

**CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
DESIGN REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 26, 2014**

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

Staff Present:

1. MINUTES

Minutes from the November 12, 2014

2. ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM

A. Zoning Amendment 14-364/Site Plan Permit 14-365/Conditional Use Permit 14-366/Cultural Heritage Permit 14-367, Santiago Mixed Use (Atamian)

A request to consider amending the zoning designation of a portion of the Neighborhood Commercial (NC 2) zone along South El Camino Real to a new Mixed Use (MU 3.1) zone, and consider a new mixed use development consisting of 7 residential units and 4,244 square feet of commercial space located at 1010 South El Camino Real.

Associate Planner Adam Atamian summarized the staff report.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell asked staff for clarification regarding the usable outdoor area required for each residential unit, referencing the requirements for multi-family residential development. Mr. Atamian responded that the Mixed-Use zoning standards require a certain amount of usable outdoor area, but not a specific amount assigned to each unit.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked staff for clarification on their recommendation regarding the front courtyard. Mr. Atamian responded that the front courtyard is quite narrow and creates a canyon-like effect. Additionally, the courtyard is more like a pathway to and from the parking garage, the street, and the commercial units than as a usable outdoor space as discussed in the General Plan.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell asked for staff clarification of how height is calculated for this property, whether it is based on the original topography of the site, or the existing built-up grade. Mr. Atamian responded that for this part of the City, the height is calculated from the original grade, which would follow the slope of Avenida Santiago. He stated that the existing grade that results from the back-filled retaining wall at the rear of the

property does not provide any opportunity for additional height over the natural topography.

Project architect Michael Luna presented the project, and responded to staff's comments using project illustrations.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin asked Mr. Luna how high the top of the arches at the rear of the parking garage are from the grade of the alley. Mr. Luna responded that they are approximately 14 feet from the grade of the alley.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell and Subcommittee Member Darden asked about the building setback dimensions. Mr. Luna and the property owner and developer, Nick Buchanan, responded, noting multiple setbacks throughout the project, for multiple stories. Mr. Luna continued, discussing how the project follows the topography, keeping two stories along El Camino Real.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell and Subcommittee Member Ruehlin discussed the General Plan update process and how the goal was to limit development to two stories on the El Camino Real street frontage and to provide an allowance for three stories that is dependent on topography that would allow a third story tucked underneath the two stories situated on the street.

Mr. Buchanan stated that he has familiarized himself with the new General Plan and has reviewed many City Council meeting videos and is unaware of any language that describes a two-story height limit along El Camino Real. He asked if the DRSC was aware of any language, outside of those sections of the General Plan that discuss the Downtown/ T-Zone area, where the mixed-use zones are limited to two stories along El Camino Real. Subcommittee Chair Crandell stated that he was not aware of any, but that the proposed project appears to comply with that understanding.

In response to discussion about staff's comments regarding the number of stories and the massing at the rear portion of the project, Mr. Atamian stated that the project is technically no more than a three-story building at any point in the project. However, the visual impact of the structure is that of a four level building that increases in height toward the rear of the property. Using images of the project, Mr. Atamian demonstrated how the top story of the project is stepped up from the top commercial floor of the project that fronts El Camino Real. Mr. Luna stated that the slight increase in the height of the roof line as it carries back from the El Camino Real frontage is inconsequential as the front of the building will set the ambiance on the street.

The DRSC asked whether this project complies with the minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for the commercial portion of the project. Mr. Atamian stated that the General Plan does not specify a minimum FAR for the new MU 3.2 zone, but that based on the existing MU 3 zone, it does not. The minimum FAR for the commercial portion of a mixed-use project in the existing MU 3 zone is .35, the current project is at .33, approximately 260 square feet short.

The project landscape architect, Richard Price, discussed the site landscaping and courtyard designs. He stated that the north side of buildings tend to be dark because of the reduced amount of sunlight exposure, but that the project is designed in a way to maximize landscaping that will survive while offering usable outdoor areas. Subcommittee Chair Crandell noted that he agrees with staff regarding the functionality of the proposed courtyard in that it does not serve much public purpose, only as a path to the parking area and one commercial unit entrance.

Mr. Buchanan spoke about the history of the site, specifically that it is an abandoned gas station that has sat vacant since 1987. He then proceeded to discuss the project and how it is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, utilizing a PowerPoint presentation.

Subcommittee Member Darden discussed her impressions of the project and responded to comments made earlier. She stated that she liked much of the architectural treatment and the landscaping. She also noted that the pedestrian portion of the project fronting El Camino Real could be enhanced to be more inviting at the street. She specifically noted that the courtyard could be opened more to provide more connection to the street, less of a surprise to those walking into it. She is concerned about the shallow second story setback from El Camino Real. For the rear portion of the project, Subcommittee Member Darden agreed with the staff report description of the project and how it "consumes the lot." She stated that the project should incorporate measures that reduce the overall building impact such as increased setbacks. She noted that while there is a difference in scale between mixed-use zones and residential zones, development should be tailored to not overwhelm the abutting residential zone. She also agreed with staff's recommendation to revise the roof line to more closely follow the natural topography of the site.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin stated that he liked the arches at the rear of the property and how they helped reduce the impact of the rear façade on the adjacent property. Additionally, he noted that the landscaping located along the alley also softens the impact. He asked for clarification from staff regarding the building's impact to adjacent properties. Mr. Atamian stated that staff's concern is mainly about the rear portion of the structure and its impact to the single-family residential zone to the west. Mr.

