



**PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

TO: Chair and Planning Commissioners
DATE: October 26, 2021
FROM: David Dowswell, Contract Planner, Community Development Department
SUBJECT: Public Hearing and Consideration of Site Plan/Design Review 2021-04 application by Homes by Towne (Stones Throw) for approval of new model homes for 52 alley-loaded lots in Phases IV and V of Winters Highlands Subdivision (formerly APN 030-220-017 and 019).

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Receive the staff report; and
2. Conduct the Public Hearing to solicit public comment; and
3. Approve Design/Site Plan Review 2021-04 for the Winters Highlands Subdivision model homes for Phases IV and V; and
4. Confirm Exemption from the provisions of CEQA; and
5. Approve Design Review/Site Plan subject to the conditions of approval in Attachment 4.

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION, EXISTING ZONING AND LAND USE:

The entire project site is 102.6 acres; it is General Planned Low Density Residential (LR), Medium Density Residential (MR), Medium/High Density Residential and High Density Residential (HR) is zoned Single-Family Residential (R-1), Single-Family Residential (R-2), Multi-Family Residential (R-3) and High Density Residential (R-4). The site is located in the northwestern portion of Winters, north of the Winters Ranch and Callahan Estates, off the future extension of Main Street. The portion of the subdivision Meritage Homes has purchased is General Planned Low Density Residential (LR) and Medium Density Residential (MR) and zoned Single-Family Residential (R-1, 7,000 Square Foot Average) and Single-Family Residential (R-2, 6,000 Square Foot Average).

BACKGROUND:

On July 17, 2017, the Planning Commission approved the site plan and design review for the model homes (73 lots) for Phase 1 of the Stones Throw Subdivision.

On February 26, 2019, the Planning Commission approved the site plan and design review for 100 lots purchased by K. Hovnanian Homes Phases IA and II for the Stones Throw Subdivision.

On July 27, 2021, the Planning Commission approved the site plan and design review for model homes proposed for 148 lots in Phases III, IV and V of the Stones Throw Subdivision purchased by Meritage Homes.

Homes by Towne, the master developer of the Stones Throw Subdivision, is proposing a new set of model designs to build on the remaining 52 lots in Phases IV and V. On October 7, 2021, the Design Review Committee (DRC) met and reviewed the design of the model homes. Staff discussed with the DRC comments on the proposed designs. In addition, the following comments were made by DRC members:

1. Design homes to have a “Universal Design” entry.
2. Homes should be designed for “visit ability.”
3. Include a sidewalk for each home through the landscape strip, which connects the existing sidewalk to the face of curb.
4. Prior to issuance of the first certificate of occupancy (C of O) applicant shall work with Police Chief for what signs are needed at the entrance to the alleys indicating “no parking” is allowed in the alleys.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicant submitted an application for Design/Site Plan Review for new model homes for 52 alley-loaded lots in Phases IV and V of the Stones Throw Subdivision. The Planning Commission will take final action on the project unless appealed to the City Council.

The applicant is proposing three model homes with four architectural styles, “Spanish’, “Craftsman”, “Farmhouse” and “Traditional”. There will be multiple elevations for each architectural style. The building facades are stucco with reverse board and batten and horizontal trim. The “Traditional” style elevation is completely finished with horizontal siding. Many of the elevations have shutters and all have covered porches. All three of the “Craftsman” elevations include a very small amount of stone or brick veneer on the porch columns. Building colors, including the roof colors, will vary by model. There will be a total of 9 color schemes (Attachment 2).

