

**CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
DESIGN REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 11, 2015**

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

Staff Present: Jim Pechous, Cliff Jones, Amber Gregg, John Ciampa and Adam Atamian

1. MINUTES

Minutes from January 28, 2015 meeting

2. ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM

A. Pre-App 14-509, Pacific Coast Church Vacant Property (Gregg)

Vacant property located on Calle Frontera between the church and the townhome development.

Associate Planner Amber Gregg summarized the staff report and highlighted staff's main concerns which include the architectural style of Spanish in the Cape Cod Marblehead and neighborhoods, the proposed site design which results in rows of garages, vast roof decks, and lack of landscaping and pedestrian walkways.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin asked staff if the site plan had been shown to the traffic division. Ms. Gregg noted they were currently reviewing it. Subcommittee Member Ruehlin believed the main entry with a right-in-right-out access as shown may help with traffic calming on Calle Frontera.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell invited the applicant to speak and discuss any major concerns they had with staff's comments and recommendations. Representative David Stearn of Lennar Homes said he would address access from Calle Ola Verde. There is a slope and wall along the street but it's not undoable. They were concerned with traffic load added to the existing neighborhood and believed the right in-right out design would be less impactful. He also stated there are existing easements and they merged them to the center aisle. Easements are driving their circulation. Along Calle Frontera designs are different because of the grades and the garages are five feet below the first living floor in a "tuck-under" design. This helps minimize retaining walls on-site that can be unattractive. Those units are also slightly bigger than the other units because they have the best views. They appreciate the feedback on the design as they are in their due diligence period. The applicant also clarified that the roof decks will have 4

foot tall walls separating them from the other unit's deck, and the front entry patios will have three and a half foot tall walls.

Chair Crandell stated that architectural styles are easy to change so he is going to focus on the site plan. He is concerned about living space along the freeway and questioned if they would be able to meet noise requirements for outdoor living space. The applicant noted that they are reviewing a Plexiglas sound wall that will go above the second floor deck of the homes. Chair Crandell noted that there needs to be variation on the freeway side of the buildings. Right now there is just a long straight line of buildings with no movement or interest. The roof decks will probably be a concern to adjacent homeowners as well as the Planning Commission. He stated that the concern may not be with the decks themselves, but rather the things people tend to put on their decks. The applicant noted they would propose stringent CC&R's that would be submitted with the application.

Chair Crandell noted that the applicant has used a "cookie cutter" type townhouse and that an "L" or other shape may help reduce paving on-site and add variation. He understood the roof deck may provide the only ocean view due to the Marblehead Coastal developments, but noted that not all units would have views from the deck and maybe those units are designed without roof decks. The applicant confirmed that some decks do not have views, but the decks provide a nice private outdoor space. Chair Crandell agreed but noted that roof decks can be noisy and courtyards could be created and may be a better option.

The applicant noted that the back of the site, adjacent to the freeway, will be 20 feet higher than it currently is to level out the parcel.

Chair Crandell again reiterated that the architectural style can be resolved and the applicant should concentrate on the site design.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked if the views were only available from the roof decks. The applicant stated on the front line no, but behind them, yes. Subcommittee Member Darden stated that staff and Chair Crandell are right about focusing on site design. In regard to their question on if they can meet their required density, she noted that only they could answer that question. For the City, our focus is quality of life for existing and new residents. To assess the quality of life she drove the adjacent townhome development just south of them that was a 100% affordable project when it was constructed. She believed the existing development offered more of a quality of life and a feeling of a neighborhood and she believes the applicant's proposal has sacrificed that for feeling for the roof decks. Rearranging the units may help achieve the neighborhood feeling.

