

URBAN DEVELOPMENTS

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August 26, 2013

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Mayor and City Council
City of Santa Barbara
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

Subject: *Appeal of the August 14, 2013 Historic Landmarks Commission approval of the Preliminary Design Review and Development Plan Findings For 1330 Chapala Street Mixed Use Project (Arlington Village)*

Dear Mayor Schneider and Councilmembers:

Please accept this letter as an appeal of the August 14, 2013 Historic Landmarks Commission approval of Development Plan Findings for the 1330 Chapala Street Mixed Use project as described below.

Proposed Project - 1330 Chapala Street

New, three-story, 40'-2" tall mixed use development on a 91,000 square foot parcel located at the corner of West Sola and Chapala Streets. The project will comprise 33 residential apartments (totaling 28,302 square feet) and two commercial units (931 net square feet). The Proposed new building will total 52,945 square feet, including a 534 square foot exercise room and a 13,400 square foot partially below-grade parking garage. The parking garage will contain 42 spaces, and a surface lot will contain 49 spaces for a total of 91 spaces, with 33 spaces allocated to the residential units, two spaces allocated to the commercial units and 56 spaces allocated to the Arlington Theatre (source: City of Santa Barbara Memorandum to HLC dated August 14, 2013).

The Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) is guided by a set of general goals that define the major concerns and objectives of the HLC review process. In particular, to promote neighborhood compatibility and safeguard the heritage of the City (by providing for the protection of landmarks representing significant elements of the City's history). Unfortunately, the HLC failed in its mandate to ensure sound community planning and neighborhood compatibility by approving the Development Plan Findings for the proposed project.

The following discussion outlines the proposed project's ***inconsistencies*** with the required Development Plan Findings for sound community planning and neighborhood compatibility.

Sound Community Planning

In order to approve a Development Plan, a proposed development must be found consistent with the principles of sound community planning as outlined in the City's General Plan. The City's Land Use Element contains Principles for Development that are in place to ensure that the character of the El Pueblo Viejo District (in which the Proposed Project is located), is not compromised. These principles encourage compact, vibrant, and walkable places that are designed in harmony with surrounding development. Unfortunately, the proposed Arlington Village project fails to incorporate these principles and has been designed and sited so that it is incompatible with adjacent developments and the Arlington Theater. The project's design instead creates conflicts, particularly with respect to ingress, egress, and overall coordination with traffic flow and parking between adjacent developments and the Arlington Theater. The proposed design completely underestimates the operations and commercial parking needs of the Arlington Theater. For example, the Arlington Village traffic analysis estimated only 10 days of production related traffic at the Arlington Theater. This is grossly underestimated. The Santa Barbara Film Festival alone operates for two weeks and this does not include set-up leading up to the festival or breakdown once the festival has concluded. The project must be redesigned to address this issue or it will result in ongoing traffic conflicts and complaints for years to come.

Furthermore, the City's Circulation Element includes a number of policies and implementation strategies to increase access and walking opportunities. In particular, Circulation Element Policy 5.3 promotes the protection and expansion of paseos in the Downtown, while Implementation Strategy 5.3.3 encourages private development to incorporate public paseos by offering increased density and other incentives for providing or improving paseos and paseo connections. Regrettably, despite the project receiving increased density, the project's design fails to incorporate a connecting paseo or increase the width of the existing paseo at 34 W. Victoria to accommodate the increased uses associated with the proposed Arlington Village project. The project must be redesigned to ensure that new and existing paseos are incorporated into their overall project design. Otherwise, the paseos will end up being disconnected and highly congested that will impact residents of both projects, patrons of the public market place, shop owners, and the Arlington Theater operations.

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Neighborhood Compatibility

In order to promote consistency between the City land use decision making process and the City design review process, Section 22.22.145 Title 22 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code provides project compatibility criteria that shall be considered by the HLC in their review and approval of the design of a proposed development project.

Unfortunately, the HLC failed to ensure that the proposed project was designed to be sensitive to the adjacent Arlington Theater and its operation and in compliance with the City's Design Guidelines.

The project is located within the El Pueblo Viejo Historic District and subject to the very specific El Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines. The project's proposed design is inconsistent with the El Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines regarding paseos and courtyards. The proposed project fails to adhere to these guidelines that encourage paseos, which provide pedestrian connections that are important for customer convenience and aesthetic compatibility. More importantly, the El Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines include a figure illustrating paseo opportunities within the City. This figure (attached) shows two paseo opportunities as identified in the Paseo Plan located on the subject development site. However, these paseo opportunities are not properly addressed and/or incorporated into the project's overall design.

In addition, the City's Urban Design Guidelines encourage the protection and enhancement of the City's paseo system. This document also provides specific guidelines as to when paseos should be incorporated into new developments. The design of the proposed Arlington Village project fails to incorporate the required paseos to provide walkable pedestrian connections to the Arlington Theatre, offices, and stores located within the interior of this City block, and more importantly, the design fails to address how residents, large trucks and busses associated with the proposed project (and the existing Arlington Theater) will impact the adjacent paseo at 34 West Victoria street. The current design of the Arlington Village project will create significant pedestrian and traffic conflicts with the adjacent property's paseo. The Arlington Village project needs to address not only the residents of both projects, but the Arlington Theater truck loading. Failure to address this matter will lead to potential safety issues for pedestrians and unnecessary congestion with vehicles and trucks, both on and offsite. The design of the proposed Arlington Village project must take into consideration the existing paseos to ensure connectivity between the paseos and to avoid conflicts between residents of both projects and the Arlington Theater truck ingress/egress needs.

