

Planning Commission Staff Report



Planning

Author: Kirsten Whetstone
Subject: Treasure Hill CUP
Date: September 22, 2004
Type of Item: Administrative – Work session

Summary Recommendations:

The planning staff requests the Commission review and continue to discuss the Treasure Hill CUP as it relates to conditional use permit criterion # 11 (physical design and Compatibility with surrounding structures in Mass, scale, style, design, and architectural detailing).

The planning staff met with the applicants on September 7th to review various alternatives presented by the applicants to address the Commission's concerns raised at the August 25th meeting.

Staff is requesting a work session to continue this dialog with the applicant and the Commission regarding various revisions to the proposed site plan and building volumetrics (in terms of massing, stepping, articulation, setbacks, heights, etc.). Planning staff recommends the Commission discuss the various alternatives at work session and provide specific direction to the applicants. No public hearing is scheduled for this meeting.

Staff recommends the Commission focus on the physical design, ie. Mass and scale (elevations and site plan), well as on the Compatibility with surrounding structures in terms of heights, articulation, setbacks, buffering, landscaping, etc. and delay discussion of specific architectural concepts and detailing for a future meeting.

Description:

Topic:

Project Name: Treasure Hill (Mid-station and Creole Gulch parcels of the Sweeney Properties Master Planned Development)
Applicant: MPE, Inc.
Location: Empire Avenue
Proposal: Request for approval of a CUP and preliminary subdivision plat for 197 UE residential and 19 UE commercial (approximately 282 condominium/townhouse/hotel suites ranging in size from 650 sf to >2,500 sf and approximately 19,000 sf (net) resort related support commercial uses), 473 parking spaces, and up to 10% of the gross floor area for meeting rooms and support uses. Resort related amenities are also proposed, such as pools, spas, etc. The proposal includes approximately 51 acres of dedicated open space for

Zoning: ski runs, trails, and passive use. The proposal includes a revised Town Lift chair lift/cabriolet people mover system. E-MPD (Sweeney Properties Master Planned Development) and ROS (Recreational Open Space)

Adjacent Uses: Ski resort and related uses, single-family residences, condominiums, bed & breakfast inns, and open space.

Date of Application: January 13, 2004

Project Planner: Kirsten Whetstone

Conditional Use Permit Review

Process to Date

At the previous meetings on August 11 and 25, the applicants presented information for discussion of CUP criteria 7-10 (fencing, screening, building mass, building location and orientation, open space, signs, and lighting), as well as on Criterion #11 (physical design and Compatibility with surrounding structures in Mass, scale, style, design, and architectural detailing). Public hearings were held at both of these meetings.

At the July 14 meeting, the applicants presented plans and information to the Planning Commission regarding CUP criterion #2 (traffic) as well as criteria #'s 12 – 15 (#12- noise, vibration, odors, etc.; #13- control of delivery and service, loading and unloading, etc.; #14- expected ownership; and #15- impacts on Sensitive Lands, topography, slope retention, etc.). Criteria # 1- 6 were discussed at the May 26, 2004 meeting.

For the September 22 meeting, the applicants have prepared a presentation for work session, including a revised visual analysis and computer model. Staff has asked the applicants to focus on CUP criterion 11 (physical design and Compatibility with surrounding structures in Mass, scale, style, design, and architectural detailing), with less emphasis on the architectural details than on the general concept.

The applicants did meet with planning staff to review a variety of proposed revisions and are now requesting input from the Planning Commission. Staff is recommending a work session where the Commission can engage in discussion regarding compliance with CUP criterion #11.

On-going discussion

As presented at the August 25 meeting, Staff has outlined below a preliminary analysis of the Treasure Hill CUP as it relates to Conditional Use Permit criterion 11 (staff comments are in italics):

Criterion # 11 (physical design and Compatibility with surrounding structures in Mass, scale, style, design, and architectural detailing)

Staff requests discussion. *This criterion should be considered in the context of the 1985 Sweeney Properties Master Plan approval, which shed density from the overall MPD property, including the steep slopes of Treasure Hill, primarily to the*

two parcels that make up the Treasure Hill CUP. These parcels were approved in the 1985 MPD as a resort area base, such as Snow Park, Silver Lake, and the Park City Mountain Resort village area, where typically, development is clustered in mass around landscaped open space, pedestrian plazas, and ski runs/trails, leaving significant open space around the perimeter and beyond.

Typical solutions for clustering in this type of resort base area are to reduce overall building footprint and increase building height, and to provide underground parking. This generally provides more open space and limits the amount of disturbed area, while providing the increased tourist-based density (bed base) in close proximity to resorts, ski lifts, ski runs, and other tourist amenities, such as restaurants, bars, shops, galleries, etc.

