




## Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC)

Meeting Date: January 28, 2015

**PLANNER:** Cliff Jones, Associate Planner 

**SUBJECT:** **PRE-APP 14-413, Verizon at Little Inn,** a request to review design, massing, height, and scale of two proposed hotel towers which would conceal cellular antennae. The site is located at 1819 S. El Camino Real within the Neighborhood Commercial (NC3) zoning district.

### **BACKGROUND:**

#### *Project Description*

The applicant, Verizon Wireless, proposes to extend two towers upward on the Little Inn hotel to house new cellular antennae. The purpose of this pre-application review is to obtain feedback from the Design Review Subcommittee regarding the potential design, massing, height, and scale of the project.

#### *Why is DRSC Review Required?*

Design Review is not required for a Pre-Application review, but it is available if applicants desire it. The applicant requested DRSC review to help assess the feasibility of the project, the project's compatibility with City Design Guidelines and the neighborhood, and to determine whether to proceed with a formal application.

#### *Site Data*

The project site is a 9,304 square foot lot, which contains a four level hotel at 1819 South El Camino Real. The hotel architectural design is a contemporary Spanish style. The project site is located within the Neighborhood Commercial (NC3) zone and abuts commercial uses to the east and west, commercial uses across El Camino Real to the south, and residential uses to the north.

### **ANALYSIS:**

The proposed towers are 46.5 feet tall, which are an extension of six and a half feet to the existing towers height of 39 feet 11.5 inches. The proposed towers are 1.5 feet above the 45 height limit of the NC3 zone. The zoning ordinance allows cellular antenna projects to exceed the height limitation of the zone provided the use does not negatively impact surrounding land uses and meets Conditional Use Permit (CUP) findings. The appropriate height limitation for cellular antenna projects exceeding the height limitation of the zone is determined through the discretionary review process.

*Tower Design*

The design of the tower extensions are accentuated with recessed stucco arches in a blue trim color facing the south, east, and west. The north elevations have small square stucco recesses that are unpainted. The top of the towers have a cornice that is painted blue on all four sides to match the existing building trim.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The following are staff's initial comments on the building height, scale, massing and design and do not include the detailed design recommendations typical of discretionary application review.



**Building Height, Scale, and Mass:**



1. The applicant has not provided substantial evidence why the 1.5' projection of the towers above the height limit is necessary. Sufficient evidence is needed to demonstrate why the project cannot meet the existing height standard and why alternative designs or sites are not possible.
2. Staff support of a cellular tower above height limits is dependent upon the applicant demonstrating the following: 1) the tower extensions are an architectural enhancement to the building design that improves the appearance of the neighborhood; 2) the tower element designs do not have negative impacts upon surrounding uses; and 3) cellular antennas cannot not be concealed within the towers without the request to exceed the height limitation.

**Tower Design:**

3. The towers appear out of scale with the building at the proposed height. The towers should be redesigned so they appear as though they are integral to the architecture of the building. Additionally, the recessed arches within the towers are not functional and are not applied in a traditional Spanish Colonial Revival manner. The arches exaggerate the height of the towers, which makes the towers appear less in scale with the neighborhood. Staff recommends that the towers be redesigned and accented with non-vertical decorative features. To assist the applicant, Table 1 provides examples of Spanish Colonial Revival style towers that have a traditional appearance and a description of the traditional design details. Elements of these tower designs could be incorporated into the proposed towers to help the project comply with Design Guidelines.

**Table 1 – Spanish Colonial Revival Towers**

Building Description	Image	Architectural Details of Tower
San Clemente Fire Station		<p>The tower height is reduced by scaling down the upper portion of the tower. Architectural interest is added with the cupola and weather vane at the top of the tower.</p>
Santa Barbara Paseo Nuevo		<p>The tower element is simple and elegant with a cornice atop, stucco band below and crisscross stucco detail between. The cornice and stucco band are painted a terra cotta color to match the terra cotta tile roof.</p>

<p>San Clemente Miramar Theater</p>		<p>The tower has a traditional clay tile roof accented with weather vane, stucco corbels, recessed arches near the top, and stucco band below.</p>
<p>Santa Barbara Building located on State Street.</p>		<p>The tower has a traditional clay tile roof, cornice detail below, stucco insets, and a clock for visual interest and function.</p>

4. To improve the Spanish architectural style of the building as a whole, staff recommends the following be incorporated into the project: 1) blue cornice be painted a terra cotta color; 2) wrought-iron details painted blue be painted a black color throughout the building; and 3) blue wood trellis at the front entry be painted dark brown. These subtle design changes coupled with attractive towers could improve the overall look of the building.
5. Additional visual analysis tools from different perspectives are requested with future discretionary application review so staff and the DRSC can further evaluate the project design, height, scale, and mass. Staff seeks DRSC input on whether additional visual analysis tools are necessary.

