

Planning Commission Agenda Report

May 9, 2018
Item 6.a.

- SUBJECT:** P17-0907
- APPLICANT:** Robert Lyman, Johnson Lyman Architects
- PROPERTY OWNER:** Dennis Winslow
- PURPOSE:** Application for Design Review approval to retain an existing, approximately 1,042-square-foot, single-story single-family residence and to construct an approximately 2,404-square-foot, two-story, two-unit apartment building behind the existing residence and related site improvements.
- LOCATION:** 4722 Harrison Street
- GENERAL PLAN:** High Density Residential
- SPECIFIC PLAN:** Downtown Specific Plan – High Density Residential
- ZONING:** RM-1,500 (Multi-Family Residential), Core Area Overlay District
- EXHIBITS:**
- A. [Draft Resolution and Conditions of Approval](#)
 - B. [Project Plans dated "Received March 22, 2018"](#)
 - C. [February 28, 2018, Planning Commission agenda report with Exhibit B \(Project Plans dated "Received January 17, 2018"\), Exhibit C \(Arborist Report dated October 18, 2017\) and supplemental information \(previous public comments\)](#)
 - D. [February 28, 2018, Planning Commission meeting minutes](#)
 - E. [Environmental Noise Analysis prepared by RGD Acoustics dated January 9, 2018](#)
 - F. [Approved site plans for 434 Rose Avenue and 273 Spring Street](#)
 - G. [Location and Notification Map](#)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt the attached resolution approving Case No. P17-0907, subject to the draft conditions of approval listed as Attachment 1 in Exhibit A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant, Robert Lyman, is proposing to retain an existing, approximately 1,042-square-foot, single-story single-family residence and to construct an approximately 2,404-square-foot (does not include 440 square feet of garage space), two-story, two-unit apartment building behind the existing residence and related site improvements at 4722 Harrison Street. As proposed, the project conforms to the General Plan, Downtown Specific Plan, and zoning requirements. Additionally, staff believes the proposed design would be an aesthetic upgrade for the site and be compatible with the surrounding area. Conditions of approval have been included which will ensure all City requirements are met. Design Review (DR) applications of this nature are subject to review by the Planning Commission. Accordingly, the DR application is before the Planning Commission for consideration.

BACKGROUND

On February 28, 2018, this application was presented to the Planning Commission as a workshop item to allow the Planning Commission an early opportunity to review the plans and provide direction to staff and the applicant on any identified issues. The workshop also provided the public with an early opportunity to review and comment on the project. The balance of this report focuses on the key modifications made to the project plans pursuant to the Planning Commission's direction.

Staff has attached the February 28, 2018, Planning Commission workshop agenda report and pertinent exhibits (Exhibit C), as well the meeting minutes from the workshop (Exhibit D) for comparison purposes with the current proposal. Please also refer to Exhibit C for more background information, site and area description, maps, site photos, prior staff analysis, et cetera related to the project and project site.

MODIFICATIONS BASED ON FEBRUARY 28, 2018 WORKSHOP

At the February 28, 2018, Planning Commission workshop the Commission was asked to consider five specific aspects of the proposed project. Those questions, along with the Planning Commission's direction and the applicant's responses/plan modifications are summarized below. The applicant's responses/plan modifications are also addressed in the appropriate analysis sections of this report.

Question #1: Is the proposed density for the project site acceptable?

Planning Commission direction:

- The majority of the Commission stated the density of the project was acceptable; however, several Commissioners noted that some minor modifications to the site plan to improve vehicular access and maneuverability would be beneficial. Those suggested modifications are noted in Questions #2 and #3 below.

Question #2: Are the proposed site layout and access acceptable?

Question #3: Is the proposed parking for the project acceptable, including the proposed parking access and maneuverability?

Planning Commission direction:

- Consider using enhanced/decorative paving and a mow strip for the project.
- Make any feasible modifications to improve access into and out of the parking spaces.
- Consider relocating the trash enclosures for Units 1 and 2 to allow Parking Space 5 to be

moved to the east and provide more maneuverability for Parking Space 4. Also consider taking a foot or two off the front of the ground floor of each new unit to improve on site maneuverability.

- Consider adding additional trees on-site to mitigate the removal of the Heritage tree.
- Consider merging the rear yard open space of the existing residence with the proposed open space for Unit 1 to allow more open space for Unit 1. Consider enhancing or modifying the front yard landscaping to create private space within the front yard for the existing residence (i.e., fencing, low walls, enclosed patio, etc.).

