

**CITY OF NORTH OLMSTED  
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMISSION**

**REPORT**

**COMS07-0026: Biddulph Trail  
25747 Butternut Ridge Road  
(Ward 4)**

**I. Project Summary**

The project consists of a new cluster home development of 29 residences on a 10.82 acre parcel of land located east of the Springvale Golf Course with entrance on the south side of Butternut Ridge Road. The property currently is zoned "Single Family Residential" and would require rezoning to "Residential Cluster District."

**II. Conformance with 2005 Master Plan**

The Master Plan provides recommendations for future land use patterns within the City. The section captioned "Future Land Use Plan" states:

The existing land use pattern occurred over time and the parcel patterns and uses were appropriate for those times and uses. However, as private owners explore redevelopment opportunities and seek zoning or land use changes from the City reflecting those opportunities, it is imperative that land use patterns, configurations, and arrangements reflecting total community interest are considered.

Further, the subsection thereto titled "Single Family Residential Options" provides:

In addition to the traditional one and two family structures associated with single family residential land use, other types and styles of residential development may be appropriate in various areas of the City. ...

- a. *Cluster Residential.* The cluster option contemplates a planned residential area where dwelling units are designed in groups and clusters as a coordinated architectural and site entity. This option allows for greater flexibility and use of space than in standard single family developments.

*Appropriate areas for cluster development:* areas of infill or redevelopment, areas of vacant or underutilized backlands of deep properties, areas of transition between single family and other higher intensity land uses.

  
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*Examples: ...*, undeveloped backlands along major collectors (Clague, Columbia, Barton Roads), lands adjacent to parks and open space areas.

The proposed cluster home development clearly is designed as a coordinated architectural and site entity that allows for greater flexibility and use of available space. In addition, it not only encompasses an area of vacant, underutilized backland along a major collector (i.e., Butternut Ridge Road) but also is adjacent to an open space area (i.e., Springvale Golf Course). Finally, it helps segue from the higher intensity uses on nearby Great Northern Boulevard (i.e., the Moen headquarters at the International Centre, the Madison at Butternut Ridge apartments) to the single family homes on Butternut Ridge Road and on the streets adjacent to it (e.g., Fitch Road, Revere Drive, etc.)

For the reasons stated above, the proposed rezoning to Residential Cluster District meets and/or exceeds the intent and provisions of the City's 2005 Master Plan.

### **III. Conformance with Landmarks District Regulations**

At its meeting on January 14, 2008, the City's Landmarks Commission denied a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the existing structure at 25747 Butternut Ridge Road. That denial effectively functioned as a six month moratorium on the cluster home proposal and encouraged the developer to refine its plan.

Following further discussions at various subcommittee and commission meetings, the Landmarks Commission, at its meeting on April 14, 2008, approved a Certificate of Appropriateness to include the relocation and renovation of the structure, with the following conditions:

1. the house will be on a foundation before or simultaneously as the other homes in the development;
2. there will be leniency on the time in which the addition is completed;
3. there will be no additional changes to the front of the home and it will be renovated as shown in the plans submitted; and,
4. the reconstructed home will be inhabitable before the completion of twenty-five percent of the development.

Also at that meeting, the Landmarks Commission approved an additional Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction to include an entry drive, landscaping and building units for a cluster development within the City's landmarks district. The Commission further found and determined that the proposal is consistent with the guidelines of Chapter 165.11 and that:

1. the new buildings are designed to be compatible with other buildings in the landmarks district while still reflecting work of contemporary times;
2. the proposal reflects a quality of design, materials and craftsmanship to develop such character as to contribute positively to the landmarks district;

3. the proposal reflects design concepts such as rhythm, proportion, building form and materials as to establish consistency between the new units and the landmarks district; and,
4. the proposal includes an interaction of pedestrians and public space in a manner consistent with the character of the landmarks district.

#### **IV. Conformance with Residential Cluster District**

##### **A. Intent**

Chapter 1136.01 describes the intent of a residential cluster district as follows:

In order to allow greater flexibility and utilization of space than is possible through the strict application of minimum requirements of the standard one and two family residential districts and to provide a reasonable variation in dwelling unit types and density, dwellings may be clustered in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter on land zoned in a Residential Cluster District in order to:

- (a) Encourage the conservation of any natural amenities on a site, including, but not limited to, steep slopes, wooded areas, floodplains and wetlands;
- (b) Increase the available housing choices within the City by providing for a variety of dwelling unit types on smaller sized lots than in conventional subdivisions;
- (c) Provide a more flexible and attractive residential development that will allow for a clustering of buildings in order to allow a greater utilization of open space; and,
- (d) Allow for a reasonable increase in residential density for areas well served by transportation and other community facilities.
- (e) Provide for rezoning consistent with the adopted Master Plan.

The site plan for the proposed cluster home development is consistent with the provisions of Chapter 1136.01 inasmuch as it preserves the natural amenities on the parcel, particularly the creek, ravine and wooded area on its southern end. The proposed cluster development not only will increase the available housing choices within the City but also will provide a greater utilization of open space within the development itself. Proposed for an area well served by transportation and other community facilities, the proposal for 29 residences represents a reasonable increase in residential density. Finally, as discussed above, the proposed rezoning is consistent with the adopted Master Plan.

