



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council
Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report

File #: 20-278, **Version:** 1

Item #: PH-1.

PC: Tentative Parcel Map No. 82348 and Administrative Site Plan Review for the Development of a Four (4) Unit Condominium Subdivision at 3846 Bentley Avenue.

Meeting Date: September 25, 2019

Contact Person/Dept: William Kavadas, Assistant Planner;
Michael Allen, Current Planning Manager

Phone Number: 310-253-5706 / 310-253-5727

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒ **Action Item:** ☐ **Attachments:** ☒

City Council Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒ **Date:** N/A

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Planning Commission (09/19/19); (Posted) City Website (09/05/2019); (Published) in Culver City News (09/05/2019); (Sign Posted) on Project Site (09/04/2019)

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (9/20/19)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission 1) Adopt a Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA Section 15303 and 15315, Class 3 and 15, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures and Minor Land Divisions, finding that there are no potentially significant adverse impacts on the environment and 2) Approve Tentative Parcel Map No. 82348, P2019-0027-TPM and Administrative Site Plan Review P2019-0027-ASPR, subject to the Conditions of Approval as stated in Resolution No. 2019-P009.

PROCEDURES

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and the Planning Commission poses questions to staff as desired.
2. Chair opens the public hearing, and receives comments from 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 February 5, 2019, Urban Design Specialists submitted an application for a Tentative Parcel Map and Administrative Site Plan Review to allow the development of four (4) attached condominium units at 3846 Bentley Avenue in the Medium Density Multiple Family Zone.

Existing Conditions

The project site is located on the west side of Bentley Avenue midway between Venice Boulevard and Matteson Avenue in the Clarkdale Neighborhood, as shown on the Vicinity Map (Attachment No. 2). The site is generally flat in topography and rectangular in shape with dimensions of 50 feet in width by 132 feet in depth. The subject site is currently developed with a vacant single-family residential structure. Existing mature trees span the northern side of the rear yard.

The surrounding neighborhood consists of largely rectangular parcels, similar in size, and developed mostly with single family and multi-family dwellings in both single story and multi-story designs. The City's General Plan Land Use Element designates the site as Medium Density Multiple Family and the site is zoned Medium Density Multiple-Family Residential (RMD). Surrounding Zoning and existing land uses are the same as the subject property.

Project Description

The proposed project is designed as four (4) unit condominium with two-story structures and parking in a subterranean shared garage. Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.540.010, construction of new residential projects of less than ten (10) units is subject to an Administrative Site Plan Review. As the project also proposes subdivision for condominium purposes of four units or less, the Planning Commission is required to take action on both the proposed Site Plan Review and Tentative Parcel Map.

The units incorporate a modern design, each with three (3) bedrooms and two one-half bathrooms. Units range between 1,900 and 2,020 square feet. The subterranean garage would be accessed by pedestrians through common access staircases in the front and rear of the property and accessed by vehicles through a driveway ramp off of Bentley Avenue. The building incorporates multiple breaks in the façade and appropriate setbacks on all sides to minimize unfinished building massing and provides variety in building finishes including white and grey stucco, unfinished walnut like wood accents, dakota brown veener stone, and dark grey metal trim. The balconies on the projects north façade have been stepped in from the main façade to provide increased variation. The maximum height of the structure is 24 feet 4 inches to top of plate and 28 feet 4 inches to top of parapet, compliant with Zoning Code requirements that allow a maximum 30 foot height limit. Tall landscaping is proposed along northern property lines to shield adjacent properties from the windows of the proposed project.

All improvements shown in the preliminary development plans are consistent with the provisions of the Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC). The proposed subdivision will create four condominium airspace parcels, consistent with Municipal Code requirements for Condominium subdivisions.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The RMD Zone allows up to one dwelling unit per 1,500 square feet of lot area. The minimum required setbacks in the RMD Zone are ten (10) feet or half the building height, five (5) feet, and ten (10) feet, for the front, sides, and rear respectively. The maximum allowable height is two (2) stories and thirty (30) feet. The minimum lot size and area are fifty (50) feet in width, one hundred (100) feet in depth, and 5,000 square feet in area. There is no floor area ratio requirement for the RMD zone. As illustrated in the project summary (Attachment No. 3), the proposed development conforms to all regulations of the RMD zone.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY

The proposed development is located along the 3800 block of Bentley Avenue, which is a residential street developed with a variety of one-story and multi-story, single-family and multi-family units. The block and surrounding Clarkdale neighborhood have overall transitioned to higher density housing developments consistent with density designations (Medium Density Multiple Family) envisioned for the neighborhood by the City's General Plan Land Use Element.