DESIGN/SITE PLAN REVIEW:

Winters Municipal Code, Chapter 17.36 (Design Review) (Section 17.36.020C), states “New construction of any single-family residential units is subject to design review.” According to the Design Review provisions, the Planning Commission shall consider the following aspects for design review of a site plan:

- The overall visible mass of the structure, which includes height, roofline profiles and overall scale of a building; and
- The proposed use and quality of exterior construction materials striving for long-term compatibility with the general setting of the subject property and visual character of the general neighborhood; and
- Avoidance of buildings which are characterized by large, blank or unbroken wall planes, as well as buildings which exhibit general lack of architectural detailing, shadow lines, etc. which generally lack interest; and

- Effective screening of ground – and – roof mounted equipment; and
- The use of landscaping decorative site paving, etc. which provides effective visual screening or softening of the development, as necessary; and
- The application of the Winters Design Guidelines

The Planning Commission shall make findings relative to compliance with the above provisions prior to approving a design/site plan review.

ANALYSIS:

The following discussion regarding the design of the model homes is based on staff's review of the Conditions of Approval #60 through #65 (shown below in italics) and their consistency with the Winters Highlands (Stones Throw) Architectural Guidelines and comments from the DRC meeting.

Architecture

Design Review Conditions of Approval

60. *In order to achieve architectural diversity, the developer shall offer four floor plans and 12 elevations (three per plan) for each new model phase, consistent with the Winters Highlands Architectural Guidelines.* The applicant submitted three different architectural styles with four different elevations per plan. The total number of elevations is 12.
61. *A minimum of half of the required elevations shall include brick or stone veneer wainscot which wraps around all sides of the structure so that it terminates where the yard fencing begins consistent with the Winters Highlands Architectural Guidelines.* In initially reviewing the plans staff did not notice that the new models only have a small amount of stone veneer on the columns of the three Craftsman model porches. Staff recommends 50 percent (6 of the 12) of the elevations have a stone veneer covering at least a portion (porch or pop-out) of front elevation and the veneer wrap around to the corresponding side yard fence.
62. *Each elevation for a particular floor plan shall be distinctive, with a unique roof design, architectural detailing, and application of exterior materials consistent with the Winters Highlands Architectural Guidelines. Single story and two-story plans shall be varied.* Working with staff the architect designed each elevation to be distinctive through the use of varied materials, roof pitches, roof styles, veneers and colors. Pop-outs and some additional window treatments were added to the street side "enhanced" elevations of houses on corners lots break the flatness of the side elevations.
63. *The same (or substantially similar) elevation may appear no more than twice on one side of a block, or three times on either side of facing blocks, and may not be opposite or kitty-corner from the same elevation on the opposite side of the block. In addition, no more than ten percent of the homes can share the same elevation within a development.* The applicant is aware of this restriction. Staff will be working with the applicant during the construction process to ensure this condition is met.
64. *A minimum of 50 percent of all detached units shall have prominent useable architectural features such as courtyards, porches or balconies, consistent with the*

Winters Highlands Architectural Guidelines. All three of the models have functioning porches.

65. *Units on opposing sides of a street shall be compatible in terms of design and color.* The designs of the new models are compatible with each other and with the design of the nearby homes approved for Meritage Homes.

DRC comments

1. *Design homes to have a “Universal Design” entry.* As part of Meritage Homes Purchase Agreement documents they provide the buyer with a Universal Design checklist that their sales associate reviews with the buyer at time of purchase to see if the buyer is interested in any of the Universal Design features. The buyer signs the universal design checklist form as part of the Purchase Agreement documents indicating they have been provided this information and indicate if they are interested in selecting any of the universal design options.
2. *Design homes which are visitable.* See above.
3. *Need to provide the changes to the elevations mentioned by staff, which include:*
 - a. *Adding shutters to one window on the left elevation of the Plan 3 Spanish and Craftsman elevations and to the left and right elevations, including the right enhanced elevation, of the Plan 2 Spanish model. Cannot add shutters to any window on the rear elevation.*
 - b. *Adding shutters to the left, right and rear elevations, including the right enhanced elevation, of the Plan 3 Farmhouse and Traditional elevations.*
 - c. *Adding windows to the top row of panels of the garage doors to allow in natural light. It is not clear in looking at the plans if this has been done.*
 - d. *Plan 1, 2, and 3 Craftsman model, adding outriggers shown on the front elevation upper floor triple window to the triple window on the lower floor right elevation.*
 - e. *Plan 3 Farmhouse and Traditional Plan, adding outriggers shown on the front elevation lower floor double window to the to the triple window on the lower floor right elevation.*
 - f. *Provide a sidewalk leading from the existing side through the streetside landscaping similar to what was done for the Aspire project.*
At the DRC meeting the applicant agreed to make all of the above changes and would provide revised elevations with the changes.
4. *Prior to issuance of the first certificate of occupancy (C of O) applicant shall work with Police Chief for what signs are needed at the entrance to the alleys indicating “no parking” is allowed in the alleys.*

