



City of Santa Barbara California

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE: May 31, 2005
AGENDA DATE: June 9, 2005
PROJECT ADDRESS: 1822 San Pascual Street (MST2004-00546)
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Division, (805) 564-5470
Jan Hubbell, AICP, Senior Planner
Victoria Greene, Project Planner

I. SUBJECT

The proposed project involves demolition of an existing single family residence, an unpermitted residential unit, garage and shed, and the construction of seven new residential condominiums with twelve covered and two uncovered parking spaces. Units would range in size from 983 to 1,930 square feet. Access would be provided by a driveway off of San Pascual Street.

The discretionary application required for this project is a Tentative Subdivision Map for a one-lot subdivision to create seven residential condominium units (SBMC§27.07 and 27.13).

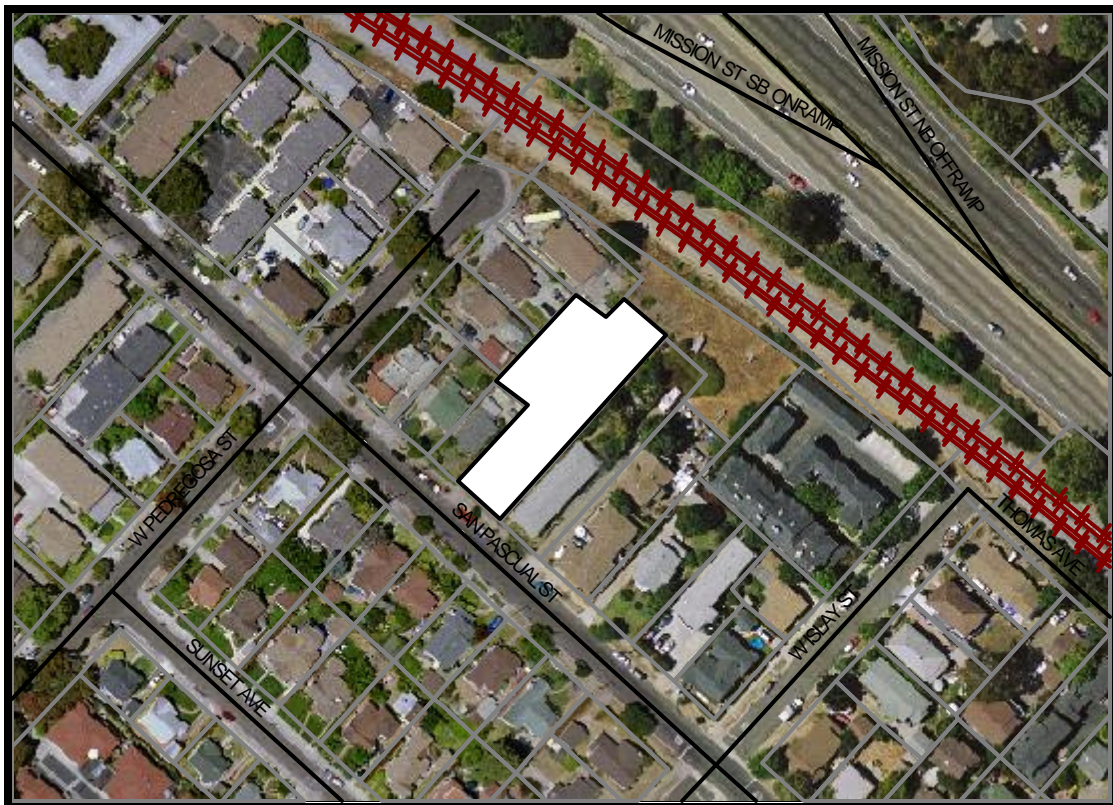


Figure 1: Vicinity Map 1822 San Pascual Street

DATE APPLICATION ACCEPTED: April 20, 2005
DATE ACTION REQUIRED PER MAP ACT: July 8, 2005

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

Applicant: Garcia Architects, Inc.
Property Owner: San Pascual Cottages, LLC
Project Address: 1822 San Pascual Street
Parcel Number: 043-163-013
General Plan: Residential, 12 units per acre
Zoning: R-3, Limited Multiple-Family Residence Zone
Environmental Assessment: Categorical Exemption, CEQA Guidelines §15332, In-fill Development
Existing Use: Single family residence
Proposed Use: Seven residential condominiums
Topography: Less than 2% slope to the east
Access: San Pascual Street
Adjacent Land Uses:
North: Residential
South: Residential
East: Private garden/Railroad Tracks/US Highway 101
West: Residential

III. SITE STATISTICS

LOT AREA: 15,341 square feet

LOT COVERAGE:

-Structures: 6,130 square feet (40%)
-Paving/Driveway: 3,906 square feet (25%)
-Landscaping: 5,305 square feet (35%)
15,341 square feet (100%)

OPEN YARDS:

-Required: 1,534 square feet
-Provided: 1,836 square feet

UNIT TYPE:

