

October 1, 2021

Todd Hager

City of Aurora - Planning Department
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy
Aurora, CO 80012

Re: Buckley Yard – Residential Site Plan

Dear Mr. Sakotas,

On behalf of Raintree Investment Corporation, we are pleased to submit this Site Plan application for Buckley Yard, a residential infill neighborhood located on two parcels at the northeast corner of the intersection of Airport Blvd and Alameda Ave. The consultants listed below have been assembled to realize this plan and we look forward to working closely with Aurora to make this new community a success.

Developer:

Raintree Investment Corp.
7200 S. Alton Way, C-400
Centennial CO 80112
303.267.6195
Jerry Richmond

Planner:

Norris Design
1101 Bannock St,
Denver, CO 80204
303.892.1166
Diana Rael

Civil Engineer:

JR Engineering LLC
7200 S. Alton Way, C400
Centennial, CO 80112
303.740.9393
Kurtis Williams

Architect:

KTGY Architecture
820 16th St Mall #500
Denver, CO 80202
303.825.6400
William Ramsey

Landscape Architect:

Norris Design
1101 Bannock St,
Denver, CO 80204
303.892.1166
Brad Haigh

Traffic Engineer:

Kimley Horn
4582 S. Ulster St. 1500
Denver, CO 80237
303.228.2304
Curtis Rowe

Photometric Engineer:

Studio Lightning
63 Sunset Dr.
Bailey, CO 80421
303.242.1572
Jacob Bennefield

Design Intent

The design for Buckley Yard is inspired by the colors, sounds, and celebrations of yesteryear, a contemporary reimagination of urban and rural Americana when America's hometown spirit shined, and the streets filled with jubilation. Buckley Yard is imagined as a neighborhood where people can come to sow a future steeped in reminders of the past. Colorful rows of houses, classic lighting fixtures, and stepped porches blooming with vibrant plantings line the streets, drawing the community out for a friendly "hello." The familiar sounds of neighborhood freeze-tag and the smells of backyard barbecue waft through the air as versatile public spaces designed with retro-inspired motifs become the local hub for weekly fun and games.

Site Plan Description

This Site Plan will result in a 36+ acre residential neighborhood adjacent to commercial uses on Airport Boulevard, creating a mixed-use development that evokes a retro-urban feel and the history of Buckley Air Force Base. The community will consist of 113 single-family attached townhomes near the commercial uses, 146 paired homes along Alameda Parkway and through the middle of the neighborhood, and 49 single-family detached homes toward the eastern end of the site, creating a gentle transition of density throughout the neighborhood. This combination of home-types results in a total of 308 homes and an overall density of 8.6 units per acre. This plan realizes the vision of the Aurora Places Comprehensive Plan PlaceTypes map, which designates the area as an Established Neighborhood and offers a variety of housing options, keeping with the goals of the plan. It also furthers the city's goals of infill development, as all of the land surrounding this neighborhood has already been developed for residences, commercial uses, or designated as parks and open space.

All roads interior to the residential neighborhood will be private drives with public access easements. These road sections match the Aurora Local Type 1 (64') and Type 2 (60') sections. All of the townhomes and paired homes will feature alley-loaded garages, and homes fronting onto local streets or green-courts. Guest parking is provided with on-street parking along the local roads and head-in spaces at key points along the alleys. The single-family detached homes will feature front-loaded garages with access off of local roads.

Landscape Design

The site features a landscape buffer on the eastern edge, adjacent to S Quintero Way, to keep homes outside of the airport noise zone. Further north, where Quintero arches southwest, a detention area will serve for site drainage and accommodate floodplain from nearby East Toll Gate Creek. Landscape buffers, open space, and drainage areas utilize native species with a mix of evergreen and deciduous plant material in order to provide screening year-round.

Southwest of E Alameda Drive, a detention pond and a private neighborhood amenity will serve the Buckley Yard residents. The landscaped amenity areas feature a private community recreation center for residences with a community pool and spa as well as grills, cabanas, and pool seating. In addition to the recreation center, a fenced dog run, active play sport court and lawn game area, open lawns, perimeter crusher fines trail, and concrete walk connections will be provided within the park areas. Amenities within these areas will include bench and table-style seating, bike racks, trash receptacles, and pet waste stations. Park shade structures and festoon-style lighting will also be provided at key gathering nodes.

The overall landscape and softscape consist of layered materials with vibrant pops of colors and strong forms while integrating a naturally occurring native landscape as a nod to the high plains in the area. All parks, trails, and open space will be well connected and activated through comforting and protective landscape. Landscape material within these areas has been selected to create a pedestrian-oriented and visually interesting landscape that will provide color, texture, and structure all year round. Canopy trees will be used to help mitigate noise from roads as needed.

Architectural Design

The architecture of Buckley Yard includes 2-story townhouses, paired homes and single-family detached front-loaded homes ranging 1,300 to 2,500+ square feet. Single-family attached homes include a two-car garage at the rear of the plan and a front porch with fenced front patio. The typical raised porches within private fenced patio areas create a quiet transition from the public paseos to the interior of every home. Single-family detached homes are also served by a two-car garage as well as additional 2 parking spaces provided via a private driveway.

