

**Cullowhee Planning Council
Design Review Committee**

Planning Department Staff Report – April 13, 2022

Project: Jackson County – Parks and Recreation Aquatics Center
Applicant: Jackson County
Location: Cullowhee Mountain Road, Cullowhee; PIN 7558-26-8899
District Zone: Cullowhee Planning Area – Institutional District

Project Summary: This proposed Aquatic Center will be an addition to the existing Parks and Recreation Center campus of 30.17 acres located on the west side of Cullowhee Mountain Road and approximately 525 lf south of the Highway 107 intersection. The existing facility offers a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation activities including team sports, fitness classes and personal wellness opportunities. This property is located within the Cullowhee Community Planning Area and is in the Institutional District. Two access points are provided to this property from Cullowhee Mountain Road, which has a pavement width of approximately 22 feet; sidewalk is required and provided paralleling Cullowhee Mountain Road. This proposed addition will consist of a 30,565 s.f. aquatic center, which will include a new entry, vestibule, lobby, competition pool, leisure pool, changing rooms, event rooms, concession space and outdoor patio. Site grading (cut and fill) will be minimal for this proposed building and new parking area as the construction site areas are gently sloped; a retaining wall is proposed between the proposed structure and existing softball field, which will approach 6' (+/-) in height. Proposed siding material for the structure will be masonry split face veneer, masonry brick veneer, phenolic (composite) wood tone panel, high quality metal accents, translucent wall system and curtain wall glazing. The finished roofing material will be "standing seam" metal. The proposed addition of the Aquatic Center will require 266 parking stalls total; which will be a mix of on-site, shared and remote parking. Water and wastewater service will be provided by TWSA and these utilities will be reviewed by TWSA when final plans are submitted to their office. Final plans will be provided to the NCDOT for review, they will be coordinating their requirements with the project engineer of record (Jared Deridder) for encroachment, and driveway connection permits as well as any traffic safety issues. The Cullowhee Fire Department will provide fire protection for this property. A portion of this property is located in a designated flood hazard area (100-year floodplain); however, the proposed building addition and parking area are not affected. The average slope of the property is 2% and the administration of the Mountain and Hillside Development Ordinance will not be required.

UDO Section: 3.7.4 - Design Review Committee (Regulated Districts):

The Cullowhee Community Planning Council shall appoint a committee, composed of at least four members of the council, to serve as the Design Review Committee. The members of the Design Review Committee should have some knowledge of design and construction. The Design Review Committee shall have the following powers and duties, to be carried out in accordance with the terms of this ordinance:

(v) Formal Review.

- a) For design review applications associated with projects requiring a zoning permit issued by the Planning Department, the Planning Council will review the application and related information for compliance with the design standards set forth in Article IX (Regulated Districts) of this Ordinance. This review by the Planning Council may approve proposed project if it complies with the design guidelines, may approve with conditions or recommendations, or may find the proposed project is not in compliance with the design guidelines.

- 2) For design review applications associated with projects that require a special use permit, the Planning Council will review the design guidelines set forth in Article IX (Regulated Districts) as a standard for the granting of a special use permit. The Planning Council may approve proposed project if it complies with design guidelines, may approve with conditions or recommendations, or may find the proposed project is not in compliance with the design guidelines.

UDO Section: 9.4 – Cullowhee Community Planning District

- **Section 9.4.8 – Design Standards**

Staff responses to ordinance standards are shown in *Blue*.

- a) *General*. Building design and architecture are critical components for quality development. Building architecture design standards are intended to promote compatibility within a development and throughout the Cullowhee Planning Area, allow creativity and diversity of design, protect property values and neighborhood quality, and provide a safe and attractive environment for residents and visitors alike in the community.
- b) *Applicability*. The standards in this section shall apply to all nonresidential development and to multi-family residential development with greater than 12 units. Design standards are not applicable to one and two-family dwellings per NCGS 160D-702.
- c) *Building materials and color*.
 - (1) *Materials*.
 - a. All buildings shall be constructed of stone, exposed timber, fiber cement siding, wood siding, shingle siding, brick, or other high quality material as approved by the architectural review committee. No building shall be covered with sheet or corrugated metal or with vinyl siding, unless it is a high quality material approved by the architectural review committee.

Proposed siding material for the structure will be masonry split face veneer, masonry brick veneer, phenolic (composite) wood tone panel, high quality metal accents, translucent wall system and curtain wall glazing.
 - b. Exterior building materials shall be continued to finished grade of any elevation in accordance with minimum manufacturer specifications.

