



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Staff Report

Planning and Environmental Services
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AGENDA ITEM M-2

DATE: August 11, 2009
TO: Goleta Design Review Board
FROM: Shine Ling, Assistant Planner
SUBJECT: 09-106-DRB; Rincon Palms Hotel Revisions; 6878 Hollister Avenue and 6868 Cortona Drive; APN 073-140-003; -004

APPLICANT: Laurel Perez
Suzanne Elledge Planning and Permitting Services
800 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This is a request for *Conceptual* review. The 3.05-acre property is vacant and is located within the PI zone district with Hotel Overlay. The applicant proposes to revise the Development Plan for the Rincon Palms Hotel and Restaurant Project, approved by the City in October 2008. The proposed revision includes: the addition of approximately 5,340 square feet of roof-top structures to improve the use of the hotel roof deck, some of which exceed the 35-foot height limit for the PI zone district, up to a maximum of 50 feet; expansion of hotel room sizes, resulting in an increase of overall floor area from 59,600 square feet to 75,580 square feet and a reduction in room count from 112 to 102; changes to the port-cochere structure and lobby area; relocation of the ground-floor conference patio, and the elimination of 3 parking spaces (2 surface; 1 underground). The restaurant component of the Development Plan would not be changed.

The revisions would result in a project that consists of the following: A 75,580-square foot hotel, 3 stories with a partial 4th-story and underground parking garage; outdoor pool and patios; a 6,000-square foot restaurant with a 1,000-square foot outdoor dining area; trellises and repeating columns along the southern boundary of the property; sidewalk, curb, and gutter improvements along Hollister Avenue and Cortona Drive. Access is proposed from both Cortona Drive and with the neighboring M-RP building at 6868 Cortona Drive. The project was filed by Laurel Perez of Suzanne Elledge Planning and Permitting Services, agent, on behalf of Kip Bradley for Cortona Opportunities LLC, property owner. Related cases: 09-106-DP RV.

BACKGROUND:

The project was submitted on July 6, 2009. This is the first time the project in its revised configuration has been before the DRB. There are no known violations on the property.

The Development Plan for the Rincon Palms Hotel and Restaurant project was reviewed by the DRB in May and June, 2007. The project was approved by the City Council in October 2008. Since then, the property owner has selected Hyatt as the hotel operator, and has been working with Hyatt's design team to modify the approved design to meet Hyatt standards for the configuration and size of guest rooms, meeting spaces, and the lobby.

Comparison of Development Statistics of Approved Project and Proposed Revision

| | Approved | Proposed Revision | Change from approved |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Overall Site Area | 132,858 sf | 132,858 sf | -- |
| Building Coverage | 26,400 sf | 29,596 sf | 12.0% |
| Landscape | 29,372 sf | 29,853 sf | 1.6% |
| Hardscape | 77,086 sf | 73,409 sf | -4.7% |
| Permeable | 31,580 sf | 30,098 sf | -4.7% |
| Impermeable | 45,506 sf | 43,311 sf | -4.8% |
| <i>Floor Area</i> | | | |
| Hotel | | | |
| Ground Floor | 20,400 sf | 23,596 sf | 15.7% |
| Second Floor | 20,000 sf | 24,684 sf | 23.4% |
| Third Floor | 19,200 sf | 23,250 sf | 21.1% |
| Fourth Floor (roof-top) | n/a | 4,050 sf | 100.0% |
| Parking Level (garage) | 18,900 sf | 25,276 sf | 33.7% |
| Total Hotel | 77,500 sf | 100,856 sf | 30.1% |
| Restaurant | 6,000 sf | 6,000 sf | -- |
| Outside Dining Patio | 1,000 sf | 1,000 sf | -- |
| FAR (w/o garage level) | 0.5 | 0.6 | 20.0% |
| Parking | 189 spaces | 186 spaces | -1.5% |

ANALYSIS:

Zoning Consistency

| | Required | Proposed | Consistent Y/N |
|-----------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| Front Yard Setback | 45 feet from centerline 15 feet from ROW | <u>Hollister Avenue</u> : 80 feet from centerline; from ROW, 10 feet to landscape wall and approx. 11 feet to restaurant eave overhang <u>Cortona Drive</u> : 50 feet to patio retaining walls, 23 feet from ROW <u>Storke Road</u> : 65 feet from centerline and 15 feet from ROW to nearest structural element | Yes |
| Rear Yard Setback | 15 feet | Greater than 15 feet | Yes |
| Parking | Guest Rooms: 1 space per room plus 1 space per 5 employees (107 total spaces) Restaurant: 1 per 300 square feet of patron-serving area plus 1 space per 2 employees (26 total spaces) Total: 133 spaces | 186 spaces total: On-site: 157 spaces Off-site at 6868 Cortona: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 spaces exclusive • 12 spaces conjunctive | Yes |
| Building Coverage | 40% Maximum | 20% | Yes |
| Landscaping | 10% Minimum | 22.5% | Yes |
| Building Height | 35 feet maximum | Variable stories; weighted average height is ~37 feet; tallest elements 45-50 feet | TBD |

