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P L A N N I N G & P E R M I T T I N G S E R V I C E S , I N C .

PRINCIPAL PLANNERS  
SUZANNE ELLEDGE • LAUREL F. PEREZ

30 January 2009

Planning Commission  
City of Santa Barbara  
630 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**RE: Project Description Letter for El Encanto Hotel – Revised Master Plan  
(MST2007-00140)**

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the applicant, El Encanto, Inc., we are pleased to provide the following detailed project description for the El Encanto Hotel Revised Master Plan, located at 1900 Lasuen Road in the City of Santa Barbara.

**Background**

On December 9, 2004, the Planning Commission approved a Development Plan and modification requests for the El Encanto Hotel Master Plan, prior to the current applicant's ownership of the property. The proposal involved the addition of five new cottages containing nine new keys (rooms) totaling 5,759 square feet, as well as a 2,251 square foot expansion of the Main building for a total allocation of 8,010 net square feet. The project also involved cottage relocations, alterations and other site improvements.

In November 2005, the new owner's representative and project team presented a Revised Master Plan to staff and the Planning Commission during a lunch meeting to receive early feedback regarding program changes relative to the pool, underground parking garages, and additional operations or back-of-house floor area. Over the course of several reviews, the project team has been continuing to define the details of the revised plan before the Historic Landmarks Commission and coordination with the project historian.

**Substantial Conformance Determinations**

Following the 2004 Planning Commission approval, several phases of construction commenced on the site. The first phase involved the renovation of Cottages 11, 14, 15, and 16. The extent of structural deterioration of the cottages was unknown until the initial construction activities were underway. Similarly, the approval for the Main Building involved a renovation/restoration; however, City staff and structural engineers determined that renovation/restoration to be

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infeasible to achieve current code compliance. Other program changes were a result of applying satisfactory operational needs required by the current owner. As a result, we have requested Substantial Conformance Determinations (SCD) of the approved 2004 Master Plan; the majority of which have been presented to the Planning Commission and the remainder have been approved by staff and the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC). See below for a summary of the project SCD's.

June 15, 2006 - Main building basement expansion

The Main building expansion consisted of 1,671 net square feet and did not alter the exterior of the building because the addition was on the north portion of the building, which is below grade. The request consisted of temporarily transferring the approved floor area from Cottages 27 and 28 (1,838 square feet) to the Main building basement.

At the time, the Main building increase was proposed to be 1,671 square feet which left a 167 square foot surplus. However, once construction documents were developed, the Main building increase from the 2004 entitlement was 953 square feet leaving an 883 square foot surplus from Cottages 27 & 28.

December 19, 2006 – Cottage 4 demolition and reconstruction

The primary reason to substantiate the demolition request for Cottage 4 was due to the evolution of the architectural style, reconfiguration, and structural compromises. Cottage 4 was originally a Vernacular board and batten cottage. The architectural style is referred to as "Spanish Eclectic" because it exhibits features such as the smooth stucco clad wall and red Mission tiled roof. Due to alterations and additions, it was not be feasible to restore Cottage 4, either structurally or architecturally, to true Spanish Colonial or Vernacular Craftsman architecture. The HLC reviewed and approved Cottage 4 and the Historic Structures letter addendum.

January 18, 2007 – Main building height increase

The reconstruction of the Main building resulted in a minor height increase of two feet at the third level portion of the building relative to the original building to provide adequate space to accommodate current code compliant, life safety, elevator and mechanical equipment. The new building incorporates mechanical equipment within the structure; the previous building was nonconforming to building code. The Main building and Historic letter addendum were reviewed and approved by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

April 20, 2007 - Cottage 12 demolition and reconstruction

The primary reason for the request to demolish and reconstruct Cottage 12 was due to the architectural style and the feasibility to restore it, either structurally or to true Spanish Colonial or Vernacular Craftsman architecture. The Historic Structures/Sites Report prepared by Alexandra Cole, Preservation Planning Associates, dated December 2002, describes Cottage 12 as an example of Spanish influenced resort architecture from the 1950's. Further, the report identifies Cottage 12 as constructed outside the period of significance, concluding that the structure is a non-contributing building to the district.

