



City of Culver City

Staff Report

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MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director
Michael Allen, Contract Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Information Memo Report on Administrative Site Plan Review, P2016-0177-ASPR and Tentative Tract Map, P2016-0177-TTM (Map No. 69482) allowing the creation of three lots and construction of two condominiums on each Lot for a total of six condominium Units at 4227 Ince Boulevard in the Two Family Residential (R2) Zone.

This memo serves as a response to your request for a report by staff on the outcome of discussions with the applicant for the proposed subdivision and residential development at 4227 Ince Boulevard regarding a tree survey, circulation and driveways at the front of the property facing the street, and pervious paving.

On February 22, 2017, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution No. 2017-P002 approving the project as described above. Commissioners expressed concern over the loss of street parking and length of driveways across the front of the project, as well as questions regarding the species of the trees in question. As a result, the Planning Commission directed staff to work with the applicant to explore alternative driveway approaches to minimize the impact along Ince Boulevard, and provide an update prior to Building Permit Issuance as an informational item only on the outcome of discussions with the applicant.

On April 11, 2017, the City Council approved the tract map associated with this development proposal. At the City Council hearing on the Tentative Tract Map, the Council expressed concern on three issues:

- 1) Pervious paving;
- 2) The two trees in the front yard facing the street; and
- 3) The number of driveways at the front.

Subsequent to the Planning Commission and City Council public hearings and approval of the project, City staff met with the applicant to review the Conditions of Approval, as well as address the outstanding questions/concerns of the Planning Commission and City Council. Staff asked the applicant to address the following prior to building permit issuance:

- Provide a tree survey for all proposed tree removals to determine if such trees can be

replanted on-site and determine definitively if there are any protected species.

- Identify existing trees to be saved, replanted, or incorporated into the proposed design.
- Determine whether street fronting driveways can be reduced/narrowed.
- Identify if the project includes pervious paving.

The applicant agreed to include the pervious paving and produce an arborist report that addresses all trees on-site to see if they fall under protective status and whether they are salvageable (can they be replanted on-site). In addition staff asked for the developer's Civil Engineer to produce a survey of all trees on site to see if they can be accommodated within the design. The applicant responded to these request and below is a summary of the outcome of those studies and discussions with staff.

Tree Survey/Street Facing Trees

The applicant's arborist, Arthur V. Murphy conducted a survey of all trees and found none to be protected. Existing on-site trees include three Ficus, two Olive, 37 Eugenia, one Date Palm, one podocarpus, and one guava. The trees range in diameter from 1 inch to 68 inches and in height from 5 feet to 45 feet. The arborist recommends all trees be removed except for the Date Palm which is small and healthy enough to withstand the initial shock of transplanting. The arborist provided the following reasons why the other trees are not successful candidates for transplanting include:

- Ficus - shallow roots and evidence of hardscape damage,
- Olives - trees are damaged due to improper pruning in the past,
- Eugenia - highly susceptible to insect pests and do not provide adequate privacy screening; there are other species that are less susceptible to insect pests and provide better privacy screening
- Podocarpus - small tree that is easily planted anew with a higher success rate than transplanting;
- Guava - small tree that is easily planted anew with a higher success rate than transplanting.

Additionally a separate study by the arborist identified the two front elms (trees in question) as being in an unhealthy state with dead branches.

The Civil Engineer also provided a survey of existing trees with the site plan superimposed. It indicates trees are located at or near proposed driveways and homes. Trees as noted above would not be good candidates for transplanting with re-grading of the site necessary to prepare it for the proposed location of driveways and structures. Existing trees including the two front Elm trees cannot be incorporated within the design in their current locations due to siting of the proposed buildings and driveways and the arborist report does not recommend transplanting of the trees except the Date Palm.

Circulation and Driveways

The applicant's Civil Engineer met with City Staff and demonstrated that circulation would be problematic if driveways and garage entrances were designed around the two fronting elms. The two units fronting Ince Boulevard would have their garage entrances either in a north/south orientation facing each other or in an east facing orientation opposite the current west facing orientation.

In the north/south orientation the driveway width between the two garages is only 15 feet wide which is inconsistent with the Zoning Code required 24 foot wide drive aisle. Required turning movements would conflict with structure locations. In the east facing orientation, back up radial turn movements would require that cars use the back-up driveway space of adjacent units thereby creating an internal conflict and eliminating guest parking for those units since their driveways would be needed as back-up area for the two street fronting units.

With regard to narrowing the number of driveway approaches, conflicts similar to those noted above would arise. There would be an elimination of guest parking for the two street fronting units and potential re-orientation of garage entrances would result in the back up conflicts noted above.

Pervious Paving

The applicant's engineer provided a memo to staff outlining pervious paving features. Storm water treatment proposed for the project includes:

- Pervious pavers are proposed over a large portion of the central driveway and courtyard which will allow storm water to seep through the paving material and infiltrate into the ground.
- An underground storm water infiltration chamber system is proposed to be installed beneath the courtyard in order to accommodate the City's Low Impact Development (LID) requirements. This system will consist of a catch basin adjacent to the street which will intercept runoff from the site. This catch basin also contains a filter and small diameter discharge pipe which will be connected to the infiltration chamber. This will allow the initial flows from the site to be filtered and transferred to the infiltration chamber. Water in the infiltration chamber will seep into the ground and recharge the ground water system. Larger flows will bypass the filter system and discharge into the back of the existing catch basin in the street via a storm drain pipe connecting the on-site catch basin to the street catch basin. The street catch basin is part of the City drainage system.
- The infiltration chamber system is sized to handle the runoff from the entire site per City requirements; it is slightly larger than required. The infiltration from the previous pavers will also add to the treatment capacity which exceeds City requirements.

Conclusions

Based on staff conversations with the applicant as well as a review of the Planning Commission and City Council meetings, staff believes the project as designed cannot accommodate the existing trees through either potential transplanting or maintenance in place and communicated the same to the applicant.