C and D.
8. Consider adding additional articulation to the northern, eastern, and southern elevations of Building A and break-up blank space (OS 17.82.080.A.3).
9. Update the western elevation of Building B to ensure structural consistency.
10. Consider breaking up Building B on the Eastern Elevation with articulation elements to remove blank space (OS 17.82.080.A.3).
11. Examine the possibility of extending the lower floors or using setbacks on upper floors on the eastern, western, and southern elevations of Building C (OS 17.82.080.A.3).
12. Explore ways to add additional articulation detailing through differing window sizes and heights that coincide with varying stacking articulation elements that differ from floor to floor.
13. Consider further enhancing the design of Building D by adding articulation and variation to the northern, eastern, and southern elevations (OS 17.82.080.A.3).
14. Consider raising the pitch of the roof above Building A and Building B patio space to enhance the prominence of the entry way along the public realm.
15. Extend the wood trim around the entire window.



16. Modify window sizes and heights across the South Elevation on Building C and consider pairing window variety with stackable articulation elements.
17. Consider modifying the proposed column style to the image shown on Sheet PA4.5 depicting columns with stone base to add variation to the building (OS 17.82.080.A.1).

Overall, we feel the applicant has proposed a project that is appropriate to the location and surrounding context of the site. However, as addressed above, we have a few design concerns regarding massing, articulation, and windows, among others, that will have to be adequately addressed by the applicant to ensure a project that appropriately addresses the existing neighborhood context while also being consistent with City's Objective Standards Ordinance and desire for high-quality new developments.

Very truly yours,

**RRM DESIGN GROUP**