

# Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC)

Meeting Date: February 26, 2020

**PLANNER:** Katie Crockett, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: Cultural Heritage Permit 19-130/ Variance 19-131/ SPP 19-217, 1602 N.

<u>El Camino Real Mixed Use</u>, a request to consider a renovation and addition of two stories to an existing one-story commercial building, resulting in a first floor commercial unit with a two-story residence above, including a variance to exceed maximum lot coverage at 1602 N. El Camino Real in the Mixed Use 2 zoning district and the Architectural,

Visitor Serving Commercial District, and Coastal Zone overlays.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The project site is a 2,000 square-foot lot located in the North El Camino Real Mixed Use (MU 2) zone and Architectural (A), Visitor Serving Commercial District (VSCD, known as the Central Business overlay in the General Plan), and Coastal Zone (CZ) overlays. The site is improved with a 975 square-foot commercial building with no on-site parking. The existing commercial building was constructed in 1956. The lot is nonconforming with regard to both area and lot width/street frontage and appears to have been divided by grant deed prior to the Subdivision Map Act, reflected in the legal description of "Tract 821, Block 1, Southeasterly half of Lot 15."

The proposed project would renovate the existing commercial space and add one residential unit. The project includes adding a 297 square foot garage/storage space on the first floor to the rear of the existing commercial space, and constructing a 2,198 square-foot two-story residential addition above. The request also includes a variance to exceed the maximum allowable lot coverage, resulting in 70 percent lot coverage, where 50 percent is allowed. The current lot coverage for the existing development is 50 percent.

#### Why is DRSC Review Required?

Because the project is an addition over 2,000 square feet to a non-residential or mixed-use site within the A-overlay, a Cultural Heritage Permit (SCMC Table 17.16.100(B)) and Site Plan Permit (SCMC Table 17.16.050) are required. SCMC Table 17.12.025 specifies that DRSC review is required for the Variance, Cultural Heritage Permit, and Site Plan Permit to evaluate the visual impacts of exceptions to development standards, to review site planning, parking lot design, setbacks, and compatibility with adjacent development, and to review and evaluate architectural design issues, such as quality and style, massing, scale, proportions, landscaping, materials, and design features. The purpose of the DRSC review is to advise applicants on how projects can best comply with general plan policies and/or

design guidelines. The DRSC's recommendation will be forwarded to the Planning Commission, which is the final decision making authority for this item.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**





Figure 2 – Project Elevation



The proposed project will remodel and reduce the size of the commercial space by 40 square feet to 935 square feet. A new addition will include a 297 garage/storage area on the first floor behind the commercial unit. A new residence is proposed totaling 2,198 square feet comprising the second and third floors. The new residence on the second and

third floors contain three balconies/patios totaling 779 square feet. Two new paved on-site parking spaces for the residence accessed by the rear alley are proposed to meet the residential parking requirement. The existing building is off-white stucco with a flat roof and does not reflect Spanish Colonial Revival (SCR) Architecture. The proposed building contains SCR elements such as smooth off-white stucco, a red-brown clay tile roof, dark wood rafter tails and columns, dark wood-look composite doors and windows with simulated divided lites, and wrought iron railings and window grilles.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

#### **Development Standards**

The project meets development standards, except as existing nonconforming conditions and the requested lot coverage variance, as shown in Table 1, below.

**Table 1 – Development Standards** 

	Code Requirements	Proposed Site Plan	Complies with Requirements
Minimum Lot Size	6,000 sf	2,000 sf	No*
Minimum Lot Width	60'	20'	No*
Residential Density:	1 Unit	1 Unit	Yes
F.A.R.	1.5 (0.35-1.0 commercial)	1.4 (0.47 commercial)	Yes
Residential Location	Behind/above commercial	Above commercial	Yes
Building Height (Maximum)	37' max plate height	29'2"	Yes
	45' top of roof	32'4"	Yes
Setbacks (Minimum):			
Front	0'	4"	Yes
Side	0'	0'	Yes
• Rear	0'	22'-4"	Yes
Lot Coverage	50%	70%	No**
Required Parking (Minimum):	4 spaces	2 spaces	No***