Staff seeks DRSC comments and any additional recommendations.

***Attachments:***


1. Location Map
2. Visual Simulations  
Plans



# LOCATION MAP

PRE-APP 14-413, Verizon at Little Inn  
1819 S El Camino Real



No scale 



LOCATION

©2014 Google Maps



EXISTING



PROPOSED

LOOKING NORTHWEST FROM EL CAMINO REAL

# ALCAZAR

1819 SOUTH EL CAMINO REAL SAN CLEMENTE CA 92672



LOCATION

©2014 Google Maps



EXISTING



PROPOSED

LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM AVENIDA SAN ANTONIO



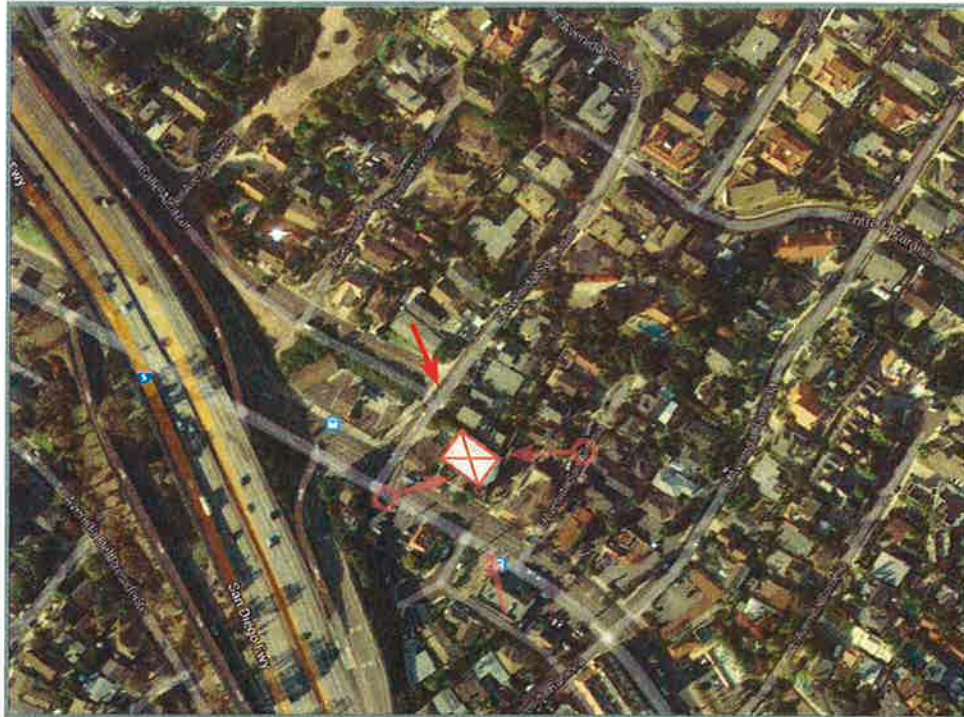


