



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

File #: 2017-7157

Location: 840 and 850 E El Camino Real (APN: 211-25-030, 211-25-031)

Proposed Project: Related applications on a 1.05-acre site:

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT: To demolish three commercial buildings and construct a 10,350-square foot single-story multi-tenant commercial building and associated site improvements. The project includes a deviation request from the front yard setback to accommodate an architectural feature and parking adjustment from minimum required parking; and

VESTING TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP: To combine two lots into one lot.

Applicant / Owner: Steinberg Architects/ PVGP Second El Camino Properties L P

Environmental Review: Mitigated Negative Declaration

Project Planner: Cindy Hom, (408) 730-7411, chom@sunnyvale.ca.gov

REPORT IN BRIEF

General Plan: Commercial

Zoning: Highway Business Commercial/Precise Plan for El Camino Real (C-2/ECR)

Existing Site Conditions: The 1.05-acre site comprised of two parcels developed with a one single-story retail building and two two-story office buildings.

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Commercial (hotel, auto parts store, car rental facility, and miniature golf park)

South: Residential (multi-family apartments)

East: Residential (multi-family)

West: Vacant (four-story hotel entitled in April 2017)

Issues: Encroachment into front setback and parking

Staff Recommendation: Make the findings required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in Attachment 3, adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration in Attachment 5 and approve the Special Development Permit and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map with the recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 4.

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposed Project

The project includes the merger of two lots, demolition of the existing buildings and removal of seven out of 26 trees surveyed to allow for the construction of a new one-story, 10,350-square foot multi-tenant retail building, reconfiguration and resurfacing of parking areas, and installation of on- and off-

site improvements and utilities.

The project includes the following development applications:

- **Special Development Permit**

A Special Development Permit (SDP) is required for projects within the El Camino Real (ECR) Combining District for use, site and architectural review. A SDP also allows for consideration for deviations from specific development standards in exchange for superior design, environmental preservation or public benefit. The applicant is requesting a deviation from the allowable encroachment into the 15-foot front setback, which is discussed further in this report. The findings required to grant the SDP are in Attachment 3.

- **Vesting Tentative Map**

The Vesting Tentative Parcel Map is required to merge the two lots of the project site in one and address any required dedications and easements. The Final Map is reviewed and approved by the Director of Public Works and must be in substantial conformance to the Vesting Tentative Parcel Map. A Vesting Tentative Parcel Map vests the developer's right to build the project for the life of the map and secures the approved project against future Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) amendments that might otherwise affect the project. The proposed Vesting Tentative Parcel Map is on Sheet C3.0 of Attachment 6.

See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices and Attachment 2 for the Data Table of the project.

Previous Actions on the Site

There have been no previous development applications on the project site. The existing buildings were originally built in the mid to late 1950s. The two-story building at 840 E. El Camino is currently occupied by auto rental and acupuncture office uses. The two one-story buildings on 850 El Camino Real are currently vacant, but have had various retail and service tenants, including outdoor furniture/spa sales, kitchen and bath showroom, gun shop, surfboard design shop and psychic reading.

EXISTING POLICY

General Plan Goals and Policies: The following are key goals and policies from the General Plan that pertain to the proposed project:

Land Use and Transportation Chapter

Goal D: An Attractive Community for Residents and Businesses - In combination with the City's Community Design Sub-Element, ensure that all areas of the city are attractive and that the city's image is enhanced by following policies and principles of good urban design while valued elements of the community fabric are preserved.

Policy 50: Encourage nodes of interest and activity, public open spaces, well-planned development, mixed-use projects, signature commercial uses, and buildings and other desirable uses, locations, and physical attractions.

Action 3: Allow for innovative architectural design.

Action 4: Promote distinctive commercial uses.

Goal K: Protected, Maintained, and Enhanced Commercial Areas, Shopping Centers, and

Business Districts - Achieve attractive commercial centers and business districts and buildings that are maintained and allow a full spectrum of businesses that operate unencumbered.

Policy 89: Improve the visual appearance of business areas and districts by applying high standards of architectural design, landscaping, and sign standards for new development and the reuse or remodeling of existing buildings.

Policy 91. Action 2: Promote commercial uses and designs that mitigate a boxy appearance or mass of large buildings (e.g., wall offsets, building articulation, or pedestrian-scale design).

Precise Plan for El Camino Real

The project site is subject to the Precise Plan for El Camino Real (Precise Plan), which contains goals, policies and design guidelines to guide development of private properties located within the plan area (parcels containing the ECR Combining District designation). The City is currently undertaking an update of the Precise Plan, which is anticipated to be completed in 2018.

The following are key goals and policies from the Precise Plan pertaining to the proposed project:

Goal 3.2.2. To maintain and enhance the retail sales tax revenue generated for the City.

