

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA
Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number
P.C. 5/12/04 Item #:

File Number
PDC03-076

Application Type
Planned Development Rezoning

Council District
1

Planning Area
West Valley

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
Portions of 403-02-014 and -046

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completed by: Lori Moniz

Location: Southwest corner of Woodglen Drive and Campbell Avenue

Gross Acreage: 5.39

Net Acreage: 4.08

Net Density: 13.7 DU/AC

Existing Zoning: R-1-8 Residence District

Existing Use: School district office and facilities yard

Proposed Zoning: A(PD) Planned Development

Proposed Use: Up to 56 single-family detached residential units

GENERAL PLAN

Completed by: LM

Land Use/Transportation Diagram Designation
Public/Quasi-Public

Project Conformance:
 Yes No
 See Analysis and Recommendations

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

Completed by: LM

North: Castro Middle School

R-1-8 Residence District

East: Single-family detached & attached residential

R-2 and R-M Residence Districts

South: Baker Elementary School

R-1-8 Residence District

West:: Apartments

A(PD) Planned Development

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Completed by: LM

Environmental Impact Report found complete
 Negative Declaration circulated on April 22, 2004
 Negative Declaration adopted

Exempt
 Environmental Review Incomplete

FILE HISTORY

Completed by: LM

Annexation Title: San Tomas No. 5

Date: September 11, 1958

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

Approval
 Approval with Conditions
 Denial
 Uphold Director's Decision

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
 Action
 Recommendation

APPLICANT/DEVELOPER

OWNER

Summerhill Homes
Attn: Joe CoMartin
777 California Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Moreland School District
Leslie Adelson, Superintendent
4710 Campbell Avenue
San Jose, CA 95130

PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED

Completed by: LM

Department of Public Works

See attached memo

Other Departments and Agencies

n/a

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

None received

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Summerhill Homes, is proposing to rezone a 5.39 gross-acre site from the R-1-8 Residence zoning district to A(PD) Planned Development to allow up to 56 single-family detached residential units. The proposed project consists of traditional detached single-family units and detached garden townhouse units.

The subject site, owned by the Moreland School District, is currently the school district offices and facilities yard. There is an office building, built approximately 40 years ago, on the northern portion of the site which was. The facilities yard with two metal warehouse buildings and a bus storage area is located on the southern portion of the site. There are currently 22 ordinance-sized trees on the project site.

The surrounding land uses consist of Castro Middle School to the north across Campbell Avenue, single-family detached and attached residential units to the east, Baker Elementary School to the south and apartments to the west.

Project Description

The proposed project consists of up to 56 single-family detached units including 35 two-story single-family detached units with front facing attached two car garages. The minimum lot size for these units is 3,000 square feet. The homes are approximately 2,100 to 2,600 square feet in size, with a minimum of eight (8) feet of separation provided between the individual units.

Up to 21 units within the project will be a product type referred to as a detached garden townhouse. The garden townhouse component of the project is proposed on the portion of the site closer to Campbell Avenue. The garden townhouse units have garages that take access from a private alley along the rear of the units. The front porches or unit entrances are oriented on the opposite side of the garage with the

front doors facing either a street or paseo. Access to the front door of a unit is via a small, semi-private yard area adjacent to the paseo or street.

The minimum lot size for the detached townhouse units is 1,650 square feet. The homes have approximately 1,600 to 1,750 square feet of living space in two stories over a two-car garage, with a minimum of eight (8) feet of separation between units. Guest parking is provided near the entrance of the proposed private alley and along the project's frontage on the proposed public streets that branch off of Campbell Avenue and Woodglen Drive.

This housing type was constructed by Summerhill Homes (Ravenna project) last year in San Jose on the south side of Foxworthy Avenue between Almaden Expressway and Pearl Avenue. Summerhill Homes is also building a variation of this housing product for a portion of the Dairy Hill Project on Communications Hill and in the Evergreen Specific Plan area.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The subject site is designated Public/Quasi-Public on the General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram. This designation is generally used to accommodate public land uses, including schools, libraries, and governmental offices. The General Plan includes a Discretionary Alternate Use Policy that addresses potential alternative land uses with this designation. The Policy states that property with this designation may be approved for alternative uses as part of an approved Planned Development Zoning provided the alternate use is compatible with existing and planned uses on neighboring properties and is consistent with any other applicable General Plan policies.