# ALCAZAR

1819 SOUTH EL CAMINO REAL SAN CLEMENTE CA 92672



VIEW 3



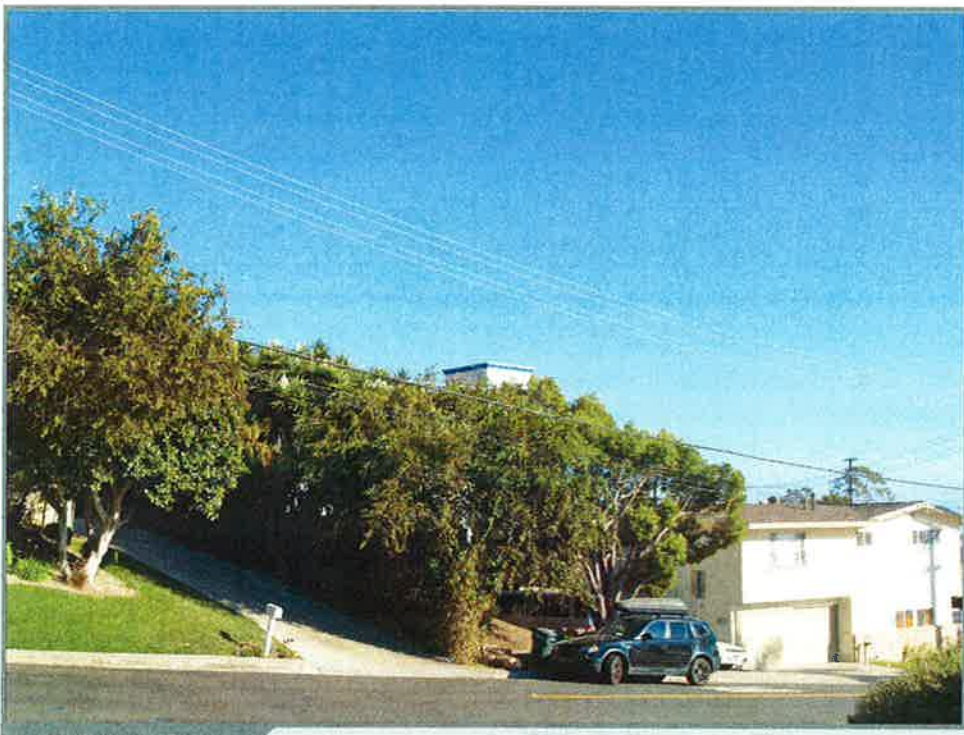
LOCATION

©2014 Google Maps



PROPOSED

LOOKING SOUTHEAST FROM AVENIDA SAN ANTONIO



EXISTING

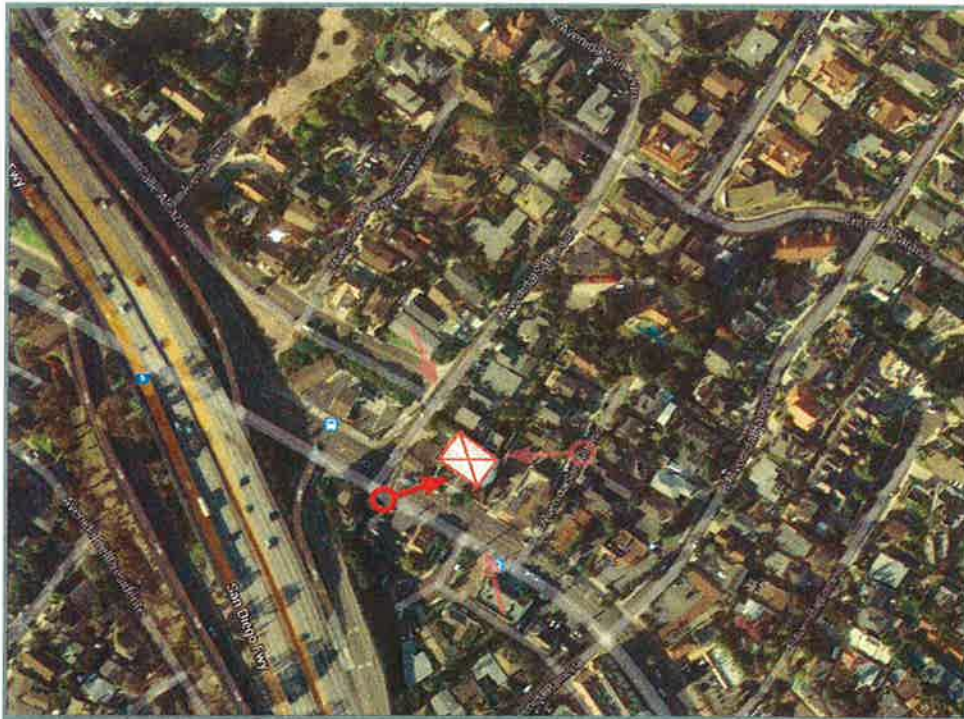


# ALCAZAR

1819 SOUTH EL CAMINO REAL SAN CLEMENTE CA 92672



VIEW 4



LOCATION

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PROPOSED ANTENNA SCREEN

PROPOSED ANTENNA SCREEN



EXISTING

PROPOSED LOOKING NORTHEAST FROM EL CAMINO REAL

ACCURACY OF PHOTO SIMULATION BASED UPON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY PROJECT APPLICANT.