	Type	Bedrooms	Sq. Ft.	Parking	Private Outdoor Living Area Sq. Ft.	
					Provided	Required
Unit 1	Detached	3	1,930	2-car garage	165	160
Unit 2	Attached	2	1,215	2-car garage	96	84
Unit 3	Attached	1	1,134	1-car garage	120	120
Unit 4	Attached	1	1,073	1-car garage	120	120
Unit 5	Attached	2	1,545	2-car garage	140	120
Unit 6	Attached	1	983	2-car garage	120	120
Unit 7	Attached	2	1,358	2-car garage	98	84

PARKING:

- Required: 14 spaces, 7 spaces must be covered
- Provided: 14 spaces (12 covered, 2 uncovered)

IV. BACKGROUND

The project site is developed with a single family residence, illegal unit, garage and shed. The date of construction of the structures is unknown, and some may have been moved to the site. The application for the proposed Tentative Subdivision and condominium development was submitted to the Pre-Application Review Team in August 2004. The Planning Commission applications were submitted for DART review on November 12, 2004 and found complete for processing on April 20, 2005.

V. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project site is located in the Westside Neighborhood, on San Pascual Street between West Pedregosa and West Islay Streets. The requested approval is for a Tentative Subdivision Map to create a seven unit condominium project. The project includes a 2,365 square foot detached three-bedroom unit and attached two-car garage adjacent to San Pascual Street. Two three unit buildings would be located behind this structure and would include three one-bedroom units and three two-bedroom units in structures of 4,482 and 4,984 square feet with attached garages. Living area within the units would range from 983 to 1,930 square feet. Access would be provided by a ribbon driveway from San Pascual Street, which is shared with the residence to the west.

Site preparation would require the importation of fill to raise the back of the site by approximately 2 feet to gain positive drainage to the street. Drainage from the northwest would be collected in a drainage swale to be located up slope of a proposed property wall and conveyed to the street. Onsite drainage would be directed to vegetated swales located along the site perimeter and to drains in the driveway for conveyance to the street.

VI. OTHER COMMITTEE REVIEW

A. ARCHITECTURAL BOARD OF REVIEW (ABR)

The project received concept review by the ABR on August 16, 2004 and continued the project to the Planning Commission. The ABR found the overall density of the project, massing and architecture appropriate for the site. ABR recommended changes to the project that including lowering building profiles through a reduction in the amount of fill, setting buildings into the grade and reducing plate height and roof pitch. The ABR minutes are attached in Exhibit D.

The applicant made a number of project changes in response to the ABR comments. The applicant lowered the finished floor of Unit 7 by about 3 inches and the finished floor at the back of the site by about 6 inches. Overall building height was reduced substantially by lowering the roof pitches, though plate heights of 9'8" on the first floor and 8' on the second floor were retained. The revisions to the project have not been reviewed by ABR.

While the changes made to date move the project in the direction desired by the ABR and improve neighborhood compatibility, staff believes that additional revisions to further reduce the apparent scale of development are warranted. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission include a condition of approval requesting that ABR continue to identify project modifications to improve compatibility of the scale of development with the surrounding neighborhood. Project modifications could include reduced plate heights and a modified grading and drainage design that minimizes fill of the site.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City's Environmental Analyst and staff have determined that the Tentative Subdivision Map is categorically exempt from CEQA requirements pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15332, which provides for in-fill development projects in urban areas where it is determined that there will be no significant effects as identified by the following criteria:

1. The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation regulations;
2. The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses;
3. The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species;
4. Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and
5. The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

VII. ISSUES

A. ZONING ORDINANCE CONFORMANCE

1. Lot Area

The 15,341 square foot project site is located in the R-3 Limited Multiple-Family Residence Zone and is subject to the City's variable density provisions. The development of three one-bedroom, three two-bedroom and one three-bedroom units requires 15,280 square feet of lot area under the variable density provisions. The project is in compliance with this requirement.

2. Zoning Standards

The proposed project is in conformance with applicable standards of the zoning ordinance; specifically, standards related to building height, setbacks, open yard area, private yard area and parking requirements. A portion of the second story of Unit 5 would encroach into the rear yard setback by 2 feet. Such encroachments have been permitted in the past without modifications when they do not include useable space and can be considered as architectural projections. No useable space would be provided in this area.

3. Residential Condominium Development

The project would be consistent with general City requirements and physical standards for new condominium development, per SBMC §27.13.050 and §27.13.060, respectively. The project would provide the required parking, private storage space, laundry facilities, and open yard area. Each of the units would have their own utility meters and all utilities are proposed to be underground.

B. GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

In order to approve a condominium project and the associated tentative map, it must be found consistent with the City's General Plan. The proposed development would result in infill development in an existing urbanized area that is currently developed with a variety of single family and multi-family residential developments.

1. Land Use Element

The proposed project is located in the City's Westside neighborhood. The General Plan Land Use Element characterizes this neighborhood as a primarily single family residential neighborhood with R-3 zoning and some apartment development in the area between Highway 101 and San Andres Street. The development of condominium units would continue the pattern of residential development in the larger area; however, the scale of development would be more intensive than found on neighboring properties where development appears to be primarily single family.

