



# City of Culver City

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## Staff Report Details (With Text)

**File #:** 16-218      **Version:** 1      **Name:** 4180 Duquesne Ave  
**Type:** Public Hearing      **Status:** Public Hearing  
**File created:** 9/7/2016      **In control:** PLANNING COMMISSION  
**On agenda:** 9/28/2016      **Final action:**  
**Title:** Administrative Site Plan Review, P2016-0121-ASPR and Tentative Parcel Map, P2016-0121-TPM, for the construction of a two-story, four-unit condominium development at 4180 Duquesne Avenue in the Medium Density Multiple Family Residential (RMD) zone.

**Sponsors:**

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** 1. 16-09-28\_ATT NO 1\_4180 Duquesne Ave - Reso CofA Final.pdf, 2. 16-09-28\_ATT NO 2\_4180 Duquesne Ave - Vicinity Map.pdf, 3. 16-09-28\_ATT NO 3\_4180 Duquesne Ave - Project Summary.pdf, 4. 16-09-28\_ATT NO 4\_4180 Duquesne Ave-Arch Plans.pdf, 5. 16-09-28\_ATT NO 5\_4180 Duquesne Ave-TPM 74065.pdf, 6. 16-09-28\_ATT NO 6\_4180 Duquesne Ave-Com Meeting Minutes.pdf, 7. 16-09-28\_ATT NO 7\_4180 Duquesne Narrative.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
9/28/2016	1	PLANNING COMMISSION		
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**Administrative Site Plan Review, P2016-0121-ASPR and Tentative Parcel Map, P2016-0121-TPM, for the construction of a two-story, four-unit condominium development at 4180 Duquesne Avenue in the Medium Density Multiple Family Residential (RMD) zone.**

**Contact Person/Dept:** Peter Sun, Assistant Planner  
Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager

**Phone Number:** 310.253.5710

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**General Fund:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Public Hearing:** ☒

**Action Item:** ☐

**Attachments:** ☐

**Public Notification:** Mailed to all property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius, Public Notice, emailed to the City's master distribution list, and posted on the City's website on September 7, 2016

**Department Approval:** Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (09/15/16)

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt Class 3 and Class 15 Categorical Exemptions for this project pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; and Section 15315, Minor Land Divisions.
2. Approve Administrative Site Plan Review, P2016-0121-ASPR and Tentative Parcel Map, P2016-0121-TPM, subject to the Conditions of Approval as stated in Resolution No. 2016-P013 (Attachment No. 1).

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and Planning Commission poses questions to staff as desired.
2. Chair opens the public hearing, providing the applicant the first opportunity to speak, followed by the general public.
3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
4. Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Request**

On July 6, 2016, an application was submitted for an Administrative Site Plan Review and Tentative Parcel Map to allow the subdivision of one (1) parcel into four (4) airspace condominium lots, and the construction of four (4) attached residential condominium dwelling units at 4180 Duquesne Avenue in the Residential Medium Density Multiple Family (RMD) Zone.

### **Existing Conditions**

The project site is located at 4180 Duquesne Avenue on the northeast side of Duquesne Avenue between Braddock Drive and Lucerne Avenue. The lot is 50 feet in width and 135 feet in depth, having a gross lot size of 6,750 square feet. A 10-foot street dedication is required for future widening of Duquesne Avenue. As a result, the net developable lot area is 6,250 square feet. The property is zoned Medium Density Multiple Family Residential (RMD) and designated Residential Medium Density Multiple Family by the General Plan. The project site is located in the Gateway Neighborhood and is subject to the Gateway Multi-Family Residential Design Guidelines.

The project site is currently developed with a one-story single-family home and detached two-car garage. All existing structures and site improvements are to be demolished as part of the proposed project.

The neighborhood surrounding the site is zoned RMD on both sides of Duquesne Avenue between Braddock Drive and Lucerne Avenue. The block is developed with a mix of one to ten-unit developments with the most frequent being two-unit developments.

Duquesne Avenue is a 60-foot public right-of-way and identified as secondary artery, as classified by the General Plan Circulation Element. Duquesne Avenue serves as a link between collectors and primary arteries, including Lucerne Avenue, which is a collector, and Culver Boulevard and Jefferson Boulevard, both primary arteries. New development projects along Duquesne Avenue are required to record a 10-foot

dedication closest to the public street for the future widening of Duquesne Avenue. The street dedication will be recorded prior to final map approval.

