



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 22-1143, **Version:** 1

Item #: PH-1.

PC - PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of an Administrative Site Plan Review and Tentative Parcel Map to Allow a Four (4) Unit Residential Condominium Development Located at 3826 Girard Avenue in the Residential Medium Density (RMD) Zone, Case No. P2021-0116-ASPR/TPM (Project).

Meeting Date: June 22, 2022

Contact Person/Dept: William Kavadas, Assistant Planner;
Erika Ramirez, 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: (Mailed) Property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius of the site (05/31/2022); (Sign Posted) Project Site (06/01/2022); (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas-Planning Commission (06/16/2022); (Posted) City Website (06/01/2022)

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (06/15/2022)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission 1) Adopt a Class 3 and 15 Categorical Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and 2) Approve Administrative Site Plan Review and Tentative Parcel Map No. 82792, Case No. P2021-0116-ASPR/TPM subject to Conditions of Approval as stated in Proposed Resolution No. 2022-P012, allowing a Four (4) Unit Residential Condominium Development.

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 May 10, 2021, Steve Stapakis (Applicant) applied for an Administrative Site Plan Review and Tentative Parcel Map to allow the development of four (4) attached condominium units on a 6,111 SF parcel at 3826 Girard Avenue (the "Project Site") in the Medium Density Multiple Family (RMD) Zone.

Existing Conditions

The Project Site is located on the west side of Girard Avenue south of Venice Boulevard, as shown on the Vicinity Map (Attachment No. 2). The Project Site is generally flat in topography and rectangular in shape measuring 47 feet wide and 130 feet long for a total gross area of 6,111. The Project Site subject site is currently developed with an 837 square foot single-story single-family residential structure with attached front loaded single-car garage.

Surrounding Area/General Plan/Zoning

The Project Site is in an urbanized area surrounded with mostly single family and multi-family dwellings. Adjacent to the project are single family homes to the north and east and multi-family apartments to the south and west. The surrounding neighborhood consists of largely rectangular parcels that are similar in size. 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. Surrounding zoning and land use is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

Location	Zoning	Land Use
West	RMD	Four-Unit Apartment
East	RMD	Single-Family Dwelling
North	RMD	Single-Family Dwelling
South	RMD	Triplex

Project Description

The proposed multi-family structure has a Cape Cod architectural design with exposed rafter tails, white vertical wood siding, a dark shingle roof, and dark metal porch roof.

Each condominium unit will range in total size from 1,632 square feet to 1,834 square feet with three bedrooms and between two and one-half and three bathrooms. Each unit will have two parking spaces in individual subterranean garages. Pedestrian access to the subterranean garage would be provided by a common access staircase in the rear of the property and a parking lift in the front of the property. The maximum height of the structure is 29 feet 11 inches measured from finished grade to the top of the roof pitch. The project development program is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Development Program

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
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Size (sq. ft.)	1,834	1,669	1,632	1,689
Bedrooms	3	3	3	3
Bath	3.5	2.5	2.5	2.5

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The RMD Zone allows for up to one dwelling unit per 1,500 square feet of net lot area for up to a maximum of nine dwelling units. Based on the Project Site lot size of 6,111 square foot, a maximum of four dwelling units are permitted on-site; the applicant is proposing four 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 building is designed in a Cape Cod architectural style with exposed rafter tails, white vertical wood siding, a dark shingle roof, and a dark, metal porch roof. These features and materials break-up the massing and bulk and blend with existing single-family development in the neighborhood. The center of the building proposes increased setbacks to reduce the area of the building in the middle of the property. Gable roofs and front porches along Girard Avenue also help to mimic single-family design and create a pedestrian oriented front façade. The use of bay windows create breaks in the façade and the overall window placement protects neighboring privacy by offsetting on-site windows from those of adjacent neighbors.

Landscaping and Open Space

As required by the Zoning Code, the applicant must landscape all front, side, and rear yards 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. The front yard setback provides approximately 388 square feet of landscaping, thus meeting the requirement. The street frontages are landscaped, with Wilson Olive trees and ground cover. The side yards and rear yards includes several Western Rosebud trees while substantial ground cover is placed along all other frontages. Trees, shrubs, and ground cover is conditioned to include drought tolerant planting per new statewide water saving initiatives. The Project is subject to the City's Urban Forest Master Plan and will provide necessary parkway landscape improvements. 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 at-grade patios. The Project's proposed patios provide a total open space area of 735 square feet. Private open space details are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Private Open Space per Unit

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Total
Patios (sq. ft.)	217	105	200	213	735

Neighborhood Compatibility and Multi-Family Guidelines

The proposed development is located along the 3800 block of Girard Avenue surrounded by a mix of single-family and multi-family uses. The block and surrounding Clarkdale neighborhood have overall transitioned to higher density housing developments consistent with the Medium Density Multiple Family land use designation 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 Girard Avenue between Venice Boulevard to the north and Washington Boulevard to the south. Neighborhood typologies related to lot coverage and setbacks are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Neighborhood Typologies

	Coverage	Setback
Clarkdale	44%	17'-4"
3826 Girard	57%	17'

The Planning Commission has used typologies as a baseline to ensure new structures are compatible with the neighborhood block and adjacent parcels. The setback is consistent with the average for the block area. While coverage is slightly larger than the overall block average, it is consistent with average coverage (58%) for multi-family units on the block.

