

BELL HOMES IN LAKE FOREST PARK

Lake Forest Park could easily be characterized by its name: A city in the forest by the lake. Much of it is essentially a forest/park with houses tucked within it. The revised proposal for 3 duplexes and one small house at 3030 NE 200th Street is an effort to accentuate that quality of character while also addressing the need and demand for more housing in the city.

OUR REVISED PROPOSAL IS CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The City of Lake Forest Park's Comprehensive Plan, adopted on January 14, 2016, established goals and policies encouraging the development of more and diverse housing in the city while preserving and enhancing the natural landscape of the city and respecting the character of the individual neighborhoods.

We believe that our proposal fulfills the intent of the Comprehensive Plan which: encourages "infill development" in a "variety of settings and sizes throughout the city," (CP: H-1) and encourages projects that: "preserve and enhance the unique character of the city's residential neighborhoods." (CP: H-2) Our proposal of three duplexes and a single small house takes advantage of the unique size of the lot (25,294sf) to create more diversity in terms of home size in Lake Forest Park while respecting the character and massing of larger homes in the surrounding neighborhood by grouping the proposed dwellings into duplexes. (CP: LU-4) Another stated goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to "Identify underused land and encourage infill development that is compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding development." (CP: LU-4) The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of wood-clad split-level and two-story houses with an occasional single-story brick rambler, all on properties ranging from 7,600sf to 12,600sf. The proposed 3 duplexes and single house on our 25,294sf lot will be very complementary to the surrounding properties in terms of house to land ratios. (CP: H-2) **(See schematic site elevations.)**

The small size of the individual dwellings (960sf and less) and, in particular, the single small house further meets the intent of the Comprehensive plans stated goal of: encouraging the development of houses for a "wide range of household sizes, incomes and ages" (CP: H-1.8) and a "compatible mix of residential densities within the city's neighborhoods." (CP: LU-4) While the houses in this proposal will be small, they will be carefully designed to meet or exceed current industry standards. They will be energy efficient with heat pumps, fresh air circulation and on-demand hot water heaters. (CP: H-3) The homes will be constructed with high quality, long lasting materials. They will be a part of a Homeowners Association (HOA) which will ensure that the structures and common areas of the property are well maintained. Because of these qualities, they will be attractive to middle or high income young couples, young families or empty nesters who want to remain and/or live in the quiet Lake Forest Park setting but not have a large house and property to maintain.

The Comprehensive Plan also addresses the need for quality common outdoor space. (CP: H-2) The common areas designed for 3030 NE 200th Street will be inviting for children to play, gardeners to garden and families and neighbors to cook out and dine together. Because they are

in the center of the property and are safe from cars, they have the potential to be attractive to the larger neighborhood as well.

In addition, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of the natural environment and tree cover to the character of Lake Forest Park and encourages the “integration of natural landscape into new development.” (CP: LU-2) The planting plan and conservation easement defined in this proposal will preserve and enhance the existing landscape, thereby maintaining much of the original character of the site. (CP: LU-4) In addition, the proposed site plan is designed specifically to preserve two large and healthy western red cedars on the property and to augment them with other native plantings, which will anchor the required conservation easement. (CP LU-3) The proposed native plants of the region will be protected on 50% of the property, including the entire perimeter of the site, all of which will be placed in a permanent conservation easement. All other plantings will be compatible with the surrounding native species, and the projected total tree canopy will grow to be 58% of the lot area. (CP: LU-2) The proposed single angled driveway access with a 20’ deep landscape buffer along the street will soften the street presence of the proposed onsite parking. (CP: LU-2) Per LFPMC 18.54.030.J, design guidelines for southern gateway single family residential zone, Type II landscaping is the standard for the proposed 20’ landscape buffer along the street.

As the Comprehensive Plan directs, an effort will be made with this project to improve the “pedestrian environment” with the addition of a sidewalk as well as approach ramps separated from the traffic by a raised curb and gutter. (CB: LU-2) This project will bring with it the first much needed stretch of sidewalk installed on NE 200th Street.

The amount of tree canopy and land NOT covered by impervious surface is this project’s contribution to the “promotion of natural drainage and green infrastructure concepts.” (CP: LU-3) The soils on this property are not conducive to handling large quantities of rainfall, so a large vault has been designed to manage storm water on this property, making it a low impact project and ensuring that there will be no detrimental impact to the surrounding properties and to the city. (CP: LU-3)

