

Analysis

The applicant is proposing a three-story building with two floors of residential and a roof deck above ground floor commercial. The two residences are located side by side and contain three bedrooms and three baths in a split level floor plan. Parking is provided to the rear of the building with access from the alley preserving on-street parking on Hermosa Avenue.

The project is subject only to the development standards contained in the C-1 Zone. The Zoning Ordinance does not contain standards specific to residential projects in the C-1 zone that would apply to the residential portion of this project, such as open space, lot coverage, and setback requirements that would typically apply to multiple unit projects in residential zones. Therefore, in addition to reviewing the project for compliance with C-1 requirements staff has evaluated the project relative to R-3 development standards for discussion purposes. The surrounding residential zoning is R-3, and if the Commission is interested in seeing some consistency in the residential portion of this project relative to surrounding properties these standards could be considered for application to this project. The General Plan designates the property along with a two-block section between 1st Street and south City boundary as Neighborhood Commercial and contains no policies relating to mixed uses or residential uses in this district.

C-1 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Pursuant to Section 17.26.050 the only standard that applies to the project in the C-1 zone is the building height (Maximum 30-feet). No setback requirements apply to buildings in the C-1 zone unless the property abuts residentially zoned property. Further, no standards are contained in Section 17.26.050 relating to lot coverage, open space, or landscaping.

The project complies with the 30-foot height limit of the C-1 zone as the high point on the roof is within 30 feet of the lowest corner point, although the plans do not indicate the maximum building height at the critical point. *This required information is included in the list of recommended Conditions of Approval.*

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

For discussion purposes and for Commission consideration if consistency with surrounding residential buildings is deemed appropriate, staff evaluated the project relative to the R-3 residential development standards. The Commission may consider applying some or part of these standards or others deemed appropriate within their purview for discretionary projects that require a C.U.P. and P.D.P.

If the R-3 development standards were applied to the residential portion of the project it would only be consistent with the height and side yard setback requirements. Lot coverage is 84%, which is well in excess of the 65% maximum in residential zones. No front yard setback is provided while the typical requirement for Hermosa Avenue fronting R-3 lots is 5 feet (3 of the four blocks fronting on Hermosa Avenue to the north of this block have a 5-foot minimum, and one block has a 2-foot minimum). While 300 square feet of open space is provided in a roof deck and additional open spaces is provided in a 5-foot deck along the side of the residences at the entry level, no open space is provided adjacent to primary living areas with a 7-foot dimension.

Whether or not it is appropriate to apply residential standards to a commercial lot with mixed uses is a policy decision beyond the current standards of the Zoning Ordinance. A parallel situation exists in the S.P.A. zone along P.C.H. with respect to transitional lots with frontage off the side streets near the Highway where residential uses are still allowed as an exclusive use (not mixed use). In those situations the Zoning Ordinance clearly states that the residential zoning requirements of the adjacent residentially zoned properties apply to development of those lots. However, in the current situation that involves a mixed use on the main Hermosa Avenue frontage on a commercial block, the need for consistency with adjacent existing and future commercial development may have a higher priority than consistency with nearby residential development.

PARKING ISSUES

Two parking spaces per residential unit are being provided in tandem. The plans do not include a designated guest space for the residential units, but office parking will be made available for residential guest parking during off-peak times for the commercial use. Seven parking spaces are provided to comply with the requirement for the commercial portion, however, the seven spaces include 6 in tandem. Chapter 17.44 contains no provision for allowing tandem parking for required commercial parking and therefore would recognize these as only 4 available commercial parking spaces. Further, 4 of the 11 spaces are compact size, which is greater than the 30% allowed by the Zoning Ordinance.

Since the Code only recognizes this parking layout as providing 3 spaces for the commercial building, and because no guest parking is proposed for the residences, the applicant has applied for consideration of reduced parking. Pursuant to Section 17.44.210 the Planning Commission may approve Parking Plan for a reduction in the number of spaces required if it is found that adequate parking will otherwise be provided for customers, clients, visitors and employees. In this case the applicant is proposing to provide the commercial parking in tandem. Because the commercial square footage is small, it is anticipated that shuffling of parked vehicles would not be unreasonable. With respect to the residential guest parking, the argument is that ample guest parking will be available for the residences after closing time for the commercial use. While this argument has merit, no residential guest parking will be available during the weekday peak use of the commercial space. There is certainly no guarantee that occupants of the residences will follow typical patterns of use, and will not have a demand for guest parking in the daytime.

The parking was designed this way to take advantage of access from the alley and to avoid using curb cuts on Hermosa Avenue, and provide ground floor commercial frontage on the street. A project of this scale and design could not be constructed without tandem parking because of the small size of the property. Alternatively, almost all of ground floor would have to be used for parking with the building located above. This would significantly reduce or eliminate any possible ground level commercial space. Further it would significantly reduce or eliminate the apartments.

Staff believes the Commission can make findings for approval of the Parking Plan for reduced commercial parking because the needed parking will be provided in tandem. It is not possible to waive the guest-parking requirement based on shared use since it cannot be demonstrated that the parking demand for the two uses will not conflict. Another alternative would be to provide another tandem space behind the handicapped parking space, requiring the relocation of the trash dumpster and electrical box. It should be noted that Coastal Commission approval is also required for this project. With that in mind, staff recommends that an additional parking space be provided for the residential guest space for all times of the day.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

If the Commission approves the project staff will return with a resolution of approval, and recommends including the following conditions of approval to address the issues noted above:

1. An additional tandem space shall be provided behind the handicapped parking space for residential guest parking.
2. The parcels comprising the subject property shall be merged prior to issuance of building permits.
3. Precise building height information shall be provided on final project plans, which shall include corner point elevations provided on a detailed roof plan indicating corner points of the lot, the location of all property lines and the maximum and proposed height at the critical point on the roof.
4. Two exits must be provided from the third floor of the building to comply with the U.B.C. existing requirements for a three-story building, or other modifications must be made to comply with exiting requirements of the U.B.C. *(This required modification and added stairway may result in a fairly significant change to the floor plans, the Commission may want to see final plans incorporating this change before final approval.)*

CONCUR:

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Attachments

1. Photographs
2. Height Calculation