Comment [TEF1]:

| | Required | Proposed | Consistent Y/N |
|---------|---|---|-------------------|
| Storage | Areas for trash shall be enclosed and architecturally screened in such a manner as to conceal all trash or stored material from public view | Trash enclosures and storage areas provided | Yes |

The project is consistent with most of the provisions of the City's Inland Zoning Ordinance (Article III, Chapter 35, Goleta Municipal Code). Staff is analyzing if height averaging may be used for consideration of consistency with the ordinance's standard for height.

ISSUES:

Staff seeks comments and input from the DRB with regard to the following topics:

1. *Height:* As proposed, the tallest portions of the building are 45 feet, with the glass wedge element and architectural projections up to 50 feet; the weighted average height of the building is 36.8 feet tall. In order to be consistent with the General Plan and the Inland Zoning Ordinance, a "Good Cause" finding and findings for a zoning modification request would need to be approved by the Planning Commission. (The specific text of the findings is included as an attachment to this report.)

Staff would appreciate the DRB's comments on the community-wide tolerance for the project's scale of height, and thus whether the project merits these special findings. In general practice, staff uses a +10% threshold for height modifications, which is the maximum threshold for "stand-alone" Modifications for ministerial projects. There is no maximum threshold for modification requests via a Development Plan. Since the tallest elements of the project exceed the +10% threshold (an increase from the 35.0-foot limit to 38.5 feet), staff has substantial concerns on whether the special findings are justified. In addition, when the City Council approved the original project, the Council's consensus was that the applicant should consider making shorter the architectural projections that exceeded 35 feet in height.

The project location is along a designated scenic corridor (Hollister Avenue), and scenic views to be protected can be found in all directions at the Storke/US 101 interchange. Staff seeks feedback from the DRB regarding the project's potential visual impacts to these views, in comparison to the original project. Visual simulations and story poles are strongly recommended to help analyze these potential impacts and gauge the project's consistency with General Plan policies on scenic resources.

2. *Size/Bulk/Scale:* A reconfiguration and small increase in the hotel room sizes will add square footage to each floor of the hotel, increasing the overall hotel square footage from 59,600 square feet to 75,580 square feet (including the proposed partial fourth floor). The total room count has decreased from 112 rooms to 102 rooms as a result.
3. *Neighborhood Compatibility:* The addition of approximately 5,340 square feet for a partial fourth floor would improve the use and function of the roof-top area. The hotel roof deck was previously approved for community meetings, social gatherings, and conference use ancillary to the hotel. The currently proposed structures include a shade structure, break-out and storage space, dressing room, bathrooms, bar and catering staging space. Comments regarding the compatibility of the proposed partial fourth floor with neighboring uses (including the industrial research property to the north and the residential area to the east) would be appreciated. Compatibility issues include private views from neighboring properties and noise.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Selected Applicable General Plan/Zoning Ordinance Policies
- Reduced 11" x 17" copies of site plans and elevations. Note: additional supplemental height studies and elevations may be obtained by contacting the project planner.

Rincon Palms Hotel Revisions: DRB Conceptual Review

Selected Applicable General Plan/Zoning Ordinance Policies

General Plan Definition of “Good Cause”:

The good cause finding is a finding of public or community necessity, e.g., a better site or architectural design that will result in better resource protection, will provide a significant community benefit, and/or does not create an adverse impact to the community character, aesthetics, or public views. Standards for analysis include:

- a. Conceptual drawings (basic site plan and elevations) of the proposal that meet the standards in the land use tables for review by the DRB and Planning Commission;
- b. At the discretion of the DRB and/or Planning Commission, conceptual plans may be request for one (1) other version of the project that comes closer to meeting the standard(s) in the tables;
- c. At the discretion of the DRB and/or Planning Commission, story poles and/or visual simulations may be requested, including those that reflect the proposal that meets the standards; and
- d. The use proposed should meet a public or community need or goal, e.g., senior affordable or other affordable housing, recreational facilities open to the public, non-profit facilities that serve the public, preservation or restoration of a historic structure or resource, and/or projects that have negligible impacts and do not require significant use of public and/or natural resources.

Inland Zoning Ordinance, Sect. 35-317.8.1: Development Plan Modifications

At the time the Preliminary or Final Development Plan is approved, or subsequent amendments or revisions are approved, the Director, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission or City Council may modify the building height limit, distance between buildings, setback, yard, parking, building coverage, landscaping or screening requirements specified in the applicable zone district when the Director, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission or City Council finds that such modifications are justified.