OUR REVISED PROPOSAL MEETS THE CRITERIA IN LFPMC 18.54.030 FOR CONDITIONAL USE

As described above, we believe that our revised proposal is “consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan.” We believe, as stated above, that the houses and landscaping we are proposing are “compatible with the character and appearance” of the existing houses and landscapes in the vicinity of the property. In addition, we believe that it will be an asset to the health and safety of the community. With regard to safety, a traffic study was performed by Transpogroup to determine the need for parking and the projected amount of traffic that would be generated by the proposed 7 dwellings. According to the study, the 12 parking spaces in the revised proposal is more than adequate to meet the demand. The traffic study also revealed that the number of expected vehicular trips generated by the proposed 7 dwellings would be equivalent to the anticipated vehicular trips generated by 3 larger homes. For additional safety, we are maintaining only one curb cut along the right of way; as comparison, a 3-lot short plat would require 3 curb cuts. We are also proposing to build a safe sidewalk along

the right of way that is protected by a raised curb and gutter and protected further by parked cars. In addition, our proposal includes a safe open space in the center of the property for community enrichment, a landscape enhanced with native plantings and thoughtfully designed houses that complement the surrounding neighborhood.

OUR REVISED PROPOSAL MEETS THE CRITERIA IN LFPMC 18.54.042 FOR CONSERVATION CLUSTER HOUSING AND ADDRESSES COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The revised plan is designed to address the concerns brought up in the neighborhood meeting held on June 14, 2017, and later comments from the public as well. The original plan has been modified as follows:

Number of dwellings: The lot size and zoning for 3030 NE 200th Street would potentially allow 9 separate dwelling units to be built on the property under the Conservation Cluster Housing Criteria. In the revised design our originally proposed 7 dwellings have been consolidated into 3 duplexes and one single house so that they are more complementary in terms of massing to the surrounding homes in the neighborhood.

Setbacks, footprints and building height: We have increased the setbacks from the side lot lines in two places and in no place are they less than the 10' required. The footprints of the proposed duplexes and house are under the maximum 750sf allowed and the living area is at or under the maximum 950sf allowed. The proposed duplexes and house will be two story and not higher.

Separation between structures: In the revised plan, the spacing between the duplexes has been increased to allow for larger areas of conservation easement. The minimum separation required in the Conservation Cluster Housing Ordinance is 6 feet; we are proposing 20 feet between structures.

Common area: The more than 200sf of common area per dwelling incorporated into the revised design has been consolidated and redistributed so that it is more readily accessible to the individual dwellings for ease of gatherings and view from the individual dwellings on the property. They are still within the center of the site and insulated from the neighbors by the buildings themselves as well as the plantings in the conservation easement.

Impervious surface area: Consolidating the houses into 3 duplexes and one small house also reduced the amount of impervious surface created. In our revised proposal, the impervious area is less than it would have been for the 7 cottages and is far less than would be if the property were developed as a 3-lot short plat. (See earlier proposal for three lot short plat.) The maximum allowed impervious surface for the zoning in this neighborhood is 45% of the lot area. In the revised plan, the impervious surface is 9,400sf or 37% of the lot area. We are proposing a vault system to manage all of the storm water on the site. There are currently two catch basins in the public right of way that will be utilized for the right of way improvements for additional parking, curb, gutter and sidewalk.

Parking: We are able, through this more consolidated redesign, to maintain more than the required parking on the property. In the center of the property, we are providing one parking place per household to be assigned to each household in the Homeowner's Association Agreement. The lot will also be wired for electric power for electric vehicle charging. In addition, there will be one unassigned parking place on the property. The total number of parking spaces will be 12, nearly two per household. Because the prospective owners of these homes will know at the outset they are only guaranteed one parking space per house, they will likely decide to buy a house based on that fact. The prospective owners will be naturally more inclined to only own one car, to carpool, bike and/or use mass transit. The nearest transit stops to 3030 NE 200th is a 5 to 10-minute walk and is served by King County Route 347. The 347 bus terminates to the north at the Mountlake Transit Center, "which has connections to local service as well as express bus service for regional destinations including Everett, Lynwood and Seattle." **(See Traffic Study)** According to the traffic study, the Lynnwood Link Extension of the Sound Transit Light Rail is anticipated to open service at the Mountlake Transit Center in 2024. This rail service will provide more rapid public transportation to destinations along the I-5 corridor. In addition to Route 347, there are three other bus routes within a 10-minute walk from 3030 NE 200th.

Pedestrian Safety: In this redesign, we have added sidewalks in the right of way as well as sidewalk access from the street and into the property from the additional parking places along the street. We are also proposing to construct parking for up to 4 cars in the right of way together with a curb, gutter and sidewalk. The sidewalk will be buffered from the traffic on the street by the parked cars and separated by a raised curb and gutter. The centralized parking requires only one curb cut along the right of way which further improves the safety for pedestrians, more so than the alternative 3-lot configuration which would require 3 curb cuts.