Cottage 12 will be reconstructed generally in the footprint of the existing structure, in a more compatible architectural style than the existing structure, and with a minor increase in square footage from 3,078 net to 3,250 net square feet. This increase is also attributable to meet code compliance, integrate life safety elements and meet accessible standards. Staff made a determination of substantial conformance and the new structure received preliminary approval by the HLC.

### **Project Description – Revised Master Plan**

The Revised Master Plan encompasses four components described in detail below. The components include the Pool/Fitness Center (Group E), a re-approval of Cottages 27 and 28 (Group K), an Operations Facility (including storage area proposed under previously approved Cottage 29) and Utility Distribution Facility (Group L) adjacent to and below a surface parking lot to accommodate 43 valet parking spaces in the northwest portion of the property, demolition of buildings 22, 23, and 24 and construction of Mission Village (Group M), five new cottages (30-34) with a valet parking structure below. In addition, to the four project components described above, the project proposes to reconfigure the existing entry drive off of Alvarado Place to provide improved site circulation, to construct a trash enclosure area and screen fence in the service area adjacent to the Main building.

As stated above, the 2004 approved project resulted in a total of 97 guest rooms. The current application includes construction of 92 guest rooms. The owner would like to preserve the entitlement of 97 guest rooms in the event it is necessary to reconfigure the existing rooms to create five additional rooms within the existing building footprints.

### **Swimming Pool/Fitness Center**

The Master Plan that was approved in 2004, by the previous owner, included a remodel of the existing pool with an expansion of the pool deck area. The previous pool was located immediately to the east of the Main building lower area. Subsequent to the approval, further study of the Main building uses and guest needs, it was determined that the existing pool should be relocated further away from the Main building in order to provide an open lawn area to the east. The pool was constructed in the 1960's and does not contribute to the historic character of the property. The proposed pool design will result in a project element more in keeping with the historic setting. Further, the revised pool design will take advantage of the natural topography sloping to the south, by proposing a guest fitness center and pool equipment area (2,775 net square feet) partially subterranean under the pool and pool deck. Similar in topography to the Mission Village podium parking, the fitness center will daylight at the south end of the structure. Additionally, the fitness center beneath the pool is more suitable for guest use versus the 2004 approved project from the previous owner that included the fitness center within the Main building.

### Cottages 27 & 28

On June 15, 2006, the project team requested a substantial conformance determination in order to increase floor area on the basement level of the Main building. The floor area allocation (1,838 square feet) that was approved to construct Cottages 27 and 28 was effectively transferred to the Main building.

The current application includes a request for re-approval of Cottages 27 and 28, a total of three (3) guest rooms, which would not result in an increase of the total key count with the original approval granted by the Planning Commission on December 9, 2004. Cottages 27 and 28 are located on the east side of the property, immediately south of the proposed Mission Village area. Prior to the request to transfer floor area from these cottages to the main building basement, the Cottages were reviewed by HLC. The HLC requested minor changes to the building placement, resulting in a canted building orientation relative to the north/south axis. Due to the reorientation, a small portion of Cottage 28 will encroach into the interior yard setback. The 2004 approval included a modification for the patio of Cottage 27 to encroach into the side yard setback consistent with the current design. Additionally, the floor area increased slightly in order to provide adequate circulation to meet ADA code. The total net floor area of the cottages combined is 1,934 square feet. The mass, bulk, and scale and design of the cottages have received positive comments from the Historic Landmarks Commission.

### Operations and Utility Distribution Facility (UDF) & Valet Parking

The surface parking lot located in the northwest corner of the property was approved by the Planning Commission to be graded, resurfaced and reconfigured to provide 52 valet parking spaces. Subsequent to the approval in 2004, a revised project was developed to provide the Operations Facility (commonly known as the back of house) completely subterranean below the 43 space valet parking lot and Utility Distribution Facility (UDF) in a predominately subterranean structure adjacent and to the north of the valet parking lot.

The program changes are critical to the successful operation of the hotel by creating a more pleasant experience for guests by relocating hotel operations to a portion of the property more suited for these types of activities versus the carrying out these activities in the Main building or off site. The Operations Facility will provide on-site laundry services, staff lockers, storage, and staff offices in below grade structure composed of 8,773 square feet.

