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Design Tweaks for Downtown KB Home Project

By Cathy Tyson



Lafayette Town Center Phase III, Option 1 south elevation Image provided

It was down to the wire when the Lafayette city council finally conditionally approved the multi-story 72-unit KB Home condominium project slated for the gravel parking lot behind Panda Express; a Dec. 6, 2012 deadline was firmly spelled out in the Process Agreement that governs the project. While that deadline was firm, and progress had been made on the architectural plans, there were concerns about a number of design details that hadn't been finalized to everyone's satisfaction.

The project was conditionally approved based on a complete set of plans that the design review and planning commissions can fully support. Six specific design directives were itemized to clarify what the city is looking for in the structure. The project had an initial informal study session in February that demonstrated positive progress, but further refinement was needed, said senior planner Christine Sinnette.

Although there have been significant adjustments to date, the design review commission again reviewed the most recent set of updated plans and met with the architect and developer to give feedback. One design directive stated, "Incorporate a grand gesture or organizing element." Although the applicant responded with an entry pavilion that was taller and had a gable roof, city planning staff agreed with the commission that "it needs to be grander and less commercial looking."

The project is making headway and KB Home senior vice president Ray Panek was gracious about the constructive criticism. "We heard about more finite details that we need to work on." Going forward, the applicant will schedule another study session incorporating suggestions heard at this meeting to iron out design wrinkles.

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