Atamian noted that staff's main concerns regarding the portion of the project fronting El Camino Real is primarily about the pedestrian orientation. Mr. Luna asked whether this property was located in a Pedestrian Overlay. Mr. Atamian stated that it was not, but that the project is proposed to utilize the reduced parking ratio of the MU 3 zone, which is provided to pedestrian oriented districts.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin agreed with Subcommittee Member Darden's comments regarding the front portion of the project in terms of the courtyard and the pedestrian orientation. He went on to state that while this is the type of project that the General Plan Advisory Committee intended to promote in this area, this particular project appears to present a potentially looming development. He noted that the project does incorporate measures to reduce the massing impacts of the projects, and he is not sure that additional upper story setbacks would provide the type of relief necessary to really reduce the looming effects of a structure this massive. He stated that he is not supportive of setting a precedent of projects that increase the canyonization along the alley.

Mr. Buchanan discussed the difficulty of building to the maximum allowable development standards while trying to meet the Design Guidelines. Mr. Luna also spoke about the difficulty of trying to hide third stories, and how this project has incorporated sizeable setbacks that the plan elevations do not present adequately.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell commended staff on the job of reviewing a project without the use of clearly established development standards. He thanked the applicants for their honesty regarding the project and their concerns regarding the pedestrian frontage and mass. Subcommittee Chair Crandell asked the other Subcommittee Members if they had any concerns regarding this project's impact to nearby historic resources. Subcommittee Member Darden stated that she finds that the project's mass has the potential to impact the historic resources and that the project's mass should be reduced. Subcommittee Member Ruehlin stated that as part of a commercial area, he does not see the potential for a negative impact. Subcommittee Chair Crandell agreed with Subcommittee Member Ruehlin.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell stated that he was generally supportive of the project as it is representative of the type of development intended for this area. He noted that he agrees with staff's concern about the narrowness and usefulness of the front courtyard as a pedestrian space.

The DRSC and staff discussed the potential process for the proposed Zoning Amendment in terms of how it could affect the design of the project and whether the project would need to be brought back to the DRSC for additional review. Mr. Atamian stated that based on the proposed

development standards and the level of support for them, there are potential design changes that could occur, and in that event, this project would need to be reviewed again by the DRSC to ensure compliance with the Design Guidelines.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell discussed staff's recommendations with the applicants. They were in agreement with most of the comments, which they felt they could incorporate into the project without too much difficulty. However, they were not in agreement regarding the comments to further step the building to follow the natural topography of the site, nor the recommendation to further articulate the roof for the same purpose. All were in agreement that public art was not required, and the DRSC stated that they would rather see good architecture than forced public art.

The DRSC was not unanimous regarding the scale and massing of the project or the suggestions to reduce the scale of the project either through stepping the building down more or increasing the setbacks of the higher stories of the project to improve the building's compatibility with the adjacent residential structure and single-family residential zone. The DRSC did indicate that the project should be reviewed again prior to proceeding to the Planning Commission level.

Mr. Buchanan asked the DRSC for some clarifications on design comments discussed previously. When discussing the massing impacts of project, the DRSC and staff discussed how additional perspective renderings and simulations could help to better illustrate how this project will be perceived within the context of the surrounding neighborhood. The DRSC expressed their appreciation for the proposal to build this type of project in this area, and thanked the applicants for working with staff through this process.

B. Cultural Heritage Permit 14-107, McIlvian Addition (Ciampa)

A request to consider a first and second story addition to a historic house located at 209 Avenida La Cuesta.

Associate Planner John Ciampa summarized the staff report.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell asked if the Minor Exception Permit (MEP) is supported by staff and what are their reasoning's to allow a reduced setback for the side yard of the house. Staff responded stating that the modified project reduced the addition to a single story to improve the compatibility and the massing of the project with the historic house. Staff's position was that this reduction of one foot to the side yard setback was acceptable because it pulls the addition further from the original portion of the house and there was a significant setback and topography change to the adjacent house. Subcommittee Chair Crandell agreed with staff's analysis and added

that the requested MEP improves the roof design of the house. He also stated that staff's recommendation of lowering the peak of the roof for the small addition at the front of the house would be possible when the applicant develops the building plans for the project.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked staff if the San Clemente Historic Society (SCHS) had seen the revised plans that modified the project to one story. Staff stated that the SCHS have not seen the plans but they were provided and update over the phone of the new project and were in favor of the new proposal. Subcommittee Member Darden agreed and also supported the request for the MEP as it pulled the addition away from the original house. She also thanked the applicant for modifying the project to a single story so it maintains the integrity of the historic resource.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin stated that he was also in favor of the project. He also was in support of the MEP because it is not visible from the street and should not impact the adjacent property.