The proposed subdivision to create four condominium housing units will be consistent with the existing density and land use patterns in the neighborhood. As shown in Attachment 4, the future development complies with the RMD Zoning Code requirements, as well as the average and prevailing conditions related to lot coverage, front setback, building height, and density as identified in the Multi-Family Residential Design Guidelines (Guidelines) that mirror prevailing neighborhood development conditions on the subject block.

The building design incorporates a modern architectural design. Architectural features and siding materials break-up the massing and bulk so as to be compatible with development in the neighborhood. Balconies are set in further from the main façade in order to provide façade variation, especially next to existing lower density housing. Use of different material including white and grey smooth stucco, unfinished walnut wood accents, Dakota brown veneer stone, and dark grey metal canopies help to provide façade variations on all sides of the structure. Window placement and landscaping choices are sensitive to the preservation of privacy for both residents of the proposed project and residents of surrounding developments. The architectural design of the street facing façade includes windowed facades that help transition the private realm of the home to the public realm of the street without closing off the front façade to passing pedestrians.

The existing neighborhood makeup is a mix of post-war single-family architecture with some multi-unit apartment complexes with designs from the latter half of the 20th Century. The subject structure's modern design is different from existing structures, but architectural features and compliance with neighborhood design guidelines and block averages will help the proposed structure to blend into its surroundings.

LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE

As required by the CCMC, the applicant must landscape all front, side, and rear yards not devoted to paved driveways, walkways, or patios. In addition, no more than 45 percent of a front yard setback area can be covered in hardscape. The front and rear yard setbacks will provide approximately 1,056 square feet of landscaping. First floor patios will be accessible from the living rooms of each unit. Roof decks are also available on each unit and measure between 337 and 378 square feet. Roof decks are setback from the edges of buildings to provide additional privacy to neighboring properties. Landscape will include a variety of plant materials including a marina strawberry tree in the front yard and bamboo along the side of the building. Plantings will accent and soften the building façade and increase privacy along key frontages. Preliminary landscape information is included in the preliminary development plans attached to this report (Attachment No. 4).

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Planning and Public Works Environmental Programs and Operations (EPO) staff worked with the applicant regarding placement of trash and recycling services. The trash room was originally shown on the plans in the basement of the structure as individual bins. Individual bins would add to a proliferation of on-street bins during trash day. To resolve this issue, the applicant and EPO staff designed a trash enclosure solution along the rear alley. This solution allows for adequate trash bin size for waste management and also removes trash enclosures or trash bins from facing or temporarily occupying the primary public right-of-way.

TRAFFIC, PARKING, AND CIRCULATION

Primary pedestrian access to the building will be via a walkway from Bentley Avenue. The walkway will continue along the southern property line and provide access to the front doors of all four units. The walkway will also provide pedestrian access to the parking garage and rear alleyway.

Bentley Avenue currently measures eighty (80) feet in width and is of adequate width to serve the proposed subdivision and four-unit development. The gutter, curb, sidewalk, and driveway approach along the project's frontage are required to be removed and replaced, while preserving existing street trees, as more specifically outlined in the recommended conditions of approval. The density of the overall development will not create any significant traffic impacts and is below the threshold requiring a traffic study or off-site improvements related to traffic.

In accordance with the Zoning Code requirements, the project will provide nine (9) total parking spaces. Each unit will be provided with the minimum required two (2) parking spaces and the project will have one guest parking space, all designed to provide the minimum required width, depth, and height clearances. The proposed ten (10) foot wide common driveway along the southerly edge of the site will provide vehicular access to the subterranean garage while a separate pedestrian entrance will allow pedestrians to enter the garage from the front of the property. A back-up clearance of 27 feet is provided, exceeding the minimum requirement of 24 feet and allowing sufficient turning radius and maneuvering area in accordance with all applicable CCMC standards. Based on the above, the proposed subdivision project is in conformance with all applicable CCMC requirements relating to parking, circulation, and traffic.

