

**CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
DESIGN REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE
July 9, 2014**

Subcommittee Members Present: Julia Darden, Bart Crandell and Jim Ruehlin

Staff Present: Jim Pechous, Cliff Jones, Sean Nicholas and Adam Atamian

1. MINUTES

Minutes from June 25, 2014 approved.

2. ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

A. Amendment to Site Plan Permit 97-16, Marblehead Coastal Residential Architectural Update (Nicholas)

Review of the updated architecture for the majority of residential lots for Marblehead Coastal Residential.

Associate Planner Sean Nicholas summarized the staff report and presented a PowerPoint showing the modifications and design enhancements with the new designs. Staff started with the Courtyard product that went to the 5000, 5500, and 6000 Series designs. As a note, the number of the series refers to the lot size (i.e. 5,000 square foot lot = 5000 Series) not to the house size. Staff also indicated that Coastal Commission has limited the City's ability to have homes with smooth white stucco. For that reason there is a wide variety of earth tone colors, but there will be some white stucco buildings towards the middle of the development.

Staff reviewed the enhancements to the Courtyard product noting that the heights have been matched to the approved two-story heights, and the third-story elements have been completely removed from the project. Staff and DRSC were supportive of this change. Also, the other change is that all of the garages for the courtyard product will be side entry, allowing for an entry element for each residential cluster.

Subcommittee Member Crandell commented that he had general concerns about guest parking for the project. He understood that the project was not reducing the approved number of guest parking spaces for the cluster product type, but recommended looking at the potential for having street parking on one side of the road. The applicant's representative, Don McDougall of Marblehead Development Partners, LLC, indicated that they were open to the idea and that they would look at what opportunities there are.

David Cain, the architect for the Courtyard product, stated that in the original vision and streetscape for the development was for parking on one side of the street and they would verify that this was continuing.

Planner Nicholas indicated that he has discussed the issue preliminarily with Engineering, and after ensuring sufficient right-of-way (which there appears there is) that Engineering and Planning would both be supportive to the idea of additional parking.

The DRSC agreed that this would be beneficial to the project.

Subcommittee Member Crandell also asked about the turning radius for the side entry garage, and whether it has been reviewed.

Planner Nicholas indicated that it has been with the original design of the project years ago, as originally at least half of the development was side entry garages, and has been reviewed by Engineering staff to ensure functionality. The garage in the center has been shifted by one foot to allow for easier access, and all divisions have given the necessary conditions of approval.

The DRSC agreed the designs were equal to or greater than the design quality of the original approval and was supportive of the proposed designs. They also stated that maintaining the two-story heights and removing the third-story element, though originally approved, is best for the overall project.

Planner Nicholas then went through and discussed and showed images of the 5000, 5500, and 6000 series homes. Planner Nicholas also went over staff's recommendations regarding insets of doors and windows, carrying the details around all sides of the buildings, and ensuring that rafter details are properly designed. Staff also indicated that the heights of the homes for the 5000 and 5500 series has been reduced and is consistent with the approved heights, though two of the three plans for the 6000 series has been shown with higher elevations. The applicants architect on these series, Chris Barlow, has revised the architecture to meet the heights of the zone, but the applicant wanted to get feedback from the DRSC regarding the increased heights and whether there was support for the design.

The DRSC agreed that the heights need to meet or be below the approved heights. While DRSC understood the reasons for the increased height, everyone agreed that avoiding increases in height, which is a very sensitive subject in the community, would be best. The DRSC felt the revised architecture was better than the taller product.

The applicant understood and appreciated the feedback, and indicated that the heights will meet the approved heights.

Subcommittee Member Crandell also asked that the mix of units, once completed, be emailed to DRSC for review, and recommended that the final details for the project come back to DRSC for review prior to construction. The rest of DRSC agreed.

B. Site Plan Permit 13-161/Cultural Heritage Permit 13-162/Conditional Use Permit 13-163, Cabrillo Mixed-Use (Atamian)

A request to consider a new mixed-use development consisting of a two-story commercial building and a separate two-story residential structure with basement level parking. The project is located at 176 Avenida Cabrillo within the Mixed-Use zoning district (MU3.1-A-CZ).

Assistant Planner Adam Atamian summarized the staff report.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked Subcommittee Member Ruehlin if he had any questions as he was not present at the last DRSC meeting where this project was discussed. He stated that he did not have any questions regarding how this project has changed since the first time the DRSC had seen it, but did have comments on the project as currently proposed.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin stated that while the right side elevation of the residential portion of the project has nice architectural detail, the commercial building's right elevation could use some additional landscaping or windows. Subcommittee Member Darden agreed.

Michael Luna, architect for the project, stated that the right side of the commercial building is the only part of the entire project that goes up to the property line, which is unusual for this area. He stated that due to the building codes requirements no openings in that wall are allowed, which is why he proposed the false shutters to give the appearance that there are windows. He stated that there is no opportunity to add landscaping. He went on to say that eventually, something on the adjacent property could be built up to the property line as well.