### Project Description

The project applicant proposes to construct four (4) condominium dwelling units in a two-story 24'-8" high building. The four units are positioned with two units side-by-side in the front of the lot, and two units side by side in the rear. Each of the units are two-story with common areas on the ground floor and 2-3 bedrooms on the second floor. See below for unit breakdown.

	Unit A	Unit B	Unit C	Unit D
Bedrooms	2	3	3	3
Bathrooms	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
1 <sup>st</sup> Floor Living Area	606	678	883	870
2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Living Area	819	951	876	908
Total Living Area	1,425	1,629	1,759	1,778

The condominium building is designed in a modern style with large expansive windows and a building form with both vertical and horizontal articulation achieved through varying building planes. Private roof decks are provided for each unit to provide passive recreation space. Each unit is also provided with a ground level yard area of at least 200 square feet.

Parking is provided in a semi-subterranean parking structure accessed from a 10-foot wide driveway ramp off Duquesne Avenue. The new driveway ramp is located in the same location and width as the existing driveway, minimizing the changes to existing parkway and curb improvements that could reduce street parking. Each of the units are provided two (2) private tandem spaces in an enclosed garage in the semi-subterranean garage. One (1) guest/handicap space is provided per zoning requirements.

## **ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION**

### **1. ADMINISTRATIVE SITE PLAN REVIEW**

#### Standards of Development

The RMD Zone allows a density of 1 unit per 1,500 square feet of net lot area, up to a maximum of 9 dwelling units; therefore, based on the net lot area of 6,250 square feet, a maximum of four (4) units may be allowed on the site. The RMD Zone requires minimum setbacks of 10 feet or half the building height in the front, 5 feet on the side, and 10 feet in the rear or 5 feet when adjacent to an alley in rear. The maximum allowable height is two (2) stories and thirty (30) feet. However, permitted projections may project above the finished top plate.

The project meets all applicable standards of development of the RMD zone. The project complies with all setback requirements, providing a 22'-6" setback in the front yard measured from the sidewalk, 5-foot setback in the side yards, and 10-foot setback in the rear. The project is measured approximately 24'-8" from grade to the top of parapet/guardrail. This complies with the maximum height of 30 feet in the RMD zone. Two staircase enclosures provide access to private roof decks for each of the units. Staircase enclosures are permitted projections above the maximum height, and the height measured to the top of the staircase enclosures is 33 feet 8 inches.

The project meets the minimum required livable area of 1,100 square feet for a three-bedroom unit. Each of the units is provided approximately 450 to 550 square feet of roof deck and 200 square feet of private yard

space to comply with minimum open space requirements of 100 square feet per unit.

### Parking

Parking is provided in a semi-subterranean garage accessed from Duquesne Avenue. The project meets the parking requirement for a multi-family project by providing two (2) enclosed parking spaces per unit, for a total of eight (8) enclosed spaces. These private spaces are provided in tandem and enclosed in with a roll-up door. 150 cubic feet of storage is provided at the front of the spaces above the car hood. Each unit has individual access through a staircase into a private garage. One (1) guest parking space is provided in front of the trash room to meet the guest space requirement of 1 space per every 4 units. The guest parking space is also shared to be used as a handicap space.

The driveway ramp providing vehicular access to the subterranean garage is located at the north corner of the site and utilizes the same driveway apron on the street. The ramp is minimized to 10 feet in width to minimize the driveway visibility on the street and to minimize the impact of wider curb cuts which would reduce street parking availability. Common access to the subterranean garage is provided through an elevator lift to the small interior courtyard on the ground floor, and an exterior staircase in the side yard.

### Landscape

As required by the CCMC, the applicant must landscape all front, side, and rear yards not devoted to paved driveways, walkways, or patios. Each of the two units in the front has a private front yard and landscaped area within the 10 foot street dedication area. The front yards are fenced with 4-foot high horizontal metal railing. The two rear units will each have a private landscaped rear yards. All landscaped areas will be required to comply with the City's requirements for drought tolerant landscaping

The applicant is also required to make improvements to the parkway, which shall be landscaped with drought tolerant plants and irrigated pursuant to the City's recently adopted parkway landscape standards.

