



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

SUBJECT

Proposed Project:

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT to consider a change of use for a 10,860-square foot tenant space from retail to self-storage.

Location: 802 West El Camino Real (APNs: 201-21-005)

File #: 2019-7294

Zoning: C-2 (ECR)

Applicant / Owner: Adaptive Architecture (applicant) / Sunnyvale Civic Sq. LLC (owner)

Environmental Review: Class 1 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions.

Project Planner: Shila Bagley, 408-730-7456, sbagley@sunnyvale.ca.gov

BACKGROUND

The existing building (Civic Square Shopping Center) was built in 1968 at 802-844 El Camino Real. The subject property is located on the southwest corner of West El Camino Real and Hollenbeck Avenue. The shopping center is situated on a 4.23-acre site and developed with a 39,116-square foot one-story commercial building, surface parking, and landscaping. The site has been occupied by multiple retail and restaurant uses. Surrounding land uses include a hotel and fourplex apartments to the west, a mixed-use development with a hotel, retail, and residential uses to the north, a mix of commercial uses (medical office and retail) and triplex apartments to the east, and townhomes to the south.

At the heart of the shopping center, the subject tenant space was originally built as a big-box retail space for a Safeway in 1968, and then occupied by a Michael's crafts store in 1984. The space has been vacant for more than one year.

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

Description of Proposed Project

Due to the difficulty of leasing the large tenant space to a retail store, the applicant is requesting a Special Development Permit to allow for a new self-storage facility within the existing shopping center. The applicant is proposing tenant improvements to partition the existing retail space into six smaller spaces, including five retail and restaurant spaces facing the interior parking lot and a 10,860-square foot space for the self-storage facility, which can be accessed from the rear of the building.

The applicant also proposes minor site and building improvements that are shown in the project plans provided in Attachment 5. In summary, the proposed modifications consist of the following:

- Replacing the existing inefficient trash enclosure in the rear with a new upgraded trash enclosure;
- Restriping and installing new landscaping islands in the rear parking lot; and
- Updating the building façade with new paint and decorative elements.

Previous Actions on the Site

Between 2004 and 2009, the Zoning Administrator approved several Special Development Permits to allow for a fast food restaurant and restaurants that may have on sale beer and wine or alcohol beverage service. Additionally, the Zoning Administrator approved a Special Development Permit for landscape and facade improvements in 2007. Multiple staff level permits were granted to allow for minor modifications to parking and landscaping, temporary sign permits, outdoor display of merchandises, and waiver of screening for roof mounted equipment. There are no other previous planning projects related to subject application and no open Neighborhood Preservation complaints.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Class 1 Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301, Existing Facilities) relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions. Although the project proposes to change the use from retail to self-storage, both are considered commercial uses and the site will remain a commercial shopping center. Furthermore, the proposed project involves negligible changes to the existing site.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Use

Self-storage “mini warehousing” uses require a special development permit in the C-2 /ECR zoning district. Retail and restaurant spaces that are proposed as part of this application are permitted uses in this zoning district. There is a prospective tenant that will occupy the self-storage space; however, the owner has not determined the uses that will occupy the five tenant spaces in the front. The owner is anticipating that three of the larger spaces in the front will be occupied by restaurants and the other two will be leased for general retail uses.

The storage facility will have up to two employees on site during office hours, which are 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday, and 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturdays. Customers will be able to access the facility every day from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

Site Layout and Access

There is an existing reciprocal egress/ingress and parking agreement between the subject property and the property on the northeast corner of the site at 804 W El Camino Real (Men’s Warehouse). The parking lot can be accessed through three two-way driveways from West El Camino Real and one two-way driveway from Hollenbeck Avenue. There is an additional driveway on Hollenbeck Avenue that provides access to service trucks and the new self-storage facility in the rear.

There is also an existing concrete masonry block trash enclosure with metal gates that is located at the southwest corner of the rear parking lot. Over the years, the need for larger size bins has grown and the existing trash enclosure is not large enough to address this need.

No changes to the site layout or access are proposed. However, the applicant proposes to restripe

the rear parking lot to comply with current parking standards. The proposed on-site and off-site improvements are incorporated in the conditions of approval (see Recommended Condition of Approval in Attachment 4).

Development Standards

The project does not propose any changes to the building footprint. As such, the project maintains existing building setbacks, building square footage and floor area ratio, lot coverage, and height. A summary of the project data is provided in Attachment 2.

Parking

The subject property is considered a shopping center that is served by a common parking lot. The shopping center has a variety of uses, including restaurants and retail businesses. The parking lot has 309 parking spaces that are shared between the subject property and the adjacent property at 804 W El Camino Real.

Sunnyvale's parking standards for shopping centers (SMC 19.26.110) require all individual businesses to use the shopping center parking rate (min. 4/1,000 sq. ft.) except in the following instances:

- A. A restaurant with a bar or entertainment (Does Not Apply);
- B. Total recreational and athletic facility square footage of greater than eight thousand square feet (Does Not Apply); and
- C. Total restaurant square footage (not including takeout restaurants) of greater than forty percent of the shopping center floor area. (Does Not Apply; the total square footage of restaurants in the shopping center including the proposed restaurants is 38% of the shopping center floor area).