Overall, the Project complies with the Multi-Family Design Guidelines. Massing is reduced along street frontages by utilizing a mix of façade treatments including gable roofs, bay windows, and porch features. Parking is subterranean with no visibility from side or rear yards and setback areas are landscaped. Front entrances for Units 1 and 2 face the public right-of-way, and Project windows do not align with neighboring property windows as much as possible.

Traffic, Parking, Storage, Circulation

The project provides nine parking spaces as required by the Zoning Code, distributed as shown below:

- Eight subterranean parking spaces in individual garages (two per unit)
- One guest parking stall (one per four units)

The subterranean garage is accessed from a single driveway from Girard Avenue. The driveway slope exceeds the Zoning Code Standard for maximum slope; however, the applicant has provided supporting drawings with engineer approval to verify visibility of pedestrians at the public right-of-way and the ability for automobiles to traverse changes in slope without damaging the underside of the vehicle.

Resident parking is provided in individual garages meeting minimum width, length, and overhead clearance requirements. Additional clearance is provided for private storage within each garage. A 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 a walkway on the southerly side of the property. Exterior access to the garage will be provided by a lift facing Girard Avenue and a common staircase in the rear of the property. The applicant meets bike parking requirements by providing two bike parking stalls per unit in each garage and two guest bike stalls within the front yard adjacent to Girard Avenue. Each garage as well as the guest parking space will have EV ready installation.

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 vehicle maneuvering area is designed in accordance with all applicable CCMC standards and the driveway design allows for visibility and maneuverability of automobiles. The density of the development will not create significant traffic impacts on adjacent streets and is below the City's threshold required for a traffic study.

TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP

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 6,111 square foot lot area. The overall lot width of 47 feet will not change and the overall lot length of 130.58 feet will not change. Other parcels in the neighborhood have a similar lot area. While the lot does not meet current minimum development width of 50', the overall lot size complies with code, and can be developed as long as all other development standards are met. Through the subdivision process, four airspace condominium parcels will be created within the existing 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. City staff 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:

Pursuant to the City's Community Meeting Guidelines, a community meeting was held on Thursday, April 25, 2019 at 7:00PM, at Veterans Memorial Building and a second community meeting was held virtually due to the COVID-19 Pandemic on January 12, 2021. The applicant invited interested persons to learn about the development project, provide comments and feedback, and share any concerns regarding the proposed project.

During the first community meeting, there were general concerns about construction impacts and hours. The design was looked upon favorably, but there was some concern about window size and overall privacy towards the rear of the property. At the second community meeting, the applicant presented changes to the community that included replacing full size windows with clearstory windows towards the rear of the property. The applicant also told community members that the general days for construction activity would be Monday through Friday with an attempt to reduce any work on weekends. Summaries of the Community Meetings are provided in Attachment No. 6.

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 applicant has modified their original Project to incorporate community and staff feedback into the design and façade materials with the intent of providing new residential units that complement the existing neighborhood. Articulation and greater setbacks are provided in the middle of the building to minimize appearance of bulk and mass. The building design incorporates clearstory windows towards the rear of the property to preserve privacy between adjacent properties.

The findings for Administrative Site Plan Review and Tentative Parcel Map No. 82792, Case No. P2021-0116-ASPR/TPM are provided in proposed Planning Commission Resolution No. 2022-P012 based on the preliminary development plans and recommended conditions of approval (Attachment No. 1).

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the proposed Project is Categorically Exempt per CEQA Section 15303, Class 3, New Construction of Small Structures as there are 6 or fewer units proposed and CEQA Section 15315, Minor Land Divisions, for the division of property in urbanized areas zoned for residential into four or fewer parcels.

The location of the Project is predominantly urban and built out and will not result in any significant impacts that may otherwise occur in a sensitive environmental area. 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 as part of the original Zoning adoption for the property and surrounding neighborhood. The Project is not located along any state designated scenic highway or within any designated hazardous waste site. The site on which the Project is proposed is not considered a significant historical site.

Additionally, the subdivision is in conformance with the General Plan and zoning, no variances or exceptions are required for the project, all services and access to the proposed parcels will be provided through easement as part of the final map approval, the parcel has not been involved in a division of a larger parcel within the previous two years, and the parcel does not have an average slope greater than 20 percent.

MOTION:

That the Planning Commission:

Adopt Proposed Resolution No. 2022-P012, Approving an Administrative Site Plan Review and Tentative Parcel Map No. 82792, Case No. P2021-0116-ASPR/TPM to Allow a 4 Unit Residential Condominium Development.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Planning Commission Resolution No. 2022-P012 and Exhibit A - Conditions of Approval and Exhibit B - Standard Code Requirements
2. Vicinity Map
3. Project Summary
4. Preliminary Development Plans Received May 29, 2022
5. Tentative Parcel Map No. 82792
6. Summary of Community Meetings