The UDF is proposed to be approximately 2,796 square feet constructed predominately underground, designed to result in a minimal above-grade change to the property. The below grade components of the UDF include equipment encapsulated within a concrete structure with silencers and acoustic lining and would range approximately 17 - 22 feet below the existing grade. The components of the UDF that are proposed to be above grade would be screened by a trellis and a structure approximately 15 feet in height, architecturally compatible to the site, screening the air ventilation shaft and the electrical switch gear. The UDF is a vital and integral

component of the overall operation of the hotel. It includes a single pipe condensed water loop system (versus a traditional four pipe system) which allows for a common utility trench. Additional components include an electrical room, condensed water cooling equipment and air ventilation. The HVAC function of the UDF will operate under an Energy Management System (EMS). The Energy Management System (EMS) controls are based on high/low ambient outside temperature points. For example, if the outside temperature is approximately less than 75-80 degrees, the condensed water cooling equipment would not operate. If a guest should turn on the A/C, the fan will generate cool air and not refrigerated air drawn from the cool water in the underground supply lines. Once the outside ambient temperature exceeds the high limit set points, the cooling towers will operate only to the point to bring the water to the cool set point. Additionally, the project includes installation of sensors in exterior doors and some windows of the cottages, so that if the doors or windows are left opened, the EMS controls will not allow HVAC equipment to operate other than a fan blowing cool air. The heating system will operate similarly when temperatures drop below an ambient low set point.

The proposed valet parking lot is consistent with the previous orientation reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission in 2004 with the exception of the reduction of overall surface area by shifting the lot south and proposed number of parking spaces. The previous design received a modification approval to encroach into the front yard setback along the Mission Ridge and Alvarado Place property frontages. The proposed parking lot does not encroach into the northerly property frontage and is screened by the proposed above ground elements of the UDF structure which provides a visual and noise buffer. Due to the loss of nine (9) parking spaces from the 2004 approved project, the balance of the parking spaces are proposed in the Mission Village parking structure. The valet parking lot will be screened with generous perimeter landscaping in keeping with the garden setting of the property, while providing appropriate line of sight visibility at the hotel entrance, exit, and at the corner of Alvarado Place and Mission Ridge Road.

Consistent with the comments received by the Historic Landmarks Commission on July 9, 2008, the elevation of the parking surface has been depressed and the perimeter wall height has increased to allow for maximum screening and noise buffering of the parking lot. Additionally, five tree wells have been incorporated into the design to further screen and shade the parking surface.

#### Mission Village

The final component of the Revised Master Plan includes demolition of the buildings 22, 23, and 24, located in the northeast portion of the site, and construction of five new structures – Mission Village. Buildings 22, 23, and 24 are composed of three two-story detached structures totaling 10,614 net square feet and containing 20 keys. These structures were previously approved to receive façade renovation in 2004. The Historic Structures/Site Report prepared by Preservation Planning Associates dated December 2002 identifies these structures as non-contributing

structures to the historic significance of the site as they were constructed outside the period of significance.

The Mission Village Cottages (30-34) are composed of 26 keys, in a combination of one and two-story structures in a Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style. The Mission Village cottages are proposed over a partially underground valet parking garage. The parking garage includes a total of 51 valet parking spaces.

During the course of concept review hearings before the Historic Landmarks Commission, the Mission Village configuration underwent significant changes, most notably elimination of one of the proposed cottages and floor area reductions in order to satisfy mass, bulk, and scale and density considerations. Ultimately, the HLC unanimously stated positive comments at the hearing held on June 11, 2008 and was appreciative of the manner in which the design team responded to direction received.

#### Grading

Preliminary earthwork estimates indicate approximately 14,650 cubic yards of cut and 1,327 cubic yards of fill. The construction team will endeavor to identify a local construction site that requires fill soil to accept the project export soil.

#### Development Plan and Transfer of Existing Development Rights (TEDR)

The subject property has a balance of 7,021 square feet for future development. The Main building was originally approved to be 22,640 square feet. Transferring floor area from Cottages 27 and 28 resulted in an approved building of 23,618 square feet through approval of the Substantial Conformance Determination. Subsequent to additional construction document development, the Main building total floor area requirement was 23,618 square feet, resulting in a surplus of 883 square feet. Therefore, the remaining future development potential totals 7,021 square feet.