Landscaping and Fencing

The City requires all new homes to provide front yard landscaping with an irrigation system and perimeter fencing. The applicant has provided staff with a landscaping and irrigation plan and fencing details. Staff will be reviewing the plans and will provide the applicant with comments.

Planned Development Overlay

Winters Highlands/Stones Throw Subdivision has a PD Overlay Zone on top of the existing zoning. The PD Overlay Zone allows the creation of the smaller lots, reduced lot widths and reduced rear yard setbacks. The applicant has requested the following modifications to the City's setback requirements to the existing PD Permit:

1. Plan 2 models reduce the front setback from 20 feet to 17 feet 6 inches.
2. Plan 3 reduce the front setback from 20 feet to 15 feet.
3. Plan 5 reduce the side yard setback beyond the parking pad from 10 feet to 5 feet.

All of the requested modifications are consistent with what the Planning Commission approved for the Aspire alley-loaded product, which is part of the Stones Throw Subdivision.

Affordable Housing

The Development Agreement (DA) between the City and Homes by Towne required Homes by Towne to have an approved Affordable Housing Plan. The Plan requires they pay the City an in-lieu fee of \$2,000,000. Half of the fee is to be collected with the recording of each final map. The remaining fee, divided equally between the approved 395 homes, is collected with the issuance of certificates of occupancy for each home.

The City and Homes by Towne are working on amending the DA. The amended DA will need to have been approved before any building permits can be issued to develop the new models.

PROJECT NOTIFICATION:

Public notice advertising on this planning application was prepared by the Community Development Department in accordance with notification procedures set forth in the City of Winters' Municipal Code and State Planning Law. A legal notice was published in the Winters Express on 10/14/21 and notices were mailed to all property owners who own real property within three hundred (300) feet of the project boundaries at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing. Copies of the staff report and all attachments for the proposed project have been on file, available for public review at City Hall since 10/21/21.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for Winters Highlands/Stones Throw project and certified by the City Council on April 4, 2006 (Resolution 2006-08).

ALTERNATIVES:

The Planning Commission can elect to modify any aspect of the approval or recommend denial of the application. If the Planning Commission denies the application findings would be needed for the official record that would illustrate the reasoning behind the decision to deny the project.

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS FOR SITE PLAN/DESIGN REVIEW 2021-04 FOR STONES THROW NEW MODEL HOMES.

CEQA Findings:

- 1) The proposed project (design review of model homes) is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15061.

Design Review Findings:

- 1) The proposed project's overall visible massing, which includes height, roofline profiles and overall scale of the building meets the intent of the Winters Highlands Architectural Guidelines and the Winters Design Guidelines.
- 2) The proposed project's use of quality of exterior construction materials is compatible with the general setting of the subject property and visual character of the general neighborhood.
- 3) The proposed project avoids the use of large, blank or unbroken wall planes and architectural detailing such as shadow lines, etc. which generally lack interest.
- 4) The proposed project provides effective use of screening of ground mounted equipment.
- 5) The proposed project provides effective use of landscaping, which provides effective softening of the development.
- 6) The proposed project achieves conformity with the Winters Highlands Architectural Guidelines and the Winters Design Guidelines.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Tentative Map showing Phases IV and V alley-loaded lots
2. Design Review exhibits including color and materials boards
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7lqtb0015vgpytt/AABrgBytZCa0K-XaHT2KhMF2a?dl=0>
3. Revised Planned Development Permit
4. Conditions of Approval