

Albany Village's look discussed by Mesa Design Review Board

228 homes to be constructed next to Dreamland Villa



Independent Newspapers/Richard H. Dyer

Tractors at the site where Albany Village will be constructed on 32 acres at 5656 E. Albany St., at the closed nine-hole Dreamland Villa Golf Course. It is generally northwest of East Albany Street and North 57th Place, south of University Drive.

By Richard H. Dyer
Independent Newspapers

Tractors have been moving dirt and beginning construction of the 228-home Albany Village housing subdivision for a couple months. It is generally northwest of East Albany Street and North 57th Place, south of University Drive, and will be surrounded on the east, west and north sides by homes in unincorporated Maricopa County.

The Mesa Design Review Board on Thursday, April 16, had its first examination of the proposed design and landscaping for the William Lyon Homes development at a study session in the lower level council chambers, 57 E. First St.

Seven home plans are proposed from 1,165 square feet to 2,515 square feet in one- or two-story configurations and with two to five bedrooms. Four architectural styles are proposed – cottage, ranch hacienda, western ranch and

rancho adobe, each incorporating details specific to the theme, according to a product narrative document provided to the design review board.

"It's a definite upgrade to the area because that is all mid-'60s, '70s construction. So it looks good. The elevations are dressed up around the windows, the stone accents I'm not a fan of, but it goes with the house," Brian Sandstrom, chair-

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man of the board, said at the meeting.

"One unusual thing they have got, which you don't see a lot with this type of home, is a ... single-story with a two-bedroom option," Leslie Davis, staff planner, said to the board. "A lot of the homes in that neighborhood are two-bedroom homes. They might be looking for something newer in the area."

The Mesa City Council on May 19 voted to establish city zoning on previously annexed property and to rezone it to allow the development of a single-residence subdivision. At that time, two-story homes were envisioned, the council was told.

A stipulation of the approval of the project was that it go before the design review board, Ms. Davis said.

"It's the former Dreamland Villa Golf Course," she said. "They came in for 228 cluster-type homes that they'll be constructing off of ... a public-street system that goes through there that kind of goes around in a U and each of the clusters feeds off of that."

The subdivision will have a garden court housing product with six lots that front onto a shared landscape courtyard that has pedestrian access to homes, according to the document.

"Your property-line wall is going to be your neighbor's house. So we have to be very careful (with) the detailing on those walls because you don't want, for privacy

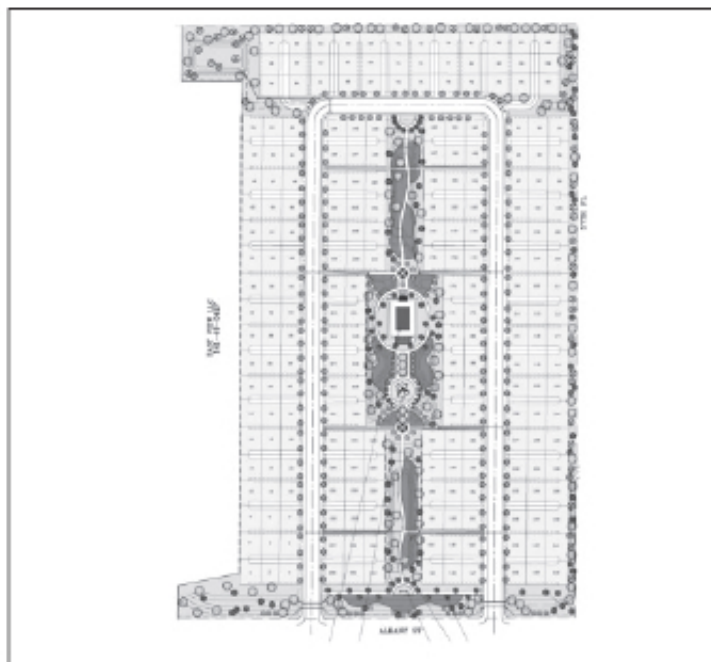
reasons, you don't necessarily want to look out your living-room window into somebody else's backyard without any kind of barrier," Ms. Davis said to the board.

The courtyard landscaping will be open and maintained by the homeowners association. Vehicle access to a two-car garage at the rear of each home is from a shared private drive and no garage doors will be on the street, according to the document provided to the design-review board.

"I appreciate you can see every front door," Nicole Thompson, board member, said at the meeting.

The unincorporated Maricopa County housing subdivisions of Dreamland Villa and Velda Rose, which surround the new subdivision on three sides, have age-restricted, 55-and-up senior overlays.

"This area of Mesa is unique as it is going through a transition from a mature, almost exclusive retirement area, to a more urban family friendly part of the community. With the area's proximity to the Red Mountain Freeway and a future light rail line (Main Street), we foresee a diverse mix of families wanting to move into this part of Mesa. We are proud to be on the front edge of that transition and believe this project will be a successful example of how to accommodate the needs of the future city residents that have diverse lifestyles and housing needs while still integrating into the existing community," officials from William Lyon Homes and Iplan Consulting wrote in the product narrative document provided to the design review board.



Graphic courtesy of city of Mesa

The Albany Village housing project, according to product narrative document provided to the design review board.