Development of the Pool/Fitness Center, Operations and Utility Distribution Facility and re-approval of Cottages 27 and 28 exceed the subject parcel's remaining development potential. Therefore, the project proposes to transfer 10,000 square feet of existing development rights to the site.

#### Environmental Issues

##### Historic Structures Report

A letter addendum to the historic Structures/Site Report for El Encanto Hotel, dated December 2002 and prepared by Alexandra C. Cole of Preservation Planning Associates was prepared to address the elements of the Revised Master Plan. The 2002 report that the site was eligible as a City Landmark District; however, within the proposed district, buildings 22, 23, & 24, the tennis

court, and the parking lot in the northeast corner were considered non-contributing to the proposed Landmark District.

The specific project effects described in the letter addendum are summarized below. The proposed pool/fitness center location east of the Main building is in an area of non-significance and the design incorporates elements, such as the brick paving, walls and entry that make reference to the Landmark eligible arbor north of the pool. Thus, there are no significant historic impacts as a result of the pool/fitness center component.

Cottages 27 & 28 were previously evaluated in the 2004 project approval. The new cottages must be determined to be compatible with historic cottages 17 & 18. The letter explains that both Cottages 27 & 28 are compatible with the historic size, scale and proportion of Cottages 17 & 18 providing a stylistic link along the eastern edge of the property between the Spanish Colonial Revival style Mission Village cottages to the north with the 1929 Spanish Colonial Revival Cottage 11 to the south.

The proposed valet parking lot in the northwest portion of the site replaces an existing parking lot that was determined to be non-contributing to the site historic setting. The new configuration will be screened by existing and proposed vegetation and a screen wall with a minimum height of five feet. The letter concludes that the parking lot will not affect significant spatial relationships and can be found to be compatible with the site.

The demolition of buildings 22, 23, & 24 is considered a less than significant impact in that these structures are non-contributing to the historic site. Analysis of impacts to historic resources for Mission Village was focused on the spatial relationship to the relocated cottages 17 and 19. Cottage 30 is the closest to Cottage 17; Cottage 30 is proposed to be one-story for purposes of compatibility of massing and scale to the historic cottages. The orientation of the entrances to 17 and 19 are to the south and the east, away from Cottage 30 providing a functional separation.

#### Acoustic Analysis

A Sound Impact Analysis Report, prepared by Newson Brown Acoustics, dated November 20, 2008 has been prepared to evaluate potential noise impacts related to the underground Utility Distribution Facility, the surface valet parking lot, and the partially subterranean Mission Village parking structure. The analysis concludes that these project components would generate sound levels well within the "clearly acceptable" exterior noise level of 55 dB(A) Ldn and the normally acceptable exterior noise level of 60 dB(A) Ldn for residential land use as established in the City of Santa Barbara General Plan Noise Element.

#### Traffic and Parking

Traffic and parking was analyzed as part of the 2004 Master Plan approval which involved nine (9) new guest rooms (an increase from 88 to a total of 97). The analysis concluded that the

increase in traffic resulting from the additional rooms would be minimal. The current application does not propose additional guest rooms.

The previous project was approved to provide 97 parking spaces consistent with the Zoning Ordinance provision to provide one space for each guest bedroom. The current application includes 92 guest rooms; however, the owner would like to preserve the entitlement of 97 guest rooms given that it may be necessary to reconfigure the existing rooms to create five additional rooms in the future. Upon further evaluation by staff through the development review process for the Revised Master Plan, it was determined that 100 parking spaces are needed in order to meet parking demand. Therefore, the current application provides 100 spaces to support the entitled 97 guest rooms in the following layout: 6 surface spaces in the motor court area, 43 valet spaces in the northwest parking lot, and 51 valet spaces in the Mission Village parking structure. As part of the service area reconfiguration near the Main building, four (4) previously approved parking spaces are proposed to be relocated into the Mission Village parking structure.

