



City of Santa Barbara California

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE: November 23, 2005
AGENDA DATE: December 1, 2005
PROJECT ADDRESS: 617 Garden Street (MST2005-00575)
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Division, (805) 564-5470
Jan Hubbell, AICP, Senior Planner
Marisela G. Salinas, Associate Planner

I. SUBJECT

The project consists of a three-unit, one-lot subdivision for an approved mixed-use project being developed by the Mental Health Association in Santa Barbara County (MHA) that includes 13,075 square feet of commercial space, 51 residential units, and 110 parking spaces. The commercial condominium units would be comprised as follows: Unit 1 – 51 residential apartments and common space (37,782 square feet); Unit 2 – commercial space on the first and second floors (13,852 square feet) for the Mental Health Association; and Unit 3 – commercial space on the third floor (3,688 square feet) for the City or other non-profit organization. The parking would be held in common by all three units as previously approved.

The Planning Commission previously approved the mixed-use development on the site on January 27, 2005 (Exhibits D & E). Currently on the site there is an existing 1,160 square foot office building, four apartment units, 5,212 square foot athletic club and City employee parking lot, which have been approved for demolition.

The discretionary application required for this project is a Tentative Subdivision Map for a one-lot subdivision to create three (3) condominium units (SBMC Chapters 27.07 and 27.13).

II. BACKGROUND/ISSUES

As approved by the Planning Commission, the project site would be a combined 39,444 square foot parcel located on Garden Street in downtown Santa Barbara. The site would be composed of a 0.58 acre parcel at 617 Garden Street that is owned by the Mental Health Association plus a 0.32 acre portion of a parcel at 627 Garden Street that is currently owned by the City's Redevelopment Agency and used as a 35-space parking lot for City employees. The remainder of the Redevelopment Agency owned parcel is occupied by the Ortega Water Treatment facility and until recently Santa Barbara Recycling Center.

The approved project consists of a mixed-use development, proposed by MHA, containing 25 low income affordable apartment units for downtown workforce housing, 26 very-low income units for MHA clients, a 4,991 square foot MHA office, a 5,262 square foot Fellowship Club

for MHA clients, and a 2,822 square foot office/conference facility intended for governmental agencies or non-profit organizations. A total of 110 parking spaces would be provided in a two-level parking garage, including 35 spaces for City employees and 6 spaces for the Alano Club. Vehicular access would be provided via a two-way entry/exit from Garden Street at the northeast corner of the site. Access to the lower level and egress for both levels of parking is accessible from Cota Street via an existing access easement.

The project included approvals of modifications for a parking reduction and bonus density, a lot line adjustment, development plan approval, and a recommendation to the City Council for a Final Community Priority Designation. At the time the project was approved, it was found consistent with applicable General Plan policies, Building Code, and Zoning Ordinances.

Since then the project received a preliminary approval from the Architectural Board of Review and continues to move forward through the building plan check process. The applicant has also moved forward on processing a number of agreements and the lot line adjustment, which are required as part of the prior project approval.

In order to bring this project to fruition, several parties are involved in its financing. This requires a complexity of agreements that necessitates the applicants' request for a one-lot subdivision. While it changes the private ownership of the proposal, it does not change the parameters or conditions of the prior approval.

The proposal for a three-unit condominium project conforms with applicable City Zoning and Building Ordinances and General Plan policies. Although residential apartments are included as one of the condominium units, it is not considered a residential condominium since the apartments are not proposed to be sold individually. In terms of environmental review, Staff has determined that the project is exempt from further environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15315 for minor land divisions (Tentative Subdivision Map).

III. RECOMMENDATION/FINDINGS

As analyzed in the prior review of this project, the proposal conforms to all applicable City Zoning and Building Ordinances and General Plan policies. With the exception of a change in ownership, the project has not changed from the approval granted by the Planning Commission earlier this year. Therefore, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the project, making the findings outlined below, and subject to the conditions of approval in Exhibit A.

A. THE TENTATIVE MAP (SBMC §27.07.100)

The Tentative Subdivision Map is consistent with the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Santa Barbara. The site is physically suitable for the proposed condominiums, the project is consistent with the density provisions of the Municipal Code and the General Plan as previously approved, and the proposed use is consistent with the vision for this neighborhood of the General Plan. The design of the project

will not cause substantial environmental damage, and associated improvements will not cause serious public health problems.

B. 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 outdoor living space requirements.
2. The proposed development is consistent with the General Plan of the City of Santa Barbara. The project is consistent with applicable policies of the City's General Plan, including the Housing Element, Conservation Element, Noise Element and Land Use Element.
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 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. Adequate park facilities exist nearby, and the project would not adversely impact other 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. The design has been reviewed by the City's Architectural Board of Review, which found the architecture, density, and landscaping appropriate.

Exhibits:

- A. Conditions of Approval
- B. Site Plan
- C. Applicant letter
- D. Planning Commission Staff Report dated January 21, 2005 (without attachments)
- E. Planning Commission Minutes dated January 27, 2005