Applicant Responses:

- Decorative concrete pavers have been included throughout the new driveway/auto court area and the parking spaces.
- A site plan revision has been made to improve maneuverability that consists of combining and relocating the trash enclosures for the new units to the far eastern edge of the project site. This revision allows greater depth for parking space no. 5, allowing any vehicle utilizing that space to pull forward more than in the previous design, which in turn improves the maneuverability (specifically the back-up area) for parking space nos. 3 and 4. Revised turning templates have been provided to show the improved maneuverability (Exhibit B, Plan Sheet A6). (Note: The revised turning templates are based on a 2018 Ford Explorer.)
- Three additional trees have been provided on-site to mitigate for the removal of the Heritage tree.
- The open space of proposed Unit 1 has been increased in size by absorbing a portion of the rear yard area of the existing residence. A fenced yard, utilizing vines and a lattice/green screen, has been added at the front of the existing residence to provide private open space.

Question #4: Is the architectural style and design of the proposed apartment building acceptable?

Planning Commission direction:

- Enhance the architecture of the apartment building to make it less plain. Consider following staff's recommendations in the agenda report (i.e., exposed rafter tails, more substantial window trim, raised porch with detailing, carriage-style garage doors, etc.) to address this issue and also look at incorporating those elements into the existing residence (light fixtures, front door, etc.) to improve its appearance and tie both buildings together.
- Consider introducing a third accent color on the buildings.

Applicant Responses:

- The following architectural modifications are included in the revised design of the proposed units:
 - Exposed rafter tails at roof overhangs
 - More detailed window trim
 - A trellis over the garage doors
 - Beams added at gable-end eaves
 - The lapped siding on the second floor was changed to board-and-batten siding
 - The single body color was changed to have different colors for each floor
 - Carriage-style garage doors (see details on Plan Sheet A5 in Exhibit B)
 - A step was provided at the front entry porches
 - Shed-style awnings were added over two second-floor windows on the west elevation.

- The existing residence would be remodeled to be compatible with the proposed units, including:
 - New windows and doors
 - New siding to match the apartment building
 - New paint to match the apartment building
 - New awnings over the front window and side door
 - The existing composition roof would remain. The apartment building would match the roofing of the existing residence.

Question #5: What other information would assist the Planning Commission in its decision on the proposed project (e.g., additional photo simulations)?

Planning Commission direction:

- Provide some background on the turning movements approved for other similar projects.
- Explore if a double-paned sound attenuating window is available as opposed to a triple-paned window as proposed, to allow the windows to have a deeper recess.
- Provide line-of-sight sections to determine the extent of privacy impacts on the property to the north (Note: staff did not request the applicant to provide these sections as staff determined there would be a clear line-of-sight from the second-floor windows of the apartment building toward the property to the north.

Applicant Responses:

- The approved site plans for projects at 434 Rose Avenue and 273 Spring Street have been provided in Exhibit F. The project at 434 Rose Avenue has similar turning maneuverability to the proposed project and also a similar back-up distance of 23 feet. The project at 273 Spring Street also has similar turning maneuverability to the proposed project, but a smaller back-up distance of 20 feet.
- No double-paned windows are available that would reduce the anticipated noise levels described in the environmental noise analysis (Exhibit E) to meet the City’s noise standards; thus, triple-paned windows are required.

EXISTING LAND USE DESIGNATION AND ZONING

The General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan designate the project site for High Density Residential uses – allowing for residential development of greater than eight units per gross acre. The General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan have language that encourages and/or allows a variety of housing types (i.e., detached and attached single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, condominiums, and apartments) under the High Density Residential designation provided that all requirements of the Zoning Ordinance are met.

The project site is zoned RM-1,500 (Multi-Family Residential) District, and is in the Core Area Overlay District. The purpose of the Core Area Overlay District is to encourage the efficient use of land consisting of parcels of unusual size and shape located in the core area of Pleasanton and to facilitate the development of smaller multi-family rental housing projects; thus, the overlay applies to mixed multi-family/commercial and office uses or multi-family projects containing 10 or fewer rental units only.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Site Plan/Layout

The applicant is proposing to retain the existing approximately 1,042-square-foot, single-story, single-family residence and construct an approximately 2,404-square-foot (does not include 440 square feet of garage space), two-story, apartment building incorporating two side-by-side (duplex) units, behind the existing residence, and related site improvements. Please refer to Figure 1 for the site plan and Figure 2 for a street perspective rendering. Complete project plans are included in Exhibit B.

