



# City of Santa Barbara California

## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 004-21

630 CHAPALA STREET

COMMUNITY BENEFIT HEIGHT EXCEPTION

AUGUST 12, 2021

**630 CHAPALA STREET, 25 W. ORTEGA STREET AND 17 W. ORTEGA STREET; ZONE: M-C (MANUFACTURING-COMMERCIAL); LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL/HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL/PRIORITY HOUSING OVERLAY; APN: 037-131-001, -002, -022; PLN2021-00189; APPLICANT/OWNER: TOM MEANY & MARY REICHEL MEANY/GRETA CLAIRE MEANEY REVOCABLE TRUST**

The proposal is for construction of a new three- and four-story mixed-use development. The project includes 5,119 square feet of commercial space and 31,617 square feet of residential space consisting of 39 rental units proposed under the Average Unit-Size Density (AUD) Incentive Program. A voluntary lot merger between 630 Chapala Street and 25 W. Ortega Street is proposed, as well as an ingress/egress easement with 17 W. Ortega Street. In order to effectuate the proposed easement, the demolition of a 1,102-square-foot storage building on 17 W. Ortega Street is also requested. The existing sandstone wall separating 25 W. Ortega Street and 17 W. Ortega Street would be reconstructed as a privacy wall along the south property line. The proposed density on the 27,492-square-foot merged site is 63 dwelling units per acre. The project requires Concept Review by the Planning Commission (SBMC §30.150.060), as well as a Community Benefit Height Exception (SBMC §30.140.110.B) to allow the project to exceed 48 ft. in height (50 ft. 11 in. proposed).

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has held the required public hearing on the above application, and the Applicant was present.

**WHEREAS**, two people appeared to speak and the following exhibits were presented for the record:

1. Staff Report with Attachments, August 5, 2021
2. Project Plans
3. Correspondence received:
  - a. Bob Stout and Dawn Manolakos, Wildcat Lounge/ Little Kitchen
  - b. Vijaua Jammalamadaka, League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara
  - c. Katie Peters
  - d. Kelli Peters
  - e. Greta Meaney
  - f. Alex Hacker
  - g. The Novakovic Family
  - h. Kirby

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Planning Commission:

I. Approved the Height Exception, making the following findings and determinations (SBMC §30.14.110.B.1):

A. **Demonstrated Need.** The applicant has adequately demonstrated a need for the project to exceed 45 feet in height that is related to the project's benefit to the community, or due to site constraints, or in order to achieve desired architectural qualities.

*The proposed project would add 39 new rental units to the City's housing stock and 4 of those units would be offered at the moderate-income level under the City's inclusionary housing requirements (SBMC §30.150.110). The project would provide the required parking for the commercial uses and bike parking for both the commercial and residential uses. The project is in line with General Plan goals to increase housing near services.*

*The proposed unit sizes are 811 sq. ft. average; the additional height allows for extra ceiling height and additional light into the units so that they feel more spacious.*

B. **Architecture and Design.** The project will be exemplary in its design.

*The Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) has reviewed the project on two occasions and found the project to be acceptable and the design to be "beautiful, well-designed, and supportable." The HLC especially appreciated the building references and regularities, "especially the Lobero Theater building reference." Concluding that the proposed Spanish Colonial Revival style is consistent with the adjacent El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District, with the City's Hispanic tradition, and with applicable design guidelines. Required formal approval of the project by the HLC will ensure that the project will be exemplary in its design.*

C. **Livability.** If the project includes residential units, the project will provide amenities to its residents which ensure the livability of the project with particular attention to good interior design features such as the amount of light and air, or ceiling plate heights.

*The project will be walkable to the State Street core of Santa Barbara and is also located near public transit, retail, and entertainment. Additionally, there will be a roof deck that will provide open space for the units. Higher plate heights also increase livability and light within smaller units. The plate heights proposed are 14'-2" at the first floor, 10'-10" for the second and third floors, and 9'6" for the fourth floor. Although these plate heights are lower than originally proposed, they still maintain enough height to achieve openness within the unit to enhance livability.*

D. **Sensitivity to Context.** The project design will complement the setting and the character of the neighboring properties with sensitivity to any adjacent federal, state, and City Landmarks or any nearby designated Historic Resources, including City-designated Structures of Merit.

*The project site is adjacent to 17 West Ortega, a Structure of Merit designed in 1905 in the Mission Revival style and 9-15 West Ortega, a Structure of Merit designed in 1926 by architects Sauter and Lockard in the Spanish Colonial Revival; and 614 Chapala Street, a Structure of Merit designed in 1946 by architects Soule, Murphy and Hastings in the Streamline Moderne/Spanish Colonial Revival style.*

*Additionally, there is a six-course, ashlar cut, sandstone wall on the project site, running perpendicular to West Ortega Street. All the historic, ashlar cut sandstone walls in Santa Barbara are on the Historic Resources Inventory as they are character defining, unique, high quality*

*elements of our streetscapes. The project proposes to relocate the minimally visible wall on the same parcel, using the same sandstone, to be perpendicular to Chapala Street.*

*The City's Urban Historian and HLC concluded that the relocation of the sandstone wall meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and the design of the new mixed-use development will not overwhelm or compete with the adjacent structure of merit, or nearby historic resources.*

This motion was passed and adopted on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of August 2021 by the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Barbara, by the following vote:

AYES: 6 NOES: 1 (Lodge) ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT: 0

I hereby certify that this Resolution correctly reflects the action taken by the City of Santa Barbara Planning Commission at its meeting of the above date.

*Gillian Fennessy*  
Gillian Fennessy, Commission Secretary

9/2/2021  
Date

**PLEASE BE ADVISED:**

**THIS ACTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION CAN BE APPEALED TO THE CITY COUNCIL WITHIN TEN (10) CALENDAR DAYS AFTER THE DATE THE ACTION WAS TAKEN BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION.**