

# ***Bignell Planning Consultants, Inc.***

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May 10, 2022

John Soltesz, Chairman  
Edison Technical Review Committee  
680 Grove Avenue  
Edison, NJ 08820

Re: Markim Developers, LLC  
(The Links at Edison)  
Preliminary & Final Site Plan  
Use and Bulk Variances  
Block 557, Lot 16-B-2  
222 Plainfield Avenue  
Application #Z13-2021  
Amended 2<sup>nd</sup> Technical Review

Dear Chairperson:

This office has received a site plan, dated: April 14, 2021 and revised through April 11, 2022, architectural plans, dated: April 26, 2022, an undated photo-simulation packet (12 sheets: 11"x17"), a revised application Rider (2 pages, undated), a fiscal impact report, dated: April 20, 2022, a traffic impact report, revised through April 15, 2022, a bound set of pipeline buffer letters and a letter of conditional approval from MCPB, dated: June 15, 2021, a letter from the FSCD, dated: September 1, 2021, a letter from the NJDEP, dated: September 24, 2021, all relative to this application and offers the following planning comments for your consideration.

*The applicant first submitted this application in April 2021 proposing a site plan application to construct 23 3-level townhomes on this site arranged in 4 buildings. This application was heard by the Edison Zoning Board in February 15, 2022. Subsequent to that hearing, the applicant revised the original proposal and has re-submitted a revised site plan showing a new design and layout for the site. This revised design is now being forwarded "back" to the Edison Technical Review Committee for technical comments and review. This matter is still assigned application # Z13-2021.*

## **1. Property Description**

The subject property is an irregular 87,817 sf (2.016 Ac.) interior lot located on the east side of Plainfield Road opposite Broad Avenue. The lot has 560' of frontage and driveway access along Plainfield Road and contains the former "Charlie Browns" restaurant building on the west frontage of the site. Paved parking areas surround the building.

## 2. Proposed Development

### A. Current Proposal (May 2022)

The applicant proposes to clear the site and construct a new duplex development at this location. A total of (16) dwelling units are proposed in eight (8) duplex style buildings. The units will be 3-level (+ basement) duplexes. All units will have a basement. The ground floor will contain a 1-car garage, kitchen, family and dining rooms. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor will contain 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. A permanent staircase will lead to a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor home office space. Each unit appears to contain a small elevator/lift connecting all floors and the basement. A 1-car driveway is also provided for each unit. The units will be true duplexes with 2 units in each building sharing a central common party wall. No subdivision or individual lots are proposed; All units will be located on a common lot which will be governed by a condominium/homeowner's association owning the common facades and spaces.

The buildings will be arranged around a central paved access driveway. The driveway will be 24' wide and connect to Plainfield Road on the northwest corner of the site. This will remain an association driveway and will not be a dedicated public street. Freestanding parking will be constructed at the southwest corner and central area of the site and will provide general parking for 16 additional vehicles along with two (2) electric car charging stations. The development will have a 42" high screening wall along the frontage of the site to mimic the wall existing along the frontage of the Metuchen Country Club. A "community name" sign is proposed on the wall at the site entrance. All 16 units will now be age-restricted for persons 55 years or older.

### B. Original Proposal: (This version of the plan is no longer proposed. Provided for comparison purposes only.)

The applicant proposes to clear the site and construct a new townhouse development at this location. A total of 23 units are proposed in four (4) townhouse style buildings. The buildings will be true 3-level (+ basement) townhouses. No unit will be located above another unit. All units will have a driveway parking stall, a 1-car ground-level parking garage space and two (2) upper floors of living space. All units will have a basement. The buildings will be arranged around a central courtyard with paved access driveway, small landscape island, and (2) handicapped parking stalls. The driveway will connect to Plainfield Road on the northwest corner of the site. A freestanding parking lot will be constructed at the southwest corner of the site and will provide general parking for 13 additional vehicles along with two (2) electric car charging stations. All units will be 3-bedroom units with 1 bedroom on the ground level, 1 basement bedroom, and a master bedroom/bathroom suite on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. The development will have a 7'7" high privacy wall along the frontage of the site to match the wall existing along the frontage of the Metuchen Country Club. All 23 units will now be age-restricted for persons 55 years or older.

## 3. Plan Revisions

- A. A new concept plan has been submitted for this site. See item 2.A. above and plans revised through: April 11, 2022.

4. Master Plan Review

The 2003 Master Plan Land Use Map recommends this lot for continued commercial use. The proposed use is not consistent with this land use recommendation.

5. Zoning Compliance: G-C (Golf Course Natural Preservation) Zone

A. Use:

The Golf Course Zone is designed to regulate large golf courses and abutting and ancillary uses. The proposed residential use is not be a permitted use in this zone.