The existing two-car garage, attached patio cover, wood picket fence in the front yard, existing hardscape and landscaping would be demolished, and all four existing trees (including one Heritage tree) that are on-site would be removed to accommodate the project. The existing perimeter fence would also be removed and replaced with a new, 6-foot-tall, solid wood fence along the north, south, and east property lines. In addition, the existing driveway off Harrison Street would be removed and replaced with a new driveway of the same width and in the same location.

A total of five on-site parking spaces would be provided for the three units; three (uncovered) spaces and two covered spaces within garages. Four of the five spaces would be oriented along the northern portion of the site and would require on-site left turn movements from the new driveway for entry access while one space would be accessible straight-on from the new driveway. Exiting the parking spaces would, in some cases, require multiple on-site vehicular movements as shown on Plan Sheet A6 in Exhibit B.

Architecture

The architectural design for the proposed apartment building (Figure 3) would emulate a "Minimal Traditional" style which is typified by simplistic forms, uncomplicated cladding and wall finishes, clean lines, simple detailing, low-pitched roof elements, and shallow eave overhangs. The proposed apartment building would echo many of these same features and would be clad with horizontal smooth texture composite lapped siding on the first floor and smooth texture board-and-batten siding on the second floor, and feature a composition shingle roof. The body color for all buildings would be a combination of dark blue (almost navy) and off-white. The roof color would be a mix of light and dark brown colors. The existing residence would be modified as previously described to match the proposed apartment building, including new siding, roofing and paint.

Landscaping

New perimeter landscaping would be installed along the front, sides, and rear of the proposed apartment building. The front yard of the existing residence would also be re-landscaped to allow it to be used as outdoor space for the existing home. The landscape plan includes a tree/plant palette of native and non-native species that are primarily drought tolerant, as well as some hardscape features, including concrete patios, stepping stones and a green-screen. The new driveway/auto court area and parking spaces would be constructed of decorative concrete pavers.