##### **B. Development Standards**

Chapter 1136.04 provides the development standards for a residential cluster district.

## Site Design

The site design for the proposed subdivision is complementary to the surrounding historic district. The developer has incorporated the Landmark Commission's and the Planning and Design Commission's comments into the site design of the project. The project is sensitive to the existing setback from Butternut Ridge Road. The original house is being saved, relocated and renovated to keep the look the same from the street. The balance of the subdivision will be screened from Butternut Ridge Road.

The street is lined with trees and has a sidewalk to replicate the feel of a historic neighborhood. The eastern edge of the proposed development is lined with vegetation for natural screening of the properties from the neighbor. The retention pond is located to the south of the site to allow for proper drainage.

## Building Design

The subdivision is designed with three options for housing, Cluster A (~1,965 sf), B (~2,275 sf) and C (~2,345 sf). The design of the houses was revised per the Planning and Design Commission's and the Landmark Commission's comments. The style of the proposed homes is now based on the Arts and Crafts movement that occurred from the late 19th century through the early years of the 20th century. This is an asymmetrical and quaint style house. This style appears to be the most prevalent style in the district. The design of the houses is very well done and will contribute to the character of the district.

There will also be one house that is relocated from the existing location and will maintain its original style. An addition will be added to the rear of the house. This addition will be modified per the needs of the potential buyer. The addition will match the existing style of the house. No modifications to the house will be visible from Butternut Ridge Road.

## Landscaping

Overall, the landscape plan is conceptually superior. Each unit type has unique design elements while maintaining a consistent theme throughout the site. Selected plants include well suited varieties and sizes that will give a finished appearance at the time of planting with room for growth to prevent overgrown conditions in the future. There is ample variation in color, shape and texture providing a natural feel to the overall landscape.

The original proposal with gazebo and country garden design would have given the entrance an inviting, small town feeling, creating a representation of the historic character of this district and a vignette of what might have been historic North Olmsted. That opinion notwithstanding, the current proposal is aesthetically pleasing, and more than adequately beautifies the space and buffers

surrounding residents. Further adjustment of plant types, sizes and spaces should be avoided as doing so will have serious detrimental effects on the future health of the plants and functionality of the screening.

As shown on the submitted plans, extraordinary efforts will be given to preserve the plants that have value or are historically significant. Those plants slated for removal are primarily scrub and undergrowth. The proposed landscape plan far outweighs any concerns about the destruction of existing vegetation.

Considering the entire site plan and the adjoining properties, no further buffering is necessary as doing so would detract from the overall quality of the design.

### Vehicular Circulation

The vehicular circulation is a simple ingress/egress street. The entrance drive was located to avert the headlights of exiting vehicles from shining in the resident's house across the street. It was designed to save the large tree at the entry. It was also designed to not interfere with the ingress/egress of the drive of the neighbor to the east.

There is a parking area for visitors to the northeast of the property. This area is screened with vegetation to shield the headlights from the eastern neighbor's property.

### Pedestrian Circulation

The development has a simple pedestrian circulation plan. There is a sidewalk on the east and west side of the street. The walkway circles around the retention pond and continues into the woods to the south of the homes, which is common area for the development.

## C. Area and Density Regulations

Minimum area and density requirements are established in Chapter 1136.05 to guide and control the planning, development and use of land in a residential cluster district.

Chapter 1136.05(a) provides for a minimum development area of 5 contiguous acres for a new residential cluster district. The proposed development consists of 10.82 acres.

Chapter 1136.05(b) states the criteria for a development's area density. Whereas the permitted density (based on buildable area) is between 33 and 40 units depending on open space preserved, the proposed development consists of only 29 units. Further, although the required open space consists of a net 1.37 acres [after allowing for the open

space credit of 0.19 acres provided for in Chapter 1136.08(c)], the proposal consists of 1.98 acres of open space.

Chapter 1136.05(c) requires a minimum livable floor area of any dwelling unit in a residential cluster district to be 1,200 square feet. The minimum area of the proposed floor plans is 1,965 square feet for Cluster A units, 2,275 square feet for Cluster B units, and 2,345 square feet for Cluster C units.

#### D. Height Regulations

The proposed cluster home development meets all of the height regulations set forth in Chapter 1136.06 for buildings and accessory structures.

#### E. Building Spacing and Yard Regulations

Chapter 1136.07 provides that dwelling units in a residential cluster district may be arranged in various groups, courts or clusters with open spaces organized and related to the dwellings so as to form a unified composition of buildings and space, in accordance with specified building spacing and yard regulations.

With the exception of one deviation pertaining to units 1, 2 and 3, the proposed cluster home development meets all of the provisions set forth in Chapter 1136.07.