The submitted elevations indicate that the siding materials will extend to the finished grade.
 - c. Cornices shall be constructed of brick, stone, wood, pre-cast concrete, or other high quality, long-lasting material.

Decorative cornices are not proposed for this project; however, traditional overhangs and entry canopies will be constructed.
 - d. Architectural accent materials located above the roof line shall be constructed of brick, stone, wood, pre-cast concrete, architectural quality steel, fiber cement siding or other high quality, long-lasting material.

Architectural accents above the rooflines are not planned; however, the design of this proposed structure does incorporate rooflines at varying elevations, which extend siding materials vertically.

(2) *Colors.*

a. Color schemes used for buildings shall aesthetically integrate building elements together, relate separate (free-standing) buildings on the same lot or parcel to each other, and be used to enhance the architectural form of the building.

The applicant has submitted building elevations and a material board supporting the color palate for the proposed structure will be earthy tones including browns, tans and grays, which will complement the existing recreation facility.

b. Exterior colors for new buildings and structures, including roofs, shall be coordinated with the predominant colors of the surrounding natural and built environment to minimize contrast between the structure and the surrounding area.

The applicant has submitted building elevations and a material board supporting the color palate for the proposed structure will be earthy tones including browns, tans and grays, which will complement the existing recreation facility.

c. All building projections, including, but not limited to, chimneys, flues, vents, and gutters, shall match or complement in color the permanent color of the surface from which they project.

The Developer will coordinate color schemes for the proposed building on this project as well as accent features.

d) *Building massing and configuration.*

(1) Buildings located on steep areas shall conform to hillside topography by stepping or staggering the mass of the proposed structure up or down the slope.

The proposed site design for this project indicates that the developed areas (graded) will be relatively flat and not located on steep slopes.

(2) Building masses shall maintain a balance of scale and proportion using design components that are harmonious with natural landforms and landscaping.

This proposed building addition is located on an overall property of 30.17 acres including open fields, walking paths, existing vegetation and parking areas. It appears that this structure will be harmonious with the existing landform.

(3) Proposed structures shall not be sited atop peaks or silhouetted against the sky when viewed from any designated public right-of-way.

The finished floor for the proposed addition structure will be on the same elevation of the existing recreation facility and near the elevation of Cullowhee Mountain Road. The overall property is well below the peaks of surrounding mountains.

e) *Building façade character.* Elements of articulation shall be employed on any building visible from the public right-of-way or public street or pedestrian walkway to reduce the apparent bulk and uniform appearance of large buildings, provide visual interest and variety, and reinforce local architecture.

(1) *Buildings containing nonresidential uses.* The following requirements apply to any building containing nonresidential uses, regardless of whether the building also contains residential uses:

a. Buildings with a façade length of more than 40 feet shall incorporate offsets to break the plane of the façade. The distance between required offsets shall be every 30 feet.

The proposed building addition complies with this ordinance standard.

b. A building façade that is less than or equal to the height of the building shall not require an offset. ***N/A***

c. The depth or projection of the offset shall be at least two feet.

The proposed building addition complies with this ordinance standard.

d. The change in wall plane (i.e., offset) shall extend at least 20 percent of the length of the façade wall.

The proposed building addition complies with this ordinance standard.

(2) *Buildings containing residential uses.* The following requirements apply to any building containing only residential uses:

a. The distance between required offsets shall be 20 feet, provided that a building façade that is less than 25 feet in length shall not require an offset.

N/A

b. The depth or projection of the offset shall be at least two feet regardless of the length of the adjacent façade walls.

N/A

c. The change in wall plane (i.e., offset) shall extend at least 20 percent of the length of the façade wall.

N/A

f) *Minimum wall articulation.* Any building greater than 40 feet in length, measured horizontally, that faces a public right-of-way or private street or pedestrian walkway shall include at least three of the following features:

a. Change in texture or masonry pattern

b. Change in color

c. Windows

d. Dormers

e. Trellises with vegetation

f. Covered porch

g. Balconies

h. Parapet walls designed to meet the minimum requirements set forth of Section 6-6, i) Roof Form and Articulation, of this ordinance.

All sides of the building shall include articulation, materials, and design characteristics consistent with those on the primary front façade in terms of quality and detail, unless

the public's view of a rear or side building elevation from a public right-of-way or private street or pedestrian walkway is blocked by intervening buildings, topography, a solid screen wall at least six feet high built using materials consistent with the building, or landscaping measuring at least 15 feet in height at maturity.