The elevations harken back to earlier American neighborhood designs with the americana and cottage styles. The americana elevations feature massing with 6:12 to 8:12 steeper pitched accent gable roof forms with smooth panel trim gable end details. Lower pitch shed style porch roofs sometimes feature metal roofing and are supported by sanded finish square porch posts. The americana windows utilize vertical and horizontal muntin patterns across the entire window to divide the glazing into vertical pane proportions typical of traditional styles. The cottage elevations also feature accent 4:12-8:12 steeper pitched gable roofs with a wood-look stained shingle siding gable end detail intersecting lower pitch shed roof forms. Porches of the cottage style have gable or shed roof form and are supported by square wood porch posts with additional trim capital and base wood detail. Cottage windows utilize vertical muntin pattern only in the top portion of windows different from the americana but consistent with historic American style windows. Window and door trim surrounds are consistent with historic precedent. A more urban looking horizontal picket metal guardrail detail is featured at porches of both style elevations. In addition to more modern durable fiber cement siding and trim materials, elevations feature brick veneer, and colors schemes with white trim and fascia, muted color selections on siding material, and accent color at the front doors. The massing, roof pitch, gable end, fascia, and eave details altogether with porches, appropriate window muntin and trim designs make these homes a clear reflection of historic American architecture with a retro-urban perspective.

Adjustment Requests

The follow adjustments are being requested with this Site Plan application:

Code Section: 146-4-.2.2-1 General Dimensional Standards Summary Tables

Adjustment Request: The Applicant requests the following reductions from Table 4.2-1 for R-2 Zoning.

	Allowed under R-2 Zoning	Adjustment Request
Minimum Lot Area (<i>Two-Family</i>)	3,000 SF	2,241 SF
Minimum Lot Frontage (<i>Two-Family</i>)	30 ft.	27 ft.
Minimum Front Setback (<i>for Two-Family & Single-Family Attached Homes</i>)	20 ft.	10 ft.
Minimum Rear Setback (<i>for Two-Family & Single-Family Attached Homes</i>)	15 ft.	6 ft.

Justification: The above noted dimensional standards are reflective of current market standards for urban mixed-use neighborhoods such as this. The community design encourages interaction between residents and pedestrians through the use of smaller setbacks and brings front porches closer to the activity incurred on the street. In addition, reduced lot size is warranted due in combinations to the nearby park, open space and commercial amenities provided both within the community and planned nearby.

Code Section: 146-4.2.3.C.1.b.vi. "In Subareas A and B, no more than 14 dwelling units may face the same Green Court open space."

Adjustment Request: The Applicant requests to allow up to 22 dwelling units to face the same Green Court open space.

Justification: Due to the urban character of the community and its infill location, additional units are requested to face the same Green Court open space, similar to what is permitted within Sub Area C. Sub Area C permits up to 24 dwelling units to front onto the same open space when both ends of the Green Court open space have frontage onto a public street, such as the case here. These green courts provide additional pedestrian circulation opportunities as well as neighborhood activation through the use of shared amenities such as multi-use lawns, a shelter, benches, tables, and other programmed amenities.

Code Section: 146-4.7.9, Table 4.7-4 Fence Location and Height: Residential Uses

Adjustment Request: The Applicant requests that a front yard fence be permitted 0 inches from back of sidewalk.

Justification: In order to promote a unique urban character front yard fencing is proposed with single-family duplexes and townhomes. Due to limitations caused by utilities, the fence is proposed to be located outside of those necessary easements and thereby adjacent to the back of walk. The fenced front yard creates both a usable private space for residents as well as reinforces traditional residential character consistent with the overall Buckley Yard Master Plan.

Site Plan Approval Criteria

- a. The application complies with the applicable standards in this UDO, other adopted City regulations, any approved Master Plan that includes the property, and any conditions specifically applied to development of the property by the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council in a prior decision affecting the property.

The Buckley Yard residential neighborhood is a part of the Buckley Yard Master Plan, and was approved by Planning and Zoning Commission approval hearing on March 24, 2021. The design is fully compliant with the Master Plan, and with the UDO on any details not included in the Master Plan.

- b. The City's existing infrastructure and public improvements, including but not limited to its water, wastewater, street, trail, and sidewalk systems, have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development, and any burdens on those systems have been mitigated to the degree practicable.

As an infill site, infrastructure already surrounds Buckley Yard, including the existing E Alameda Drive and S Quintero Way. A Public Improvements Plan has been included in the Master Plan set and details the extents and timing of improvements to the neighborhood.

- c. Major Site Plans shall be designed to preserve and protect natural areas, ridgelines, swales, natural landforms, water quality and wildlife habitat of riparian corridors, wetlands, and floodplains affected by the proposed development and to integrate those areas into site design where practicable.

The site is designed to retain stormwater on-site in key locations, including one impacted by floodplain. This will mitigate any additional impact on stormwater infrastructure and help to accommodate a potential floodway associated with East Toll Gate Creek.

- d. The application will improve or expand multi-modal connections with adjacent sites, neighborhoods, and urban centers.

The Buckley Yard neighborhood will include pedestrian and bike circulation along detached walks and local roadways throughout. These connections provide valuable regional connections to the nearby Signature Park and Highline Canal Trail.

- e. The application is compatible with surrounding uses in terms of size, scale and building façade materials.

The Buckley Yard neighborhood will be compatible with the nearby commercial and residential developments, with maximum building heights of 35 feet, pedestrian-scale massing, and traditional residential façade materials.

- f. The application mitigates any adverse impacts on the surrounding area to the degree practicable.

As an infill neighborhood, Buckley Yard is completing this portion of Aurora, rather than adversely impacting the surrounding neighborhood. Homes within the neighborhood have been designed to meet a variety of housing needs, while complementing each other and nearby neighborhoods. Landscape, detention, and a private park all minimize the impact of the neighborhood on existing stormwater and park infrastructure.

And while the neighborhood is already separated from Signature Park by E Alameda Dr and S Quintero Way, much of the land that faces the park is used for detention, landscape buffering, and a neighborhood park, further minimizing the visual impact of the neighborhood on the park itself.

We look forward to working with the City of Aurora on this highly anticipated community. Thank you for considering our application.

Sincerely,



Samantha Crowder
Senior Associate | Norris Design