



City of Santa Barbara California

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT - UPDATED

REPORT DATE: May 30, 2006
AGENDA DATE: June 1, 2006
PROJECT ADDRESS: 85 N. La Cumbre Road (MST2005-00295)
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Division, (805) 564-5470
 Jan Hubbell, AICP, Senior Planner
 Allison De Busk, Associate Planner

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project involves the demolition of all existing site improvements, including a two-story apartment building, a detached residence, a garage and apartment structure and carports (a total of ten (10) residential units would be demolished). A new three-story condominium building containing nine (9) residential units (three (3) one-bedroom and six (6) two-bedroom units) is proposed. Fifteen (15) covered parking stalls and four (4) uncovered parking stalls are included. One (1) of the one-bedroom units is proposed as a bonus density unit affordable to middle-income homebuyers.

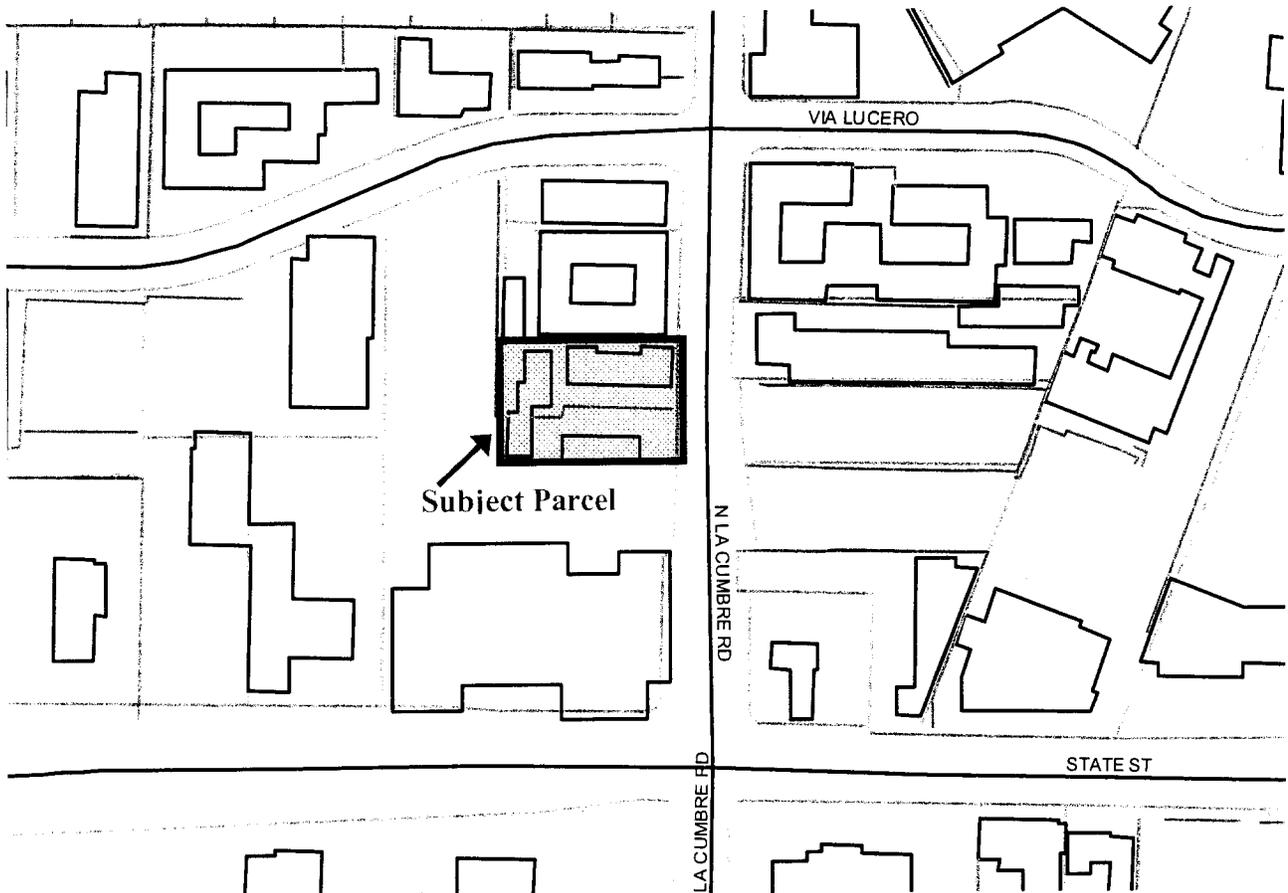
II. REQUIRED APPLICATIONS

The discretionary applications required for this project are:

1. A Modification of the lot area requirements to allow for one (1) bonus density unit on a lot in the R-3 / S-D-2 zone (SBMC §28.92.110, A, 2); and
2. A Tentative Subdivision Map for a one-lot subdivision to create nine (9) residential condominium units (SBMC 27.07 and 27.13).

III. RECOMMENDATION

Upon approval of the requested modification, the proposed project conforms to the City's Zoning and Building Ordinances and policies of the General Plan. In addition, the size, massing and design of the project are consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. Therefore, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the project, making the findings outlined in Section VII of this report, and subject to the conditions of approval in Exhibit A.



Vicinity Map – 85 N. La Cumbre Road

APPLICATION DEEMED COMPLETE: April 11, 2006
DATE ACTION REQUIRED PER MAP ACT: June 30, 2006

IV. SITE INFORMATION AND PROJECT STATISTICS

A. SITE INFORMATION

Applicant:	Trish Allen, SEPPS	Property Owner:	Wye Road Properties, LLC
Parcel Number:	057-233-010	Lot Area:	18,150 sq. ft. (0.42 acre)
General Plan:	Office and General Commerce	Zoning:	R-3/S-D-2
Existing Use:	Residential (apartments)	Topography:	Relatively flat, slopes easterly
Adjacent Land Uses:			
North - residential		East – La Cumbre Road and residential	
South - commercial		West – parking lot and commercial	

B. PROJECT STATISTICS

	Bedrooms	Size (Net)	Assigned Parking	Affordability
Unit 1	1	887 sq. ft.	1 covered space	Middle-Income
Unit 2	1	887 sq. ft.	1 covered space	Market Rate
Unit 3	1	887 sq. ft.	1 covered space	Market Rate
Unit 4	2	1,578 sq. ft.	1 covered space	Market Rate
Unit 5	2	1,578 sq. ft.	1 covered space	Market Rate
Unit 6	2	1,578 sq. ft.	1 covered space	Market Rate
Unit 7	2	1,337 sq. ft.	1 covered space	Market Rate
Unit 8	2	1,419 sq. ft.	1 covered space	Market Rate
Unit 9	2	1,337 sq. ft.	1 covered space	Market Rate

V. ZONING ORDINANCE CONSISTENCY

Standard	Requirement/ Allowance	Existing	Proposed
Setbacks -Front -Interior -Rear	20' (per S-D-2) 6' 1-2-story, 10' 3 story 6' 1 st fl., 10' 2 nd & 3 rd fl.	5' 6' 10'	20' 10' 10'
Building Height	3 stories and 45 feet	2 stories and 25'	3 stories and 33.5'
Parking	19 stalls (9 covered)	10 covered stalls	19 stalls (15 covered)
Lot Area Required for Each Unit (Variable Density)	Studio = 1,600 sq. ft. 1-Bdrm = 1,840 sq. ft. 2-Bdrm = 2,320 sq. ft. 3-Bdrm = 2,800 sq. ft.	(5) 1,840 = 9,200 sq. ft. (5) 2,320 = 11,600 sq. ft. Total Rqd=20,800 sq. ft.	(3) 1,840 = 5,520 sq. ft. (6) 2,320 = 13,920 sq. ft. Total Rqd=19,440 sq. ft.*
10% Open Space	1,815 sq. ft.	2,080 sq. ft.	2,100 sq. ft. (11.5%)
Private Outdoor Living Space			
Unit 1	120 sq. ft.	N/A	270 sq. ft.
Unit 2	120 sq. ft.		700 sq. ft.
Unit 3	120 sq. ft.		680 sq. ft.
Unit 4	84 sq. ft.		301 sq. ft.
Unit 5	84 sq. ft.		242 sq. ft.
Unit 6	84 sq. ft.		242 sq. ft.
Unit 7	84 sq. ft.		156 sq. ft.
Unit 8	84 sq. ft.		156 sq. ft.
Unit 9	84 sq. ft.		156 sq. ft.