<sup>\*</sup> Existing nonconforming conditions

#### **Parking**

No parking is currently provided for the existing commercial use and therefore the site is nonconforming with respect to parking requirements. As a part of the plan, the size of the commercial space is being reduced, but the original structure will remain. Two new parking

<sup>\*\*</sup> Variance Requested

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>See Table 2 and parking discussion, below

spaces for the residence are proposed at the rear of the property off the alley. Additionally, an extra parking space is provided in the new garage. The garage space is not counted towards required parking, however, because tandem parking is not permitted without a Variance. Table 2 summarizes required, existing, and proposed parking.

Table 2 – Parking Required

	Code Requirement	Existing	Proposed	Net
Commercial use (retail)	1/400 sf (2 spaces)	0	0	0
Residential use (1 unit)	2/unit (2 spaces)	n/a	2	+2
Total		0	2	+2

As can be seen from Table 2, the parking required for the new use (2 spaces) is provided. For mixed use properties within the Central Business overlay, the parking code specifies that for changes of use or additions where more parking is required for the new use, only the net difference is required to be provided. Therefore, the project meets the minimum parking requirement. However, staff recommends reconfiguring the parking to eliminate one surface parking space and applying for a variance to utilize tandem parking for a variety of reasons. For example, with the current proposed configuration, there is no way to move the commercial dumpster from the trash enclosure to the alley if both residential parking spaces are being used.

#### Landscaping

Landscaping requirements have been combined with urban open area (UOA) requirements in mixed use zones to allow the creation of urban open areas, such as courtyards, pedestrian walkways and outdoor seating areas accentuated with landscaping. UOA includes upper level balconies, decks, and roofs with permanently affixed planter boxes. The existing site has no landscaping. Proposed UOA and landscape area is summarized in Table 3, below.

Table 3 – Landscape/UOA Standards

	Code Requirement	Proposed	Complies with Requirements
Total UOA (percent of lot area)	30%	50%	Yes
Percentage of UOA to be provided in Landscaping	25%	21%	No

The project well exceeds the requirement for total UOA. However, it is deficient in percentage of landscape area (by approximately 40 square feet). When commercial or mixed use project sites are remodeled or expanded, past practice has been to ensure that any existing landscape nonconformity is decreased (even if not completely brought into conformity). However, staff recommends converting the second outdoor parking space into

usable open space to remedy this nonconformity, which is discussed below in the Recommendations section.

#### General Plan Consistency

The project is generally consistent with most General Plan Goals and Policies, as outlined in Attachment 2. In particular, the commercial use is at street level with the residential above, and parking is at the rear of the building, accessed from the alley. The general form and massing is permitted by the General Plan, with three story structures permitted so long as the third story is stepped back from the street. While many outdoor spaces are incorporated in accordance with the General Plan, the project does not incorporate "usable open space" on the ground floor as required by the General Plan. Staff recommends modifications to the plan to be more consistent with this General Plan policy.

#### Design Guidelines Consistency

The project is consistent with most applicable Design Guidelines, as outlined in Attachment 3. In particular, the project incorporates many elements of SCR including two-piece, red-brown, clay tile roof, smooth off-white stucco finish, with dark rafter tails, dark wood-colored composite doors and windows with simulated divided lites, wrought iron window grilles (at first floor windows), and dark wrought iron railings. The project also incorporates large balconies and patios, as encouraged in the design guidelines.

