



Planning Commission Staff Report

June 28, 2006

Item 6.d.

- SUBJECT:** Work Session for PUD-32
- APPLICANT:** Daniel and Belinda Sarich
- PROPERTY OWNER:** Daniel and Belinda Sarich
- PURPOSE:** Work session to review and provide comments on an application for planned unit development (PUD) development plan approval to construct an approximately 13,015-square-foot single-family residence and an approximately 130-square-foot pool house on an approximately 20-acre site in the Vineyard Avenue Specific Plan Area.
- GENERAL PLAN:** Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan Area
- ZONING:** PUD-LDR/HR/OS (Planned Unit Development – Low Density Residential/Hillside Residential/Open Space) District
- LOCATION:** 5 Tuscany Place (formerly 1630 Vineyard Avenue)
- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. Proposed Plans and Example Photographs
 2. Location Map
 3. Aerial Photograph of Site
 4. Excerpts of the Minutes of the September 28, 2005, Planning Commission Workshop
 5. Vineyard Avenue Corridor Land Use Plan
 6. Photographs of Property
 7. October 3, 2005, Memorandum to the Planning Commission
 8. September 28, 2005, Planning Commission Staff Report (without attachments)

I. BACKGROUND

On June 1, 1999, the City Council approved a Specific Plan and Planned Unit Development (PUD) rezoning/rezoning for the 384-acre area commonly referred to as Vineyard Avenue Corridor located in southeast Pleasanton.

The Sarich property is Lot 27 in the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan Area. The subject site has three land use designations: 1) Low Density Residential (LDR), 2) Hillside Residential (HR), and 3) Open Space (OS) (please see Attachment #5). The LDR area is shown on approximately four acres in the northeastern portion of the site fronting Old Vineyard Avenue. The HR area is an approximately one-acre area located near the southeast corner of the property. The OS area is the remainder of the site characterized by an existing oak woodland. A total of eight residential units are approved for Lot 27: one existing and one new dwelling in the HR area and six new dwellings in the LDR area.

In October 2003, Daniel and Belinda Sarich filed an application for development of an eight-lot residential project. In 2005, the applicants decided to pursue a portion of the original application: demolition of the existing house, guest house, and garage/barn and construction of a new house and several accessory buildings on the existing lot. The applicants indicated they would pursue approval of a development plan for the six lower lots at a later date. A Planning Commission workshop was scheduled on June 8, 2005, to allow the Planning Commission and public to review and comment on the proposed plans. However, the application was continued at the request of the applicants.

The applicants revised their application by proposing to retain the existing house and detached garage/barn. The existing guest house was proposed to be demolished. The applicants also decided to eliminate a proposed second unit and barn/winery structure from the plan. The revised plans were taken to a Planning Commission Workshop to receive input from the Commission and public.

September 28, 2005, Planning Commission Workshop

On September 28, 2005, the Planning Commission held a workshop to review the applicants' plans to construct an approximately 14,510-square-foot, two-story residence and an approximately 130-square-foot pool house. The Commission provided the following comments:

- With respect to the location of the new HR home site, some Commissioners felt that the proposed home site location would be acceptable if the house was redesigned to be less visually prominent and have medium to dark earthtone colors to help the home blend in with its surroundings. One Commissioner was opposed to the hilltop siting of the house and felt that the new HR house should be located down near the existing garage, closer to the asterisk shown on the VACSP land use plan.
- General consensus that the architectural style of the house was acceptable.
- Regarding the height and number of stories of the house, several Commissioners felt that a two-story house that was slightly taller than 25 feet would be acceptable if designed to

reduce its visual impact and utilized dark earthtone wall and roof colors.

- A Commissioner was concerned that the topography was being changed to conform to the house, not the other way around.
- A Commissioner expressed concern with the amount of trees that would be removed.

Regarding public input at the workshop, Greg Reznick, adjacent neighbor at 5 Windy Oaks Drive, expressed concern with the grading of the knoll and conformance with the Specific Plan regarding building height and number of stories. Mr. Reznick also stated that the house design fails to adapt itself to the geography and the character of the region it is sitting in. Mr. Reznick indicated that he was contemplating development of his property and that if the Commission granted the Sarich project flexibility with respect to the Specific Plan regulations, then he would request similar flexibility in his project. Mr. Reznick's proposed PUD development plan was heard by the Planning Commission on May 24, 2006, and is scheduled for consideration by the City Council on August 15, 2006. Mary Roberts, adjacent neighbor at 1666 Frog Hill Lane, spoke in opposition to the proposed siting of the home and felt that it should be located closer to what is shown on the VACSP land use map. Mrs. Roberts expressed concern with amount of grading and tree removal and indicated that the architecture of the house was too ornate and should be redesigned.

The applicants have submitted revised preliminary plans, which include reductions in the building area, height, grading, size of graded pad, and tree removal. Staff has brought the plans to the Commission as a work session item to have the Commission determine if the applicant is on the right track prior to finalizing the PUD plans for review. The workshop will also provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the revised plans.

