



City of Santa Barbara California

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE: January 10, 2007
AGENDA DATE: January 18, 2007
PROJECT ADDRESS: 1776 Eucalyptus Hill Road (MST2002-00614)

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Division, (805) 564-5470
 Jan Hubbell, AICP, Senior Planner
 Allison De Busk, Associate Planner

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I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of the subdivision of a 172,137 net square foot lot into two parcels. Parcel A would be 75,301 net square feet with an average slope of 36%. Parcel B would be 96,836 net square feet with an average slope of 35% and would contain the existing approximately 9,000 square foot single-family residence. Ingress to both lots would be provided via the existing driveway apron located primarily on Parcel B. No residential development is currently proposed for Parcel A, although a conceptual study has been prepared to illustrate development potential. The building envelope for Parcel A is 5,200 square feet, with a 28% slope. The project also includes removal of the paved driveway that leads to the bottom of the hill, restoration of the hillside to its natural topography, and installation of a new storm drain that outlets at the edge of the creek that runs along the east side of the lot, thus correcting an existing erosion problem.

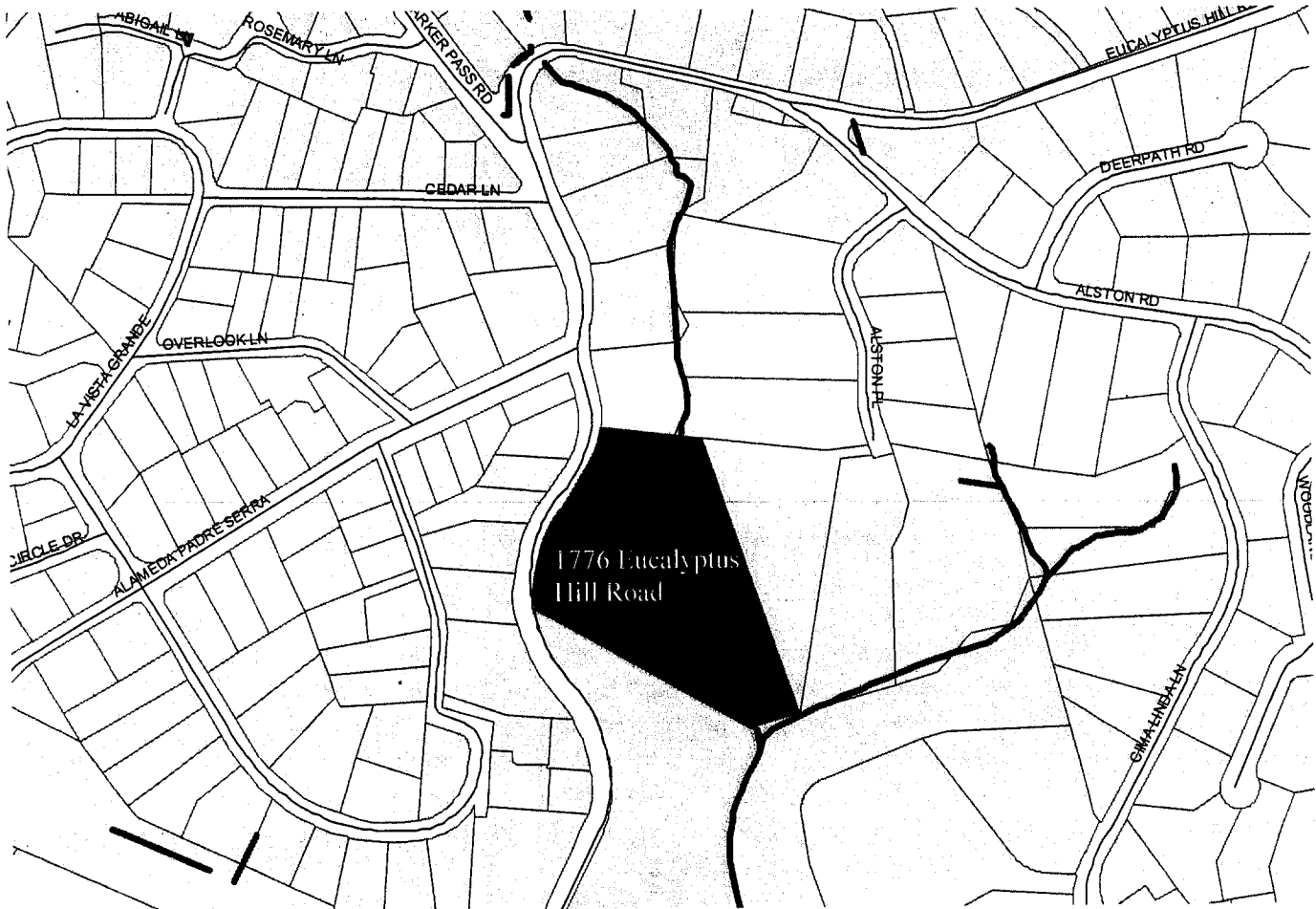
II. REQUIRED APPLICATIONS

The discretionary application required for this project is:

A Tentative Subdivision Map to allow the division of one parcel into two lots (SBMC 27.07).