Figure 1: Site Plan

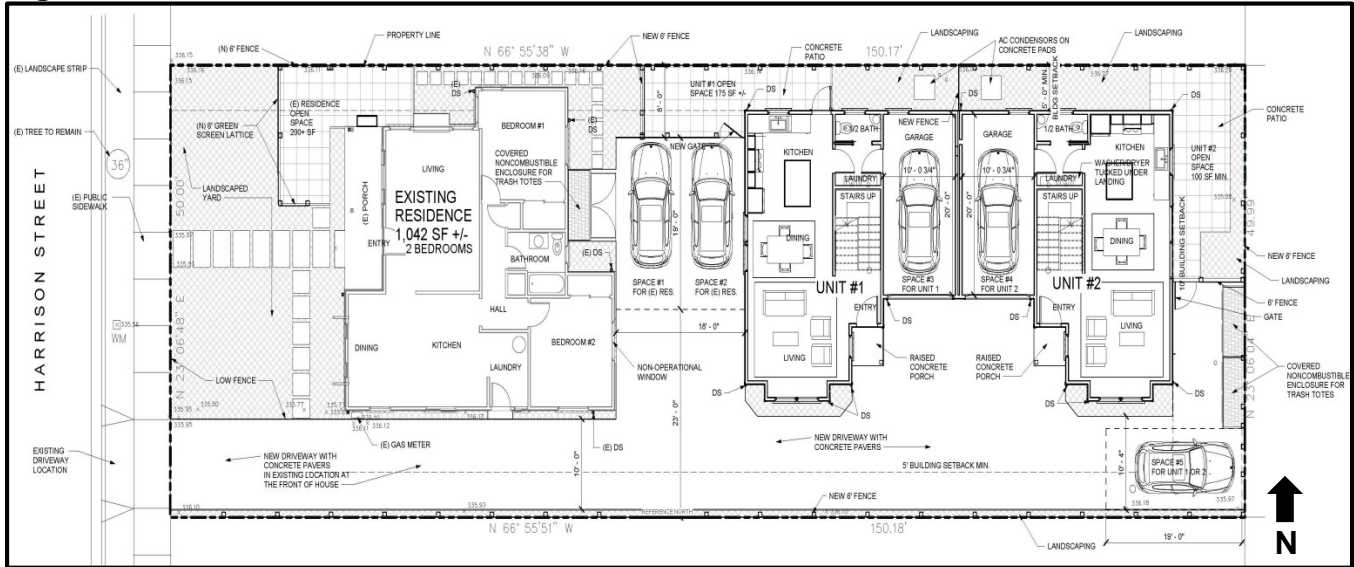


Figure 2: Street Perspective Rendering



Figure 3: Proposed elevations

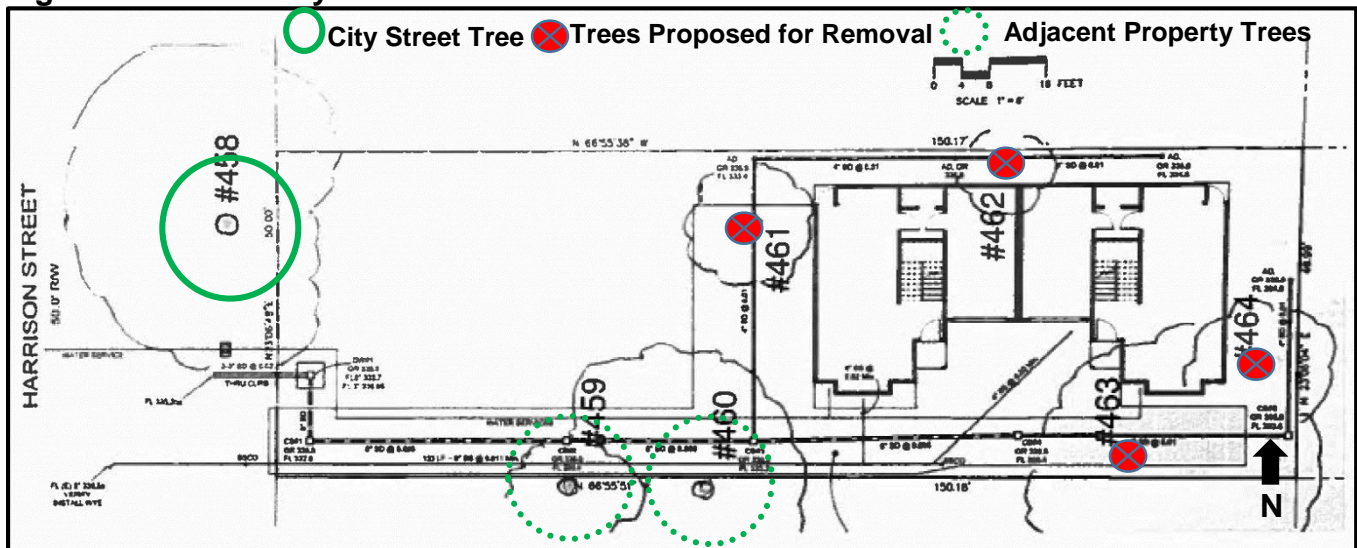


Trees/Tree Removal

An arborist report prepared for the project surveyed all trees, measuring six inches and greater in diameter, within and adjacent to the project site. A total of seven trees comprising seven species were surveyed (please refer to Exhibit C for the tree report and Figure 4 below for the tree survey map). Of the trees surveyed, four are on-site, with the remaining three being off-site either within the public right of way (one City street tree – Tree No. 458) or on the neighboring property at 4734 Harrison St. (Tree Nos. 459 and 460). Four of the seven trees surveyed are Heritage-sized (as defined by the Pleasanton Municipal Code (PMC)). Of these four trees, two are located on the neighboring property at 4734 Harrison St. (Tree Nos. 459 and 460), one is a City street tree at the front of the project site within the public right of way (Tree No. 458), and one is located at the southeast corner of the project site (Tree No. 463).

Due to conflicts with building pad locations and/or within areas where grading and/or infrastructure is proposed, all four of the on-site trees, including the Heritage-sized tree (Tree No. 463), are proposed for removal (see Figure 4). The tree species to be removed include an orange tree (Tree No. 461), a crape myrtle tree (Tree No. 462), an English walnut tree (Tree No. 463), and a yew pine tree (Tree No. 464). The two Heritage trees located on the neighboring property at 4734 Harrison St. (Tree Nos. 459 and 460) would be preserved and would be unaffected by the proposed project. The Heritage-sized City street tree (Tree No. 458) would also be preserved.