The primary design guideline inconsistencies are the long, unrelieved walls at each side. The property is constrained by the narrow lot width, limiting what the applicants can do to mitigate this issue and still be able to develop a three-story building. For example, window openings are not permitted at property line and plane changes would result in a building narrower than 20 feet, an already narrow building. In response to staff comments, the applicant did incorporate some faux shutters to help add interest. Staff recommends the applicant give further consideration to remedies for the long, unrelieved wall planes at the sides of the building.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In general, staff is supportive of the project as it redevelops and integrates SCR architecture into a physically constrained narrow lot on the North El Camino Real corridor. Furthermore, the project meets most goals and policies of the General Plan and applicable Design Guidelines. However, staff has the following recommendations to improve the project's consistency with the General Plan and Design Guidelines:

1. Modify the front entry opening. The proportions of the segmental arch are not correct for traditional SCR style. Because the first floor does not have the height needed to expand the arch height, staff recommends a rectangular opening with decorative trim or corbels at the top corners.

- 2. Request a variance to allow tandem parking for the residence, consistent with the tandem parking allowance for duplexes on narrow lots. Eliminate the second outdoor parking space. Staff believes the findings for a variance could be made in this instance because the width of the lot creates a special circumstance difficult to accommodate parking facilities that comply with the SCMC. Additionally this issue could prevent the property owner from developing a mixed use project on this site, which is a property right possessed by other property in the same vicinity and zone. This reconfiguration would increase conformity with several General Plan Policies and Design Guidelines and improve the functionality of the design as follows:
  - a. The space gained could be used to provide a "usable open space" area at the ground level.
  - b. The space could be used to incorporate additional landscape area to meet minimum landscape requirements.
  - c. Currently, there would be no way to get the commercial dumpster out to the alley if the residential parking spaces are both in use. The trash enclosure could be moved to the back alley, increasing functionality of the site plan.
- Incorporate additional design modifications meet General Plan policies and Design Guidelines related to unrelieved wall planes, articulating building forms, dividing mass into smaller scale components, and creating strong patterns of shade and shadow.

Staff welcomes additional feedback and recommendations from the DRSC to improve the project's consistency with the General Plan and Design Guidelines, particularly recommendations regarding the unrelieved wall planes at the sides of the project. Following feedback from the Design Review Subcommittee, staff recommends the project be forwarded to the Planning Commission.

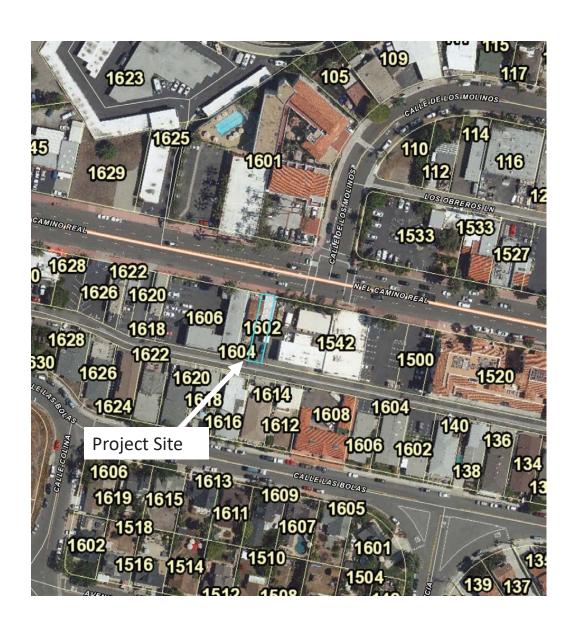
#### Attachments:

- 1. Location Map
- 2. General Plan Policy Analysis
- 3. Design Guidelines Analysis
- 4. Plans



# ATTACHMENT 1: Project Location ADDRESS: 1602 N. El Camino Real

PROJECT: CHP 19-130/ VAR 19-131, SPP 19-217 1602 N. El Camino Real Mixed Use



# **ATTACHMENT 2**

### **Analysis: General Plan Policies**

Below is an analysis of the project's consistency with General Plan (GP) and Coastal Land Use Plan (LUP) policies that should be considered.