Signage, Noise, Privacy, Lighting, Waste: There will be one small sign at the beginning of the driveway identifying the houses. The sign will be modest and in keeping with the quiet nature of the neighborhood. It will be 8" by 24" and read "Bell Homes." As the code requires, the revised lighting plan includes fixtures designed to direct light into the property and not away, to ensure the neighbors are not disturbed. The waste cans from the new houses will be located adjacent to the entry canopy and out of sight from the public right of way except on days when it is picked up. By grouping the houses and parking in the center of the property, we can maintain and further develop a forested buffer from the street and the neighboring homes. We have designed common areas in the center of the property to concentrate the noises that might arise from the new households and to use the houses (structures) and forested perimeter to buffer those noises from the surrounding neighbors. Additionally, a 6-foot-tall cedar fence will be installed along the back and sides of the property to further increase privacy and security. A decorative split rail fence well suited for the natural setting will be installed along the front property line and around the interior parking area. A low, simple "rope and post" fence will designate the boundaries of the conservation easement and subtle landscape lighting will illuminate pathways and patios.

Trees, Natural Environment and Character: We are proposing to rebuild and protect the forest of Lake Forest Park through preserving most of the existing healthy and mature trees on the lot as well as through plantings of native trees, shrubs and groundcovers in more than 50% of the land area which will be legally designated as a "Conservation Easement." **(See Planting Plan.)** Specifically, we are protecting the two healthy and mature western red cedar trees in the

southwest quadrant of the property and augmenting their surroundings with additional native trees including hemlock, vine maple and service berry, as well as other native shrubs and understory plants. We are creating three new stands of forest between and around the north duplexes. We are removing the mature but unhealthy trees in the southeast quadrant of the property and replacing them with a grove of western red cedar, flowering crabapple and other native understory plants. In addition, we are interlocking the forest with the houses with portions of the conservation easement beside the central common area to bring awareness to the priorities of forest preservation with this type of development and to accentuate the Lake Forest Park character of houses IN the forest as contrasted with houses SEPARATE FROM the forest. The projected tree canopy for the revised proposal will be 58% of the lot area.

Neighborhood Character: The neighborhood surrounding 3030 NE 200th Street is characterized by single family homes with on average footprints of 1,600sf. Most of the surrounding homes are two story and/or split level. By grouping the originally designed cottages into three duplexes, with 1,040sf and 1,129sf footprints, and one small house with a footprint of 636sf, we are consolidating the massing of the proposed structures so that it is more consistent with the size of neighboring homes. In terms of height, the proposed duplexes are 25' high, which is 5' less than the maximum 30' allowed for any of the neighboring single-family homes, and similar in height to many of the surrounding two-story houses. In terms of building spacing and setbacks, a 3-lot short plat on the same property would be permitted a 5' distance from the north property line. The north duplexes in this proposal are 10' from the north property line, 20' from the east property line, and 30' from the west property line. The south duplex is 20' from the west property line, and the small house is 10' from the east property line.

Diversity of Housing: The revised proposal includes one house with a bedroom and bath on the main floor for an individual or couple who are not comfortable using stairs. The loft bedroom above could be useful for a caregiver or visiting grandchildren.

Home Values: The revised proposal is designed to draw in moderate to high income people who don't need a large house but want to live in a quiet and woodsy neighborhood that is close to transit, grocery stores and other amenities. The houses will be thoughtfully designed using skilled labor and high-quality materials and will exceed most current standards of building construction. The carefully designed and built shared common areas will also be made with quality, long lasting materials. They will be well maintained by the Homeowners Association and will have the potential to enrich not only the property owners at 3030 NE 200th Street but also the neighborhood.

CONCLUSION

We believe that our proposal fulfills the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, meets the criteria for conditional uses in general and meets the criteria for Conservation Cluster Housing in particular.

I was born and raised in Lake Forest Park. I live here now. I will spend the rest of my life here. I build properties I am proud of for my home city. I used to walk right by this property on my way home from Kellogg Jr. High: a 1 mile walk along 200th, down 32nd, up 195th (killer hill), down

37th and up 194th. I carried my 18-pound tenor saxophone to and from school. I can see future residents of Bell Homes walking or riding their bike to the grocery store at Ballinger Village.

Some believe our city's town center is a better location for Custer Housing, but some people who downsize want to live surrounded by forest and near neighbors instead of within city amenities. Bell Homes will be part of the fabric of the neighborhood's current character: a forest/park with houses tucked within it.

I agree the CCH ordinance does not work well in its current form. It's too vague: it allows too much flexibility for the applicant, subjectivity to the plan reviewer and uncertainty to the public. I know the CCH ordinance will work well with additional changes based on neighborhood feedback and all we have learned from the Bell Homes proposal. With an improved, well defined code combined with a rigorous, multilayered review process, the CCH ordinance and the building of Bell Homes will enrich Lake Forest Park.