Mr. Atamian stated that the original proposal showed the commercial building set back a few feet from the side property line. He continued, stating that due to the Building Code and Engineering requirements applied to the project only a building located very close to the property line would not end up looking excessively narrow. Additionally, the building is set back a few inches to allow the tile to wrap around the stucco, and to provide the space for louvered shutters.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked if there was anything else that could be added to the project to create additional visual interest at the first floor of the commercial building. Mr. Luna stated that it would be difficult to add any landscaping or arched recesses to create articulation due to the limitations of the site.

Cliff Jones, Associate Planner, stated that this issue is common in the Downtown area due to the narrow lots and the Building and Fire codes which dictate what can be built along property lines.

Mr. Luna stated that for the narrow lots in this Mixed-Use zone, the emphasis is really on the build out of the street frontage. He noted that while it may take years for that to happen, this project provides an appropriately scaled two story structure for the neighborhood. Mr. Luna described the concept of the project as a "carriage house" situated at the front of the lot, with a residence toward the rear to break up the massing on the lot.

The DRSC discussed adding additional detail to the first floor of the commercial building, but noted that the slope of the lot, and the lack of space make the situation difficult and not entirely necessary. The DRSC said that if the adjacent neighbor allowed the applicant to plant a tree on the adjacent property to break up the unbroken first floor elevation that would be nice, but it couldn't be required.

Bryan Johnson, owner of the subject property, stated that the intent of the project's design is to build something with charm, and he believes Mr. Luna's design accomplishes that goal, but added that he is not opposed to additional design elements. He stated that in this particular part of the project they are extremely limited to what they can do that will maintain the architectural charm.

Subcommittee Member Crandell thanked Mr. Luna for addressing the DRSC's comments and concerns in the design revision. He stated that the graphics presented to the DRSC are very nice and clearly demonstrate how this project will be seen by neighboring properties.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked about the height of the roof of the residential portion of the project. Mr. Luna stated that the project was 21 feet to the eave from the rear grade.

The DRSC reviewed the plans. Subcommittee Member Crandell noted how the elevations lack the full detail of the landscaping plan, and how good this project will look. He stated that he is supportive of the project, commending Mr. Luna for his work on the design, and staff for his review of the project.

Subcommittee Member Darden stated that she agrees with Subcommittee Member Crandell. She noted that the right elevation drawing shows a few plants that the landscaping plans do not show. Mr. Luna responded, stating that the plant type shown was in fact incorrect, but that there would be plant material, most likely vines, in the specified locations. He stated that the plans would be amended to accurately depict the plants proposed on the landscaping plans.

Subcommittee Member Darden stated that she supports the project. She said that the reduced drive aisle width is not a concern for her, adding that the accessible walkway under the trellis is a very nice feature of the project. She stated that while there may be some concern from neighbors about a proposal for a structure more than one story, the zone allows two stories and a two story structure is entirely appropriate for this area. She added that she appreciates the applicant removing the "doghouse" from the roof of the residence.

Subcommittee Member Crandell stated that he is pleased with the proposed balcony as a full length balcony would begin to take on a Monterey-style architecture.

Larry Culbertson, Member of the San Clemente Historical Society, stated that he is concerned that the project does not provide enough parking for both the residence and the commercial project. He thinks that the project does not comply with the requirement that projects must contribute to the orderly development of the City. He stated that if the applicant decides to move forward that the right elevation of the office building would be an appropriate place for a tile mural.

Allen Korsen, adjacent property owner, discussed aspects of the project that he is concerned about including the amount of urban open area, the height of the retaining walls, the permitted rounding down of required parking spaces, the reduced drive aisle width, parking access on-site. He stated that he appreciates the reduction in the height of the residence with the removal of the "doghouse" but still feels the structure is too tall.

Georgette Korsen, adjacent property owner, stated that the project is too large for the lot. She said that the issue is not that the project is not attractive, it is just too big, and will block sunlight to her property. She asked why the staircase on the office building is outside. Mr. Luna replied that it is too allow the potential for two tenants, which would not require additional parking because parking is based on square footage. Ms. Korsen went on to discuss how the project has the potential to set a precedent in the neighborhood to allow large projects in the area.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked staff to clarify certain questions raised by the members of the public. In response to questions regarding the shown heights of the retaining walls, Mr. Atamian stated that the heights of the retaining portions of the property line walls are within the code, but that the sections of walls over the portions that are retaining will need to be removed. He went on to say that the issue was discussed with the architect and the applicant, but that the change was not reflected on the plans, and staff felt that this was a minor detail that did not require plans to be reprinted at this time. He went on to say that the Building Code will most likely require guard rails for the sections of retaining walls over 30" tall.

In response to questions about the front setback of the commercial building, Mr. Atamian stated that the Building, Fire, and Engineering codes require utilities and connections to be located along the front property line. The project places the commercial building far enough back to allow for the maximum screening of these devices, while leaving room to allow parking in the rear of the building. He stated that the Zoning Ordinance allows for no setbacks on any property line.