III. RECOMMENDATION

The proposed project conforms to the City's Zoning and Building Ordinances and policies of the General Plan. In addition, the size and massing 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.



APPLICATION DEEMED COMPLETE: 9/22/06
DATE ACTION REQUIRED: 4/22/07

IV. SITE INFORMATION

Applicant:	Rick Jeffrey	Property Owner:	Eucalyptus Modern, LLC
Parcel Number:	015-161-054	Lot Area:	4.12 acres (gross) 3.95 acres (net)
General Plan:	Residential – 2 units per acre	Zoning:	A-2, One Family Residential
Existing Use:	Single-Family Residential	Topography:	35% slope (east facing)
Adjacent Land Uses:			
North – Single-Family Residential		East - Single-Family Residential	
South - Single-Family Residential		West - Single-Family Residential	

V. ZONING ORDINANCE CONSISTENCY

Standard	Requirement / Allowance	Parcel A (building envelope)	Parcel B (existing residence)
Setbacks			
-Front	30 feet	30 feet	33 feet
-Interior	10 feet	10 feet	25 feet
Building Height	30 feet	N/A	Less than 30 feet
Parking	2 covered spaces	N/A	2-car garage
Minimum Lot Size (with Slope Density)	75,000 square feet	75,301 net square feet	96,836 net square feet
Lot Frontage	100 feet	105 feet	Approximately 250 feet
Open Yard Area	1,250 square feet	More than 29,700 square feet	More than 72,000 square feet

The proposed project would meet the requirements of the A-2 Zone.

VI. ISSUES

A. DESIGN REVIEW

This project was reviewed by the Architectural board of Review (ABR) on three separate occasions (meeting minutes are attached to the Initial Study, included as part of Exhibit E). The ABR had the following cumulative comments: 1) The building envelope on slopes of less than 30% from an aesthetic viewpoint is a buildable site; 2) The proposed structure of 3,000 square feet, including garage, is acceptable in scale and would have minimal, if any visual impact; 3) The Hillside Design Guidelines technique of stepping back will further help mitigate any visual impact from across the canyon; 4) The Board appreciates the applicant's consideration in working with the neighbors; 5) The Board appreciates the applicant's elimination of the visual scarring caused by the existing access road; 6) The proposed interim landscape plan returns the hillside to a more natural condition despite being temporary until a future house is approved or built on a newly proposed lot; 7) Restudy the plant palette for more compatible plants with the existing vegetation; 8) The proposed east side improvements on Eucalyptus Hill Road, and the proposed driveway realignment for 1776 Eucalyptus Hill Road, are both beneficial improvements to a currently awkward and dangerous curve, and should improve walkability and maneuverability in that vicinity.

B. COMPLIANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN

The project is located in the Eucalyptus Hill neighborhood as identified in the General Plan, which is bordered by the City limits on the north and east, Sycamore Canyon on the west and the bottom of the hill and Highway 101 on the south. The majority of this neighborhood is developed with single-family homes. The area is characterized by low density residential development. The proposed two-lot subdivision and future residential development would be consistent with the existing development pattern and vision for the neighborhood.

With respect to hillside development, there are three policies under the Conservation and Open Space Elements that directly apply to the project site (refer to Exhibit D for full text). The City closely scrutinizes proposals on new lots with steep slopes. The project has been designed to minimize the grading as much as possible; however, it is generally not feasible to entirely eliminate grading on hillsides with slopes greater than 30 percent. In cases where projects have steep slopes, the City uses the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance (NPO) findings and the Single-Family Residence Design Guidelines for direction in reviewing appropriate development on constrained sites such as these. The NPO findings (SBMC §22.68.060) implement policies focused on hillside development in the City's Conservation and Open Space Elements pertaining to protection of the public health, safety, and welfare, appropriateness of proposed grading and development given the site topography, protection of existing trees, preservation of public views, and compatibility with the neighborhood. These findings and guidelines have been considered throughout the review of this project.