The proposed architectural plans indicate that the proposed building addition will include at least three of the listed features.

g) *Windows.*

(1) The first floor front elevation of all commercial buildings shall incorporate windows that cover at least 40 percent of the wall plane. Windows shall be clear glass; opaque or reflective glazing shall not be permitted with the exception of low-E glass.

N/A

(2) The first floor front elevation of all multi-family residential buildings shall incorporate windows that cover at least 12 percent of the wall plane. Windows shall be clear glass; opaque or reflective glazing shall not be permitted with the exception of low-E glass.

N/A

h) *Entrance.* All entranceways shall be clearly defined, highly visible, and feature no less than three of the following:

- a. Canopies or porticos;
- b. Overhangs;
- c. Recesses or projections;
- d. Arcades;
- e. Arches;
- f. Outdoor patios;
- g. Windows;
- h. Awnings;
- i. Architectural features that are integrated into the building structure or design; or planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaped areas or places for sitting.

The proposed architectural plans indicate that the entryway will include at least three of the listed features.

i) *Roof form and articulation.* The roof of any building shall present a distinctive profile and add interest to larger buildings, and complement the character of other buildings included on the same lot or parcel.

(1) *Flat roof buildings.* The roof of any building with a flat roof shall include parapets to conceal the roof and roof-top equipment from public view. The average height of such parapets shall not exceed 15 percent of the height of the supporting wall, unless required for in Section 6-6.j, Rooftop Equipment Screening, of this ordinance, and such parapets shall not at any point exceed one-third of the height of the supporting wall.

Parapets used to conceal the roof and roof-top equipment for any building shall not extend a constant height for more than 100 feet in length.

The proposed building addition does include flat roofs with parapet walls for screening. Roof top equipment will be located at the rear of the structure and should not be visible from the public right-of-way/parking areas.

(2) *Slope roof buildings.* The roof of any building with a slope roof shall include at least two of the following to maintain proportional building architecture:

- a. Three or more roof slope planes;
- b. Overhanging eaves, extending no less than one foot past the supporting wall;
- c. Sloping roofs that do not exceed the average height of the supporting walls, with an average slope greater than or equal to one foot of vertical rise for every three feet of horizontal run and less than or equal to one foot of vertical rise for every one foot of horizontal run.

The proposed building addition does include sloped roofs that meet these ordinance requirements.

(3) *Additional requirements.* Consistent roof treatments, whether flat or sloping, shall be provided on all sides of the building. The back side of all cornices, parapets, and roofline that are visible from an adjacent public right-of-way shall be finished with materials consistent with the associated building.

The submitted plans indicate that the proposed building addition will have appropriate treatments that comply with this ordinance requirement.

j) *Rooftop equipment screening.* Screening Requirements

(1) All rooftop mechanical equipment and vents greater than eight inches in diameter shall be:

- a. Screened from the line of sight of public rights-of-way, private roads, parking lots, public sidewalks, greenways, and internal pedestrian ways except for instances where site topography precludes reasonable compliance with the minimum screening requirement;
- b. Screened by either a parapet wall along the building edge or a freestanding screen wall on the roof of a material, color, and design architecturally compatible with the building, that is at least as high as the equipment and vents for which the screening is designed to hide.

The proposed building addition will screen any rooftop equipment via parapet walls.

k) *Franchise architecture.* Franchise or national chains are welcome in the Cullowhee Planning Area, but must follow the standards of this ordinance to create a building that is compatible with the Cullowhee Community. ***N/A***

l) *Architectural unity.* All buildings within the same lot or parcel shall be architecturally unified. Architectural unity means that buildings shall be related and compatible in style, color, scheme, quality, and type of exterior building materials.

This aquatic center project will be an addition to the existing recreation facility. It appears that some of the proposed materials will be compatible with the existing building.

Comments:

This proposed project was reviewed applying the *Cullowhee Community Planning Area* architectural design standards and this project will be required to meet or exceed those standards set forth. The proposed “use” type of “Governmental Recreational” is permitted in the *Institutional District* of the *Cullowhee Community Planned Area*.

Staff Recommendation:

The *Architectural Design Standards* for this project meet or exceed the regulations set forth in the *Cullowhee Community Planning Area Ordinance*. Staff recommends approval of the architectural plans regarding style, features and materials as presented.