The approved MPD includes building height zones as well as a maximum average height for the parcels. The applicants have submitted a height matrix to demonstrate that the proposed site plan and building massing complies with the approved MPD height zones and overall average height requirements.

The overall site and building design includes elements of building massing, orientation and separation from surrounding buildings, and includes landscaping and screening to provide buffering and additional separation. These elements have been proposed to provide a design that addresses a strategy to integrate an intensive mixed use resort base area development into the context of the existing predominately historic residential district/neighborhood abutting this MPD. This existing neighborhood is a mix of new and historic single-family homes. There are also scattered duplexes, four-plexes, bed and breakfast inns, and other larger homes and buildings in the area. The project area also frames the backdrop of the Historic District and Main Street Business District.

*At the August 11, 2004 Commission meeting, the applicant presented sections through the project demonstrating the heights of surrounding buildings in comparison to the heights of the proposed buildings and also showing the horizontal and vertical separation. **(The applicants will incorporate these cross sections in the presentation.)***

In terms of evaluating the Compatibility of the overall design, staff also requested the applicant consider how the development fits into the community as a whole, as viewed from various vantage points (not specific SLO vantage points, but from areas of town where the project is visible, such as the Town Lift, Heber Avenue, City Park at Deer Valley Drive, Lowell Avenue, and from the Aerie).

Just as the buildings on Main Street and Lower Main Street are larger and taller than the surrounding single family structures, this property was identified in the Master Plan (by approval as part of the Master Plan Development of a height zone exhibit- Sheet 22 of the MPD- that identifies areas of taller and larger structures with maximum building heights (MBH) of up to 75'). The MPD consolidated and clustered the density from 125 acres into a mixed use resort base area of about 15 acres (including the Sweeney Town Lift Plaza/Caledonian

Condo area). ***(The applicants will present a massing model and a revised visual analysis for Commission discussion.)***

Staff acknowledges that it will be difficult to achieve a project massing that is similar to the existing neighborhood context given the previously approved density and volumetrics set forth in the 1985 MPD. The objective of this administrative application of the CUP criteria is to determine whether or not the proposed project provides sufficient stepping of building masses, reasonable horizontal and vertical separation between the proposed buildings and adjacent structures, and an adequate peripheral buffer so as to limit the potential for larger building masses looming over smaller adjacent structures.

If specific areas of the project plan are determined to be problematic in this regard, the Planning Commission has the discretion to request the applicant study alternative design concepts to achieve compliance with the CUP criteria that may include:

- *shifting building volumes and square footage to other areas of the project site;*
- *providing additional stepping of building mass;*
- *breaking up building mass into additional smaller masses; and/or*
- *increasing project setbacks.*

The applicant continues to work with staff to study the above listed strategies. Staff remains concerned with the overall massing of buildings 1B and 4B (please refer to project site plan) as they are the largest structures with closest proximity to adjacent residential structures. The Planning Department also finds the project's proposed retaining wall system needs further study to minimize the perceived bulk of this important project design element.

Staff recommends that the architectural design and specific detailing be addressed at a subsequent meeting, once the building locations, site plan, and general building volumetrics have been agreed upon.

SUMMARY

After a preliminary analysis of the proposed site plan, proposed setbacks, and building massing, staff believes the overall plan complies with the technical required setbacks, volumetrics, and height limitations as stated in the approved MPD. Staff also believes that the general concepts for the cliff scape and landscaping within the project and in buffer areas will help to mitigate some of the impacts on adjacent properties created by this project. Staff has concerns with the overall massing of Buildings 1B and 4B and with the location (setbacks) and stepping of buildings 4A and 4B and believes additional attention to these buildings is needed to address the Compatibility issues specific to the Conditional Use Permit process.

Departmental Review

The Treasure Hill CUP and preliminary subdivision plat were discussed at staff review meetings on May 7 and October 14, 2003, and February 3, June 10, and July 6, 2004. Additional staff review meetings will be held in response to revised plans.

RECOMMENDATION

The applicants have prepared a presentation to address criterion #11 (LMC Section 15-1-10 (E) (11)). The Staff recommends the Commission review and discuss at work session, the applicant's presentation materials as they relate to the approved MPD and the Land Management Code requirements for Conditional Use Permits, specifically criteria #11. The Staff requests specific direction on buildings 1B, 4A, and 4B, as well as discussion on the retaining walls.

Staff has also set up a site visit, scheduled for October 13, 2004 at 4:30 PM at the Lowell/Empire Avenue switchback.

Exhibit A- Plans and Sections

Exhibit B- Background and Project Description from previous reports

Please also refer to the Treasure Hill Design booklet handed out at the April 14, 2004 meeting. All plans and documents are also available at the Planning Department. Please bring the plans and exhibits from the August 11th, August 25th, and September 8, 2004 packets to use during the work session discussion.