Site constraints, in addition to the steep slopes, have also played into the siting of the proposed new development. These include existing oak woodland and creek habitats.

Future construction of a single-family residence on the new lot is not anticipated to obstruct important public scenic views to the ocean or lower elevations of the City nor would it obstruct upper foothill or mountain views from the beach or lower elevations of the City. The project site is surrounded by existing residential development as well as significant vegetation that is proposed to remain. Although the canyon mouth is visible from Highway 101 and the ocean, the new building site is behind a curve in the canyon that minimizes its visibility from these public viewing areas. Also, the public road is at a higher elevation than the proposed building envelope, thus making any new construction only minimally visible from the public road.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Environmental review of the proposed project has been conducted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and related Guidelines. An Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration were prepared to evaluate the project's potential impacts on the physical environment. The analysis identified potentially significant but mitigable environmental effects in the following issue areas: air quality (short-term), biological resources, geophysical conditions, hazards, and water environment. Also evaluated in the document as less than significant impacts are aesthetics, cultural resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation and transportation/circulation. The analysis concludes that no significant environmental impacts would result from the project as mitigated. Below is a brief summary of the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration evaluation.

1. AESTHETICS

The project site is not located along an existing or proposed scenic highway. Views of the site from public vantage points are minimal. The site is located in an urban area and is surrounded by residential development. The site is currently characterized by significant vegetation, particularly the eastern and southern portions of the lot. The project includes the removal of approximately 53 trees from the site. The project would result in a visual change to the site due to the removal of the trees; however, this is

considered a less than significant environmental impact. The Architectural Board of Review (ABR) has reviewed the project and has made generally positive comments (see Exhibit E). Aesthetic impacts would be less than significant.

2. AIR QUALITY

This project will not result in long-term air quality impacts. The primary concerns related to air quality impacts are pollutant emissions from vehicle exhaust or other stationary sources, particulates and nuisance dust associated with grading and construction. Long-term emissions are much less than the Santa Barbara county Air Pollution Control District threshold of impact significance for air quality impacts; therefore, long term project air quality impacts are less than significant. The MND has incorporated mitigation measures to minimize construction dust emissions.

3. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Portions of this site are designated as southern oak woodland and coastal sage scrub habitat. Chelham Creek runs in a north-south direction in the eastern portion of the site. This creek is mapped by USGS as an intermittent stream. The proposed project would remove approximately 53 existing trees, including three coast live oak saplings. According to the Biological Assessment prepared for the site, wildlife expected on-site is limited to species typical of urban settings and the site appears to support a rich bird life, including several species of raptors. The removal of the designated trees would not result in a significant impact because no sensitive, endangered, rare or threatened species are known to use or be established at the subject site. Short-term wildlife habitat alteration/loss impacts are expected within the building envelope and along the proposed storm drain pipe alignment. The installation of construction fencing six feet outside the riparian oak tree canopy is proposed to mitigate this short-term impact. Long-term impacts to native vegetation and creek habitat associated with future construction of a new residence and installation of the storm drain are considered potentially significant, but mitigable. A permanent 25-foot wide outer riparian buffer zone is proposed as mitigation.

4. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The project site is located within the Prehistoric Watercourse cultural sensitivity zone, based on the City Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) *Cultural Resources Sensitivity Map*. A Phase 1 Archaeological Survey was conducted in 2005. No resources were identified onsite and the report concluded that no further analysis or monitoring during construction was required.

The site is vacant and no known historic resources or ethnic or religious resources are known to exist on the site. The project would have no impact related to historic, ethnic or religious resources.

5. GEOPHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Project impacts related to ground shaking, liquefaction, seiche, tsunami, landslides, subsidence and excessive grading are considered less than significant. Potential impacts

due to expansive soils would be minimized to less than significant levels with incorporation of grading and foundation recommendations included in the Preliminary Foundation Investigation prepared by Pacific Materials Laboratory for the project.

6. HAZARDS

The project site is not on any lists for known contaminated soils, groundwater, or hazardous materials use, and there would be no impacts from the project related to these hazards. The site is located within a High Fire Hazard Area and would be required to comply with standard mitigation measures such as brush clearance, vegetation management and landscaping to reduce this potential impact to a less than significant level.

7. NOISE

The proposed project is not anticipated to have significant long-term noise impacts. Noise during construction is generally intermittent and sporadic and, after completion of initial grading and site clearing activities, tends to be quieter. Noise generated during project construction activities would result in a less than significant short-term adverse impact to sensitive receptors in the area. These impacts would be further reduced by limiting construction hours and utilizing construction sound control devices.