Goal 3.2.5. To ensure that properties are developed and operated in such a manner as to minimize their negative impacts upon adjacent residential areas.

Goal 3.2.7. To require quality site design, architecture and landscaping which incorporate sustainable design principles.

Citywide Design Guidelines

In addition to the goals and policies above, the Citywide Design Guidelines provide recommendations for site planning, architecture and design. These guidelines are referenced in the discussion and analysis below and in the findings in Attachment 3.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration have been prepared per Section 15070(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines and City guidelines (see Attachment 5). The Initial Study determined that construction of the proposed project has the potential to result in significant effects on air quality, biological resources, cultural resources and noise. However, with implementation of mitigation measures, these impacts would be reduced to a level of less than significant. The Mitigation Measures have been incorporated as Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.

DISCUSSION

Use

The proposed retail use is consistent with the type of commercial development that is anticipated in the Precise Plan for El Camino Real (PPECR). The project provides a retail presence along El Camino Real and is designed with an active street edge that includes outdoor seating areas, clear storefronts, enhanced landscaping and accent lighting.

Site Layout

The project site is located on a triangular shaped lot which create unique site constraints considering it only has a front and two side yards. The lineal street frontage measures 309 feet in length. The

proposed retail building and outdoor fixtures are located closer towards the front setback, with the parking area in the rear. The placement of the building allows for the building entries to be located near the public street, encouraging pedestrian activity and a more active street edge. The proposed site layout is consistent with the PPECR design guidelines regarding orienting building entries to El Camino Real rather than side parking lots to reinforce the streetscape and activate the street frontage.

Access and Circulation: Currently, the project site is served by three driveways along El Camino Real. The applicant proposes to remove two driveways and maintain the easterly driveway, which will be reconfigured to provide a 26-foot wide full access driveway off El Camino Real. The driveway extends to the back of the property and provides access to the parking area located at the eastern portion of the lot. As 10-foot wide landscaped area along the property lines shared with adjacent residential uses is provided to buffer the commercial activity. Pedestrian circulation is provided by walkways on three sides and which connect to the existing public sidewalks on El Camino Real. The site design accommodates and facilitates multi-modal access and circulation. Decorative paving is utilized along the pedestrian walkways and at the driveway entries.

Architecture

The proposed architecture reflects a modern, contemporary style that is characterized by angled roof forms, linear lines, and arrangement of exterior building materials, exterior fixtures, landscaping features, and architectural projections that create visual interest and an animated facade. The proposed retail building includes high quality materials and decorative elements such as glass, metal awnings and canopies, Trugrain wood paneling and stucco. The proposed color scheme consists of muted warm earth tones in beige, browns, and tans. The massing of the exterior walls is broken up with storefront windows and changes in material and color. The base of the building is enhanced with landscaped planters. The articulation in wall planes and use of varying yet compatible materials in the proposed building is consistent with Citywide and PPECR guidelines that aim to avoid a boxy appearance.

Development Standards

The project complies with the applicable development standards in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) and Precise Plan for El Camino Real, such as lot coverage, height and landscaping, except for the allowable encroachment of architectural features into the front yard setback. A parking adjustment from the minimum required parking spaces is also requested.

The project data table in Attachment 2 summarizes the project's compliance with applicable development standards.

Setbacks

The proposed building is located towards the El Camino Real frontage, and as far away as possible from the adjacent residential uses. The building meets the required setbacks, except that it includes an architectural wall projection that encroaches 13-feet into the required 15-foot front yard setback but will not impact the public frontage improvements including the 2-foot pedestrian realm (see Attachment 6). Architectural projections can extend into any required yard up to two feet per SMC Section 19.48.070. Therefore, the applicant requests a deviation from this requirement.

The architectural projection serves as a unique, identifying entry feature for the building. It serves to visually and physically lead passersby and patrons to the main building, and ties into the roof

structure above the outdoor plaza area that is adjacent to the driveway entrance. The architectural projection articulates the roof form by providing angled roof lines as well as visual interest to the building. Staff considers the architectural projection to be a minor deviation and a positive feature of the building architecture that would contribute to the El Camino Real streetscape. Staff can therefore support the deviation.

