

## Valley Center Design Review Board

### Approved Minutes: November 14, 2013

**DRB Members Present:** Montgomery, Moore, Splane, Herr

Presenters: David Ko, Angeleno Architects; Rick Grandy, R-E-D Architectural Group; Jim Chagala,

North Village Subcommittee Members: Ann Quinley, Dennis Sullivan, Rich Rudolf

Public: County Planner Dennis Campbell, Gary Wynn, Val Wynn, Kerry Watts, Will Rogers,.

**This meeting has been noticed as a joint meeting of the VC DRB and the VC Community Planning Group North Village Subcommittee to preview revisions to the site plan for Weston Communities' section of the North Village commercial area.**

The applicant is responding to recommendations made by this group in a joint meeting in mid-October. Those recommendations are detailed in a letter sent to the applicant following the October meeting (attached).

Jim Chagala, planning consultant for the project, began by stating that both the developer, Herb Schaffer (Weston Communities, LLC) and the community need to make compromises; that said, he hopes that the site design they present today will be both affordable to build and in accord with the vision. Mr. Chagala said that the new site design and architectural treatments had not yet been "costed-out" by the developers, however, Mr. Schaffer believes it will be doable. The 'majors' (prospective anchor tenants) are Stater Brothers grocery and CVS Pharmacy. Jim said that neither has signed off on this design. He said, too, that if these prospects drop out, this project more than likely would not be built.

Rick Grandy is the architect familiar with Stater Brothers' model; David Ko, the designer of the "California Farm Village" vision the community endorsed five or six years ago, is a consulting architect. They presented a conceptual site plan along architectural elevations of six buildings on the property.

David began with the live/work units that sit across the street and next to a park on the north side of the property. He considers the 'Village Green' and park to be transitional areas from the retail to the live/work spaces. The "Village Green" is bisected by School Bus Lane.

David and Rick continued describing the site plan, explaining that the main street is set up for walking traffic, not driving. There is parking along main St., and the building façade treatments are clean, sharp edges unlike a strip mall. This development will appear to have been built over time. And architecture will be authentic to a town that has evolved over time. It was requested that the existing trail along Valley Center Rd. be integrated into the village. Rick said he is still working on the storm water runoff, and noted that some of the layout may change slightly due to the needed bio-swales etc. He also stated that permeable paving could be used to meet some of the requirements instead of concrete.

Generally, the site design was well received. The group made a few requests.

- The DRB wants the size of the "village green" area to large enough to be a gathering place for the community. David Ko said the two sections together were about an acre, which he says is large enough for a gathering place. He said they are meant to be gathering spaces, not for recreation. And, since the landscape maintenance would be shared by the tenants a smaller area is more affordable.
- The Village Green should have a fountain or some other architectural/landscaped treatment for a south focal point rather than the CVS drive-through and blank wall loading area.
- David Ko said that the South end of the park would nicely accommodate a fountain, a sculpture or something architectural as a focal point.

- The group was particularly concerned about the building along “Main Street” that has parking on three sides. The corners of the intersections should be opened up to “activate” pedestrian activity.
- Tree planting in the parking lots was also discussed. Susan said that planters need to be large enough, preferably landscape strips rather than boxes, to encourage trees to grow and shade the parking areas.
- Stormwater and hydromodification design should be included in the planning, now. In the past, stormwater concerns could be postponed, as they were not that onerous and did not impact negatively a project’s site design. However, with the requirements to detain water for several days (requiring significantly larger detention basins) and the need for on-site treatment/filtering of stormwater, I strongly suggest that this be designed and engineered, now. Today, stormwater and hydromodification requirements can drive the site design and I don’t want to see a reasonable site design change drastically because of this concern and requirement. I believe that is real possibility; particularly, in light of the recent promulgation of new standards, by the Regional Water Quality Board.
- Further consideration should be given to the location and design of the commercial main street loading areas. In the current design, it is unclear where loading for restaurants, coffee shops or retail uses will occur. I strongly suggest that on-street loading or parking spaces not be proposed for this purpose. This would violate the Zoning Ordinance.
- The “main street” concept has been well received by the community, and promised by the developer.