Traffic

The proposed Arlington Village project proposes to have all ingress and egress for the project occur from Chapala Street using the same access point as the adjacent 34 W. Victoria Street mixed use project and the ongoing operations of the Arlington Theater, rather than incorporating a secondary access from Sola Street. The use of Chapala Street as the sole entrance and exit for the proposed Arlington Village project and adjacent uses will create significant traffic impacts should all these uses be required to enter and exit from the same driveway access point off of Chapala Street, not to mention increased traffic congestion along an already congested Chapala Street. The proposed Arlington Village project needs to be redesigned to incorporate access from Sola Street. Sola Street does not have any retail along the frontage and currently provides access to the existing parking lots. This access needs to be retained and incorporated as the primary access to the proposed project to avoid significant traffic impacts along the Chapala Street.

Summary

The proposed Arlington Village design is inconsistent with the City's Principles for Development for sound community planning and neighborhood compatibility. The proposed design fails to incorporate new paseos and address existing paseos in the area, which is inconsistent with the City's General Plan and the City's El Pueblo Viejo and Urban Design Design Guidelines. In addition, the Arlington Village project design needs to incorporate access to the project from Sola Street. It is simply impractical to have all ingress and egress for these uses occur from one single driveway. The proposed Arlington Village project must be redesigned to address these flaws to ensure that the character of the El Pueblo Viejo is not compromised and traffic in the neighborhood is not impacted by poor design.

We hope that your Council will consider our strong concerns regarding the design flaws of the proposed Arlington Village project as it relates to not just our project, but the entire block and neighborhood upon which our projects are located. The project must be redesigned to properly address these issues.

Appeal of HLC Approval 1330 Chapala Street, Mixed Use
August 26th, 2013

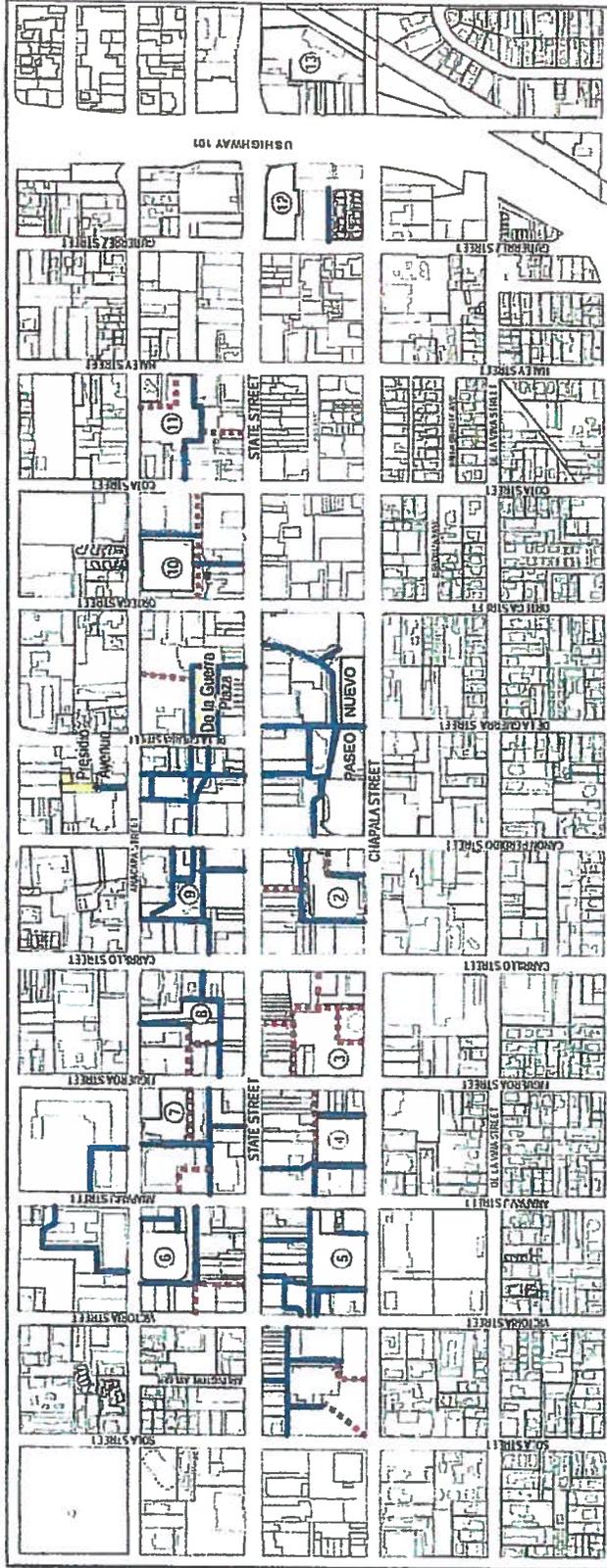
Thank you for your consideration of this appeal.

Most Sincerely,



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Attachments



Legend

- Existing Paseos
- Paseo Opportunities Identified in Paseo Plan
- City Public Parking Lots and Garages
- Plazas
- Downtown Building Lines

*All city public parking lots and garages are named and numbered. The designated number for each lot and garage is shown on this map.



**City of Santa Barbara
DOWNTOWN PASEOS**

Revised: May 14, 2009