



City of Santa Barbara
 Planning Division

Memorandum

DATE: July 10, 2014
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Daniel Gullett, Project Planner *DG*
SUBJECT: 240 W. Alamar Avenue

On May 22, 2014 the Planning Commission reviewed the four unit condominium project proposed at 240 W. Alamar Avenue and continued the item indefinitely to allow the applicant to restudy the project in response to the Planning Commission's comments. According to the applicant letter (Attachment 1), the applicant analyzed the options discussed at the Planning Commission hearing and concluded that the project originally reviewed by the Planning Commission was the best option. The applicant has elected to proceed with the original project and is requesting that the Planning Commission take action on the applications at the July 17th hearing.

On May 22nd, the Planning Commission discussed the project and took a series of straw polls to assess individual Planning Commissioner's positions and provide feedback to the applicant (see hearing minutes in Attachment 2). From the discussion and straw polls, it was clear that the majority of the Planning Commission supported the proposed creek setback and the proposed third story element. The Planning Commission, however, was not supportive of the requested Front Setback Modification to reduce the 20 foot SD-2 Zone front setback or any Parking Modification that could result from a redesign.

During deliberations, the Planning Commission suggested that the applicant consider designing the project for consistency with the Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program (AUD Program). For this parcel size and land use designation of Medium-High Density residential (15-27 dwelling units per acre), the project would need to provide at least one additional unit, for a total of five units, in order to qualify for the AUD Program and the reduced parking and setback requirements provided by the Program. However, because the project is located in the SD-2 Overlay Zone, the project would have to be entirely affordable in order to qualify for the reduced setbacks. Municipal Code Section 28.20.070.B requires projects developed with market rate units on parcels with General Plan designations of Medium-High Residential to comply with the SD-2 development standards. Therefore, in order to qualify for the setback reductions, the project would not only have to add a unit, but the unit would have to be an affordable unit.

The current project is subject to a 20-foot SD-2 Zone front setback for all three stories. If the project qualified for the reduced setbacks under the AUD Program, the front setback requirement is reduced to ten feet for the first and second stories and 20 feet for the third and fourth stories in the SD-2 Zone. With front setbacks of ten feet for the first and second stories and 47.5 feet for the third story, the proposed building would conform to the reduced AUD Program setback standards. The AUD Program also allows for a reduction in parking to one

covered or one uncovered parking space per unit, unless the project includes any market rate condominium units. Public comments received by the ABR for this project included neighbor concerns that the project would not provide adequate parking to meet parking demand with two spaces per unit.

The applicant is required to provide four units affordable to moderate-income households pursuant to the settlement agreement with the City described in the May 15, 2014 staff report. Staff believes that requiring the project to include any additional units would be inappropriate in this case.

To approve the requested Front Setback Modification, the Planning Commission must find that the modification is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, and is necessary to:

1. Secure an appropriate improvement on a lot,
2. Prevent unreasonable hardship,
3. Promote uniformity of improvement, or
4. The modification is necessary to construct a housing development containing affordable dwelling units rented or owned and occupied in the manner provided for in the City's Affordable Housing Policies and Procedures as defined in subsection (A) of Section 28.43.020 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Although Findings 1 or 4 could potentially be made in this case, staff recommended a finding in support of the Front Setback Modification based on Finding 3 because the proposed front setback would provide a setback uniform with the adjacent developed properties and a setback consistent with the predominant front setback along Alamar Avenue within the project vicinity. The front setback reduction also provides for additional creek setback for this building design. The proposed front setback is consistent with the setback required by the base zone (R-3), the required setback on the east side of Alamar Avenue (which is outside the SD-2 Zone) and, as described above, consistent with the front setback for AUD Program projects that do not include any market rate condominium units.

For reference purposes, the maximum average unit size provided in the AUD Program (and the maximum average unit size for a five unit project on the subject property), is 1,450 square feet, regardless of the number of bedrooms. The subject project includes four, three-bedroom units that range in floor area from 1,279 square feet to 1,589 square feet, with an average unit size of 1,478 square feet, only 28 square feet larger than the maximum average unit size with the AUD Program.

Staff recommends approval of the project with the findings in the staff report dated May 15, 2014, subject to the Conditions in Exhibit A.

Attachments:

1. Applicant letter dated June 20, 2014
2. Planning Commission minutes from May 22, 2014

June 20, 2014

Daniel Gullett, Planner
City of Santa Barbara Community Development
P.O. Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

RE: Request for Final Decision – 240 West Alamar Avenue Condominium

Dear Dan,

I am writing to let you know that City Ventures Homebuilding Inc. (City Ventures) would like to present the 240 West Alamar Avenue condominium/townhome project to the Planning Commission on July 17, 2014 for purposes of requesting a final decision rather than a concept review, as discussed at the previous hearing.

We have analyzed the various options discussed at the previous hearing and City Ventures has come to the conclusion that the current project design configuration is still the best option. Provision of adequate parking was an important issue for the neighborhood, and City Ventures believes it is critical for this particular project and location. The current project design provides the two spaces per unit that we believe are needed to fulfill that expectation.