Mr. Luna agreed with Mr. Atamian, adding that the Design Guidelines encourage projects to change the street frontage, and to create connections with the pedestrian space. He stated that this project was designed to create this interaction. He went on to say that the Design Guidelines allow the flexibility to work within a set of suggestive concepts to provide the best project for the specific site.

Mr. Johnson reiterated Mr. Luna's comments, stating that he has been opposed to the utility devices at the front of the lot from the beginning, but has consistently been told that they cannot be located elsewhere.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin asked if there had been any research to indicate what this project's impact would be in terms of shadows to adjacent properties. Mr. Johnson presented some plans and elevation drawings that depicted the relationship between his proposed residential building and the northern neighbors existing residence. He stated that the section of the neighbors residence above the garage is 17 feet from the property line, and that his proposed residence is setback five at the first story and another 2 and a half feet back at the second. He went on to explain that this creates a separation of nearly 25 feet between the second floor of his project and the non-garage portion of the neighbors residence, which are both at a similar elevation.

Mr. Johnson continued by discussing how there are other two and three story buildings in close proximity to the northern neighbors residence, and that this project will be compatible with the other existing development in the neighborhood.

Mr. Atamian stated that based on the proposed plans and the setbacks both existing and provided, staff is supportive of the project because it demonstrates sensitivity to the neighbors.

Mr. Luna stated that if project review becomes about impacts to a neighbor's sunlight, or whether a two story structure is compatible with a one story structure, the City will be going down the wrong path. He stated that there are examples of recent tract developments where one and two story residences are mixed in the same neighborhood in the City.

Subcommittee Member Crandell stated that the neighbors are all in the same zone as the subject property, and all properties being discussed are allowed to be two story. He stated that the project shows sensitivity to the neighbors by providing setbacks from the property line.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin stated that the project does show sensitivity to the neighboring properties and agreed with Subcommittee Member Crandell acknowledging the property rights of all property owners in the zone.

The DRSC recommended the project move forward to the Planning Commission.

C. Tentative Tract Map 14-108/Conditional Use Permit 14-109/Site Plan Permit 14-110/Architectural Permit 14-111, Del Comercio Condos (Gregg)

A request for a 10-unit condominium project located at 2717 Calle Del Comercio.

Associate Planner Amber Gregg summarized the staff report and narrated a PowerPoint presentation.

Applicant, Michael Luna, reviewed the design and pointed out that this development is in the Residential High Density (RH) zone and permits three story development and a 45 foot height limit, so some height is to be expected. He noted that the Design Guidelines are written primarily for Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, and this project is clearly not that.

Mr. Luna reviewed the project's compliance with Design Guidelines and presented three-dimensional (3D) renderings. Staff noted that they had not seen the rendering prior to the meeting. Mr. Luna narrated the renderings and clarified that the two-dimensional drawing's did look like a box style development, but that the 3D images show how much setback the second and third stories actually have on the front and rear elevations.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked staff if they would change any of the recommendation after seeing the 3D renderings. Ms. Gregg noted that the section of the Design Guidelines that are noted in the report are general design guidelines for all architectural styles, not for Spanish Colonial Revival. She noted the 3D renderings are helpful and help clarify the massing and setback on the front and rear elevations; however, staff still has concerns about the side massing and the other recommendations are still appropriate.

Subcommittee Member Darden stated she was concerned about not providing common open space in the project. She still shares staff's concerns as noted in the staff report. She would like to see the individual units more articulated and would like to see more setback on the third story of the building.

Subcommittee Member Crandell noted that he was not concerned about the difference in visual appearance in the individual units and suggested gates to define the side entry units and provide security. He was concerned about the common open space and asked for clarification on how much was required for the project.

Ms. Gregg noted that common and private open space for multi-family development is not a requirement or a development standard. It's a Design Guideline, and the Design Guidelines recommend 100 feet of private open space per unit, and 100 square feet of common open space per unit. So the proposed development would need 1,000 square feet of common open space.

Subcommittee Member Crandell noted that each unit has more than 200 square feet of private open space per unit and the direct access to the park was a unique added feature for this development. He noted that the applicant would have to justify the request and that it would ultimately be decided at the Planning Commission since it was out of the purview of the DRSC. Subcommittee Members Darden and Ruehlin concurred that the decision would be made by the Planning Commission but that they had concerns that it was not provided. Subcommittee Member Darden stated that she would like to see common open space worked into the project.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin noted that he concurred with staff's recommendations and would like to see the issues addressed, but that he was most concerned about the open space.

The DRSC concurred that they would like to have the project return for their review.

3. NEW BUSINESS

None

4. OLD BUSINESS

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn to the Regular Meeting of the Design Review Subcommittee to be held July 23, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. in Conference Room A, Community Development Department, 910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100, San Clemente, CA 92673.

Respectfully submitted,


Bart Crandell, Acting Chair

Attest:


Cliff Jones, Associate Planner