Parking

SMC Section 19.46.100 requires a minimum of four spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area for shopping centers. Based on the proposed square footage of the building, the project is required to provide 42 onsite parking spaces where 40 spaces are provided. A parking adjustment under SMC Section 19.46.130 is requested. To grant a parking adjustment from the minimum required parking spaces, the approving body shall find:

- (1) One or more of the following applicable characteristics are present:
 - (A) There are parking agreements with off-site properties; or
 - (B) There is a parking management plan that includes valet parking, off-site employee parking, parking agreements, or other demand management tools; or
 - (C) The uses on a site have complementary peak hours; or
 - (D) The use is commercial in nature and is intended to serve adjacent employment centers. The use provides adequate pedestrian connections to the site from nearby properties and businesses; or
 - (E) The use is within one-half mile of a walk from a rail station, light rail station, or major bus stop. A major bus stop is defined as a stop where six or more buses per hour from the same or different routes stop during the peak period in core, corridor or station areas; or
 - (F) The proposed use has an unusual characteristic that results in less parking demand. This characteristic shall be described and limited in applicable conditions of approval for a discretionary land use permit. Land uses that are permitted by right may not apply for adjustment because of this criterion of unusual characteristics.
- (2) Based on the characteristics present in subsection (d)(1), the proposed parking is adequate and will not spill over onto surrounding properties or streets.

Staff finds that the project meets (1)(E) above. The site is located on El Camino Real, which is a major transit corridor. It is less than 150 feet from the VTA 22 bus stop in front of the neighboring property, and about a quarter mile from the Wolfe Rd. and El Camino Real VTA stop for bus routes 522 and 22. The site is located near residences and is adjacent to a future hotel use, thereby making the site conducive to being accessed by foot. The project also exceeds the bicycle parking requirement by providing 10 bicycle parking spaces near the building entrances, where only three are required.

The triangular shape of the project site poses unique constraints in access, circulation and layout design. Despite these constraints, the applicant has designed a project that includes a sizable retail building located towards the El Camino Real frontage, provides appropriate setbacks and buffers from the adjacent residential use, provides outdoor gathering areas for patrons and exceeds landscaping requirements.

Due to the site characteristics and the provision of additional bicycle parking, staff finds that the proposed parking is adequate. Staff also requires a parking management plan to be submitted for review and approval by the Community Development Director prior to building permit issuance (BP-

15 in Attachment 4).

The preliminary parking lot striping plan shows compliance with parking lot design requirements, such as universal stall dimensions, wheel stops, loading space and maintenance of driveway vision triangles. As conditioned, a final parking lot striping plan demonstrating conformance to SMC 19.46 and Citywide Design Guidelines will be reviewed by staff prior to submittal of a building permit.

Loading and Trash

A loading area is provided adjacent to the southwest side of the building and in proximity to the tenant spaces. The area will be signed and striped per the Citywide Design Guidelines.

The trash enclosure is located at the rear of the lot, more than 20 feet from the property line shared with the adjacent multifamily residential use to minimize potential noise impacts. The proposed building materials include concrete masonry block walls with a cement plaster finish and metal gate. The proposed trash enclosure meets the requirements of the SMC and the *Design Guidelines for Solid Waste and Recycling Facilities*; however, it includes a trash compactor that projects above the walls of the enclosure. Staff recommends condition of approval PS-2 to require that the height of the enclosure wall adequately screen the proposed compactors and solid waste bins. In addition, the design of the enclosure shall incorporate additional architectural elements to ensure a high-quality design that complement the building.

Landscaping and Tree Preservation

Various landscaping and decorative hardscape will be installed along the perimeter of the site that provides a mix of color, texture and form that help frame views of the building as well as add visual interest. As proposed, approximately 22% of the lot area is landscaped where 20% is required. In addition, the project would provide 56% parking lot shading within 15 years after tree establishment, where 50% shading is required per SMC Section 19.37.070. The project is also required to meet the City's standards for water-efficient landscaping. A final landscaping plan will be reviewed by staff prior to building permit submittal (see BP-7 in Attachment 4)

Landscaped Buffer and Perimeter Wall: The project complies with SMC 19.37.040 in that it provides a 10-foot wide landscaped buffer and six-foot tall masonry wall adjacent to the multifamily residential uses. The project includes a heavily landscaped edge consisting of 24-inch box Chinese Elm trees, various shrubs and groundcovers along the east edge. The existing perimeter wall will be extended with new wall panels to complete the edge. The extended walls will be constructed to match or complement the existing walls, which will be repaired in kind and painted to match the new. The perimeter wall along the east edge consist of a slump stone material while the wall on the west is a plaster wall. To ensure design consistency and uniformity, staff recommends condition of approval PS -3 in Attachment 4 to explore design treatments such as a stucco finish or stone cladding applied along the entire length of the perimeter walls.

Tree Preservation: The applicant proposes to remove a total of seven trees. The trees are being removed due to poor condition, disease susceptibility and conflicts with site improvements. The four off-site trees to be removed are located on the neighboring property. Out of the seven trees proposed for removal, three are deemed as protected trees as defined under SMC Chapter 19.94. The City's Tree Replacement Policy require a minimum of six (6) 24-inch box trees be planted to mitigate the loss of the existing protected trees. The project includes the installation of twenty-three (23) 24-inch box trees and eight (8) 36-inch box trees as well as other various shrubs and groundcover, which

complies with the City's tree replacement standards.