Subcommittee Member Darden continued stating quality of life and contributing to the existing residences will be a focus of the Planning Commission, and will be a concern of the City Council most likely as well since their approval is required for the General Plan and Zoning Amendments that are required. She noted that staff will probably find that the Cape Cod style is required for the parcel, and even if they don't most likely it will need to be Cape Cod for the Commission to make the finding that it's compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

The applicant asked for clarification on the Cape Cod architecture and wanted to verify if the DRSC would be looking for true Cape Cod style or a similar style to the existing Marblehead Inland developments. The DRSC concurred they would be looking for something compatible with the existing developments.

Subcommittee Member Darden thanked the applicant for taking advantage of the pre-application process. The purpose of it is to help applicants navigate the process and that is the spirit of their comments.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin noted that the other members covered a lot of ground with their comments and he shared their sentiments. He noted he was also concerned about the lack of common open space and pathways for pedestrians or bikeways. He noticed that there are no bike parking stalls on-site either. In regard to the garages he stated that he knew the architecture would be of high quality but as designed they are still just a row of garages and has major concerns with that. He believed that if the applicant incorporated modifications based on his cohorts' comments that it could help the design.

Subcommittee Member Darden was glad Subcommittee Member Ruehlin noted the pedestrian paths and thanked staff for noting them in the report as well. She believes the pathways will add a lot to the neighborhood feel of the projects.

Chair Crandell concluded the item by thanking the applicant and noting the project has potential but needs a sensitive touch.

B. Pre-App 14-409, Chick-fil-A (Atamian)

A request to review the preliminary plans for a new fast food restaurant with a drive-through located at 620 E. Avenida Pico within the Regional Commercial (RC1) zone.

Associate Planner Adam Atamian summarized the staff report.

Ed Hale, project manager, discussed the project and the goals of the Chick-fil-A team in presenting this concept. He noted that in terms of the location and adjacent uses, this parcel is appropriate for a vehicle-dependent use. He responded to the issues raised in the staff report regarding the site circulation, the wrap-around drive-through layout and potential opportunities to obscure the view of the drive-through aisle from Avenida Pico. He also noted that parking is fully provided on-site, while much effort has been made to reduce traffic impacts from cars queuing in the drive-through by locating the drive-through entrance at the rear of the property.

Russell Hatfield, project architect, discussed some of the architectural aspects of the project. He noted that parapet walls of the roof are seen in other examples of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. He disagreed with the staff report, stating that the roof is very articulated, and that he would prefer to leave the tower simpler, and focus more detail around the building entrance, if necessary. He also stated that the columns and arches are proportioned accurately for the style.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell asked staff if this site would be considered a City Gateway. Mr. Atamian stated that it would, consistent with other previous project findings. Mr. Atamian went on to explain the importance of the Gateway designation, in that projects located in these areas are held to a higher standard of design quality that reflects the City's Spanish Colonial Revival heritage.

Subcommittee Member Darden stated that the area may not be very appropriate for a vehicle-dependent use due to the already impacted traffic congestion, and neighboring drive-through uses that currently exist. She stated that a drive-through in this area may not be conducive to the City's quality of life standards. She noted that the drive-through circulation plan was circuitous and confusing. While generally agreeing with staff recommendations, she noted the importance of recommendation number one in the staff report regarding the need to further develop a clear circulation plan for automobiles, pedestrians, and service vehicles. Similarly with the building's architecture, she noted that her major concerns were reflected in staff recommendations numbers seven and nine. The comments discussed with the building's very basic relationship to Spanish Colonial Revival style, and the lack of roof articulation to make the building more scaled to the human size. Subcommittee Member Darden thanked the applicant for working diligently with their neighbors and the City's engineering division prior to submitting the pre-application review. She appreciated the quality of the application materials submitted for review.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin agreed with the Subcommittee Member Darden's appreciation for the due diligence shown by the applicants. He went on to discuss his concerns regarding the project's impacts to bicycle

