

**GIG HARBOR CITY COUNCIL  
DESIGN REVIEW MANUAL WORKSESSION  
October 4, 2004 6:00 p.m. – Civic Center Community Rooms**

**PRESENT:**

Councilmembers: Derek Young, Paul Conan, Jim Franich, Bob Dick and John Picinich.  
Mayor Wilbert presided over the meeting.

Staff: Mark Hoppen, John Vodopich, Steve Osguthorpe and Maureen Whitaker.

Mayor Wilbert opened the work-study session at 6:10. Steve Osguthorpe, Planning Manager gave a brief overview including the direction from City Council to hold two additional worksessions, October 4 and October 18, 2004. Mr. Osguthorpe stated that the agenda included some new items and a list of follow-up items for discussion. He stated that he had also received comments from Councilmember Franich that would be discussed throughout the meeting.

**3.14.02(2) Height Standards for Non-residential Structures within the Historic District  
(View Basin)**

Mr. Osguthorpe opened the discussion and illustrated how the height is currently measured in the View Basin. He noted that the current language in the Design Manual stated that a structure cannot be higher than 27 feet above natural grade. Mr. Osguthorpe answered questions from Mayor Wilbert, Councilmembers and the public. He stated that in the current Design Manual there is an allowance to measure from anywhere within the buildable area. The proposed language will limit this to within 50 feet of the foot print. Mr. Osguthorpe thought that this language would help reign things in. The proposed language states that the 27 feet is measured from natural and finished grade to protect against a looming wall plane situation.

Councilmember Franich stated his concerns that the current manual does not have any mechanisms to stop a looming building such as the BDR and Luengen Buildings. Councilmember Franich suggested changing the overall height limit to 29 feet, which includes two full-story buildings and a pitched roof. He further explained a break down of the height(s) of each story and roof pitches. He further spoke about the heights of the Gilich Building and Gig Harbor Professional Building and stated that they are all in the 29-ft. range. He stated that one way to control the mass is to have an overall height limit of 29 feet.

Councilmember Young spoke about the step-up appearance of Gig Harbor. He suggested that eliminating the appearance of a massive wall plane would be to create the look of different buildings. He thought that Councilmember Franich's suggestion of the overall 29 feet height limit would not prevent someone from building more than one building side by side which still creates an effect from the water of a massive wall plane, particularly if the buildings look the same.

Councilmember Dick stated that changing the language to measure height from natural or finished grade would help correct the current problem. He further stated that a design feature to require cornices or a pitched roof to break up the overall mass of the buildings seemed very complicated to write and does not really provide the protection that Mr. Young is suggesting. Councilmember Dick asked Mr. Osguthorpe to bring back some proposed language that might accommodate this issue. Councilmember Picinich stated that he would like to keep the current proposed language of 27 feet.

#### 2.1.01(4)(c) Encroachment into Setbacks

Steve Osguthorpe described the current language in the Design Manual and the proposed language of a provision to encroach into a setback for the purposes of retaining a significant tree or cluster of trees and not less than five feet. Councilmember Franich's question was does this apply to all sides (front, rear and side) and is this acceptable? Mr. Osguthorpe stated that this standard would apply to any development except for single-family and zone transition lots. He further explained that under this provision, if a property had a cluster of trees, it would allow you to shift the building away from them within a required side yard up to within five feet of the property line. Mr. Osguthorpe said that if there is an objection to this sliding setback requirement, the language could state that this does not apply in the View Basin. Councilmember Dick stated that he liked this approach in the View Basin. He further stated that his primary concern was side yard setbacks. Councilmembers Picinich and Young both concluded that they had no problem with this section of the code.

#### 2.1.01(6)(a) Protection of Trees during Construction

Mr. Osguthorpe explained that although this requirement may seem too restrictive, he believed it to be absolutely essential to save a tree within the trees' drip line. He further stated that the requirement only be applied to trees that were required to be retained. Council had no objections.

#### 2.6.01(1) Residential Setbacks (porches)

Mr. Osguthorpe explained that the intent of the design standards is to minimize the garage and emphasize the human aspect of a design. He stated that it is required that garages be no closer than 26' to a front setback line, a house can be within 20', and a typical 8' porch therefore brings the porch within 12' of a front setback line, thus creating an incentive to have a front porch and de-emphasize the garage. This provision would apply on all single-family residences. Mr. Osguthorpe stated that the proposed Design Manual Update eliminates the requirement for averaging setbacks. After some discussion, there were no objections to this requirement.