### Architectural Design

The project is a contemporary design, utilizing large expansive windows in black anodized frames, and score lines to match. A full height glazing is found on the front of the building and wraps around the southern corner unit. A notched box-like architectural design element is provided on the front corner of the northern corner unit. Many of the windows are casement, creating a modern streamlined and flush plane. The two front units each have a walk-up front door facing Duquesne Avenue consistent with the pedestrian and streetscape elements recommend by the Gateway Design guidelines. The rear two units are access via front door opening into a courtyard between the front and rear units which avoids entrances facing side property lines that are discouraged by the design guidelines.

On the side and rear elevations, the building uses different colors and volumes to provide architectural relief and articulation. The massing is broken into white or dark grey volumes on every elevation.

A private roof-top deck is provided for each of the four units. The roof decks provide passive recreational open space for each of the occupants. The roof decks are set back from the edges of the building by approximately 3 feet on all sides to reduce the appearance of the total height and massing of the building, and to help protect the privacy of abutting property owners. The wrought-iron railing on the roof deck also reduces the visibility of the roof deck and height of the overall building. Staircases to the roof deck are housed in two 8-foot structures of glass and anodized aluminum frame. The staircases are also set back from the edge of the building by at least the height of the structure. One is set back 15 feet from the rear; another is setback by 11 feet from the front. Each of the roof decks is equipped with a barbeque for recreational use. Air conditioning condensers are screened on the roof deck.

Neighborhood Compatibility

The project is located in the Gateway Neighborhood Multi-Family Design Guidelines (Guidelines) area. As such, the design of the project is informed by the Guidelines and is intended to be compatible with the existing neighborhood. The Gateway Neighborhood is a transitional multi-family neighborhood with many properties developed at higher densities consistent with the City's General Plan. Therefore, the block is comprised of varying architectural styles, building forms, and floor area ratios. The applicant has designed the project to be consistent with the General Plan and RMD zoning designation, and in a manner that respects the transitional building forms of the neighborhood.

In an effort to ensure neighborhood compatibility, the project is designed to be consistent with the average and prevailing front yard setback, lot coverage, and building height of surrounding properties (Identified as Block D in the Guidelines). Block D is comprised of all properties on the both sides of Duquesne Avenue bounded by Braddock Drive to the north and Ballona Creek to the south. Page G0.00 of the submitted plans contains a detailed description of the project data and averages found on Block D.

	CCMC Req.	Avg.	Prevailing	Project
Front setback	12' (1/2 of height to top plate)	24'	20'	22'-6"
Height	30' max	24'	23'	24'-8" (to parapet)
Lot Coverage	N/A	46%	41-60%	59%

During the design process, the project height was reduced several times with adjustments to the height of the top plate, the parapet and height of appurtenant roof-top structures. The building front yard setback was also increased to be more consistent with the average setback conditions on the block. Given the transitional nature of Block D, which is composed of single-family and multi-family developments, the block average is a good metric to use for determining consistency with neighborhood conditions. Please see the Design Narrative contained in Attachment No. 7.

Window alignment with adjacent buildings was also analyzed to identify potential impacts to privacy and provide appropriate mitigations. Page A1.10 and A1.20 illustrate the windows found on adjacent buildings, and a breakdown of window distances, and solutions to address compatibility. Most privacy impacts on the first floor are mitigated by the use of a 6-foot high fence or the installation of tall trees.

In summary, the project meets the design objectives outlined in the Guidelines. The project reflects the development patterns and character of the neighborhood relative to prevailing lot size, building orientation, setbacks, height, yards, open space, and lot coverage. The project utilizes a well-developed materials palette, massing, and details that create visual interest and contribute to overall architectural quality. Privacy and access to sunlight for adjacent residences is provided. The existing parkway at the street is preserved, with minimum disruption to existing street trees. Landscaping is integrated within the project in private yards and roof decks. Lighting is functionally placed and shielded to protect spillage into adjacent properties. Parking and parking access is designed to minimize visual impact and maximize open space.

