



Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC)

Meeting Date: October 14, 2015

PLANNER: Sean Nicholas, Associate Planner *SN*

SUBJECT: **Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 14-497/Cultural Heritage Permit (CHP) 14-498, Buena Vista Condos**, a request to construct a five (5) unit condo project on an infill, vacant, and coastal-bluff lot within the Residential Medium Density zoning district and Coastal Zone overlay (RM-CZ). The project address is 1500 Buena Vista.

BACKGROUND:

Project Description

The project proposes to develop a 14,168 square foot, five (5) unit multi-family structure. The lot is vacant and includes a portion that is a coastal bluff. The applicant is proposing to dig down and develop underground parking and living space. The building will step up with the topography, but like surrounding development will appear four-stories tall. The project requires a CUP because it proposes 5 units, and a CHP because it is within 300 feet of the Ole Hanson Beach Club.

Why DRSC Review is Required?

Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC) review is required because the project requires a Cultural Heritage Permit. At this point it is unclear if the development will be visible from the Beach Club or from the coastal beach trail, but based on staff visits it appears visibility will be limited.

ANALYSIS:

Development Standards

Table 1 outlines the project's compliance with the Residential Medium Density with Coastal Zone overlay (RM-CZ) zoning district development standards.

+Table 1- Development Standards

	Zoning Ordinance Requirements	Proposed	Compliance with the Municipal Code
Building Height Maximum	25' from original grade	24.92' from original grade	Yes

	Zoning Ordinance Requirements	Proposed	Compliance with the Municipal Code
Setbacks (Minimum):			
• Front	15'	20'	Yes
• Entry Side Yard	8'	8'	Yes
• Side Yard	5'	5'	Yes
• Rear Yard	5'	7'-8"	Yes
Lot Coverage (Minimum):	55%	49%	Yes
Required Parking (Minimum):	12 spaces	13 spaces	Yes

Cultural Heritage Permit (CHP)

The proposed development is located within 300 feet of the historic Ole Hanson Beach Club. The design of the proposed development is contemporary, but has some features which harken to Spanish including smooth white stucco, wood doors, and a earth tone color pallet. Staff has tried assess the level of visibility of the development from the historic resource, and due to existing development, topography, and the movement of the coastal bluff, it appears very little of the development would be visible. The only portion that may be visible would be the top of the roof over the adjacent residents.

Image 1: Distance of the Project Site from the Ole Hanson Beach Club



Design Guidelines

Table 2 is an analysis of the project’s consistency with the Design Guidelines.

Table 2 – Design Guidelines

Design Guideline or Policy	Project Consistency	Comments
<p>Relationship to Neighboring Development II.B <i>“All development proposals should demonstrate sensitivity to the contextual influences of adjacent properties and the neighborhood.”</i></p>	<p>Somewhat consistent. The homes surrounding this development are large, and from that prospective the proposed development is consistent with the surrounding development. Though the massing of the project is not broken up significantly and reads as one very large structure, compared to the surrounding developments which have an inner area and separation between portions of the development.</p>	<p>Staff recommends the applicant evaluate ways in which the massing of the project could be reduced to provide more open areas to reduce the mass, especially towards the bluff portion of the project site where the development is four stories tall.</p>
<p>Building Form and Massing II.C <i>“Reduce the perceived height and bulk of large structures by dividing the building mass into smaller-scale components.”</i></p>	<p>Not consistent. The proposed development reads as a very large single structure. While there is some movement and varying rooflines, the scale of buildings, especially by going subterranean on portions, which will still be visible, increases the overall size and massing of the building.</p>	<p>The project architect should look to evaluate the design of the building and determine ways to better break up the massing, particularly on the sides and rear facing towards the coastal bluff.</p>
<p>Compatibility with Historic Resources. IV.E <i>“New development should preserve and be compatible with existing historic resources.”</i></p>	<p>Consistent. The location is far enough away from the Ole Hanson Beach Club that there is no impact on the historic residence. While the lines and proportions of the building are contemporary in design, features such as smooth white stucco, and wood doors are consistent with the historic structure.</p>	<p>None.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends the following design modifications to improve the project's consistency with the Design Guidelines:

1. **Massing**-As noted above staff has concerns regarding the perceived massing and size of the structure. Additionally while adjacent structures have more breakup and spacing in the massing, this project is lacking that openness and movement in the same way. Staff is particularly concerned with the north side elevation with minimal plane breaks and substantial portions of just blank stucco, and the rear of the property where it reads as a large four-story project.
2. **Front Elevation Wall**-No wall shall exceed six feet in height. The 8'-6" wall shown blocking the parking needs to be reduced in height.
3. **Landscaping in front setback**-Due to the requirements to reduce the height of the wall, the applicant is only proposing 24 inch box trees. To provide more buffering, the applicant should consider increasing the size of the trees at installation.
4. **Group Open Area**-As required in the Design Guidelines, the project requires at least 500 square feet of group open area. It appears that a large deck on the main floor level is available to all residents but it is unclear, and the dimension of the deck area has not been provided. The applicant needs to provide clarification on the use of the deck, whether it is open to all residents, and the size of the area. If this area is available to all residents, it is a nice feature and faces out towards the ocean.

Due to the project site's location away from the Ole Hanson Beach Club, and limited to no visibility, the proposed contemporary design can be supported. The primary issue, as noted above, is that the massing and scale of the building is problematic and more consideration needs to be given to reducing the overall size of the development, or at least the perceived size. Due to the modifications recommended, staff suggests the item return to DRSC for a subsequent review. Staff is seeking DRSC concurrence with the above recommendations and welcomes additional comments.

Attachments:

1. Location Map
Plans



LOCATION MAP

CUP 14-497/CHP 14-498, Buena Vista Condos
1500 Buena Vista