Chapter 1136.07(c)(3) states: "No dwelling shall be closer than fifteen (15) feet from the nearest edge of an open space or required yard." Although Units 1, 2 and 3 meet the "buffer" requirement of the 20 foot setback from the western property line of the proposed development, they are within the "super buffer" requirement of the additional 15 foot area from that open space or required yard.

However, Chapter 1136.07(d) provides additional guidance for this type of situation, as follows:

Flexible Design. With respect particularly to properties of irregular shape, unusual topography or limited size, the Planning and Design Commission may modify requirements regarding yards and spacing between uses if compliance with these requirements is either infeasible or in conflict with the development standards of this chapter. Modifications made by the Planning and Design Commission must receive approval of Council.

In the instant case, unless the yard requirement is modified, the property underlying units 1, 2 and 3 could not be utilized because of its irregular shape and limited size. Inasmuch as the property abuts a large open space (i.e., Springvale Golf Course), the potential impact of the modification is mitigated substantially. Furthermore, unit 1 does not meet the yard requirements because the developer agreed to make changes to this unit at the request of the Landmarks Commission. Finally, a strict application of the yard regulation

without modification would be in conflict with the development standards of Chapter 1136.

#### F. Open Space Regulations

The proposed cluster home development not only meets the requirements of Chapter 1136.05, as discussed above, but also the requirement of Chapter 1136.08(a) regarding the preservation of the open space as common land and the various criteria of Chapter 1136.08(b). The proposed development derives additional off site open space benefits from the proximity to Springvale Golf Course immediately to the west.

#### G. Parking and Circulation

With one exception, discussed below, the proposed cluster home development meets all of the provisions set forth in Chapter 1136.09 regarding parking and circulation.

Chapter 1136.09(c) states:

Driveways. Individual driveways to garages serving each dwelling unit shall have a minimum width of sixteen (16) feet. The front of the garage shall be set back a minimum of twenty (20) feet from the nearest edge of the street or sidewalk pavement.

Although the front of the garage of all of the proposed units is set back a minimum of 20 feet from the nearest edge of the street or sidewalk pavement, the units with side load garages have driveways of 12 feet in width at the street, which expand to the required 16 feet in front of the garage.

Again recognizing the need for design flexibility, the reduction of 4 feet in the width of the driveways of the units with side load garages does not adversely impact ingress and egress to those units and, in fact, results in less concrete and more green space in each of those yards.

#### H. Improvements

The proposed cluster home development meets all of the regulations regarding improvements as set forth in Chapter 1136.10 for streets and utilities.

The City Engineer evaluated various documents and reports provided by the developer's experts related to traffic, water, storm and sanitary sewers, and found the proposed development to conform to all City standards. The City Engineer will be responsible for approving detailed engineering plans (a.k.a. site improvement plans) including on-site storm sewer calculations and storm water management calculations before permits are issued for construction. Furthermore, all necessary Ohio EPA permits for installing public sanitary sewers and water mains are required before construction commencement. The required Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan will be reviewed

by the Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (CSWCD). Approval from the CSWCD is a prerequisite for issuing a permit for construction. Approval from the Cleveland Water Department (CWD) also is a prerequisite for issuing a permit for construction. Looping of the proposed water main at the cul-de-sac will be required per CWD standards. A storm water management easement containing the proposed detention pond and 25-foot wide drainage way as well as a 10-foot wide rear yard drainage conveyance easement behind Sublots 22 through 29 will be dedicated to the proposed development's homeowners association. A subdivision plat for recording with Cuyahoga County that includes the proposed site geometry of the layout of the proposed lots, proposed ingress-egress and utility easement, proposed storm water management and rear yard drainage conveyance easements, riparian setback and conservation easement, proposed 40-foot wide sanitary sewer easement for a possible future sanitary sewer and the existing 20-foot sanitary sewer easement is required for submittal to the Planning and Design Commission for approval together with the Engineering Department's final review and approval. Full-time inspection by the Engineering Department will be required for the proposed project during construction.

## **V. Conclusion**

Based upon the analysis and discussion set forth above, including conformance with the City's 2005 Master Plan and with the City's Landmarks District Regulations, it is the finding of the Planning and Design Commission that, with an exception pertaining to the yard requirement under Chapter 1136.07(c)(3) and another exception pertaining to driveway width under Chapter 1136.09(c), the site plan for the proposed cluster home development complies with all of the regulations, standards and criteria prescribed by Chapter 1136 for a residential cluster development.

Further, again based upon the analysis and discussion set forth above, it is the recommendation of the Planning and Design Commission that City Council approve a modification to the application of the specific regulations, standards and criteria under both Chapter 1136.07(c)(3) and 1136.09(c) because of the unusual conditions of the development area and the nature and quality of the proposed design. Those adjustments will not be in conflict with the promotion of the public health, safety and general welfare of the City.

The Planning and Design Commission further finds that the Biddulph Trail proposal meets both the intent and the spirit of Chapter 1136, Residential Cluster (RC) District, and that this type of development is appropriate for the proposed location. Accordingly, it is the recommendation of the Planning and Design Commission that the Biddulph Trail proposal be approved by City Council.