Inland Zoning Ordinance, Sect. 35.321.2.3: “Stand-Alone” Modifications (for Ministerial Projects)

Modifications may only be granted in conjunction with a specific development proposal and are limited to all of the following...(d) Up to a ten percent (10%) increase in District height regulations.

Land Use Element Policies

- LU 1.8 New Development and Neighborhood Compatibility. [GP/CP]** Approvals of all new development shall require compatibility with the character of existing development in the immediate area, including size, bulk, scale, and height. New development shall not substantially impair or block important viewsheds and scenic vistas, as set forth in the Visual and Historical Resources Element.

Visual and Historic Resources Element Policies

- VH 2.2 Preservation of Scenic Corridors. [GP]** The aesthetic qualities of scenic corridors shall be preserved through retention of the general character of significant natural features; views of the ocean, foothills, and mountainous areas; and open space

associated with recreational and agricultural areas including orchards, prominent vegetation, and historic structures. If landscaping is used to add visual interest or for screening, care should be taken to prevent a wall-like appearance. Bridges, culverts, drainage ditches and other roadway ancillary elements should be appropriately designed; side slopes and earthen berms adjacent to roadways should be natural in appearance.

VH 2.3 Development Projects Along Scenic Corridors. [GP] Development adjacent to scenic corridors should not degrade or obstruct views of scenic areas. To ensure visual compatibility with the scenic qualities, the following practices shall be used, where appropriate:

- a. Incorporate natural features in design.
- b. Use landscaping for screening purposes and/or for minimizing view blockage as applicable.
- c. Minimize vegetation removal.
- d. Limit the height and size of structures.
- e. Cluster building sites and structures.
- f. Limit grading for development including structures, access roads, and driveways. Minimize the length of access roads and driveways and follow the natural contour of the land.
- g. Preserve historical structures or sites.
- h. Plant and preserve trees.
- i. Minimize use of signage.
- j. Provide site-specific visual assessments, including use of story poles.
- k. Provide a similar level of architectural detail on all elevations visible from scenic corridors.
- l. Place existing overhead utilities and all new utilities underground.
- m. Establish setbacks along major roadways to help protect views and create an attractive scenic corridor. On flat sites, step the heights of buildings so that the height of building elements is lower close to the street and increases with distance from the street. *(Amended by Reso. 08-30, 6/17/08)*

VH 4.7 Office Buildings, Business Parks, Institutional, and Public/Quasi-Public Uses. [GP] The following standards shall be applicable to office and business park development and institutional and public/quasi-public uses:

- a. Buildings and structures shall be designed to be compatible with adjacent development relative to size, bulk, and scale.
- b. Street elevations of buildings and structures should enhance the streetscape and should be pedestrian friendly. To create diversity and avoid monotonous façades, varied building setbacks should be provided and be proportionate to the scale of the building.

- c. Plazas, courtyards, and landscaped open space should be provided to create a campus-like setting and encourage pedestrian access.
- d. Parking lots should not be the dominant visual element and shall be located behind or beside buildings, where appropriate. Where buildings do not screen parking lots, landscaping, berms, and/or low walls shall be used to screen cars from adjacent roadways and other developments.
- e. Architectural elements such as arcades are encouraged to identify the main entrance and reinforce the pedestrian scale.
- f. Bicycle access shall be provided and encouraged via bike lanes. Sufficient, secure, and protected bicycle parking shall be provided.
- g. Public transit shall be encouraged through effective placement of stops for local and regional transit services. Existing stops shall be upgraded as appropriate.
- h. Loading areas and recycling and trash facilities shall be easily accessed and screened from view with landscaping and/or fencing or walls. Adjacent uses shall be considered when such areas are sited.
- i. Roof mounted equipment shall be screened and considered as part of the structure for height calculations.

Noise Element Policies

- NE 7.1 Control of Noise. [GP]** The City shall require that primary emphasis on the control of noise be accomplished at the source by reducing the intensity of the noise generated or through appropriate placement of noisy components of a project or use. Secondary emphasis should be through site design of receiver sites and noise attenuation and insulation measures.
- NE 7.2 Site-Design Techniques. [GP]** The City encourages the inclusion of site-design techniques for new construction that will minimize noise exposure impacts. These techniques shall include building placement, landscaped setbacks, and siting of more noise-tolerant components (parking, utility areas, and maintenance facilities) between noise sources and sensitive receptor areas.
- NE 7.3 Architectural Techniques. [GP]** The City shall encourage the use of architectural techniques to meet noise attenuation requirements. Such techniques include: a) using noise-tolerant rooms such as garages, kitchens, and bedrooms to shield noise-sensitive rooms such as bedrooms and family rooms and b) using building façade materials that help shield noise.
- NE 7.5 Implementation of Recommendations from Acoustical Analyses. [GP]** For projects where an acoustical analysis is required because of potential noise impacts, the City, through its development review and building permit processes, shall ensure that all appropriate noise reduction measures are incorporated.