Lot Coverage					
-Building	N/A	5,913 sq. ft.	33%	8,556 sq. ft.	47%
-Paving/Driveway	N/A	5,700 sq. ft.	31%	4,245 sq. ft.	23%
-Landscaping	N/A	6,537 sq. ft.	36%	5,349 sq. ft.	30%

* Requires a modification

The proposed project would meet the requirements of the R-3/S-D-2 Zone, with the exception of the lot area modification.

LOT AREA MODIFICATION

The applicant is proposing one bonus density housing unit for a total of nine housing units on the property. The project is subject to the lot area provisions of the R-3 (Multiple Residential) Zone and, therefore, to the City’s variable density standards. Under the variable density provisions, the proposed project would require 19,440 square feet of lot area to construct nine (9) units (when comprised of three (3) one-bedroom units and six (6) two-bedroom units). The subject parcel is 18,150 square feet, thus a lot area modification is requested to provide one (1) bonus density unit (resulting in a density of 21.5 dwelling units per acre).

Staff is supportive of the proposed lot area modification because the project is providing a residential unit affordable to a middle-income household and minimizes the net loss of units resulting from the project. The lot area modification would be consistent with the purposes and intent of the City of Santa Barbara Density Bonus Ordinance, the General Plan, Housing Element, Zoning Ordinance and with the City’s affordable housing program.

VI. ISSUES

A. DESIGN REVIEW

This project was reviewed by the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) on September 12, 2005 (meeting minutes are attached as Exhibit D). At that meeting, the ABR continued the project to the Planning Commission with generally favorable comments. The Board expressed concerns with the height of the building and design details, and suggested flipping the site plan. The applicant has responded to the ABR’s comments, and the current plans reflect those changes.

B. COMPLIANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN

Before a condominium project and a tentative map can be approved, they must be found consistent with the City’s General Plan. The project site is located in the North State neighborhood, which is bounded on the north by the northern boundary of the commercial properties on the north side of State Street and by Via Lucero, on the east by Mission Creek, on the south by Highway 101 and the southern boundary of the commercial property on State Street and De la Vina Street, and on the west by San Marcos Pass Road (Highway 154). This area is an intensely developed commercial area with a scattering of multiple-family residential development, particularly along Via Lucero.

1. **Land Use Element**

The subject site has a General Plan designation of General Commerce and Office. The parcel is zoned for residential development and is subject to the density requirements of the R-3/R-4 Multiple Family Residential Zones. The proposed project would result in a density of 21.5 units per acre, which would be consistent with the Land Use and Housing Elements of the General Plan through implementation of the City's variable density and bonus density provisions.

2. **Housing Element**

Santa Barbara has very little vacant or available land for new residential development. Therefore, City housing policies support build out of infill housing units in the City's urban areas. The City's Housing Element encourages construction of a wide range of housing types to meet the needs of various household types.

Projects that involve a net reduction in units, and particularly the loss of rental housing, have previously raised concerns by local decision-makers. In order to help offset the loss of rental housing and the potential net loss of two (2) housing units, the applicant has proposed to include a bonus density unit. This unit would be available for purchase to middle-income households. Staff has examined the issue of the loss of rental housing and determined that the project is consistent with the relevant Housing Element goals and policies.

Neighborhood Compatibility

In accordance with Housing Element Policy 2.8, which requires new development to be compatible with the prevailing character of the neighborhood, the proposed building would be compatible in scale, size and design with the surrounding neighborhood.

The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of a mix of residential, office and commercial buildings, with a wide range of heights, although primarily two-story structures. As discussed in Section VI, A of this report, the ABR is generally supportive of the mass, bulk and scale, and they find the development to be appropriate for this site and neighborhood.