### **General Plan Analysis**

	Policy	Project Consistency
1.	GP LU-3.03/LUP LU-21: In pedestrian-oriented environments (including the Visitor Serving Commercial District), retail uses must be on the ground floor to provide convenience and good visibility to shoppers, and that off-street parking be at the side or rear of the building.	Consistent. The commercial use is at street level with the residential above and off-street parking at the rear of the building, accessed from the alley.
2.	GP LU-3.04/LUP LU-22: Upper floors (3 <sup>rd</sup> and above) must be set back from the street. Third floor, including the covered deck, must be set back 10 feet from the 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> floor building face/property line.	Consistent. The third floor is set back over 10 feet from the 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> floor building face and front property line.
3.	UD-5.01: For mixed use development, integration of outdoor spaces into the architectural and site designs is required, encouraging the use of patios, rooftop terraces, gardens, and other outdoor spaces enclosed by architectural or landscape elements.	Consistent. The plans for the residence at the second and third floor incorporate large balconies at the front of the building at the second and third floor and a large roof deck/garden.
4.	UD-5.02: Three story development shall include usable open space areas at ground level.	Not Consistent. The urban open area (UOA) on the ground level of the project consists of the recessed front entry to the units, the covered walkway at the back of the units to the commercial trash enclosure and residential parking area, and a small landscape planter and the driveway to the parking spaces. While "usable open space" is not defined in any City document, staff does not believe these areas would be sufficient to satisfy this requirement.

	Policy	Project Consistency
5.	UD-5.05: New buildings and major building remodels on this section of El Camino Real must utilize Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, per the Architectural overly and Design Guidelines.	Partially Consistent. The project utilizes smooth off-white stucco, two-piece redbrown clay tile roofing, dark wood rafter tails and posts, dark wood-colored composite doors and windows with simulated divided lites, wrought iron window grilles (at first floor windows), and dark wrought iron railings. The project also utilizes double-framing to achieve deeper-set window and door openings and deep balconies and decks on the second and third floors. Some of the proportions of the wall openings, such as the segmental arch at the front entry are inconsistent with SCR and due to the constrained lot size, the sides of the building lack changes in plane.
6.	UD-5.10., The scale and massing of development must be compatible with its surroundings and with the General Plan.	Consistent. While most of the buildings in the vicinity on El Camino Real are one to two stories, there are some three story buildings such as the hotel across the street and Venetian Villas. The building is stepped back at the third story from the street to be more compatible with the scale and massing of adjacent development. The F.A.R. of the project is consistent with the General Plan.
7.	UD-5.19, Landscaping Plans. "We require that development projects subject to discretionary review submit and implement a landscaping and irrigation plan."	Consistent. Landscape plans were included with the submittal and meet minimum urban open area and landscape requirements.

# **ATTACHMENT 3**

## **Analysis: Design Guidelines**

The table below is an analysis of the project's consistency with the Design Guidelines.

### **Design Guidelines Analysis**

	Design Guideline	Project Consistency
1.	Design Guidelines II.5, Circulation and Parking. "Locate off-street parking and service areas to minimize visibility from the street."	Consistent. Parking and trash storage/pick- up is located off the alley to the rear.
2.	Design Guidelines II.B.3, Scale, Mass, and Form. 'Design buildings to be compatible in scale, mass and form with adjacent structures and the pattern of the neighborhoodCarefully design rear and side facades to be compatible with principal facades of the building."	Consistent. While most of the buildings in the vicinity on El Camino Real are one to two stories, there are some three story buildings such as the hotel across the street and Venetian Villas. The building is stepped back at the third story from the street to be more compatible with the scale and massing of adjacent development. The rear façade includes similar design details to the front, including wood rafter tails, wrought iron railings, and smooth white stucco with shutters at the window to match the shutters at the faux windows on the sides of the building. The sides of the building are also smooth white stucco, but the narrow lot size constrains what detailing can be used. Wood shutters are included at the sides of the buildings to simulate window openings.
3.	Design Guidelines II.C.3.a, Outdoor Spaces. "Incorporate defined outdoor spaces into the buildings and site designs of all new development."	Consistent. The building design incorporates large balconies and patios at the second and third floors for the residence.
4.	Design Guidelines II.C.3.b, Building Form and Massing. "Articulate building forms and elevations to create interesting roof lines, and strong patterns of shade and shadow. Reduce the perceived height and bulk of large structures by dividing the building mass into smaller scale components."	Partially Consistent. The perceived height and bulk of the building are reduced with the step-back of the third story from the front and rear facades, and the use of balconies, decks, and the recessed front entry. The site is constrained by the very narrow lot, making articulation and reduced massing at the sides of the property more difficult. The use of shutters along the sides as well as the building adjacent which