Given the results of the straw poll that the Commission took on May 22, 2014, it appears the only remaining issue that the majority of the Commissioners had a problem with was the 10 foot front setback modification. City Ventures believes, as does the ABR and staff, that the request for a modification in this case is justified and reasonable. We would like to ask the Commissioners to reconsider their position on this question with the hope that they will approve the project in its current configuration. We will be prepared to explain, with additional graphic exhibits, why the alternatives discussed at the hearing do not meet the programmatic goals that City Ventures has set for this project.

Please confirm that we can return to the Planning Commission for a final decision on July 17, 2014, as requested above. City Ventures is anxious to move this affordable housing development forward without further delay.

Best regards and thank you for your help with this.

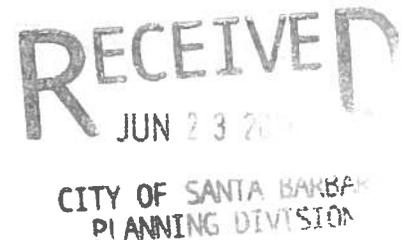
Sincerely,

RRM DESIGN GROUP



Detlev Peikert, AIA, LEED AP BD +C
Principal

cc: Bill McReynolds, City Ventures Homebuilding Inc.



○ San Luis Obispo
3765 S. Higuera St., Ste. 102
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
P: (805) 543-1794 | F: (805) 543-4609

○ Santa Maria
1862 S. Broadway, Ste. 101
Santa Maria, CA 93454
P: (805) 349-7788 | F: (805) 354-7050

○ Santa Barbara
10 E. Figueroa St., Ste. 1
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
P: (805) 963-8283 | F: (805) 963-8184

○ San Clemente
232 Avenida Fabricante, Ste. 232
San Clemente, CA 92672
P: (949) 361-7950 | F: (949) 361-7955

- Commissioner Campanella was concerned that the Commission was changing what was previously acceptable to the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC), but changed his vote in support of the motion after learning that HLC would further review the project.

Chair Schwartz announced the ten calendar day appeal period.

Chair Schwartz announced a recess at 11:08 A.M. and reconvened the meeting at 11:17 A.M.

ACTUAL TIME: 11:17 A.M.

B. APPLICATION OF BILL McREYNOLDS FOR CITY VENTURES URBAN LAND LLC, 240 W. ALAMAR AVENUE, APN 051-283-001, R-3 (LIMITED MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENCE) & SD-2 (SPECIAL DISTRICT) ZONES, GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: MED/HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (15-27 UNITS/ACRE) (MST2013-00022)

The project consists of the demolition of a single-family residence and detached garage, and construction of a two- and three-story 7,410 square foot condominium building containing four price-restricted, three-bedroom units affordable to moderate income households. Two parking spaces would be provided per unit; two-car garages for three units and a one-car garage and one uncovered parking space for the back unit. The property area is 14,808 square feet and includes a reach of Mission Creek.

The discretionary applications required for this project are:

1. A Front Setback Modification to allow the building to encroach into the 20-foot front setback (SBMC §28.45.008 & §28.92.110); and
2. A Tentative Subdivision Map for a one-lot subdivision to create four residential condominium units (SBMC Chapters 27.07 and 27.13).

The project requires an environmental finding pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15183.

Case Planner: Dan Gullett, Project Planner

Email: DGullett@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Phone: (805) 564-5470, ext. 4550

Dan Gullett, Project Planner, gave the Staff presentation. David Rowell, Housing and Redevelopment Project Planner, was present to answer questions.

Bill McReynolds, Vice President of Development, City Ventures, and Detlev Peikert, Architect, gave the Applicant presentation.

Chair Schwartz opened the public hearing at 11:58 A.M. and, with no one wishing to speak, it was closed.

Although some Commissioners agreed with the Architectural Board of Review and had no issue with the height or the third story element, they did not feel they could make the findings for the front setback modification and neighborhood compatibility.

Some Commissioners suggested that if the project had been proposed as an Average Unit-Size Density (AUD) project, it would not require a front setback modification and could result in more affordable units.

STRAW POLL:

Would there be support for a parking modification if the project were not proposed under AUD, which allows one parking space?

Ayes: 0 Noes: 6 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Jordan)

STRAW POLL:

Is there support to consider a front setback modification similar to what is being requested today?

Ayes: 0 Noes: 6 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Jordan)

STRAW POLL:

Is there support to keep the creek setback at the proposed 35 feet?

Ayes: 5 Noes: 1 (Bartlett) Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Jordan)

STRAW POLL:

Is there support for the current unit size, or would the Commission prefer smaller units?

- Commissioners Thompson, Lodge and Campanella stated that the unit size should be left to the developer.
- Commissioner Bartlett said that the unit size should be smaller.
- Commissioners Pujo and Schwartz said it was not possible to isolate this issue for a straw poll.

MOTION: Lodge/Pujo

Continue the project indefinitely.

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 6 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Jordan)