traffic, and suggested that the applicant's work on incorporating bicycle parking facilities early in the design phase. He went on to reiterate the importance of the Gateway location, stressing that the area should exemplify the character of the City. He stated that the architecture should include additional detail and look for way to reduce the amount of right angles present on the renderings. He stated that the applicant should look at other towers in the city for inspiration on how to appropriately detail that feature. He noted that the location of the drive-through creates a "parking lot in front" feel to the lot, and that the City is trying to move away from that type of street presence. He agrees with staff that the sign facing the high school should be omitted. He said that the direction of the drive-through at the rear of the lot may create problems for people driving west on Avenida Pico due to an additional set of headlights facing east.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell stated that he sees many traffic concerns with the site design, especially over the next few years when Avenida La Pata is connected to San Juan Capistrano. He stated that the exit of the drive-through, being so close to Avenida Pico, creates a situation where the drive-through queuing will be blocked when there is only one car waiting on the lot to turn onto the street. He said that the long drive-way aisle reduces the opportunity for landscaping on the site, and that he suggested the applicant review options to shorten the drive-through aisle to allow more space for landscaping. He discussed the difficulty of trying to locate a functional drive-through on the subject lot, noting that ultimately, this project will need to demonstrate that the lot is suitable for this type of feature.

C. Cultural Heritage Permit 14-336, Donoso Residence Addition (Ciampa)

A request for an addition and remodel to a single family residence located adjacent to a historic house. The project site is located at 434 Calle Gomez.

Associate Planner John Ciampa summarized the staff report.

The property owner, Mr Donoso, was supportive of staff's recommendations.

Member of the Historical Society, Larry Culbertson, stated that he was in support of the project and that it would improve the appearance of the neighborhood.

Subcommittee Darden stated that the design has a little too much embellishment for a traditional Spanish Colonial Revival design, but based on the scope and design of the project, it should not have a negative impact on the adjacent historic structure.

The property owner asked the DRSC for advice on additional design modifications to improve the Spanish Colonial Revival design of the project. The DRSC responded stating that Spanish Colonial Revival architecture has a simplified design. They gave an example that columns are slightly thicker to give the appearance that they are constructed of adobe and not modern materials.

The DRSC was supportive of staff's comments on the project and recommended the project move forward to the Planning Commission.

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

A request to consider an addition, remodel and deck extension for a historic house located at 209 Avenida La Cuesta.

Associate Planner John Ciampa summarized the staff report.

The applicant, Kirk Bassett, stated the owner's desire for the addition at the front of the house is to gain volume and taking advantage of the ocean view. He stated that a lot of the design modifications to improve the compatibility of the project also have design and cost impacts to the inside of the space.

The applicant was provided a design option for the addition at the front of the house with a raised square roof design. He reviewed the design option and stated that it was viable solution to address the owner's and the DRSC's concerns with the project. The applicant stated that the alternative design places the walls and roof in a good geometric and structural location. The alternative would also improve the design and the ocean view.

The applicant also provided the DRSC with a modified design that dropped the roof of the addition to the same plate heights as the adjacent roofs.

Historical Society member, Larry Culbertson, stated that he liked the alternative design option with the squared roof element. He stated he was not pleased with the amount of additions made to the historic house but was in favor of the proposed design and how it corrected the incompatible 1972 addition.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell stated that the alternative design option clearly separates the old from the new. He stated that the owner's request for a large window is not necessary because the window would be located at eye level.

Subcommittee Member Darden stated that the raised square roof for the alternative design creates a separation from the existing structures and complies with Secretary of the Interior's Standard #9 by improving the

compatibility of the project. She also mentioned that it is a more honest design that addresses the concerns of the DRSC.

Subcommittee Member Ruehlin agreed with Subcommittee Darden's comment and stated that the adjustment to the plate lines and the square roof design is an improvement to the previous design.

The applicant stated that the new pitched roof for the 1972 addition at the back of the house and the project's proposed materials would improve the project's compatibility with the historic house.

The DRSC expressed their support for the alternative design with the square roof element at the front of the house. They were also supportive of the design for the bedroom addition to the back of the house.