Figure 4: Tree survey



SCOPE OF PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

The DR process is intended to preserve and enhance the city's aesthetic values and to ensure the preservation of the public health, safety, and general welfare. Planning Commission review and approval is required for various categories of projects including multi-family residential projects in non-PUD zoning districts. PMC Section 18.20.030 outlines the scope of Design Review, indicating that the reviewing body shall review "site plans, landscape plans, building architecture, and other such plans as may be required to preserve and enhance the city's aesthetic values and to ensure the preservation of the public health, safety, and general welfare." Note that, even though a proposed project may comply with applicable zoning standards (e.g. setbacks, height limits) the design review process allows the reviewing body to approve conditions which may be more restrictive than normal Code standards, to ensure that

the above objectives are met. As outlined in Section 18.20.030, the reviewing body's scope of review shall include (but not be limited to) the following design criteria:

- Preservation of the natural beauty of the city and the project site's relationship to it.
- Appropriate relationship of the proposed building to its site, including transition with streetscape, public views of the buildings, and scale of buildings within its site and adjoining buildings.
- Landscaping designed to enhance architectural features, strengthen vistas, provide shade and conform to established streetscape.
- Appropriate relationship of the proposed building and its site to adjoining areas, including compatibility of architectural styles, harmony in adjoining buildings, attractive landscape transitions, and consistency with neighborhood character.
- Preservation of views enjoyed by residents, workers within the city, and passersby through the community.
- Architectural style, as a function of its quality of design and relationship to its surroundings; the relationship of building components to one another/the building's colors and materials.
- Relationship of exterior lighting to its surroundings and to the building and adjoining landscape.

STAFF REVIEW/ANALYSIS

General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Conformance

Applicable General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan policies, objectives, and programs include the following:

- *General Plan - Community Character Element policy and programs.*
 - *Policy 3 – Maintain the scale and character of downtown.*
 - *Program 3.1 – Require the height, mass, setbacks, and architectural style of new buildings to be reflective of the current downtown scale and character.*
- *General Plan – Land Use Element policy and programs.*
 - *Policy 9: Develop new housing in infill and peripheral areas which are adjacent to existing residential development, near transportation hubs or local-serving commercial areas.*
 - *Program 2.1: Reduce the need for vehicular traffic by locating employment, residential, and service activities close together, and plan development so it is easily accessible by transit, bicycle, and on foot.*
- *General Plan – Housing Element policy and programs.*
 - *Policy 37: Disperse high-density housing throughout the community, in areas near public transit, major thoroughfares, shopping, and employment centers.*
 - *Policy 38: Strongly encourage residential infill in areas where public facilities are or can be made to be adequate to support such development.*

- *Downtown Specific Plan – Residential Land Use.*
 - *Policy 6 - Encourage development at densities which generally exceed the General Plan range midpoints in order to enhance the opportunities for affordable housing, unique housing types, and economic growth in downtown.*
- *Downtown Specific Plan – Land Use.*
 - *Goal – Preserve the character and development traditions of downtown while improving upon its commercial and residential viability.*
 - *Objective 1 – To retain the small-town scale and physical character of downtown through the implementation of appropriate land use and development standards.*
- *Downtown Specific Plan - Design and Beautification.*
 - *Policy 17 - Protect the established size and spacing of buildings in residential neighborhoods by avoiding excessive lot coverage and maintaining appropriate separations between buildings.*
 - *Policy 20 - When a lot exceeds 60 feet in width, detached garages are required and shall be located to the rear of the site. Exceptions can be granted due to a physical constraint that prevents compliance such as an existing heritage-sized tree or inadequate lot depth. Provide screened rear parking for multi-family units.*

As described in the sections below, staff believes the overall size and massing/bulk of the proposed apartment building is consistent with the scale of other multi-family buildings within the surrounding neighborhood. The applicant has made an effort to provide inconspicuous or set-back garages/surface parking and an architectural design that is reflective of the downtown character and the homes on Harrison Street. Furthermore, the proposed project would promote Specific Plan policies regarding the provision of affordable housing since it add new, modestly-sized rental units to the City’s housing supply; and the applicant would be required to contribute to the City’s affordable housing fund for the two new units.

Density, Zoning and Site Development Standards

Allowable Density

The General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan designate the project site as High Density Residential – allowing for residential development of greater than eight units per gross acre. Policies in the General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan encourage and/or allow a variety of housing types (i.e., detached and attached single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, condominiums, and apartments) under the High Density designation provided that all requirements of the Zoning Ordinance are met. As proposed, there would be three dwelling units on the 0.17-acre project site, equivalent to a density of 17 dwelling units per acre, consistent with the General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan High Density Residential land use designation.

Conformance with Zoning Standards

The property is zoned RM-1,500 (Multi-Family Residential) District and located in the Core Area Overlay District. The project would include retention of the existing single-family residence and construction of a two-unit apartment building. All three units would be for rental purposes. Therefore, the project qualifies for the modified development standards for multi-family housing projects in the Core Area Overlay District, which applies to projects with 10 or fewer multi-family rental units.