The proposed rezoning would allow up to 56 single-family detached residences on a 5.39 gross acre site. After dedication for a public street along the southern and western edge for street improvements, the site area would be 4.08 net acres in size and the net density would be approximately 13.7 DU/AC. The surrounding properties to the west are developed with apartments developed at a density of 19.6 DU/AC. The properties to the east are developed at a lower density with single-family attached and detached units. The proposed detached single-family density of 13.7 DU/AC serves as an appropriate transition between the apartments to the west and lower density units to the east.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An Initial Study was prepared for this project and the Director of Planning circulated a Negative Declaration for public review on April 22, 2002. The key issues addressed included the potential impacts from traffic noise, removal of the existing trees, hazardous materials and traffic. The project includes mitigation measures that reduce any potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Noise

Noise intrusion on the site originates primarily from vehicular traffic sources on Campbell Avenue, which carries an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume of 28,000 vehicles in front of the site. To a lesser extent, other noise sources include vehicular traffic on Woodglen Drive to the east, and play field

activities at Baker Elementary School to the south. Special noise-attenuating windows and mechanical ventilation and will be installed in the units that will have the most potential to be impacted by noise. The noise report prepared for the project indicated that this mitigation will be sufficient to bring the interior noise levels into conformance with the General Plan's noise standard of 45 dB DNL.

The noise exposure levels at the most impacted units dwellings along Campbell Avenue will exceed, by up to 11 dB, the General Plan's exterior noise standard of 60 dB DNL. However, the General Plan standard recognizes that when exterior spaces are located near major roadways, it is sometimes impossible to achieve exterior noise standard conformance without eliminating the beneficial attributes of the exterior spaces. Requiring the installation of tall sound walls, greenhouse patio rooms or other intrusive mitigation measures reduces the benefits of the open space. Therefore, strict compliance of this exterior noise standard is not required of the project in this case.

Trees

A total of 54 trees, ranging in diameter from 4 to 37 inches, were evaluated. Of these, 22 are ordinance size trees with trunks in excess of 56-inch circumference measured at two (2) feet above grade. There are 33 on-site trees planned for removal with the project, eight of the trees are ordinance size. Despite their removal, the removal of these trees is not considered a significant environmental impact. Trees to remain will be safeguarded during construction by a Tree Protection Plan. Any tree removed with the project shall be replaced using standard tree replacement ratios.

Hazardous Materials

A Phase I environmental site assessment was conducted to document environmental conditions at the site related to current and historic uses of hazardous substances and petroleum products. Although the laboratory data do not indicate that significant spills have occurred in the areas sampled, there is a long history of chemical use at the site associated with maintenance activities. Therefore, there is a potential that impacted soil may be encountered during site redevelopment activities. The project site shall be reviewed by a qualified environmental professional during demolition and pre-grading activities to observe areas of the property that may have been obscured by existing structures or pavement for such items as stained soils, septic systems, underground storage tanks, and/or unforeseen buried utilities; and, if found, a mitigation program shall be developed and implemented with such measures as soil testing, removal and/or offsite disposal at a permitted facility.

Traffic

The Public Works Department has determined, through an in-house analysis, that there is no level of service (LOS) impact presented by this project, therefore there is no traffic mitigation required in order to satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). However, Public Works does have concerns regarding the operational impacts (non-CEQA issues) of providing access onto Campbell Avenue from the new project street, particularly if to accommodate left-turn movement from the proposed development to westbound Campbell Avenue. For this reason, access from this new street will be limited to right turn in/out only. This will most likely be achieved by the creation of a median island along Campbell Avenue.

ANALYSIS

The primary issues concerned in the proposed rezoning include: 1) compatibility with surrounding land uses, 2) site plan considerations, and 3) conformance to the City's Residential Design Guidelines.

Compatibility with Adjacent Land Uses

Density Distribution

Each of the two project components has a slightly different density. The larger component, which as the single-family detached units, achieves a density of approximately 12 DU/AC. The smaller component, which has the detached garden townhouse units, achieves a density of approximately 16 DU/AC. The combined overall density for the project, netting out areas for streets, is 13.7 DU/AC. The adjacent apartment complex to the west has a density of 19.6 DU/AC, which is slightly higher than the project density of 13.7 DU/AC. The density for housing development to the east, across Woodglen Drive ranges from 8 to 16 DU/AC.

The higher density townhouses will face Campbell Avenue and wrap around the corner on to Woodglen. The lower density single-family detached units will abut the existing elementary school and the apartments. In staff's opinion, this project as designed is compatible with all surrounding properties and provides an appropriate transition in the density between the existing adjacent uses on all sides of the site.

