



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman
Council Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232
(310) 253-5851

Staff Report

File #: 20-1003, **Version:** 1

Item #: 1.

PC - Consideration of an Administrative Site Plan Review and Tentative Tract Map No. 82562 for the Construction of a Five (5) Unit Condominium Subdivision at 3906 Tilden Avenue in the Residential Medium Density (RMD) Zone.

Meeting Date: June 10, 2020

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

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

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

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

City Council Action Required: Yes ☒ No ☐ **Date:** TBD

Public Notification: (Mailed) Property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius of the site (05/20/2020); (Sign Posted) Project Site (05/20/2020); (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas-Planning Commission (06/05/2020); (Posted) City Website (06/05/2020)

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (06/04/20))

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission 1) Adopt Class 32 Categorical Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act; 2) Approve Administrative Site Plan Review P2019-0046-ASPR and recommend to the City Council approval of a Tentative Tract Map, P2019-0046-TTM, subject to the Conditions of Approval as stated in Resolution No. 2020-P006.

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 22, 2019, 1485PH LLC (the “Applicant”), on behalf of Lewis Futterman (the “Owner”) applied for an Administrative Site Plan Review and Tentative Tract Map to allow the development of five (5) attached condominium units (the “Project”) at 3906 Tilden Avenue (the “Project Site”) in the Medium Density Multiple Family (RMD) Zone.

Existing Conditions

The Project Site is located on the southeast corner of Tilden Avenue and Matteson Avenue, as shown on the Vicinity Map (Attachment No. 2). The subject lot is 63 feet in width by 143 feet in depth, larger than standard dimensions of other lots in the vicinity of the Project Site. The Project Site is currently developed with three single-family residential structures.

Surrounding Area/General Plan/Zoning

The surrounding neighborhood includes predominantly multi-family dwellings and some single family homes.. Many properties include one-story structures facing the street, with taller two-story structures in the rear of the property. Sloped roofs are the most common roof type in the neighborhood. 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 land use is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

Location	Zoning	Land Use
West	RMD	Multi-Family Apartment and 4-Unit Condominium
East	RMD	Single Family
North	RMD	Duplex
South	RMD	Triplex

Project Description

The proposed structure is a contemporary design with five (5) attached condominium units. The dwelling units are two-stories including a mezzanine located over a subterranean garage. The units have a maximum height of 30 feet to the roofline and 34 feet to the top of the parapet wall. Each unit has two (2) parking spaces and private storage areas in the subterranean parking structure. Pedestrian access to the subterranean garage would be provided by a common access staircase at Tilden Avenue, a lift at Matteson Avenue, and individual entrances from the interior of each unit. A driveway provides vehicular access to the subterranean garage from Tilden Avenue. Resident entrances are accessed from Matteson Avenue. The project development program is summarized in Table 2:

Table 2: Development Program

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
Size (sq. ft.)	2,209	2,266	2,618	2,607	2,548
Bedrooms	3	3	3	3	3
Bath	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The RMD Zone allows for up to one (1) dwelling unit per 1,500 square feet of net lot area, up to a maximum of nine (9) dwelling units. Based on the 8,963 square foot lot area, a maximum of five (5) dwelling units are permitted on-site; the applicant is proposing five (5) units. As illustrated in the Project Summary (Attachment No. 3), the proposed development conforms to all regulations of the RMD Zone.

ADMINISTRATIVE SITE PLAN REVIEW

Architectural Design

The proposed contemporary design includes straight lines and multiple surfaces positioned at right angles to create articulated facades along the street frontages of Matteson and Tilden Avenues. Large windows at street level and windows adjacent to the primary entrances creates an attractive building frontage along the street. The articulated surfaces in the project include a mix of wood siding, textured black stucco panels, and dark steel door and window frames. The Projects color palette includes light-colored wood, and black stucco with yellow accent front doors. Roof top decks are bounded by glass parapet walls along street frontage, with a five foot from building edge along interior side and rear property lines to increase privacy for project residents and neighbors. Roof decks are accessed from stairwells that are setback between 13 and 16 feet from building edge to reduce visibility from street level. Solar panels are also located on the roof of each unit. The Project massing is broken up along street edges by articulation in the faces of the building and by perimeter setback landscaping.

The proposed mezzanine increases the overall height of the structure, with the interior side and rear property lines lacking the same level of articulation that is provided along the street frontage. Staff has provided direction to address the projects interior side and rear building articulation, however the applicant has decided to move forward with the project without further modifications to the project.

Landscaping

As required by the CCMC, the applicant must landscape all front, side, and rear yards that are not devoted to paved driveways, walkways or patios. In addition, the front setback area must include a total landscaping equal to 55 percent the overall area.