The Core Overlay District was established for the purpose of facilitating the development of smaller (10 units or less) multi-family rental housing or mixed-use multi-family rental housing/commercial and office projects in downtown. The Core Area Overlay District has modified standards which relax the standard requirements for setbacks (for multiple-family zoned properties), parking, and open space in order to accomplish this objective.

The narrow, long lots prevalent in downtown are sometimes difficult to develop in a manner which produces a satisfactory living environment and which minimizes negative effects on neighbors. Nevertheless, in adopting the Core Area Overlay District, the City recognized that additional development could occur, and should be encouraged, on such lots. The modified development standards were designed to allow development on these types of lots which would not be forced into a rigid mold (which could yield results unsatisfactory to neighboring properties and to the "old town" image of downtown Pleasanton), but rather which could relate more sensitively to the neighborhood.

The central idea behind the reduced standards was to retain existing structures, usually located in the front of the lot, thus maintaining the "old town" look, to take advantage of on-street parking, and to minimize driveway and parking lot paving. This was accomplished by: reducing the rear yard setbacks from 30 feet to 10 feet for RM (multiple-family) zoned properties, encouraging the placement of new units at the rear of the lot, reducing private open space requirements, deleting group open space requirements, reducing the resident parking standards, deleting all visitor parking requirements, and eliminating covered parking requirements.

Section 18.36.030(C) of the PMC allows a combination of attached or detached dwellings, including duplexes, multi-family dwellings, dwelling groups, row houses and townhomes in the RM-1,500 District. As shown in Table 1 below, the proposed project would conform to the applicable RM-1,500 and the Core Area Overlay District development standards.

Furthermore, in an RM district, no structure is permitted to exceed the height of a sloping plane 15 feet in height at the interior of the minimum required side yard (5 feet for the Core Area Overlay District) or at the minimum required rear yard (10 feet for the Core Area Overlay District), and sloping away from the side property line 5 feet for each additional 15 feet in height (see Figure 5). The proposed structure would comply with this regulation.

Driveway Access and Design

As previously described, the existing driveway off Harrison Street would be removed and replaced with a new driveway in the same location. This new driveway would also provide pedestrian access to the new units at the rear of the site. In an RM district, a separate pedestrian walk is normally required between the units and the front property line. However, on smaller in-fill sites, such as the project site, staff has in the past been supportive of providing relief from this requirement by allowing projects to utilize the vehicular driveway to serve both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This concept has been recently supported and applied on two similar projects: one at 4745 Augustine St. and the other at 434 Rose Ave. Staff believes this approach should also be applied for the proposed project given the limited width of the project site, desire to maintain the existing single-family home on-site, and because of the relatively limited amount of vehicular traffic and low vehicle speeds along the driveway, which would limit vehicular and pedestrian conflicts.

