

Valley Center Design Review Board

Approved Minutes: November 4, 2013

DRB Members Present: Montgomery, Moore, Splane, Herr

Visitors & Presenters: Jerry Gaughan, Sean Clarke, Erik Fox, Jim Chagala, Robert Lerner, Jon Vick, Dixie Switzer, Will Rogers, Rich Rudolf,

Minutes were approved from September, 2013 meeting.

Montgomery opened the floor for public discussion, but there were no speakers

Projects

Hatfield Place Project:

Tentative Map and Site Plan Revision (TM 2013-21202 and STP 2013-011)

Developers/Owners Jerry Gaughan and Erik Fox report that they have been working with the county planning and public works departments to resolve the issues with Mobility Element Road 19. This road is not built, but is shown on the Community Plan ME as a 4-lane road parallel to VC Road; the idea was to provide an alternative to relieve traffic on Valley Center Rd, thus satisfying legal requirements to achieve LOS level D on all ME Roads. Jerry Gaughan says that , the county has, as of today, removed Road 19 from the Mobility Element. Lael said that Kristina Jeffers had confirmed this information, and, in an effort to allow the Hatfield Place processing to go forward, had determined that future solutions to the circulation problems in the S. Village would not interfere with the Hatfiels Place project because the site's steep terrain make this site a poor choice for constructing a new ME road.

Jerry began discussion of his site plan revision by stating that the 40' wall had been cut to 32'. There is now a 2' setback to the second half of the wall and this 6' is slated for planting. Moore stated that 6' was not large enough to grow mature trees, that possible large shrubs would be possible. The treatment of the wall was discussed. Jerry showed a picture of a concrete created 'dirt' wall that is on a freeway, and a discussion of the pocketed, plantable concrete walls continue to be discussed. Moore stated that plantable walls require diligent establishment and maintenance, especially in our climate, and expressed concern that tenants would have the desire to maintain the landscaping, including the irrigation cost.

The building footprints have been reduced and the structures have been re-arranged from the previous site design, and Jerry said that landscaping now covers 43% of the site. There is still one entrance/exit to the project, and a drive through fast food restaurant proposed. Jerry pointed out that parking areas had shifted some. He says the road and parking design has been approved by the county.

Jerry explained that his is an application for a commercial subdivision; he says he bought 2 parcels with the plan to re-divide them into 5 separate commercial parcels, selling each

parcel. Therefore, each parcel requires its' own parking. Dixie Switzer of the County stated that there might be ways to utilize a 'shared parking' agreement that might eliminate some of the parking area and replace with landscaping. New shared parking regulations have been adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

Jerry explained that his plan, as the developer, would be to build the common walls, roads and parking areas while the purchasers of each lot will build the buildings and maintain the landscape.

DRB comments reflect the group's position that the site plan still ignores the most fundamental of the community's design objectives that are explicated in detail in the booklet, Valley Center Design Guidelines. The site is difficult, and has always been difficult. It cannot be developed "as if" it is flat site with no constraints. The plan Jerry proposes over-builds a steep and narrow site. Buildings possibly could be re-arranged to avoid excessive grading of the south side of the parcel that would be necessary to accommodate this site plan. Board members commented that both VC Design Guidelines and the VC Community Plan emphasize retention of mature trees and natural topography, and that commercial zoning is not license to ignore GP and CP goals and policies to minimize grading and build in accord with local guidelines. In fact, it was stated that when properties are bought, owners need to realize the limitations and work with the restrictions instead of ignoring them. This site is particularly important as it is the gateway to Valley Center It needs to be developed in accord with the community's most essential objectives for development.

Will Rogers, Landscape Architect and planner, also a member of the South Village Subcommittee said that the site should developed so that 'development works *with* the land, instead of forcing the land to work with the buildings.' Gaughan disagrees, stating this site plan is the only way the site can be developed. There was further discussion of other options.

Jon Vick was present, representing the South Village Subcommittee, reported on the VCC Planning Group South Village Subcommittee's comments about the original Site plan.

Jon Vick said that the site plan was reviewed. Jerry Gaughn told the subcommittee that he expected many changes but wants to start process, and get community input. The subcommittee members provided the following input: Jon Vick: suggested a roundabout to slow and calm traffic and to provide improved entrance and egress to site; extending the landscaped median from Banbury through the So. Village would aid in calming traffic; as the entrance to Valley Center, it should represent Valley Center's values and flavor; site and buildings must comply with VC design guidelines. No endangered oaks should be removed. Gary Wynn: massive buildings overpower and crowd site; 40' retaining wall is excessive; wants to see DRB comments; grading is excessive; parking in front of the buildings is not consistent with VC guidelines; suggested a presentation by developer to Banbury residents. Will Rogers: use evergreen plantings in lieu of deciduous to screen retaining walls; recommends creating a design document (planned commercial development) that spells out variables. Malcolm Smith:

as the entrance to VC, it should look really good, like RSF not Poway; traffic calming will be very important. No drive through restaurant should be included. Tom Bumgardner: traffic calming is critically important.”