The DRSC requested the revised plans be provided to them for an informal review prior to the project being scheduled for the Planning Commission so they can ensure the revised plans reflect the direction given to the applicant.

E. North Beach Curb Extensions – CIP (Rosales)

Pedestrian improvements at the intersections of Avenida Pico at Boca De La Playa and Avenida Pico at Calle Deshecha consisting of curb extensions (bulbouts). Plans will be presented for discussion.

Senior Civil Engineer Jennifer Rosales presented plans for discussion and review.

F. Conditional Use Permit 14-137/Site Plan Permit 14-138/Architectural Permit 14-139, Silver Hinge Mixed Use (Jones)

A request to consider a three-story mixed use building on the vacant lot of the 100 block of Avenida Victoria (APN 058-083-44). The project is located within the Mixed Use zoning district, and within the Architectural and Coastal Overlays, MU3.1-A (CZ).

Associate Planner Cliff Jones summarized the staff report.

Jeff Smith, Architect, indicated that they have revised the three-story project so that it fits within a two-story building envelope and significantly reduced the amount of square footage on the second and third levels. The building now sits 3'-7" below grade and is 28.4 feet tall. The second floor enclosed area was reduced by 5% in size and the third floor enclosed area was reduced by 28%. Balcony space was reduced as well by 56% on the second floor and 47% on the third floor. The enclosed living area was reduced by 750 square feet, which Mr. Smith indicated was a significant

“hair cut” to the proforma of the project. Mr. Smith indicated they significantly relieved the building mass by varying deep setbacks and courtyards.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell warned that the request to share the commercial and guest parking may be of concern to the Planning Commission and City Council. Subcommittee Member Darden agreed and indicated that parking is very difficult along Avenida Victoria.

Subcommittee Chair Crandell indicated that the project massing is much improved and is going in the right direction. Subcommittee Member Darden and Subcommittee Member Ruehlin agreed.

Subcommittee Member Darden added that the revisions are a huge improvement and the side elevations are very considerate of the neighboring properties.

The Subcommittee agreed with staff’s recommendation that a massing study should be provided to show how the project compares to the other three-story buildings on Avenida Victoria and the Fire Station. Subcommittee Member Darden added that the Bartlett Building has been identified as a building with appropriate height and mass and that the massing study should include that building as well.

The Subcommittee also agreed with staff’s recommendation to have visual simulations that show the project in relationship to the neighboring properties along Avenida Victoria as well as a simulation from Granada that shows the projects impact upon the buildings that front Avenida Granada including historic resources.

Larry Culbertson, Historical Society Member, indicated that the project would have negative impacts upon four historic properties within 300 feet and indicated that the staff report needs to evaluate impacts upon those historic resources. He indicated that all of the abutting properties are one-story and the massing of this building is going to dwarf the buildings along Avenida Granada. Mr. Culbertson indicated that the minimum .15 commercial floor area, as prescribed within the code, is not enough commercial. He did not feel it was enough to accommodate the pedestrian ambiance we are trying to accomplish. He indicated he was very concerned about parking and everyone on the street complains about parking and this project will make it worse. He does not like the concept of shared parking either and he doesn’t think that will fly. He indicated the project needs to be less dense. He suggested that this project can now be all residential and wondered if the applicant knew this. He indicated that story poles and visual simulations are very necessary.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked the applicant how tall the building was in relationship to the historic home and other buildings along Avenida Granada. Mr. Smith indicated that the building is about 24' tall from the Avenida Granada grade so it is like the relationship between a single story home and a two story home.

Subcommittee Member Darden thanked the applicant for stepping back and reimagining the project rather than making small tweaks to the design.

The Subcommittee suggested the project applicant work on the architectural details and return back to the DRSC for detailed design recommendations.

3. NEW BUSINESS

None

4. OLD BUSINESS

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn to the Regular Meeting of the Design Review Subcommittee to be held February 25, 2015 at 3:00 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