### Architectural Elevations

We reviewed architectural elevations in great detail. Our recommendations have in the past, and were again today, consistently for authenticity of each architectural genre represented. DRB members re-iterated that design elements and decorative details and accents should all be characteristic to each architectural style (see VC Design Guidelines and VC Design Guideline Checklist).

Overall most all of the concepts were well received. The applicants are using several styles: Mission, Craftsman, and a Western ranch vernacular style, (e.g. larger structures particularly should look like an old Mission, or repurposed agricultural buildings, such as a packing house or a barn). General feedback included making the buildings less decorative, more functional and simple.

The Vision requires authentic classic architectural styles and detailing that will endure the test of time rather than trendy hybrid architectures that will “date” the project. Generally, the elevations all need to be simplified in order to return to the architectural forms and details that characterize each selected genre.

The applicants were given a copy of the new VC Design Guideline Checklist for a detailed and succinct list of design features that characterize each architectural style.

Comments specific to the elevations presented today:

Craftsman style:

- Remove Italian/Palladian styling and detailing.
- Reduce the number of columns, and enlarge the remaining ones.
- Trellis should be created with heavy timber.
- Remove center windows from top portion. Replace with faux shutters .
- Remove decorative tile and replace with louvred vents that are screened.

Mission style:

- Presented style was too decorative. Mission is styled for purpose.
- Create a singular roof and recessed windows that are classic Craftsman style.
- Any banding should be done in same color stucco as building.
- No ceramic tile detail.
- Keep simple and authentic. Remember the purpose of the building.

- One tower would be authentic, four towers are not.
- Typically on Mission style, there are not 4 entrances. This building is slated for office space, a single central entrance would be workable.
- so will have to work out detailing for more authenticity.
- Because this building backs up to the Village Green, it will require heaving screen planting for aesthetic purposes. If a restaurant is added into this area, the flow needs to continue out towards the Green.

#### Western style:

- Again, the vision is for authentic architectural form and detailing.
- Remove crown of building.
- Remove the stone detailing.
- On upper faux window, make casement heavy so it appears that the window would open out.
- Any lighting behind faux window should be natural. No fluorescent or bright white light.
- Use exposed, heavy hardware and large beams.
- Edge trim is authentic and necessary on western styling.
- Keep simple. We do not want a 'bad movie set'.

#### Repurposed Agricultural buildings:

- Remove stucco/plaster finishes. Old ag buildings were wood.
- Remove faux stone detailing on pilasters.
- Design entrance to appear more like an old feed silo, perhaps use metal
- Add 3 small square windows at top as in authentic packing houses.
- Keep simple and on purpose. No decorative accents on packing houses.

Door and window frames on all buildings, if they are aluminum, should be **black or bronze**.

There are 3 additional pads for buildings along the front of Valley Center Rd. No elevations were presented for these buildings. However, the architect assured us that the architectural styles and details for these buildings will follow the design and flow of the others, and reflect the comments the DRB has made. s.

The applicants will return to the group with revisions based on this evening's recommendations.

Below is the letter sent by the DRB chair to the developer following the DRB meeting of October 14<sup>th</sup>. The letter highlights the discussion at that meeting, and re-iterates objectives that were discussed then, and have been discussed many times in previous meetings.

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Lael Montgomery  
13678 McNally Road  
Valley Center, CA 92082

October 14, 2013

Herb Schaffer  
WESTON COMMUNITIES  
10960 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 1960  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Dear Herb,

Thank you and David Ko for making the trek on Wednesday evening all the way to Valley Center. I know this is a tough trip especially for an evening meeting. I'm sure I speak for everyone here when I say that your extra effort to make a personal appearance, and David's as well, are much appreciated.