Landscaping will include a variety of materials including trees and plantings to soften the building façade and increase privacy along property lines. The landscape plan incorporates three (3) 15-gallon Sweet Bay trees and one (1) 24" box Tea Tree along the perimeter of the property. Ground cover will be placed in the front setback area. Trees, shrubs, and ground cover will be conditioned to include drought tolerant planting. The project is subject to the City's Urban Forestry Master Plan and will provide parkway landscape improvements including street trees. The front setback along Tilden Avenue will include landscaping area equal to approximately 60 percent the overall front yard setback. Preliminary landscape information is included in the preliminary development plans (Attachment No. 4).

Open Space

The RMD Zone requires a minimum 100 square feet of open space per unit. Each unit provides more than the minimum open space requirement by way of roof decks. The proposed roof decks for the project and ground level yards for Units 1 and 5 provide a total open space area of 5,763 total square feet for the project. Private open space details are shown in Table 3. Roof decks will each include a barbeque, gas fire pit, and seating area.

Table 3: Private Open Space per Unit

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Total
Ground Level Private Yard (sq. ft.)	717	0	0	0	680	1,397
Roof Top Private Deck (sq. ft.)	856	957	886	904	763	4,366
Total Private Open Space (sq. ft.)	1,573	957	886	904	1,443	5,763

Neighborhood Compatibility and Multi-Family Guidelines

The proposed development is located along the 3900 block of Tilden Avenue surrounded by mostly multi-family uses of one (1) to two (2) stories with sloped roofs. 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. As part of the development review, the applicant provided a neighborhood typology study to understand the built environment of Tilden Avenue between Venice Boulevard to the north and Washington Place to the south. Neighborhood typologies are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Neighborhood Typologies

	Coverage	Height	Setback
Clarksdale	44%	20'	17'
3906 Tilden	69%	30'	15'

Typologies are intended as a baseline to ensure new structures are compatible with the neighborhood block and adjacent parcels. The overall 30-foot height to the roof deck, 34-foot height to top of parapet wall, and 39-foot height to top of stairwell is taller than most buildings on the block which average 20 feet in height; however, potential height impacts are addressed by the offset of the street facing facades with articulated building faces and setback of stairwells to the center of the building. Building articulation also helps to reduce massing along the Tilden Avenue front setback, which, as proposed at 15 feet, is less than the block average of 17 feet.

Overall, the project complies with the Multi-Family Guidelines. Massing is reduced along street frontages by utilizing a mix of façade treatments and articulation. Parking is subterranean with no visibility from side or rear yards and setback areas are landscaped. Front entrances for each unit face the public right-of-way, and project windows do not align with neighboring property windows. Privacy for both future residents and adjacent residents is further maintained on the roof top decks by use of setbacks from roof edges with solar panel equipment.

Staff has requested that articulation along street frontages to be repeated along the interior side and rear elevations in order to create better fit with the neighboring one-story structures to the east and south of the subject property.

Traffic, Parking, Storage, Circulation

The project provides 12 parking spaces as required by CCMC, distributed as shown below:

- Ten (10) subterranean parking stalls
 - Two (2) per unit
- Two (2) guest parking spaces
 - One (1) accessible stall
 - One (1) standard stall with EV charging station

The subterranean garage is accessed from a single driveway from Tilden Avenue meeting code required standard for a three (3) percent slope for the first 20 feet and no slope greater than 20 percent overall. The changes in slope will allow automobiles to traverse the ramp without damaging the undersides of vehicles.

Resident parking is provided in tandem stalls meeting minimum width, length, and overhead clearance requirements. Additional clearance is provided in the garage for 102 cubic feet of lockable private storage. A minimum required 24-foot back-up drive aisle provides enough turning radius and circulation area to maneuver in and out of parking stalls and exit the site with automobiles facing the public right-of-way.

Primary pedestrian access to each unit is provided via front doors along Matteson Avenue. Each unit will have access to the shared garage by stairways within each unit. Exterior access to the garage will be provided by a lift along Matteson Avenue and a pedestrian path adjacent to the driveway along Tilden Avenue. Two (2) bike parking stalls are provided per unit in the subterranean garage and two (2) guest bike stalls are provided along the Tilden Avenue frontage of the project adjacent to the subterranean garage entry.

The proposed project provides code required electric vehicle (EV) parking With three (3) EV capable parking spaces, two (2) EV ready parking spaces, and one (1) EV charging station.

The proposed means of vehicle and pedestrian ingress/egress to and from the site provides adequate access for emergency vehicles and services. The configuration of the proposed onsite driveway and vehicle maneuvering area are designed in accordance with all applicable CCMC standards. The density of the development will not create significant traffic impacts on adjacent streets and is below the threshold required for traffic study as determined by the Public Works Mobility Division.