Figure 5: Sloping Plane Graphic

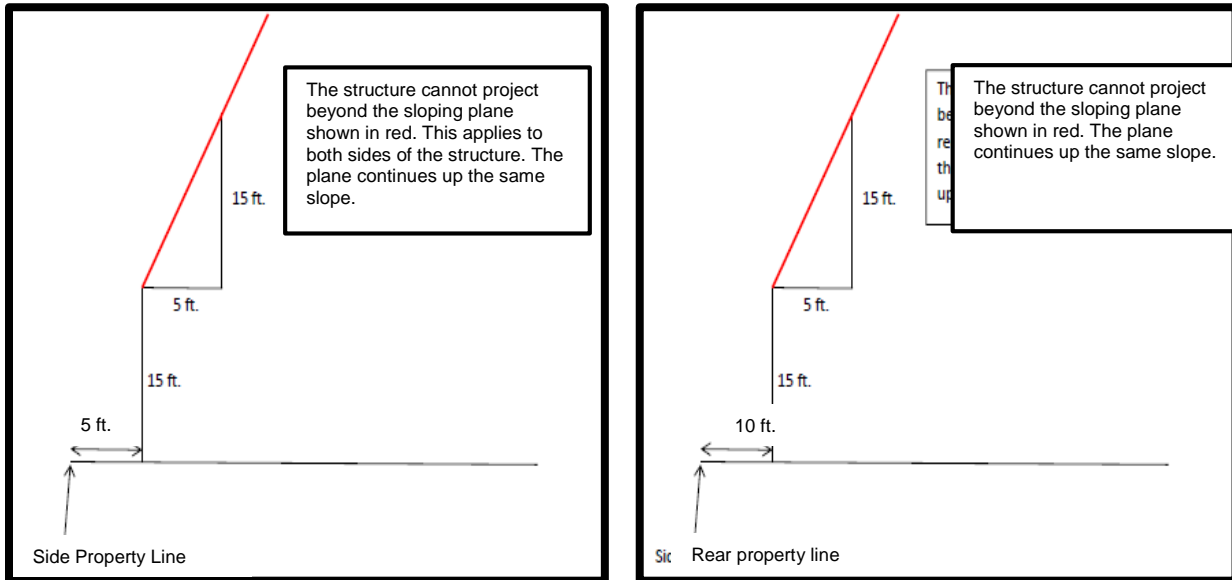


Table 1: City Zoning Requirements (Core Overlay District) vs. Proposed Project

Site Development Standard	City Requirements	Proposed Project
Site Area per Dwelling Unit	1,500 sq. ft. min. per dwelling unit	2,503 sq. ft. per dwelling unit
Floor Area Ratio	50% max.	45.89%
Building Height (apt. building)	30 feet max. ¹	23 ft., 10 in.
Sloping Plane (apt. building)	No structure shall exceed the height of a sloping plane 15 feet in height at the interior of the minimum required side and rear yard, and sloping away from the side and rear property line five feet for each additional 15 feet in height.	Conforms (see Exhibit B)
Setbacks (apt. building)		
Front	15 ft. min.	78 ft.
Side / Aggregate Between the Two Sides	5 ft. min / 10 ft. min.	5 ft. / 15 ft.
Rear	10 ft. min.	10 ft.
Parking	5 parking spaces min.	5 parking spaces
Private Open Space Standards	100 sq. ft. per unit min.	Unit 1 = 175 sq. ft. / Unit 2 = 450 sq. ft. (Existing residence = +/- 200 sq. ft.)

1. The height of a structure, as defined by the PMC, is measured from the average elevation of the natural grade of the ground covered by the structure to the mean height between eaves and ridges for a hip, gable, or gambrel roof.

Staff and the Planning Commission also recommended the use of pavers and/or special paving within the new driveway/auto court area, within the parking areas and up to the front doors of the new apartment units. Additionally, staff and the Planning Commission recommended a mow strip be included down the center of the driveway up to the front edge of the existing residence. As proposed, the applicant has chosen to utilize decorative concrete pavers for all of the prescribed areas of the project. Staff believes the incorporation of the pavers has increased the visual quality of the project and better reflects the character of downtown’s residential neighborhoods. Based on this, staff believes the previously recommended mow strip, an element which is traditionally difficult to maintain, is no longer necessary.

Traffic, Circulation and Parking

The Core Area Overlay District requires 1.5 parking spaces for each two-bedroom rental unit, which may be covered or uncovered. No visitor parking is required pursuant to the Core Area Overlay District. Accordingly, the proposed project is required to provide five on-site parking spaces, with which the proposed project would comply. In downtown, and especially on smaller, in-fill, development sites, providing the required parking can be difficult. Not only does the project meet the requirements, but it provides a mix of both covered and uncovered parking. As such, staff supports the parking as proposed.

Staff notes that typically a minimum of 25 feet of backup distance is required for on-site parking on these types of in-fill projects and 23 feet of backup distance is currently proposed. Staff and the Planning Commission have supported reduced backup distances for in-fill projects on small, downtown in-fill sites in the past. An example of two projects with reduced backup distances include the completed project at 434 Rose Avenue (apartments) where 23 feet of back up distance was supported and approved, and the project currently under construction at 273 Spring St. (apartments), where the Planning Commission supported a 20-foot backup distance. In this case, the applicant has provided a plan sheet (Sheet A6 in Exhibit B) with turning templates that demonstrate the provided backup distances are adequate for ingress/egress from each of the provided parking spaces. While staff acknowledges the path of travel is not ideal in some instances, because multiple movements may be needed to maneuver into or out of the space, especially for a larger vehicle, staff believes 23 feet of backup distance can be supported given the small number of units and vehicles parked on site.

Architecture and Design

The proposed apartment building is designed to emulate a “Minimal Traditional” style, which is one of the architectural styles required to be used for new residential buildings in downtown.

The proposed building would generally use high quality and durable finishes including smooth texture composite lapped siding, smooth texture board-and-batten siding, smooth wood trim, and composition shingle roofing.