The CHSC supported the project moving forward to the Planning Commission with staff's recommendations of removing the fascia board over the garage eaves and seeing if it is possible to lower the roof of the addition at the front of the house when more detailed plans are developed for building permits, if the project is approved.

C. Minor Cultural Heritage Permit 14-466, Carrillo Residence (Ciampa)

A request to consider allowing a 42 inch tall fence and stucco columns for a historic house located at 704 Calle Puente.

Associate Planner John Ciampa summarized the staff report.

Subcommittee Member Darden stated that the use of hibiscus plants may be an issue because they bring insects and the owner may want to consider another type of plant.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell asked the applicant if tile cap was proposed for the top of the pilasters. The applicant, Al Smith, clarified stating that the pilasters would be stucco.

The CHSC was supportive of the project moving forward to the Zoning Administrator with staff's recommendation that the wrought iron railing be a traditional railing design.

D. Minor Cultural Heritage Permit 14-455, Album Mural and Exterior Modification (Gregg)

A request to install a mural on the east side of the mixed use building, install wood planks on the balcony and replace the garage door. The project is located at 1705 North El Camino Real in the North Beach Study Area, is zoned Commercial, and is located in the Architectural and Pedestrian Overlays (C-2-A-P). It is located across the street from the historic Miramar Theater.

Associate Planner Amber Gregg summarized the staff report and presented an alternative mural in the same style for the Subcommittee's consideration. Subcommittee Member Ruehlin stated that the back of the building was a different paint color currently than the front. Ms. Gregg stated that the painting was done without permit approval and that code enforcement could follow up with the concern.

The project representative, Matt Parker, gave a description of the proposed business and stated that it would be a retail/gallery style area, similar to the Jed Noll Surf Shop next door to them. He and his business partner love the North Beach Artwalk in that part of town and would like to be apart of it.

Subcommittee Member Darden stated she was concerned about the style of the mural. She loves the design but wondered if it is appropriate in the Architectural Overlay. She stated that she preferred the proposed design over the alternative presented to them at the meeting, if the style was deemed appropriate.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin stated he too likes the mural and believes it reflects what's going on in the North Beach area.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked if it was required, or if it was appropriate, to frame the mural and reduce the size of it. Ms. Gregg stated there was no requirement to frame the art with a painted border or reduce the size of it. She noted that depending on the building and the mural style, framing is sometimes appropriate to compliment the architectural style of the building it is located on.

Committee Member Darden asked staff if there was a design style standard for murals in the Architectural Overlay, like the Downtown for example. Ms. Gregg noted that the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance do not specify an artistic style of murals in the architectural overlay, or anywhere in the City. For City art projects staff has required art pieces to reflect the character of San Clemente. Some examples include: nature, local history, surf culture and unique character. In the case of Downtown, murals and art pieces

reflecting local historic architecture are appropriate, and desired by the businesses and community.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin noted that art is a statement piece, not permanent like a building, but an accent that reflects the character of the neighborhood in which it is located. He asked staff to follow up with City Traffic Engineer, Tom Frank, to see if the style is ok or if it would be considered to distracting to motorists.

Committee Members Darden and Ruehlin like the black and white color and prefer the original submittal, not the alternate presented at the meeting.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell discussed the architectural proposals and stated that he liked the proposed garage doors but believes the style of the doors should be more modern in style keeping with the existing architecture of the building. He suggested the addition of wood or steel to the doors. He likes the wood on the balcony. He noted that in the absence of a major remodel that would change the architectural style of the entire building, that the proposed architectural details should stay true to the Midcentury style. Subcommittee Member Darden also noted that she liked the wood details.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell stated that he was overwhelmed by the graphic and would like to see it softened. He could go with the proposed style of the mural but on a considerably smaller scale; he also preferred the alternative mural presented at the meeting. He shared the concern about setting the tone in this area.

Applicant, Matt Parker, stated he believes the mural would improve and contribute to the community. He supports a temporary installation of the mural to generate community discussion on the topic.

Subcommittee Member Darden stated she was struggling with the questions you struggle with without guidelines. She noted she cannot recommend approval of the mural to the Zoning Administrator and noted that if we do not have time to develop formal guidelines then we need to develop some structure to evaluate them.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin is in favor of recommending a temporary approval to allow the mural to go up for a specific period of time as an experiment that generates community input. He supports the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural building style the Architectural Overlay requires, but with an organic community vibe and community representation that art can bring.

Ms. Gregg summarized the Subcommittee's comments, noting the wood midcentury doors and balcony were supported, but without guidelines or an interim guiding document they could not support the mural for fear of setting a precedent that may be inappropriate for the Architectural Overlay.

3. NEW BUSINESS

None

4. OLD BUSINESS

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn to the Regular Meeting of the Design Review Subcommittee to be held January 14, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in Conference Room A, Community Development Department, 910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100, San Clemente, CA 92673.

Respectfully submitted,

Bart Crandell, Chair

Attest:

Cliff Jones, Associate Planner