TENTATIVE TRACT MAP

The State Subdivision Map Act and CCMC Chapter 15.10 regulate land division and require the submittal of a tentative tract map for subdivision of five airspace condominium parcels. In addition, CCMC Section 17.210.020 - Table 2-4, Residential District Development Standards (RLD, RMD, and RHD), require a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet or the average area of residential lots within a 500-foot radius of proposed subdivision. 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. As a one-lot subdivision for condominium purposes, the project lot area will remain at 8,963 square feet. The lot width of 63 feet and lot width of 143 feet will remain. The project lot configuration - area, width, and length - complies with RMD development standards. Through the subdivision process, five (5) condominium air spaces will be created within the existing conforming lot.

The key objective of the Tentative Tract 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 Tract Map (Attachment No. 5) for the proposed subdivision and determined compliance with all applicable State and local regulations as more specifically outlined in the recommended conditions of

approval. In condominium or townhome developments, the driveway and the land surrounding the units are held in common and vehicular access easements will be secured through the condominium association's Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs).

PUBLIC OUTREACH

As part of the project review process, two (2) community meetings were held on October 15, 2018 and December 5, 2019, at the Senior Center and Veterans Memorial Building respectively. The applicant invited interested persons to learn about the proposal, provide comments and feedback, and share any concerns. Approximately six (6) people who live in the project neighborhood attended the first community meeting and approximately ten (10) people who live in the project neighborhood attended the second community meeting. Below is a summary of each meeting:

1st Community Meeting October 15, 2018

- Attendees were concerned about mass and bulk of structure and how the aesthetic would contribute to the neighborhood.
- Attendees wanted to ensure privacy for adjacent property owners but did not want rooftop parapets to create an incompatible aesthetic.
- Attendees wanted to see housing on the site that transitioned from the existing triplex to higher density but felt that the proposed scope was not consistent with the neighborhood's existing character.
- Overall concern from attendees that project was too massive to add to the neighborhood character.

2nd Community Meeting December 5, 2019

- Attendees were in favor of the project with the updated design.
- Concern about parking space availability if the condos were rented out to individuals other than families.

City staff worked with the applicant to revise the original design presented at the first community meeting due to public and staff concerns about massing and articulation. Upon resubmittal of the current proposed plans, staff requested additional articulation along interior side and rear property lines similar to what was proposed along street frontages for consistency with the adjacent one-story structures to the east and south.

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.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

Based on review of the Project plans, the proposed residential development is not anticipated to result in any significant impacts on surrounding uses or be inconsistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan. The proposed construction of five (5) new residential dwellings will result in two (2) net new units at a density consistent with the General Plan Medium Density Multiple Family Land Use designation. The Project is also consistent with the goals of the General Plan Land Use Element Objective 2, which calls for the retention and

creation of housing throughout the City and the encouragement of multiple-family housing opportunities within neighborhoods designated for this development type. Furthermore, the addition of two (2) net new housing units will be consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan Housing Element Objective 2, which calls for opportunities to develop a variety of housing types while protecting the character and stability of existing Culver City neighborhoods.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

The proposed development will result in code compliant structures and parking. The preliminary architectural design was considered inconsistent with the existing neighborhood aesthetic per staff and public input. Staff worked with the applicant to create a project that is more compatible with the neighborhood and the abutting properties. Staff believes that the applicant has redesigned and modified the project to address neighborhood concerns and meet both the specific Zoning Code requirements and the spirit and intent of the Multi-Family Neighborhood Design Guidelines including massing and articulation modifications to the project street frontages and that with further modifications to the side and rear building facades, the project will provide a positive contribution to the neighborhood.

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 Categorical Exempt per CEQA Section 15332, Class 32, In-Fill Development:

- The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan Medium Density Multiple Family Land Use Designation and the RMD Zone;
- The proposed project is within Culver City city limits surrounded by urban uses;
- The proposed project has no value as a habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species as it is currently developed as a triplex with paved driveways and parking areas and vegetation consistent with residential lawns in suburban areas;
- The proposed project will not have significant traffic impacts as determined during review by Public Works Mobility Division;
- The proposed project will be within established thresholds for existing multi-family neighborhoods in regards to noise and air quality impacts as the site is surrounded by other multi-family housing uses;
- The implementation of Public Works stormwater run-off standards and the depth of the water table will result in less than significant impacts to water quality; and
- The proposed project can be adequately served by utilities and public services.

MOTION

That the Planning Commission:

- 1) Adopt of a Class 32, Categorical Exemption and Approve an Administrative Site Plan Review P2019-0046-ASPR, subject to the Conditions of Approval stated in the proposed Planning Commission Resolution; and
- 2) Recommend to the City Council approval of the Tentative Tract Map No. 82562, P2019-0046-

TTM, subject to the Conditions of Approval stated in proposed Planning Commission Resolution.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Planning Resolution No. 2020-P006 and Exhibit A Conditions of Approval
2. Vicinity Map
3. Project Summary
4. Preliminary Development Plans Dated April 4, 2020 and Tentative Tract Map No. 82562
5. Applicant Summary of Community Meetings
6. Public Comments (if received prior to final drafting of staff report)