In staff's view, the applicant has provided sufficient articulation on all building elevations to break up the two-story façades and provide visual relief. The proposed building height is also compatible with those of the surrounding neighborhood, which include a mix of one-story and two-story single- and multi-family homes. Staff also believes that the materials and colors are appropriate for the architectural style of the buildings. However, staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring the applicant to provide a color and material board to better demonstrate the true colors and finishes for the project. Additionally, staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring the applicant to select a trim color different from the second-floor body color of the apartment building. Plan Sheet CB (Exhibit B) currently shows them as the same color in name and manufacturer specification, but they appear to be different on the elevation plan sheets. Staff is supportive of the color scheme shown on the elevation plan sheets.

Overall, and pursuant to the architectural modifications the applicant has made to architectural design since the workshop, staff believes that the design of the proposed apartment building is attractive and appropriate for downtown, conforms to the traditional character of the downtown, complies with the Downtown Design Guidelines, and would complement the existing buildings

on Harrison Street and other areas in downtown.

Landscaping and Trees

A landscape plan has been provided which includes a variety of trees, shrubs, and groundcover for the site. The landscape plan would assist in softening the appearance of the proposed building and provide an attractive streetscape. Staff believes the proposed landscaping, including four additional trees (two within the front yard and two within the rear yard) beyond what was originally proposed at the workshop, adequately mitigates the trees to be removed and is appropriate for the subject site. The proposed landscaping would be compatible with the surrounding parcels as it incorporates a similar plant palette found throughout the City.

Grading and Drainage

Minor grading would be needed to prepare the new building pad and associated site improvements. As proposed, stormwater would be treated on-site with landscaped bioswales and then conveyed into the local stormdrain system per City requirements. Accordingly, the project would meet the City's grading, drainage and stormwater requirements.

Noise and Vibration

An environmental noise analysis (Exhibit E) was prepared for the project by RGD Acoustics to assess and make recommendations for the anticipated exterior and interior noise impacts, as well as vibration impacts, caused by things such as the nearby train tracks and events in the Downtown and at the nearby County Fairgrounds. The analysis indicates that the apartment building would be subject to exterior noise levels approaching 53 dBA on the first-floor (partially shielded by existing surrounding structures) and 60 dBA on the second-floor which is less than the City threshold of 70 dBA for exterior noise compatibility; therefore, no special mitigation is required.

For interior noise levels, the apartment building would be subject to a maximum 90 dBA (train noise) that would require the applicant to utilize sound-rated windows, doors and, for some rooms, an acoustically enhanced wall assembly. Incorporation of these measures would reduce the interior noise impacts within the apartment building to the City-required 45 dBA or less.

Regarding vibration, the analysis indicates that the apartment building would experience a maximum of 56 VdB where 72 VdB is the established City threshold requiring mitigation.

Staff concurs with the findings of the environmental noise analysis prepared for the project and has recommended a condition of approval requiring the applicant to adhere to the prescribed mitigation measures contained therein.

ALTERNATIVES

As articulated above, staff believes the project, as proposed, is consistent with the objectives of the zoning district. However, alternatives to the proposal that could be considered by the Planning Commission include:

1. Denial of the application. If the Planning Commission pursues this alternative, the applicant would need to submit a new application reflecting a substantially modified project; or

2. Direct further modifications to the project design that are incorporated as conditions of approval or brought back for review at a continued public hearing.

PROS/CONS OF PROJECT

PROS	CONS
Enhances the site’s appearance from the public right-of-way and adjacent properties and building design is architecturally compatible with the existing building on the site and with other buildings Downtown.	Increases traffic and parking demand at this project site (however, circulation and parking impacts would not be adverse)
Expands the City’s market rate rental unit inventory within the Downtown	
Consistent with the General Plan policies, zoning regulations and Downtown Specific Plan requirements	

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Notices of this application were sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and noticing map as Exhibit E for reference. At the time this report was published, staff had not received any public comments regarding the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15332, In-fill Development Projects, Class 32. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

The project would improve an underutilized project site within the Downtown Specific Plan Area with two new market rate rental units. The project would not adversely affect surrounding uses and would enhance the site’s appearance from the public right-of-way and adjacent properties. Staff supports the project and recommends the Planning Commission approve the project as proposed.

Primary Author: Eric Luchini, Associate Planner, 925-931-5612 or eluchini@cityofpleasantonca.gov.

Reviewed/Approved By:

Steve Otto, Senior Planner
 Ellen Clark, Planning Manager
 Gerry Beaudin, Community Development Director