Unit Orientation

The proposed detached garden townhouse units are oriented with the front of the unit facing Campbell Avenue, thereby creating a more attractive streetscape. This project type was chosen because it provides an attractive interface with the street by maximizing the landscaping and avoiding the need for back-up fences or sound walls. Early proposals for this project included single-family houses that backed-up to the street. All units along Woodglen Drive will front onto the street further integrating the proposed project into the existing neighborhood.

Site Design

Street Connectivity

The proposed street layout maximizes connections within the existing neighborhood, providing a good opportunity for vehicular/pedestrian access and internal circulation within the surrounding neighborhood. The City's General Plan Urban Design policies encourage street connectivity to enhance the sense of neighborhood and to avoid the creation of isolated enclaves.

Preservation of Existing Trees

The site plan has been designed to preserve an existing grove of large trees. The trees will be located within a proposed common open space area adjacent to one of the new public streets so that they can provide a better more prominent visual amenity within the development and neighborhood.

Conformance with the Residential Design Guidelines

Each of the two products types was evaluated for conformance to the relevant sections of the City's Residential Design Guidelines. The 35 traditional houses conform to all identified development standards (setbacks, unit design , open space, etc.) for single-family development projects with units on 3,000 square foot lots.

The concept of a “detached garden townhouse” unit type is relatively new in the City of San Jose. The Residential Design Guidelines (RDGs) do not specifically address this product type, however, the guidelines do address an “attached” garden townhouse unit proposal and includes many relevant design policies applicable to the detached product type. This project is in substantial conformance to the development standards, including setbacks, that would typically be required of attached garden townhouse project.

The primary distinction between the detached townhouse units and traditional single-family detached houses proposed is that the garages for the single-family detached houses will front out onto the public streets while the garage door of the detached garden townhouse units is located on the back of the unit and is accessed via an alley. The front of the unit orients out onto semi-private front yards with no private backyards provided.

The proposed detached townhouse unit type offers certain advantages, in that this type of layout allows for less of the gross site area to be taken up by new streets. By providing units that generally front towards a street with access to the garage in the back of the unit, the streetscape is more attractive than traditional single-family tracts as a result of the absence of garages, driveways, and vehicles parked in the front setback area.

One of the key design issues associated with this type of unit is the manner in which the semi-private open space relates to the street and the unit itself. In staff's opinion, it is generally most desirable to strike an appropriate balance between grade difference between the open space area and the adjacent street to provide a better level of privacy. However, the open space area should not be too elevated resulting in large unattractive retaining walls. Based on other recent approvals, it is generally ideal when the open space area is elevated about 3-4 feet above the adjacent landscaped area or street. Additionally, there should be a good functional relationship between the inside living area of the unit and the open space to maximize the usability. The details to ensure an appropriate relationship and design between these areas will be further addressed at the Planned Development Permit stage.

Guest Parking

The guest parking spaces for the detached garden townhouses are located in an accessible area near the entrance to the private alley. In addition, there is an abundance of curbside parking on the proposed public streets that will be available for guests since the garages face the alley thus reducing the need for multiple curb cuts along the streets.

Private Open Space

The detached garden townhouse units lack traditional backyards. The small front patios in the front setback are the units' only form of “private” open space. These areas are to be enclosed by low fences

or walls, approximately 3-4 feet tall. Each of the units are proposing about 300 square feet of semi-private open space.

Architecture. The project's proposed conceptual architecture is attractive in appearance, and includes an appropriate amount of articulation and variation among units to avoid a monotonous appearance. The final design of the units will undergo additional review and fine-tuning at the Planned Development Permit stage.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Notices for the public hearing were distributed to the owners and tenants of all properties located within 500 feet of the project site and published in the San Jose Post record in conformance with the City's Public Outreach Policy. The Planning Commission Agenda, which is posted on the City of San Jose's website includes a copy of the Staff report for this project.

On March 25, 2004, the developer held a general community meeting noticing property owners and residents within 500 feet of the site. Seven (7) members of the community were in attendance. They were generally supportive of the project and welcomed the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends approval of the proposed Planned Development Rezoning for the following reasons:

1. The proposed rezoning conforms to the subject site's General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Public/Quasi-Public under the use of the Discretionary Alternate Use Policy.
2. The proposed project substantially conforms to the *Residential Design Guidelines*.
3. The project furthers the goals and objectives of the City's in-fill housing strategies.
4. The proposed rezoning is compatible with existing and proposed uses on the adjacent and neighboring properties.

NOTE: Development standards and other notes are included on a separate 8 ½ "x 11" attachment. These supercede the notes currently shown on the plans. These notes will be included on the Land Use Plan (General Development Plan) for this project prior to final approval of the project by the City Council.