	Design Guideline	Project Consistency
		covers much of the west elevation help to minimize the unrelieved wall planes at the sides of the building.
5.	Design Guidelines II.C.3.b, Building Form and Massing. "Scale down the street-facing facades of buildings more than two stories high in order to reduce apparent heightby stepping back the third story at least 10 feet from the street-facing property line or 5 feet from the building face, whichever stepback is greater."	Consistent. The third story is stepped back over 10 feet from the front property line and over 5 feet from the 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> story building face.
6.	Design Guidelines II.C.3.b. Building Form and Massing. "Avoid long and unrelieved wall planesrelieve building surfaces with recesses that provide strong shadow and visual interest Recesses may be used to define entries or other outdoor spaces along the perimeter of the building."	Partially consistent. The front and rear facades make use of deep balconies and decks as well as a deep recess at the front entry doors to the commercial and residential unit. The site is constrained by the very narrow lot, making articulation and recesses difficult to achieve on the side wall planes. The use of shutters along the sides as well as the building adjacent which covers much of the west elevation help to minimize the unrelieved wall planes at the sides of the building.
7.	Design Guidelines II.F, Building Equipment and Services. "Trash containers and outdoor storage areas should be screened from public streets"	Consistent. The applicant shows the residential trash carts storage in the enclosed garage and the commercial dumpster to be hidden from view in a recessed area at the rear of the property. However, the applicant will need to provide a plan for how the commercial dumpster will be accessed on trash day due to the residential parking spaces blocking access to the trash enclosure.
8.	Henry Lenny Design Guidelines, Mass, Bulk, Scale, & Proportion. Avoid having equal plate heights on all floors. The upper floors should never be taller than the lower floors.	Consistent. The plate heights are slightly varied with the tallest plate height at the ground floor.

Design Guideline	Project Consistency
<ol> <li>Henry Lenny Design Guidelines, Roofing. For manufactured tile roofs, booster tiles and random mortar packing should be used to achieve a more textured effect. Mortar bird stops should be utilized.</li> <li>Henry Lenny Design Guidelines, Various Sections. In addition to red clay tile roofs, smooth white stucco, dark wood details, wood doors and windows, and dark wrought iron railings are encouraged.</li> </ol>	Consistent. The applicant has chosen a two-piece clay tile with variegated redbrown color and boosted mortar packing. The standard condition regarding random mortar packing will be included in the conditions of approval.  Consistent. The project utilizes smooth offwhite stucco, dark wood rafter tails and posts, dark wood-colored composite windows and doors with simulated divided lites, wrought iron window grilles (at first floor windows), and dark wrought iron railings.
11. Henry Lenny Design Guidelines, Arches and Arcades. Arched openings should follow the classical proportions of an arch as pictured in the Design Guidelines.	Not Consistent. The segmental arch height should be in correct proportion to the width, which may not be achievable with the width necessary for the entry.
12. Henry Lenny Design Guidelines, Wall Thickness. Walls should be no thinner than 12" with windows and doors set toward the interior allowing the wall thickness to be revealed on the exterior.	Consistent. Walls at window and door openings are double-framed to achieve 12" thickness desired at windows and doors. This will be included as a condition of approval.