#### 2.7.01(2) Location of Structure near Front Setback Line

Mr. Osguthorpe stated that he highly recommended that this requirement be retained because it is the most important requirement in the Design Manual in terms of the City's negotiation power in terms of the larger stores that are in the Gig Harbor North area. He stated that the requirements in the Historical District are different because there are zero setbacks. There were no objections to this requirement.

### 2.8.01 Parkway Setback for Commercial Structures in Historic District

Mr. Osguthorpe explained that the purpose for this non-residential requirement is to maintain a pedestrian environment by keeping the structures within 10' of the front property line. A 20' setback would apply to a property line that abuts the Residential District. This requirement only applies to primary structures. He further stated that the Finholm area, DB and WC zones would retain this same character. Mr. Osguthorpe clarified that the Historic District includes all waterfront. There was discussion about parking lots located in retail frontages and orienting properties on the water where pedestrian traffic wasn't the primary focus. Councilmember Young was very adamant about the importance of retaining this requirement in the Design code that affects the downtown corridor. He further stated that a deviation from this requirement could destroy the character of Gig Harbor. After much discussion, Council was in favor of maintaining this provision.

### 2.9.01(2) Maximum Number of Curb Cuts

Mr. Osguthorpe explained that when the Design Manual was originally adopted there was a restriction on curb cuts to no more than one per parcel or one for every 200 feet of parcel frontage. He stated that more were allowed if there was a one-way in and one-way out situation because they would be narrower driveway lanes to maximize the landscaping of the street face. Mr. Osguthorpe also referenced a letter sent to Council by Mr. Dale Pinney stating that this is also an engineering issue. Mr. Osguthorpe stated that the Design Manual does not govern engineering as far as right-of-way is concerned. He explained that this provision is a site planning issue and said that an applicant does have to conform to Public Works Standards even with the current language in terms of driveway location, alignment, separation and related issues.

Councilmember Dick discussed that he would like to make sure that both Planning and Engineering Divisions were both fostering the same public policy purposes and minimizing the occasions of two set of standards conflicting. He further stated that he would like them to be designed together to meet the technical requirements as well as the visual and aesthetic requirements.

There were no remarkable concerns or objections by Council in regards to this provision.

### 2.9.01(3) Reduced Side and Rear Yard Setbacks for Garages in Historic District

Mr. Osguthorpe explained and illustrated this provision to reflect more of the pattern of the historic structures in the Historic District whereby the garage was located in the back and the porch in the front. Councilmember Franich had concerns about reducing the view corridor by allowing a garage and reducing the side and/or rear yard setbacks and an apparent conflict in the proposed Design Manual. The provision also requires that the height of the garage cannot be more than 12'. Mr. Osguthorpe also discussed the code requirements for proportional setbacks based on the lot width and gave the

example of a 20' side yard setback, having a 15' side yard setback on one side and a 5' setback on the other side, but in no case could there be less than 5' setback.

Mr. Osguthorpe suggested another option if Council liked the intent of this provision and wanted to address the view issue. He suggested allowing the encroachment only on the lesser side of the property in order to retain the wide corridor on the other side. He also pointed out that the zoning code standards would be changed to reflect all of the setback provisions in the Design Manual to eliminate any inconsistencies.

Discussion was held on locating accessory structures within the setbacks. Councilmember Young suggested not allowing this in the view corridor. Theresa Malich stated that there must be flexibility on this issue. It was suggested to have the encroachment in the rear yard and preserve the side yard setbacks in order to preserve the view corridor. Councilmember Young pointed out that while it is important to preserve the view corridor, there must also be some common sense applied. Lita Dawn Stanton pointed out again that the Design Review Board tried to carry through the pattern of development along Harborview Drive, Rosedale Street and in the historic areas. Councilmember Dick suggested that staff moderate the "black letter language" which is intended to be the governing language and avoid inconsistencies by removing that element from the black letter portion. City Administrator Mark Hoppen explained that the Design Review Board crafted this provision this way because it was the best compromise that could be reached due to the fact that the city is located in a basin. He further stated that this provision encourages people to have better structures towards the front, to have the garages that they need and still preserve views. Councilmember Franich exhorted staff to make sure that the language in the code be descriptive of what is really being done and why. It was somewhat decided to leave the provision as is.

There were no further comments and the worksession ended at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Maureen Whitaker, Assistant City Clerk