I've spoken with several members of the group, and we are all encouraged that David Ko will participate as "director" of the overall site design. It takes a real expert to make difficult design work look easy. Thanks to David's "tissue" revisions of R-E-D's 10/08/13 site plan for the commercial area and discussion of his suggestions, we are enroute to a site design that respects both your commitment to the community's vision of a California Farm Village and Stater Brother's retail model, and reconciles the two.

The R-E-D planners have shown that they are too entrenched in their grocery store formula to be able to design other elements of the heart of town that are so important to the community. I think we all recognize that David's broader and deeper training, skill and experience are essential to evolving a plan that the group can support. Stater Brothers grocery store has an opportunity to be the center of a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts: an integrated Town Center -- not the disconnected enclave that the retail model alone produces. The North Village site as a whole, as well, needs to align with and connect to adjacent properties, some already developed such as the post office, which we discussed, and the bank, and some which will be developed in the future, such as the Zervas-Gaughan property to the west of yours and residential properties to the north.

I hope that the plan we see on November 4<sup>th</sup> also retains key points of a pedestrian-centered "Main Street" style design for the retail area. These were emphasized by David's tissue revisions to the R-E-D site plan which we discussed in considerable detail on Wednesday evening:

- The street layout should be organic and curvilinear. These are village streets in a small country town. They are lined with shops and homes; they shared by pedestrians, (walkers, joggers), kids and adults on bicycles, and automobiles, and they are augmented by "cross country" pathways that provide short cuts for people on foot and bikes.
- The village core should feature a central "green" gathering place and a pedestrian-centered "Main Street" with wide sidewalks and shops that are close together and

front the street without intervening parking lots. On-street parking is desirable in this area. Additional parking should be to the sides and rears of streetscape structures.

- Streets, structures and distances between structures should be a human scale. (The more splayed and separate the buildings are, the less “walkable” the place is.)
- Live-work housing would be desirable in Valley Center. A lot of people who live in Valley Center work from home offices and home studios.
- Landscaping (bushes and trees) should be used liberally to cool stretches of asphalt and soften hardscapes.
- Structures need to be simple, rectangular forms with rooflines expressed. Architectures should reflect historical architectures that characterize rural California. Large buildings should look as if they are former agricultural buildings (eg. barns, packing houses, hay and grain storage facilities that have been re-purposed/re-furbished.)
- Replicate the development pattern, scale, features and architectural styles that are typically combined in traditional California farm villages of Valley Center’s vintage. The desired character is derived from a mix of “Early California” architectures, a design vocabulary reflected in the state’s early missions, adobes and farm villages.
- Avoid architectural hybrids that are so much the trend today.

We all recognize that a formulaic “shopping center” with a splay of separate “anchors” and their independent parking lots surrounded by a sea of densed-up cookie cutter suburban housing, is the antithesis of Valley Center’s vision for the North Village.

Rather, as you know and appreciate, Valley Center’s vision is a vibrant, pedestrian-centric traditional town center, a true community gathering place that combines retail, office, civic and residential uses and that reflects Valley Center’s authentic history and identity. We are looking to development to enhance and amplify the distinct, genuine and unique sense of place that we all so cherish. This is what makes Valley Center one of San Diego County’s last best places. It’s the reason families have chosen to live here in the past and why they will choose Valley Center in the future. (Folks will NOT choose to live in Valley Center because it reminds them of Rancho Penasquitos or Temecula.)

So, the challenge is to come up with a design that reconciles Stater Brothers’ “formula” with Valley Center’s vision for itself. I am looking forward to seeing the next edition at the joint meeting of the VC Design Review Board AND the VC Planning Group North Village Subcommittee on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

With high hopes and fingers crossed!

Sincerely,



Lael Montgomery

Cc: David Ko, Jim Chagala, Ann Quinley, Rich Rudolf, Deb Hofler, Dennis Campbell, Joe Farace, Sami Real

P.S. Some examples of the sort of “village” we have in mind are below. For illustrations of building forms and architectures, refer to the boards that David Ko and Dick Law presented 5 or 6 years ago.