**Use variance required.**

B. Bulk: G-C Golf Course Zone

| DESCRIPTION                 | REQUIRED         | PROVIDED              | CONFORMITY           |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| MINIMUM LOT AREA            | 100 Acres        | 2.016 Acres           | EXISTING             |
| MINIMUM LOT WIDTH           | 300'             | 348'                  | EXISTING             |
| MINIMUM LOT DEPTH           | 500'             | 266'                  | EXISTING             |
| MINIMUM FRONT SETBACK       | 35'              | 35.5'                 | COMPLIES             |
| MINIMUM SIDE SETBACK        | 15' / 30'        | 21' / 47'             | COMPLIES             |
| MINIMUM REAR SETBACK        | 60'              | 17', 27', 32'         | MULTIPLE VIOLATIONS  |
| MINIMUM GROSS FLOOR AREA    | 1,500 SF         | >1,500 SF             | COMPLIES             |
| MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT     | 2.5 story<br>35' | 2.5 STORY,<br>32' 11" | COMPLIES<br>COMPLIES |
| MAXIMUM % BUILDING COVERAGE | 5 %              | 22.3%                 | VIOLATION            |
| MAXIMUM % IMPERVIOUS COVER  | 75 %             | 46.2%                 | COMPLIES             |
| MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA RATIO    | 0.05:1           | 0.48:1                | D VIOLATION          |

**Three (3) existing bulk nonconformities for this lot.**

**New violations are proposed for building coverage and rear setback.**

**A "d" variance is required for the proposed floor area ratio.**

Note: Building Height is the vertical distance measured to the highest point of the building from the grade on a site plan. The highest point of the roof on the architectural plans is 33' high.

C. Density

Proposed: 16 units on 2.016 acres = 7.9 du/ac

6. Parking Review

A. Parking Spaces

Required: (RSIS 2-bedroom duplex: Use single-family detached):

1.5 spaces per unit = 24 total spaces

Provided: 16 driveway + 16 garages + 16 general spaces (including handicapped) = 48 spaces

**Complies.**

Required: Guest parking allocation to be provided in common parking areas (RSIS footnote B.)

16 units x 0.5 spaces = 8 of the 48 spaces must be in common areas

Provided: Common parking provided for 16 spaces (1 handicapped)

**Complies.**

Required: EVCS - Electric Vehicle Charging Stations: Residential Development 5+ units:  
15% of the total number of required parking spaces: 4 EVCS spaces  
5% required at initial occupancy: 1 space  
5% required make-ready and installed in 3 years: 1 additional space  
5% required make-ready and installed in 6 years: 2 additional spaces

Required: front setback of 35 feet  
Required: ADA van accessible  
Required: screened with landscaping  
Proposed: four (4) EVCS spaces conceptually shown  
**More information required.**

B. Driveway and Parking Dimensions

Required: 9' x 18' parking spaces.  
Proposed: 9' x 18' spaces  
**Complies.**

Required: interior driveways shall be 24' wide when used with 90° parking  
Proposed: 24' aisle dimension for 90° parking spaces.  
**Complies.**

C. Loading

**Not applicable.**

D. Lighting Compliance

Required: minimum of 0.2 fc  
Provided: lighting levels shown on addendum lighting plan, levels comply, pole heights 14'8"  
**Complies.**

7. Landscaping and Buffering

A. Street Trees

Required: street trees, minimum 2.5" caliper on 50' centers: (348 LF) = 7 trees on Plainfield Road  
Provided: 11 trees provided

B. Tree Removal and Replacement

Proposed: Removal of 3 trees <16" = 1 replacement tree  
Removal of 7 trees >18" x replacement ratios = 50 trees  
Required: 51 replacement trees

C. Wooded Area

Required: if site is <10% wooded area, 1 tree per 1,000 sf new or reconstructed impervious cover  
(+16,359 reconstructed sf) = 16 trees  
Provided: (decrease in impervious cover) 40 evergreen and shade trees provided on plant list

D. Parking Perimeter Trees

Required: parking perimeter trees, minimum 2.5" caliper on 50' centers: (±560') = 11 trees  
Provided: several dozen trees provided

E. Shade Trees Per Dwelling Unit (36-11.2(g))

Required: 2 trees per unit x 16 units 32 trees

Provided: 32 trees provided

F. Total Trees

Required: 7 street + 51 replacements + 16 impervious + 11 parking perimeter + 32 residential = 117 trees

Provided: 101 total qualifying trees proposed on plant list including evergreens planted at a minimum of 8 feet.

**More information required.**

G. Buffer Requirement (§37-4.20)

Required: Required on south property line when abutting residential

Provided: 26' to building and parking, however, patios are proposed in this area

**Violation. More information required.**

H. Fence Requirements (§37-4.4)

No fence required when a multi-family use abuts a single-family zone. However, an 8-foot vinyl fence is proposed around the entire property.