C. **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Staff and the Environmental Analyst have determined that the project is exempt from further environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Guidelines Section 15302, which provides for replacement or reconstruction of existing structures where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure it replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity of the structure it replaced. In this case, a residential development of ten (10) units would be replaced with a nine (9)- unit residential development containing approximately the same number of bedrooms on the same 0.42-acre site.

A Noise Assessment, prepared for the project site, was utilized in reaching this determination. According to the City's Master Environmental Assessment (MEA), the project site is located in the 60-65 dBA and 65-70 dBA (average A-weighted sound level over a 24-hour period) noise

corridor due to traffic noise. The General Plan Noise Element Land Use Compatibility Guidelines identify up to 60 dBA L_{dn} as the maximum compatible exterior noise level for residential uses. Units 1, 4 and 7 are located at the east end of the building and are potentially exposed to higher noise levels. Staff requested the noise study for the development to identify construction mitigations that may be needed. The recommendations of this analysis have been incorporated into the project design to achieve appropriate noise levels for interior and exterior living spaces. Refer to the attached Noise Assessment (Exhibit E) for additional details. Standard measures limiting construction hours have been recommended as conditions to minimize potential short-term construction noise impacts to the surrounding neighborhood.

The project is also exempt from CEQA per Section 15315, Minor Land Divisions, for the Tentative Map and Section 15301, Existing Facilities, for the demolition of the apartment, house and garage.

D. UPPER STATE STREET STUDY

Although the Study Area has not been officially defined at this point, the subject parcel is located in the general area of the Study. The Upper State Street Study (USSS) will only address issues within the existing policy framework, so it does not affect the Commission's ability to take action on the subject project. Additionally, the project is a residential development not located along the main arterial that is the focus of the Study (namely State Street). The following are attributes of the project that staff believes will relate favorably to future USSS discussions:

1. The proposed condominium development would replace an old building that doesn't meet S-D-2 setbacks with one that does.
2. There will be a net traffic decrease due to the reduction in the number of units on-site, and code compliant parking will be provided on-site, thereby reducing any current impact on City streets.

VII. FINDINGS

The Planning Commission finds the following:

A. THE LOT AREA MODIFICATION (SBMC §28.92.110)

The modification is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, and policies of the City's Housing Element, and is necessary to provide one bonus density housing unit affordable to a middle-income household.

The project includes one residential unit available for sale to a middle-income household. The project is consistent with the City's Affordable Housing Policies. Therefore the lot area modification is necessary in order to provide this affordable unit.

B. THE TENTATIVE MAP (SBMC §27.07.100)

The Tentative Subdivision Map is consistent with the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Santa Barbara. The site is physically suitable for the proposed development, the

project is consistent with the variable density provisions of the Municipal Code and the General Plan, and the proposed use is consistent with the vision for this neighborhood of the General Plan. The design of the project will not cause substantial environmental damage, and associated improvements will not cause serious public health problems.

C. THE NEW CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPMENT (SBMC §27.13.080)

1. There is compliance with all provisions of the City's Condominium Ordinance.

The project complies with the physical standards for condominiums related to parking, private storage space, utility metering, laundry facilities, density, and outdoor living space requirements.

2. The proposed development is consistent with the General Plan of the City of Santa Barbara.

The project can be found consistent with policies of the City's General Plan including the Housing Element and Land Use Element. The project will provide infill residential development that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

3. The proposed development is consistent with the principles of sound community planning and will not have an adverse impact upon the neighborhood's aesthetics, parks, streets, traffic, parking and other community facilities and resources.

The project is an infill residential project proposed in an area where residential development is a permitted use. The project is adequately served by public streets, will provide adequate parking to meet the demands of the project and will not result in traffic impacts. The design has been reviewed by the City's design review board, which found the architecture and site design appropriate.

Exhibits:

- A. Conditions of Approval
- B. Development Plans
- C. Applicant's letter, dated May 18, 2006
- D. ABR Minutes – September 12, 2005
- E. Noise Assessment prepared by 45dB.com, dated November 11, 2005 and Supplement to Noise Assessment Report dated January 9, 2006