#### **Discretionary Approvals for Consideration**

The project requests the following discretionary actions for consideration:

1. Modifications to provide less than the required linear distance between structures per SBMC §28.27.050.2.
2. Modification to allow Cottages 33, 34, 27 & 28 to encroach into the interior yard setback per SBMC §28.27.050.
3. Modification of the front yard setback along Mission Ridge Road to allow the Utility Distribution Facility and Cottages 32 & 33 to encroach into the front yard setback per SBMC §28.27.050.
4. Modification of the front yard setback along Alvarado Place to allow the valet parking lot to encroach into the front yard setback per SBMC §28.27.050.
5. Transfer of Existing Development Rights of non-residential floor area to the project site per SBMC §28.95.
6. Development Plan Approval to allocate non-residential square footage from the Minor Addition and Small Addition categories per SBMC §28.87.300.
7. Development Plan as defined within R-H Zone standards per SBMC §28.27.100.

### **Project Findings and Justifications**

#### *Linear Distance Between Structures*

The building separation modification requests allow the appropriate buffer from adjacent properties. Many of the existing cottages on the property do not conform to the building separation development standard. Review by the project historian and the Historic Landmarks Commission focuses on an appropriate density and separation. The proposed configuration is an improvement as compared to the existing as buildings 22, 23, and 24 currently encroach into the setbacks on the north and east property boundaries.

#### *Yard Modifications*

The subject site is located in the R-2/4.0/R-H, Resort-Residential Hotel zone district which requires a 30-foot setback for single-story structures and a 40-foot setback for two-story structures in both the front and interior yards. Currently, the property is non-conforming to the yard setback standards.

The project proposes to demolish buildings 22, 23, 24 which are currently located in the northeast corner of the property. The proposed Mission Village cottages would result in less encroachment than the existing condition and would not intensify the existing condition in terms of the number of guest rooms in this portion of the property. The proposed structures, similar to the existing, would be lower in elevation as compared to the street level elevation; therefore, the site topography provides a natural buffer. The encroachments allow for the appropriate building placement consistent with the historic site density, as recognized by the Historic Landmarks Commission during the concept review hearings.

Prior to construction of the approved 2004 Master Plan, the northwest corner of the property was developed with Cottage 19, a single-story Craftsman structure located almost entirely in the 30-foot front yard setback of Mission Ridge Road (see Sheet SD1.0). Additionally, the laundry building, approximately a 1,200 square foot structure, was located to the east of Cottage 19, also within the 30-foot front yard setback along Mission Ridge Road. This structure was destroyed in a fire in 1998. A surface parking lot was located south of Cottage 19 and in the front yard setback along Alvarado Place. The proposed Revised Master Plan is consistent with the historic land uses of this portion of the property; however, the proposed components, the Utility Distribution Facility and the valet parking lot, would result in an improved configuration as compared to the previous, by providing a greater structural setback from Mission Ridge, lowering the surface elevation of the parking lot, and with incorporation of a perimeter screen wall. As stated previously, the parking lot configuration approved in the 2004 project required modifications of the front yards on Mission Ridge Road and Alvarado Place. For these reasons, the requested zoning modifications are reasonable and appropriate.

Planning Commission  
Project Description Letter for El Encanto Hotel – Revised Master Plan  
MST2007-00140  
30 January 2009  
Page 10 of 10

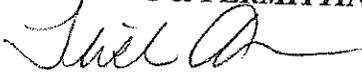
The interior yard modification requests for Cottages 27 & 28 are necessary to allow an improved spatial relationship for these new cottages to achieve compatibility within the site. The modification requests are consistent with the purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance and are necessary to secure an appropriate improvement on a lot. The surface parking lot and Cottage 27 received the yard modification approvals in the project presented to the Planning Commission in December 2004.

*Development Plan and Transfer of Existing Development Rights*

The proposed development complies with all provisions of the Zoning Ordinance upon approval of the requested modifications. The development will result in a project that enhances the neighborhood aesthetics and character; the proposed project design is sensitive to the historic character of the site and results in eliminating structures that are non-contributing to the historic setting. The Revised Master Plan is consistent with the previous project approval relative to density, overall hotel room quantities (97), and parking. The project further improves the previous approval by separating hotel operations from guest uses.

On behalf of the applicant and project team, we thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,  
**SUZANNE ELLEDGE**  
**PLANNING & PERMITTING SERVICES**



Trish Allen, AICP  
Senior Planner