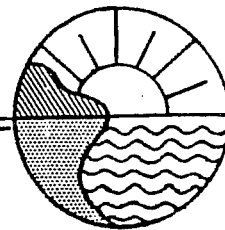


STAFF REPORT

PLANNING COMMISSION-CITY OF PACIFICA



DATE: May 4, 2009
LOCATION: Council Chambers
2212 Beach Boulevard
TIME; 6:00 p.m.
ITEM: 1

STUDY SESSION

APPLICANT: Javier Chavarria
JC Engineering
225 Rockaway Beach Avenue #400
Pacifica, CA 94044

OWNER: Cabot & Elaine Sheley
P.O. Box 1102
Pacifica, CA 94044

LOCATION: 725 Oddstad Boulevard (APN: 023-593-160)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Construction of a 96-unit Senior Assisted Living Center

General plan: Agriculture
Zoning: C-1, Neighborhood Commercial

CEQA STATUS: To be determined upon filing of a formal application

REQUIRED APPROVALS: Planning Commission approval of Site Development Permit, Use Permit, Amendments to the General Plan, and amendment to the C-1 zoning district, rezoning of the property or amendment to

the Special Use Permit Procedures, and --
City Council approval of amendment to the
General Plan, and Zoning Code or any
rezoning

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

None

PREPARED BY:

Lee Diaz, Associate Planner

PROJECT SUMMARY

A. STAFF NOTES:

1. Project Background: On April 6, 2009 the Planning Commission reviewed an earlier version of a proposed senior assisted living center at 725 Oddstad Boulevard in the Park Pacifica neighborhood. The proposal consisted of a three-story building that would accommodate 111 units (66 studios and 45 one bedroom units) totaling approximately 55,914 square feet of gross floor area on a 2.13 acre site.

2. Project Description: The applicant has resubmitted conceptual plans for the development of senior assisted living center that would now contain of 96 units on the 2.13 acre site. The proposal consists of a three-story building that would accommodate the 96 units (44 studios and 52 one bedroom units) totaling approximately 53,492 square feet of gross floor area, exclusive of a 12,117 square foot underground parking garage for 38 vehicles. The proposed building would be divided into a series of four (4) buildings interconnected with halls. The studios would have 255 square feet of living area and the one bedroom units would have 427 square feet. None of the units would be equipped with kitchen facilities. Complete in-house amenities (i.e., cooking, dining, laundry, etc) would be provided. The building would also accommodate a gym, multi-purpose room, common areas, dining room, kitchen, administrative office, employee lounge, and utility rooms. A hospice would also be provided on-site. According to the applicant, the average age of a resident would be 80+ years. However, there would be no age restriction.

The height of the building would be approximately 34 feet and would cover approximately 20% of the lot. Solar panels and cool roof using high solar reflective index materials are also being proposed. According to the applicant, the project will also include green design elements comparable to a Silver LEED certification (see attachment).

A driveway and 37 additional parking spaces are also being proposed on the northeast and southeast of the site. Of the total on-site parking (75) spaces being proposed, three (3) garage spaces would be handicapped. Access to the parking and building is proposed from Oddstad Boulevard. According to the applicant, the proposed facility would also be providing two electric vehicles and a van to transport residents to medical appointments and/or other activities not located within the vicinity. A security station is included at the entrance to the facility.

Additionally, the proposal will feature several landscape courts for the residents and some of the units will provide balconies.

The proposed assisted living center would employ approximately 38 people (administrator, receptionist, activity director, driver, registered nurse, assistant nurse, resident assistants, cook, kitchen assistant, server, housekeepers, and maintenance person). According to the applicant, the total number of employees represents a 14% reduction from the previous proposal.

Existing Conditions: The existing 2.13 acre parcel is located to the rear of the Park Mall Shopping Center in the Park Pacifica neighborhood. The subject site is currently occupied with an empty greenhouse, warehouse, carport and shed. San Pedro Creek runs along the south and western portions of the site. Several trees exist on the west property line near the creek.