## 2. TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP

The State Subdivision Map Act and CCMC Chapter 15.10 regulate the subdivision of land, and require the submittal of a tentative tract map for subdivisions meeting certain criteria, including specific airspace subdivisions for condominium purposes. In addition, CCMC Section 17.210.020 - Table 2-4, Residential District Development Standards (RLD, RMD, RHD), requires a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet or the average area of residential lots within a 500-foot radius of proposed subdivision, whichever is greater. This Zoning Code section further notes condominium, townhome, or planned development projects may be

subdivided with smaller parcel sizes for ownership purposes, with the minimum lot area determined through the subdivision review process, provided that the overall development site complies with the minimum lot size requirements of the Zoning Code.

The project lot area is 6,750 square feet; net lot area is 6,250 square feet. Through the tentative parcel map review and site plan review process, the lot is determined to be adequate to support the development of four (4) condominium airspace units and meet the requirements of the Zoning Code. At the permitted density of 1 unit per 1,500 square feet in the RMD zone, a 6,250-square-foot net lot is permitted 4.2 or a maximum of four (4) units.

Tentative Parcel Map No. 74065 has been reviewed and deemed complete by the City's Engineering Division. It includes the proper legal map descriptions, adequate preliminary site drainage and grading, and details to be accepted for tentative approval.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

As part of the project review process, one community meeting was held. The applicant invited interested persons to review the proposed project, provide comments and feedback, as well as to share any concerns regarding the proposed project.

### **Community Meeting**

A community meeting was held May 26, 2016 at the Veterans Memorial Building at 4117 Overland Avenue. Invitations were sent by the applicant on May 10, 2016 to all property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius of the project site. Four community members signed in to the meeting.

Many of the community members who participated in the meeting lived in the immediate vicinity of the property. A summary of the community meeting (Attachment No. 6) was provided by the applicant as a record of the discussion. The community participants asked about unit sizes, affordability, and construction and permit scheduling. The project team addressed questions; they also contacted homeowners individually to provide additional project details. The attendees were generally supportive of the project.

### **Comments Received During Public Comment Period**

No comments were received during public comment period.

## **CONCLUSION/SUMMARY**

Through the preliminary project review process, the applicant has worked with staff to design a project that conforms to the Zoning Code and is compatible with the neighborhood and immediate surrounding properties. The applicant has continuously worked with staff and made five or more revisions which included significant changes to step backs the front elevation, reduced the overall building height, and massing. The applicant also reduced the size of the roof decks and stepped them in from the edge of the roof in response to community input. .

Based on the preliminary development plans and recommended conditions of approval, staff finds the project to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, providing a layout, architectural design, and landscape consistent with applicable development standards and Guidelines, with adequate public facilities, and consistent with the Culver City General Plan and the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, the Tentative Parcel Map meets all requirements of the CCMC and the State Subdivision Map Act. Staff believes the findings for Administrative Site Plan Review, P2016-0121-ASPR, and Tentative Tract Map No. 74065,

P2016-0121-TPM, can be made as outlined in Resolution No. 2016-P013 (Attachment No. 1).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, initial review of the project by staff established that there are no potentially significant adverse impacts on the environment and the proposed project has been determined to be Class 3 and Class 15 Categorical Exemptions as "Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" (Section 15303) and "Minor Land Division" (Section 15315) project. Specifically, as outlined herein, the project consists of the construction of one multi-story structure containing four (4) attached residential dwelling units and the subdivision of the site into four (4) airspace condominiums, thereby establishing one (1) condominium residential unit on each airspace lot. The proposed project involves the construction of a limited number of small structures, such as a duplex or similar residential structure, totaling no more than six (6) dwelling units within an urbanized area. The project is deemed to be consistent with the applicable General Plan and RMD zoning designation and regulations without any variances or exceptions, does not involve a parcel from a larger subdivision within the previous two (2) years, and will not result in a parcel with an average slope greater than 20 percent. In addition, the project will be adequately served by all required utilities and public services; and will have all serves and access to local standards. Therefore, the project is categorically exempt pursuant to the above noted CEQA sections.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Resolution No. 2016-P013 and Exhibit A: Conditions of Approval
2. Vicinity Map
3. Project Summary
4. Preliminary Development Plans dated July 6, 2016
5. Tentative Tract Map No. 74402
6. Community Meeting Summary
7. Design Narrative