The proposed uses are not expected to exacerbate the peak hour parking needs at the shopping center, and no additional parking spaces are required. See Attachment 6, Parking Analysis, for a more detailed analysis of the parking on site.

Staff finds that the front parking lot is sufficient to accommodate businesses facing the interior parking lot. The proposed self-storage use is expected to generate a parking demand of 11 parking spaces. The project provides 11 parking spaces in the rear parking lot.

Landscaping and Onsite Improvements

There is currently no landscaping in the rear parking area. The applicant is proposing to remove one Monetary Pine tree next to the vehicular access on Hollenbeck Avenue, along the landscape strip, because of a significant lean over the driveway. The applicant's arborist report is provided Attachment 8. The applicant is proposing new landscaping in the rear parking area including one 15-gallon Western Redbud tree to the north of the driveway in the rear and six 24"-box Chinese Pistache trees along the southern property line. The applicant also proposes to incorporate groundcover and shrubs within the parking islands. The proposed landscaping in the rear parking area would increase from 2.8% to 21.2% as a result of the project. See project plans provided in Attachment 5 for more detail regarding landscaping.

Trash and Recycling Facilities

The property has two trash enclosures: one along the west vehicle access driveway that serves the businesses on the west wing of the building, and one in the rear parking area along the south side of the building. The trash enclosure in the rear parking lot is not adequate for the existing businesses that use this enclosure, and several bins are staged haphazardly in the rear parking area. The proposed uses including the restaurants could exacerbate the existing deficiency.

The applicant is proposing to remove the existing trash enclosure in the rear parking area and construct a new trash enclosure facility based on the anticipated amount of waste to be generated by the occupants of the property. The trash enclosure size is calculated based on the possibility that three of the five tenant spaces in the front could be occupied by restaurant uses. The new trash enclosure meets the City's Solid Waste and Recycling Design Guidelines. The proposed trash enclosure will allow each business to manage their individual bins and have better control over preventing contamination of recyclables.

The owner will inform each tenant about future modifications to the on-site trash service, rules for storing trash bags, and staging during collection times. Each business (or the property management) will be consenting to share the responsibility for enclosure maintenance by signing a "Use Agreement". See Attachment 9 for the Use Agreement Template.

Offsite improvements

The on-street loading zone adjacent to the site on Hollenbeck Avenue will be removed, since no street parking or loading is permitted on the City's right-of-way. There is currently one loading zone in the rear parking area. An additional loading zone is proposed in the same area to accommodate multiple deliveries.

The existing sidewalk will be removed and replaced with a new 6-foot sidewalk along Hollenbeck Ave. The final details of the sidewalk, curb, gutter, and street trees are subject to review and approval by the Department of Public Works prior to issuance of an encroachment permit.

Architecture

Minor exterior changes are proposed to the building frontage to accommodate the five new tenant spaces in the front. The clerestory windows will remain. The yellow stucco band will be extended to match the existing stucco band. The new storefronts will consist of transparent glazing with clear anodized aluminum framing. Modifications proposed on the rear of the building include painting accent colors (yellow and brown) on the existing walls and constructing a column with brick veneer to match existing building frontage. The applicant also proposes interior remodeling and reorganization of the floor plan for the purposes of the proposed self-storage use.

Staff finds that the proposed change of use from retail to self-storage meets the required Use Permit findings, as the use meets the General Plan policies that encourage a mix of uses that serve neighboring residential properties, complies with all development standards, and does not result in negative impacts to neighbors. See Attachment 3 for required Use Permit findings.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACTS/COMPATIBILITY:

The proposed self-storage facility at this location is compatible with the surrounding uses as it does not generate additional parking and traffic compared to retail uses that are permitted in this zoning district. The self-storage facility provides an amenity to the nearby residents and commercial users by

providing self-storage options to a currently underserved area.

Additionally, the proposed use provides an appropriate transition from the commercial corridor in the front to the residential uses in the rear. The new trees along the south property line will buffer the self-storage facility from the residential townhome complex.

No outdoor activity is proposed, and no exterior noise is anticipated to be generated on site beyond typical delivery-related noise. Due to the small size of the storage units most clients will use personal vehicles to transport their belongings. Approximately 2 truck trips (inbound/outbound) are anticipated per week. The self-storage facility operation plan is provided in Attachment 7.

For these reasons, staff finds that the proposed use is compatible with the neighborhood, and would not significantly impact neighboring uses.

PUBLIC CONTACT

445 notices were sent to surrounding property owners and residents adjacent to the subject site in addition to standard noticing practices, including advertisement in the Sunnyvale Sun Newspaper and on-site posting. Staff has not received any letters or calls from the public regarding the proposed project.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Special Development Permit with recommended Conditions in Attachment 4.
2. Approve the Special Development Permit with modifications.
3. Deny the Special Development Permit.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1. Approve the Special Development Permit with recommended Conditions in Attachment 4.

Prepared by: Shila Bagley, Associate Planner

Approved by: Jay Lee, Senior Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Maps
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Standard Requirements and Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Site and Architectural Plans
6. Parking Analysis
7. Self-Storage Facility Operation Plan
8. Arborist Report
9. Trash Enclosure Use Agreement