A site meeting was requested by the developer, and agreed upon. This meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Hatfield Place Site Meeting: Monday, 11/11/13.

We met on site at noon. DRB members in attendance were Montgomery and Moore. Develop-owners Jerry Gaughan and Erik Fox were present. Also present were Will Rogers and Malcolm Smith of the VCC Planning Group South Village Subcommittee, and Ann Quinley, Planning Group Vice-Chair (and Chair of the North Village Subcommittee. The group walked the site. The developers had prepared a large illustrated “rendering” of how the project would look. It was suggested that a silhouette of the development constructed on the site would provide a much more realistic idea of how a three story wall would appear on the site. It was pointed out that the silhouette idea is being used quite often, especially for projects that are difficult to visualize by other means.

The group adjourned to Gary Wynn’s office for discussion.

Will Rogers presented an alternative conceptual site plan to demonstrate that there were other ways, many other ways, to develop the difficult site. Rogers’ suggestions included terracing the walls to show how the development could work with the landscape. Another idea was 1st floor parking. The walls were distributed around the buildings with landscaping, and one wall was greatly reduced in height, and showed planting between the wall and the buildings.

A number of alternatives were discussed, including consolidating structures on the north end of the site where the terrain is flatter, and would not require 30-foot cuts and retaining walls. The developers explained that their business plan requires the property to be re-divided into separate legal lots. DRB members and others said that terrain did not lend itself to this plan without ignoring, again, the community’s most fundamental design parameters.

At the end of the site visit meeting, it was agreed that Jerry Gaughan would address some of the alternative design ideas in writing, and that we would meet with the County PDS planners to further discuss whether and how alternative approaches would also meet all the regulations that Jerry said his plan is trying to accommodate. Jerry and Erik reiterated their desire to work with the community and design a project that is in accord with VC’s Design Guidelines and Community Plan.

This meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.

Previous comments re: Hatfield Project

Jerry presented no new information of a commercial project to be built at the 1921 site of Charlie Hatfield. He stated that the project was in the 'modeling phase' and would present the models instead of drawings. The DRB continues to request that the previous drawings be redesigned in accordance with the Guidelines. Moore asked if there could be fewer buildings on the site, and questioned the number of existing trees that appeared to require removal. These questions were not answered. She stated her feelings were the property was over-graded, over-built and under planted. The applicant states that this project MUST have substantial grading, retaining walls that far exceed the DRB Guideline limits, parking in the front instead of the rear of the buildings and that the layout of the property does not allow him to follow the guidelines. The DRB stated several times that there was no point in adding additional comments to our previous comments, as this project continues to defy the guidelines, and would not be approved as designed. Montgomery stated the project would not be approved as shown in the last meeting. We encouraged the applicant to please reconsider the design as it is one of the first properties coming into Valley Center, and MUST meet the guidelines. Jerry did not agree to redesign, only requested a special meeting for the 'modeling' designer to present his work. Due to the constraints of the Library's schedule and the member's schedule, this will not be possible, and we agreed to review the modeling at the next DRB meeting, scheduled for August 5.

Previous comments re: Hatfield Project

Jerry Gaughan has submitted an application with the county which depicts building styles and layout we would not approve. Jerry stated this was a 'place marker' for the county and he would be working with us on what we wanted in the site.

The 4 buildings and parking that sit between Banbury Rd. and Valley Center Rd.. DRB made comments regarding the placement and the amount of parking. Our preference is that buildings sit at the road with the parking behind those buildings. Due to the elevation difference between Valley Center and Banbury, this is not feasible. So, additional landscaping and screening was requested. Also, due to the elevation at Banbury, there will need to be retaining walls that exceed Design Guidelines. This proposed retaining wall was a concern with the DRB. In some areas it will be 40' tall, and terraced. Denise Larson, Architect for the project, presented some 'vertical gardens' ideas for the wall and also showed some possible sketches of the buildings. The DRB was pleased with the building designs. The wall is still a concern and there was willingness to look at options both in building layout and wall design. Moore mentioned there were still quite a few trees on the site that looked like they would require removal with this design. There was no comment. Moore also reviewed the plant palette created by Sean Clarke and made suggestions as well as additions. They will be in touch.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:55 pm.