8. POPULATION AND HOUSING

The project would not involve substantial employment growth that would increase population and housing demand. Growth-inducing impacts would not be significant.

9. PUBLIC SERVICES

Public services in the project vicinity are in place. Impacts to fire and police protection, schools, roads and utilities would be less than significant.

10. RECREATION

The project may result in a very small increase in the demand for recreational facilities, but is considered an incremental increase in the number of potential users for existing facilities. There are various recreational facilities in the project area including the Eastside Neighborhood Park, Hale Park and Sunflower Park. Project impacts related to recreational demand would be less than significant.

11. TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION

The project is expected to generate approximately 1 additional a.m. peak hour trip, 1 p.m. peak hour trip and 10 average daily trips. When these trips are added to the existing street network, they would result in a less than significant traffic impact.

Short term construction traffic would not result in a significant impact to the traffic network because of the temporary nature of the trips generated and the size of the project. Standard mitigations include restrictions on the hours permitted for construction trips and approval of routes for construction traffic.

Project impacts relative to access and circulation are not significant.

12. WATER ENVIRONMENT

The existing onsite drainage sheet flows to the south and east into Chelham Creek. Currently, the storm drain from Eucalyptus Hill Road also outlets approximately 400 feet from the edge of the creek bank and is causing substantial erosion, which is degrading the water quality of the creek. The project includes construction of a curb drainage inlet to direct stormwater flows into the creek. Future development of the site with a new single-family residence will result in an increase in impervious surface coverage, thereby increasing surface water runoff into the creek. The applicant is proposing to install two below-ground cisterns to capture the increase in runoff.

Proposed grading for the project would consist of 1,150 cubic yards of cut and fill. Standard erosion and dust control measures have been included in the project conditions to minimize potential short term adverse impacts to water and air quality.

A Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared and released for public review. During the public review period from November 8, 2006, to December 8, 2006, public comment on the draft MND was taken. No Environmental Hearing was held by the Planning Commission because one was not requested by the public. Staff received one letter of concern regarding the project during the public comment period. Environmental concerns related to grading, traffic and growth-inducing impacts were raised. These issues are outlined in the Staff response to public comments incorporated into the Mitigated Negative Declaration (Exhibit E).

The Final Mitigated Negative Declaration has identified no significant and unavoidable impacts related to the proposed project. Pursuant to CEQA, and prior to approving the project, the Planning Commission must consider the Mitigated Negative Declaration. For each mitigation measure adopted as part of a Mitigated Negative Declaration, the decision makers are required to make the mitigation measures conditions of project approval and adopt a program for monitoring and reporting on the mitigation measures to ensure their compliance during project implementation [PRC Sec.21081.6]. The mitigation measures described in the proposed Final Mitigated Negative Declaration have been incorporated into the recommended conditions of approval for this project. In addition, a mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) is included in the project's Final Mitigated Negative Declaration.

VII. FINDINGS

The Planning Commission finds the following:

A. 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 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.

B. FINAL MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION ADOPTION

- The Planning has considered the proposed final mitigated negative declaration together with comments received during the public review process.
- The Planning Commission finds on the basis of the whole record before it (including the initial study and comments received) that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
- The Planning Commission finds that the final mitigated negative declaration reflects the Planning Commission's independent judgment and analysis.
- The Planning Commission finds that the final mitigated negative declaration has been prepared in compliance with CEQA, and constitutes adequate environmental evaluation for the proposed project. The Planning Commission hereby adopts the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project.
- The Planning Commission hereby adopts a mitigation monitoring and reporting program for measures required in the project or made a condition of approval to mitigate or avoid significant environmental effects.
- The location and custodian of the documents or other material which constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based is the City of Santa Barbara Community Development Department, 630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, California.

C. DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME FEE FINDING

An Initial Study has been conducted by the lead agency, which has evaluated the potential for the proposed project to result in adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on wildlife resources or the habitat on which the wildlife depends. For this purpose, "wildlife" is defined as "all wild animals, birds, plants, fish, amphibians, and related ecological communities, including the habitat upon which the wildlife depends for its continued viability" (Section 711.2 Fish and Game Code). This project has the potential to affect wildlife resources or the habitat on which wildlife depend, and is subject to the Department of Fish and Game fee.

Exhibits:

- A. Conditions of Approval
- B. Tentative Map (reduced)
- C. Applicant's letter, dated October 13, 2005
- D. Applicable General Plan Policies
- E. Final Mitigated Negative Declaration