**Not applicable.**

8. Signs

**The Golf Course Zone does not provide sign standards. Variances are required for any sign. The following sign standards apply to residential development in residential districts and should be used for comparison.**

*Residential Zones: Housing development:      maximum 2 signs with development name  
                                                                                 maximum 25 sf sign area  
                                                                                 maximum 8' high*

*Proposed: 1 "Development Name" sign is proposed on the screening wall, 7' x 3.5' in dimension, wall is set back approximately 3' from front property line*

**Testimony required.**

9. Pipeline Buffering

The applicant must document that no distribution, gathering, or transmission lines, as defined ordinance exist within 75' of proposed improvements.

**Complies. Pipeline letters on file.**

10. Land Use Inventory

The following land uses are found in the neighborhood:

North: Golf Course

East: Golf Course

South: single-family residential

West: Plainfield Road, single family residential beyond

11. Fees

A. Application: Preliminary Site Plan = \$500.00

Number of units = \$230.00  
Final Site Plan = \$300.00  
Use Variance (2) = \$1,000.00  
Bulk Variance (4) = \$125.00  
**Original application fee = \$2,155.00**

**1/3 Revised plan fee will be: \$711.15**

B. Escrow: Use Variance = \$2,500.00  
Bulk Variance = \$100.00  
Preliminary Site Plan = \$4,500.00  
Final Site Plan = \$1,000.00  
**Original escrow fee = \$8,100.00**

**1/3 Revised site plan = \$2,673.00**

## 12. Plan Review Comments

- A. Applicant must document approvals or exemption from all agencies having jurisdiction.
- B. The applicant will need to provide testimony to address the use, density and FAR “d” variances. This testimony should include a comparison of the township’s zoning (where this use would be permitted) for the Board as the Golf Course Zone does not provide development standards for duplexes.
- C. How will the property owner enforce the age-restriction? Will this be in a deed to each unit and in the master deed/documents of the association? This restriction should run in perpetuity. This should be a condition of approval.
- D. Will a homeowner’s association be formed for this development? Will a master deed be filed? Will each unit be owned in condominium or as a qualifier parcel?
- E. The applicant should notify all future residents that the zoning ordinance does not permit individual “rear yards” in townhouse/duplex developments to be fenced or altered from the approved site plan. That standard should apply to this development. This should be a condition of approval.
- F. The Zoning Ordinance does not prohibit or regulate front yard screening walls or fences in the GC Zone. Testimony should be provided to clarify the height of this wall and verify the ability of vehicles to see around it in a designated sight triangle.
- G. The lighting plan should reduce lighting to minimum levels on the south side guest parking lot and central island parking lot. This office believes it would be preferable to under-light these areas and seek relief rather than create light nuisance for the abutting homeowners on lots 43.03 and 43.04.
- H. The applicant shall explain the storage of and removal of refuse and recycling. Who will pick up? Why are trash enclosures needed? Won’t trash be stored in cans inside individual units? The Board should determine if refuse areas or individual cans should be provided per unit.
- I. All shrubs should be minimum 36” high at the time of planting and shown on the plant schedule.
- J. A mechanical irrigation system has been included as part of the landscape plan. (See notes on pp.2.)
- K. Any outstanding trees should be provided via a contribution to the Township Tree Fund.
- L. The plan should provide sign area and setback details for the proposed wall sign. Are informational signs proposed at the charging stations and guest parking lot?
- M. The Board should modify the rear patios from the southernmost dwelling to maintain the 20’ buffer, OR, dimension this space and seek a variance from this requirement.
- N. The general landscaping plan, including the 101 trees on the site, should be maintained by the property owner. If trees die or are removed over time, they should be replaced. This should be a condition of approval.

- O. Mail and parcel deliveries should be delivered to each individual unit.
- P. Will any utility transformers, hotboxes or other utility equipment be needed for this development? This should be shown on the plan.
- Q. The plan should clarify the EVCS charging stations. Are 4 spaces provided at initial occupancy?
- R. The applicant shall provide testimony to address the findings of the traffic and fiscal impact reports.

13. Recommendations

From a physical planning perspective, this office recommends that any action taken on this application be subsequent to the applicant submitting the following:

- A. Revised plans addressing the above planning comments to the satisfaction of the TRC.
- B. Submission of documentation from any outside agency having jurisdiction.
- C. Payment of any outstanding taxes, application and/or escrow fees.

Very truly yours,



Henry Bignell, PP  
For the Firm

HB/TB

Markim Developers, LLC, Applicant  
S. Tripp., Applicant's Attorney  
M. Wilder, PE, Applicant's Engineer  
File #801/21-10