2. General Plan, Zoning, and Surrounding Land Use: The property has an Agriculture designation under the General Plan. The zoning classification is C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial) which permits and conditionally allows a variety of retail uses and personal uses including residential use above the ground floor level. The project is inconsistent with the C-1 zoning regulations, in that residential uses on the ground level are not allowed, and the City has no provisions for senior assisted living projects. The proposal is also inconsistent with the General Plan designation which does not permit this type of use.

The proposed project would require amendments to the General Plan and a modification to the C-1 zoning district or a rezoning of the property to allow the senior assisted living center as proposed. Alternatively, the Special Use Permit procedures section could be amended to include senior assisted living uses. The purpose of this section is to prescribe the procedure for the accommodation, in any zoning district and General Plan designation, of uses with special site or design requirements, operating characteristics, or potential adverse effects on surroundings through the review and imposition of special conditions of approval.

Existing uses within the project area include commercial, single-family homes and multi-family developments.

3. Municipal Code and Regulatory Standards: No minimum setbacks are required in the C-1 zone unless established as part of the Site Development Permit. However, the applicant is proposing a 15 foot setback on the north side of the building, 69'-8" from the south, 56'-9" from the west, and 27'-2" on the south. According to the applicant, the proposed building has also been redesigned to avoid any impacts to the San Pedro Creek. At the closest distance the building is 57 feet to the stream, 39 feet to the 100 year flood plane and 29 feet to the edge of the riparian belt.

If the proposed assisted living center was treated as a residential use it would exceed the maximum allowable residential density under the C-1 district. The C-1 development regulations require a minimum lot area per dwelling unit of 2,000 square feet. The subject site is only 2.13

acres which would allow a total of 46 units. Therefore, a variance to allow 96 units would be required. However, an argument can be made that the density requirements outlined in the zoning ordinance are not applicable to the proposed project due to the reduced unit size, lack of kitchen facilities, layout and shared configuration plan of the facility.

It is unknown if the proposal would meet all the development standards if the site is rezoned to a residential district. Code consistency would be determined if and when a formal application is submitted.

In terms of parking, there is no specific requirement for senior assisted living projects. The closest requirement is based on that for dwelling units especially designed for, and to be occupied by, persons sixty-two (62) years of age or more. As such, 1 space for every 2 units, plus 1 guest space for each 5 units is required. Given that the proposal project would have no age restriction; this requirement may not be applicable. The other closest requirement for this type of project is for nursing and convalescent hospitals which require one (1) parking space for each three (3) beds. For unlisted uses, the parking provisions allow parking spaces to be provided as required by the Commission or Planning Administrator, as determined by conditions of the permit approval. The parking requirements shall be used as guidelines to determine the parking needs for unlisted uses.

Based on the above, parking could range from 23 to 48 spaces. The applicant would be providing a total of 75 parking spaces including 3 handicapped spaces. Parking for disabled persons requires a minimum of 2 spaces if the total spaces required is 40. If the total spaces required is 41 or greater then one additional space for each 40 required spaces or fraction thereof are required. In addition, the widths of the drive aisles are required to be 25 feet. The plans do not specify the width of the proposed driveway aisles.

Additionally, the C-1 development standards require 10% of the lot area to be landscaped if the property is zoned commercial. The plans specify that approximately 53% of the lot will be landscaped. Hardscape area would amount to approximately 26% of the lot. The maximum height requirement in the C-1 district is 35 feet. The height of the proposed building would be 34 feet.

4. Environmental Issues: The level of necessary environmental review per CEQA cannot be determined until a formal application has been submitted and reviewed. A requirement for a complete application will most likely include geotechnical, biological and traffic reports. Other issues of concern include visual impacts, and potential impacts to the adjacent San Pedro Creek.