SUBDIVISION, DENSITY, AND LOT AREA REQUIREMENTS

CCMC Section 17.210.020 - Table 2-3, Residential Districts Development Standards (R1, R2, R3), requires a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet or the average area of residential lots within a 500 foot radius of the proposed subdivision, whichever is greater. However, this section also states that 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 State Subdivision Map Act and CCMC Chapter 15.10 regulates land divisions and requires the submittal of a tentative parcel map for subdivisions of land.

The overall project will maintain its current 6,600 square foot lot area. The overall lot width of 50 feet will not change and the overall lot length of 132 feet will not change. Other parcels in the neighborhood have a similar lot area of 6,600. Thus, the overall project lot configuration - area, width, and length - will comply with the RMD development standards. Through the subdivision process, four airspace condominium parcels will be created within the existing conforming lot.

The key objective of the tentative parcel map process is to allow the City to review the proposed subdivision to ensure all necessary improvements and requirements are provided. The Public Works Department has

reviewed the Tentative Parcel Map (Attachment No. 5) for the proposed subdivision and found it to be in compliance with all applicable State and local regulations as more specifically outlined in the recommended conditions of approval. The proposed condominium development includes a common driveway with vehicular access easements secured through the condominium association Covenants, Restrictions, and Conditions (CC&Rs).

All required subdivision findings can be made for the Project and all required vehicular, pedestrian, and utility/drainage easements will be made a part of the final map assuring all airspace parcels have required access to the public right-of-way.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

As part of the project review process, a community meeting was held on Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 7:00PM, at Veterans Memorial Building. The applicant invited interested persons to learn about the development project, provide comments and feedback, and share any concerns regarding the proposed project. One (1) member of the public who lives in the immediate neighborhood attended the community meeting. The member of the public reviewed the proposed plans and responded positively to the development. No additional comments were made. Attachment No. 6 includes notes from the public meeting.

Comments Received During Public Comment Period

As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any written public comments on the proposed project.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

The proposed project design and façade material provide an attractive street frontage that helps maintain the neighborhood character. Staff worked with the applicant to minimize the project mass and create greater building articulation. Adjacent property privacy will be preserved by use of increased setbacks and tall landscaping along property lines adjacent to other residential uses.

Based on the proposed preliminary development plans and recommended conditions of approval, staff considers the project: compatible with the surrounding neighborhood; adequately served by public facilities; and, consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Code, and all CCMC and State subdivision requirements. Staff believes that findings for Tentative Parcel Map P2019-0027-TPM and Administrative Site Plan Review P2019-0027-ASPR can be made as outlined in Resolution No. P2019-009 (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 environmental and the proposed project has been determined to be a Class 3 and Class 15 Categorical Exemption as an “New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures” (Section 15303) project and as a “Minor Land Division” (Section 15315) project. The proposed project is a new four (4) unit multi-family residential condominium development in an urban area that is being subdivided into four or fewer airspace parcels. No variances or exceptions to the code are required and all services and access to the proposed parcels are currently available or will become available after construction. The parcel involved in the project has not been a part of a larger parcel division in the last two (2) years, and the parcel has an average slope of less than 20 degrees.

The proposed project is not subject to any of the exceptions that require additional analysis for exemption under Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines. The location of the project is predominantly urban and the

project is considered consistent with the surrounding urban uses including similar multi-family housing. The cumulative impact of this project, and the approval of other projects like it in the vicinity, is not expected to have any significant environmental impact that has not already been studied by virtue of adopting the original zoning for the property. Additional residential developments constructed within the regulations of the adopted zoning code are not expected to have cumulative or significant environmental impacts.

The project is not located along any state designated scenic highway nor within any designated hazardous waste site. The site on which the building is proposed is not considered a significant historical site by any governmental body. Staff does not expect any significant impacts or unusual circumstances related to the approval and construction of this project.

Therefore, the proposed project is categorically exempt from CEQA.

MOTION

That the Planning Commission:

Adopt a Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA Section 15303 and 15315, Class 3 and 15, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures and Minor Land Divisions, finding that there are no potentially significant adverse impacts on the environment and Adopt Resolution No. 2019-P009 approving Tentative Parcel Map P2019-0027-TPM and Administrative Site Plan Review P2019-0027-ASPR related to a new four-unit condominium development.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Resolution No. 2019-P009 and Exhibit A Conditions of Approval
2. Vicinity Map
3. Project Summary
4. Preliminary Development Plans Dated June 27, 2019 and Tentative Parcel Map No. 82348
5. Applicant Summary of Community Meetings