

S U Z A N N E  E L L E D G E
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

15 January 2009

Ms. Kathleen Kennedy, Associate Planner
Planning Division, Community Development Department
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**RE: 1900 Lasuen Road, MST#2007-00140 – Initial Study/Draft Mitigated
Negative Declaration (MND) Comment letter**

Dear Ms. Kennedy:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide the City with the written comments from the project team and applicant concerning the Draft MND for the El Encanto Hotel project. In order to assist you in preparing the Final MND “response to comments” this letter includes all applicant and project team comments on the DMND including those provided at the January 8, 2009 public comment hearing held before the Planning Commission.

The majority of the project team and applicant’s comments are summarized into four issue areas:

- I.** Project Description
The project description should include additional detail for the following: Site History relative to the 2004 entitlement and subsequent Substantial Conformance Determinations and the proposed Revised Master Plan components. Also, we request that the Final MND include the applicant project description letter as an exhibit.
- II.** Aesthetics
- III.** Air Quality
- IV.** Cultural Resources

I. Project Description clarifications
(Additions are indicated with underline italic font.)

Site History (page 1) The second paragraph should include the following additional detail: “Since the 2004 Master Plan approval, substantial structural problems were found within Cottages 4, 12 and the Main Building; therefore, Substantial Conformance Determinations were made in regard to the demolition and reconstruction of these buildings. *The Historic Landmarks Commission reviewed and approved the requests to*

demolish and reconstruct these structures. The demolition and reconstruction of the structures was found to be in accordance with the project conditions which required preparation and subsequent acceptance of individual Letter Addenda to the Historic Structures/Sites Report by the Historic Landmarks Commission. Further, these structures were previously determined to be historically non-contributing to the site.

Also, a Staff Hearing Officer approval was granted on December 6, 2006 for a modification to allow a minor addition to Cottage 11 to encroach into the interior setback. The minor addition to Cottage 11 was also reviewed and approved by the Historic Landmarks Commission. The addition was found to be in accordance with the project conditions which required preparation and subsequent acceptance of the Letter Addendum to the Historic Structures/Sites Report by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Proposed Project Components (page 2)

1) Utility distribution facility and surface valet parking lot with operations facility below.

The second paragraph should be revised to provide additional detail relative to the elements that are completely subterranean and those that are required to daylight for purposes of air ventilation. The components of the proposed Utility Distribution Facility would range approximately 17 - 22 feet below the existing grade include equipment encapsulated within a concrete structure with silencers and acoustic lining. The components of the Utility Distribution Facility that are proposed to be above grade would be screened by an architectural feature, compatible to the site, shrouding the air ventilation shaft and the electrical switch gear.

As part of the project description, we would like to include the following information relative to the operations of the valet parking lot and suggest that it be inserted after the first sentence of the third paragraph: The operating procedures for the surface valet parking lot which will be implemented by the hotel operator are as follows: 1) Between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., no vehicle will be locked/unlocked automatically with an audible alarm activating device, but will be locked/unlocked with a manual key. 2) Valet attendants will request that the driver of each vehicle disable their audible alarm system upon arrival.

The third paragraph should be revised to describe the Operations Facility as entirely subterranean. The 8,773 square foot Operations Facility would be located entirely subterranean below the valet parking lot.

2) Mission Village with valet parking garage below.

The second sentence of the first paragraph states, "The Revised Master Plan includes the demolition of these cottages and the construction of Mission Village." Additional detail should be included relative to the demolition of Cottages 22, 23, and 24. The Historic Landmarks Commission reviewed and approved the requests to demolish these structures. The demolition was found to be in accordance with the project conditions which required preparation and acceptance of a Letter Addendum to the Historic Structures/Sites Report by the Historic Landmarks Commission. Further, these structures were previously determined to be historically non-contributing to the site.

Non-residential square footage:

The description should include additional project detail such that the transferred square footage is proposed for the underground operational facilities as opposed to guest amenities. This paragraph should be revised to include an additional sentence to clarify. The proposed floor area to be transferred would be allocated to project components that are predominately subterranean and these on-site facilities are required to serve as hotel operational functions (commonly known as "back of house").

II. Aesthetics (page 6)

1.b) On-Site Aesthetics

The fifth paragraph can be revised to indicate that the comments made by the Historic Landmarks Commission on July 9, 2008 have been incorporated into the project design. An additional sentence can be included stating, "The current plans have incorporated the following design changes as directed by the HLC in order to maximize screening of the parking lot: the surface parking elevation has been depressed, a site wall ranging approximately from 5-7 feet has been proposed, and landscape features are also included."

III. Air Quality (page 9)

2.e) Odors

The first sentence indicates that the project is limited to hotel use. Please clarify that this is inclusive of the restaurant in the Main building.

IV. Cultural Resources (page 13)

4.c) Ethnic/Religious Resources

Since historic resources were discussed in the previous section, the word "historic" should be deleted from the second sentence of this section.

Conclusion

The Initial Study/Draft MND is a thorough document addressing project potential environmental impacts. The applicant team comment letter primarily focuses on project description detail and clarification. The project applicant team is in agreement to both the required and recommended mitigation measures contained in the Initial Study/Draft MND dated December 17, 2008 prepared for the subject project.

Thank you for consideration of our written comments and please do not hesitate to call me or any of the project team if you have any questions or would like to discuss the comments contained in this letter.

Sincerely,

SUZANNE ELLEDGE
PLANNING & PERMITTING SERVICES

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Trish A", written in black ink.

Trish Allen, AICP
Senior Planner