The level of environmental review would be in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An environmental review would describe the environmental consequences of the proposed senior assisted living center. The document is designed to fully inform City decision-makers, responsible agencies, and the general public of the proposed project and the potential consequences of project approval.

The applicant has submitted a riparian corridor assessment (copy attached) for the proposed project. According to the assessment prepared by Live Oak Associates, Inc., the project would be setback from the edge of the riparian by 25 to 38 feet and be build with LEED Silver certification, noxious weeds would be eradicated and the installation of enhancement plantings would offer the community a biologically sound project that would not negatively impact the San Pedro Creek system.

5. Design Guidelines: According to the City's Design Guidelines, "variety is a key ingredient in the appearance of multi-unit development. Building design should also incorporate variety in the type of materials, colors, and heights while maintaining a cohesive style." The design of this type of development is crucial because it can have a large and immediate impact on the character of the area. The conceptual plans also include various photosimulations depicting the proposed building from different vantage points. Although the proposed senior assisted living center that would contain 96 units appears to be fairly large, in the absence of complete detailed building elevation drawings and other information, it's difficult to assess if the project would comply with the City's Design Guidelines.

6. Comparison to Previous Submittal:

The previous submittal also consisted of a three-story building but with 111 units (66 studios and 45 one bedroom units) totaling approximately 55,914 square feet of gross floor area, exclusive of 3,248 square feet of private open space. The studios had 250 square feet of living area and the one bedroom units contained 400 square feet. The height of the building was approximately 33 feet and coverage was approximately 22.32% of the lot. A driveway and 47 parking spaces were also proposed on the northeast and southeast of the site. No underground parking was proposed. The proposal also included landscape courts for the residents. Overall, the design and in-house amenities were similar to the current proposal.

The Commission was concerned with the density, size of the building, building setbacks from the creek, and project compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. The applicant has attempted to address some of these concerns by dividing the building into 4 separate buildings interconnected with walkways, reducing the number of units from 111 to 96, reducing the foot print of the building from approximately 22.32% to 20%, and setting back the building further from the creek to avoid any impacts. The roof was also modified to a mansard type of roof instead of a pitch roof. The height of the building, however, increased from 33 feet to 34 feet.

Although the development has been setback further from the creek area, the current proposal appears very similar to the previous submittal.

7. Staff Analysis: The future development of 96 unit senior assisted living center structure does not appear to be totally out of character with the surrounding land uses which include commercial, single-family homes and multi-family developments. A good opportunity exists at

this location for a well designed development that could provide residential use for seniors. The proposal would be a unique development and would be a positive benefit for the area by providing the City with much needed affordable housing to a special housing needs group. The City has no specific requirements which exclusively or adequately address assisted living projects. In the absence of these requirements, the project raises a number of policy issues regarding land use. A determination needs to be made as to whether the senior assisted living project is either appropriate for the site and surrounding neighborhood or is it an inappropriate intrusion.

Other permits may also be required and/or other issues may arise as the project moves through planning and environmental review process. Among other things, traffic and aesthetics would be other issues to be addressed in the environmental review. The Commission may also wish to provide comments on project density, design, and any other issues of interest to the Commission.

Specifically, staff requests that the Commission comment on the following:

1. Would the Commission support the project density and design?
2. Would the Commission support an amendment to the General Plan, modification to the C-1 Zoning district, amendment to the Special Use Permit procedures, or property rezoning to allow the proposed use?
3. Would the Commission support the site layout?
4. Would the Commission have any concern about the project compatibility with the neighborhood?
5. Would the Commission support parking exceptions, if necessary?
6. Are there any other areas of concern the Commission would like to address?

Attachments:

- a. Land Use and Zoning Exhibit
- b. Letter from Applicant, JC Engineering, received April 28, 2009
- c. Riparian Corridor Assessment, Live Oak Associates, Inc. dated April 27, 2009
- d. Plans and Elevations (Planning Commission only)