Additionally, the Land Use Element recognizes that in the multiple-family residential zones where variable density standards apply, development may be allowed which exceeds the limits of the 12 units per acre where a dwelling unit

may yield fewer persons than the average unit. With the application of variable density standards, the proposed project would result in a density of 20 dwelling units per acre. This results in part from the provision of three one-bedroom units. The Land Use Element recognizes that, in multiple family residential zones, where variable density standards apply, development may exceed the 12 units per acre limit of the General Plan designation without causing an inappropriate increase in the intensity of development.

2. Housing Element

The availability of all types of housing is of primary importance to the City. Santa Barbara has very little vacant or available land for new infill residential development and, therefore, the City has supported build-out of housing units in the City's urban areas where individual projects are deemed appropriate and compatible. The development would provide for homeowner opportunities in a neighborhood with close proximity to the downtown.

A goal of the Housing Element is to assist in the production of new housing opportunities, through the public and private sector, which vary sufficiently in type and affordability to meet the needs of all economic and social groups. The proposed project contains a mix of unit sizes. The proposed residential units would not be restricted to low- or moderate-income households. The City provisions for inclusionary zoning only apply to projects that involve ten or more units.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY

The block of San Pascual Street between Islay and Pedregosa Streets is characterized by single story, one or two family residences on lots of 3,600 to 15,300 square feet on the north side of the street and lots of approximately 5,000 square feet on the south side. The proposed project would introduce multi-family housing to this block, although there is another condominium development of 12 units on a 22,600 square foot lot located around the corner from the site on Islay Street, adjacent to the railroad right-of-way. As noted above, the Architectural Board of Review found the overall density is appropriate for the size of the lot and the architecture and massing appropriate. Staff, however, remains concerned regarding the compatibility of the proposed intensity of use and scale of development with the surrounding neighborhood. A proposed condition of approval requests that the ABR continue to identify project modifications to improve compatibility of the scale of development with the surrounding neighborhood. Project modifications could include reduced plate heights and a modified grading and drainage design that minimizes fill of the site.

D. EASEMENTS IN FAVOR OF NEIGHBORING PROPERTY

The property located immediately to the north of the project site at 1824 San Pascual Street holds several easements over the project site. This property is developed with an older single family residence on a 3,600 square foot parcel. The owner of 1824 San Pascual has a 10 foot wide access easement over 1822 San Pascual along the southern property line of 1824 San Pascual and a landscape easement over a 7 foot wide area adjacent to the rear yard of 1824 San Pascual. The proposed ribbon driveway has been designed to maintain access to the back yard of 1824 San Pascual.

The landscape easement provides for “An exclusive easement for landscaping and for the maintenance, repair, replacement and construction of fences and any improvements including, but not limited to, sheds or other buildings over, under, across and through a strip of land 7 feet in width.” This area is currently fenced and maintained by the owner of 1824 San Pascual. The proposed project shows construction of a block wall for the garage of Unit 7 at the edge of the easement with two feet of the garage roof overhanging the easement area. The second story of Unit 7 would be set back three feet from the edge of the easement area. The proposed design does not appear to infringe upon the easement holder’s use of the landscape easement area; however, the property rights configuration in this location may present problems in the future when fee title to this area is held by the condominium’s homeowners association.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION/FINDINGS

Staff supports the proposed development because it provides all physical standards required in the Zoning Ordinance for new condominiums, is consistent with the General Plan, and meets all applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements. Additionally, the project will provide ownership housing opportunities for the community. However, staff recommends that approval of the project be subject to a condition of approval requiring further ABR review of neighborhood compatibility issues related to the scale and design of development. Staff recommends approval of the project based on the Conditions of Approval (Exhibit A) and the following findings:

A. THE TENTATIVE MAP (SBMC §27.07.100)

The tentative subdivision map is consistent with the General Plan of the City of Santa Barbara. The project is consistent with its General Plan Land Use Designation of 12 dwelling units per acre, with variable density, and the requirements of the R-3 Zone.

B. THE NEW CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPMENT (SBMC §27.13.080)

1. There is compliance with all provisions of the City's Condominium Ordinance.
The project complies with density, parking, storage, laundry facilities, separate utility metering, adequate unit size and the required outdoor living space requirements.
2. The proposed development is consistent with the General Plan of the City of Santa Barbara.
The project can be found consistent with applicable policies of the City’s General Plan.
3. The proposed development is consistent with the principles of sound community planning and will not have an adverse impact upon the neighborhood's aesthetics, parks, streets, traffic, parking and other community facilities and resources.
The project is an infill residential project proposed in a primarily residential area. Reductions in the scale of development to be considered by ABR would provide for compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and thus sound community planning. The project is adequately served by a public street, will

provide adequate parking to meet the demands of the project and will not result in measurable traffic impacts. The project would not adversely impact community resources, such as water, sewer, police, fire, schools and parks. Environmental review of the project determined that no significant environmental effects would result from the project.

Exhibits:

- A. Conditions of Approval
- B. Site Plan
- C. Applicant Letter dated February 24, 2005
- D. Architectural Board of Review Minutes of August 16, 2004