Green Building Requirements

The project is subject to the City's Green Building Program, which requires nonresidential construction that exceeds 5,000 square feet to attain LEED Silver level (formal certification not required). Condition of Approval BP-18 is included in Attachment 4 to ensure the project will meet LEED Silver or equivalent.

Easements

The project includes public frontage improvements that consists of a new 15-foot wide public right-of-way that includes a 5-foot street dedication and 2-foot public realm easement to allow for an 8-foot wide monolithic sidewalk and 4-foot by 5-foot tree wells that will be installed with 24-inch box Shumard Oak street trees. The frontage improvements would be continuous with the streetscape that was approved for the hotel adjacent to the west.

Traffic

A preliminary analysis by the City's Transportation Division determined that this retail use did not generate significant peak hour trips and a traffic impact analysis was not required. The proposed retail building at buildout would generate 46 new peak hour trips and approximately 457 average daily trips. Both are considerably lower than the threshold for requiring a transportation impact analysis as set forth by VTA.

Expected Impacts on the Surroundings

Staff anticipates a minimal impact on the surrounding uses considering the building is one story and does not impact views or privacy. The project would benefit the site by removing older and vacant underutilized buildings with a new retail center that would be neighborhood-serving.

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed project is anticipated to have a positive fiscal impact on the City. The project is subject to transportation impact fees and housing mitigation fees. Fee estimates are noted in the conditions of approval in Attachment 4.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made through posting of the Planning Commission agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board, on the City's website and the availability of the agenda and report in the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website.

Notice of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Public Hearing

- Published in the Sun newspaper
- Posted on the site
- 226 notices were mailed to property owners and tenants within 300-feet of the project as shown in Attachment 1
- Posted on the City of Sunnyvale's web site
- Provided at the Reference Section of the City of Sunnyvale's Public Library

Planning Commission Study Session: Staff presented the project to the Planning Commission at a study session on June 12, 2017. The Commission members were generally supportive of the design and provided the following feedback:

- *Explore opportunity for cross access between the parcels.* The applicant reviewed the grades to see if the cross access would be possible. There are grade changes between the three parcels that range from a 1 to 1 ½-foot. There is mature landscaping on the adjacent residential property and therefore the root system and wall stability may be jeopardized. Providing cross access with the neighboring hotel site would also not be feasible since the opening would be adjacent to the hotel's drive aisle and it would not be served by a designated walkway.
- *Privacy from upper story windows. Look at tree species and size along edge to ensure adequate screening.* The edge along the existing residential development is already densely landscaped with mature trees. The project would add an additional row of trees to further add to the natural privacy screening.
- *Locate some bike racks on the interior plaza space.* The applicant has provided additional bike racks at the interior plaza space.
- *Encourage uses that are neighborhood serving and increases foot traffic.* Future uses will be reviewed for consistency with zoning and PPECR objectives.
- *Take a second look at the location of the seat walls along the street frontage to further define the pedestrian realm.* Proposed landscaped planter boxes create a defined edge between the public realm and outdoor plaza area.
- *Explore saving the sweet gum trees near the front.* The Sweet Gum trees need to be removed to accommodate the required street tree species and ensure a consistent streetscape along the El Camino Real per current City standards.
- *Incorporate some type of public art on the perforated metal panels.* The applicant studied design alternatives to incorporate public art on the perforated metal panels. They stated concerns related to design compatibility with the other design elements of the building. However, a stand-alone art feature could be feasible with the overall design of the site. Since public art is not a requirement of the project, the applicant is not considering it with this proposal at this time.

Community Outreach Meeting: A community outreach meeting was held by the applicant on July 19, 2017. There was one person from the public who attended the outreach meeting. One member of the public attended the meeting who asked general questions about the scope of the project and process.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Make the findings required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in Attachment 3, adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration in Attachment 5 and approve the Special Development Permit and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map with the recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 4.
2. Make the findings required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in Attachment 3, adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration in Attachment 5 and approve the Special

- Development Permit and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map with modified conditions.
3. Make the findings required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in Attachment 3, adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration in Attachment 5 and deny the Special Development Permit and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map.
 4. Do not adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and direct staff as to where additional environmental analysis is required.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Make the findings required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in Attachment 3, Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration in Attachment 5 and, approve the Special Development Permit and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map with the recommended conditions of approval in Attachment 4.

Prepared by: Cindy Hom, Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Rosemarie Zulueta, Acting Principal Planner

Reviewed by: Gerri Caruso, Principal Planner

Approved by: Andrew Miner, Planning Officer

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings for Approval
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Mitigated Negative Declaration
6. Site and Architectural Plans