Subject Property and Surrounding Area

The Specific Plan Area is divided into three subareas, determined by land use, topography, and environmental characteristics. The Sarich property is located in Subarea 3. Subarea 3 contains steeply sloping terrain that rises up from Old Vineyard Avenue to the southern boundary of the Plan Area. There are flatter areas along the hilltops and in the eastern portion of this subarea. The southern boundary forms a prominent ridge that acts as the visual backdrop for the Plan Area when viewed from the north.

The subject property is located on the south side of Old Vineyard Avenue and measures approximately 20-acres in area. The property contains an existing one-story, approximately 2,300-square-foot residence, detached guest house, and detached garage/barn with a paved driveway off of Old Vineyard Avenue. Most of the subject property contains slopes exceeding 10%, with large portions of the property exceeding a 20% slope. Flat portions of the site are limited to the small pads that were created for the existing structures. The elevations of the

subject site range from 450 feet along Old Vineyard Avenue to 670 feet at the top of the ridge near the southern property line. The property has a large number of native blue oak trees and smaller numbers of valley oak, eucalyptus, California buckeye, and willow trees.

The property is bordered on the west by the Roberts parcel and residence (1666 Frog Hill Lane, formerly Vineyard Avenue), on the east by Greenbriar Homes' Bordeaux Country Estates development (currently under construction), and on the south by the Foley parcel. Centex Homes' Avignon development (soon to be under construction) and the Safreno parcel and residence (1627 Safreno Place, formerly Vineyard Avenue) are located north of the subject site, across Old Vineyard Avenue.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicants wish to construct a new home and pool house. The existing residence and its detached garage/barn would be retained and the existing detached guest house would be demolished. The existing house would be located on its own separate parcel. Below is a description of the proposed single-family residence and accessory structure along with a table comparing the previous and current plans:

- An 11,785-square-foot, two-story home with a habitable basement and a 1,230-square-foot, four-car-attached garage are proposed [*Please note that the building and garage areas listed on Sheet A-1 are from the previous proposal; please see the building elevations for the revised areas.*]. A 130-square-foot pool house would be located on the eastern side of the home.
- The applicants propose to site the proposed home on a knoll near the ridgeline. The knoll would be cut to accommodate a flat building pad for the house. A maximum 40-foot deep cut would occur near the base of the slope bank behind (south) of the house, similar to the prior workshop plans, but the cut below and immediately around the house has been reduced from 622 to 625 feet in the previous plan to elevations of 627.3 to 630.5 feet. A 4½-foot tall retaining wall would be located along the north side of the house, making the base of the northern house wall approximately 4½-feet lower than the natural grade at the top of the retaining wall. The applicants have indicated that they would try to balance the grading at the site so that there is no soil to off haul.
- An "Italian villa" design is proposed for the Sarich residence. The applicants have included the previously proposed building floor plans and elevations with the proposed building reductions shown as a darker black outline. The applicants have indicated that the two-story home would measure approximately 27 feet 8 inches tall at the top of the main roof ridge and approximately 32 feet 8 inches at the top of the cupola, excluding the finial. Because the grading below the house was reduced, the finished floors elevations of the house increased from 623 to 626.5 feet in the previous plan to elevations of 627.5 to 631

feet.

- A revised color and material board has not been prepared, but the applicants have provided color renderings of the proposed home. Images of textures, colors, and materials similar to what the applicants' desire are also attached.
- Access to the proposed house, unchanged from the previous plan, would be from a 12- to 16-foot wide private drive that generally follows the location of the existing road to the existing residence. Staff notes that the road may need to be widened to a 16-foot paved and 20-foot clear (excluding drainage ditches) to accommodate fire-fighting equipment. The drive would be extended approximately 400 feet up the ridge to serve the proposed home site.
- A 55-foot diameter, circular Fire Department turnaround would be located at the top of the private drive. A retaining wall with a maximum height of 7½ feet would be located on the west side of the turnaround. Although not shown on the plans, the turnaround and retaining wall would require the removal of a 28-inch diameter, healthy blue oak tree (tree no. 18). The applicants have indicated that they are willing to relocate and redesign the turnaround to save the tree and to reduce the height of or eliminate the retaining wall at this location by utilizing a hammerhead-style turn around which is incorporated into and/or located next to the garage motor court/back up area.
- A stone retaining wall with a maximum height of 7½ feet would be located on the west side of the private drive, between a turnout and the circular Fire Department turnaround. Since this retaining wall would be visible from the existing Roberts and Reznick homes, the applicants have indicated that they are willing to use two parallel retaining walls at this location with landscaping installed at the base of the walls.
- Approximately 38 trees would be removed to accommodate the proposed development. The current plan saves 18 more trees than the prior plan, seven of which are heritage-sized trees. Please see the revised site plan for the location and list of the additional trees to be saved. Nineteen trees are shown on the list, but staff notes that tree no. 63 was to be saved in the prior plan. Staff believes that a few additional trees may need to be removed to accommodate widening of the lower portion of the private road. Impacts to these trees will be assessed after staff receives revised grading plans for the project.
- At the northerly portion of the site designated as LDR, a series of stepped benches would be graded and planted with vineyards until the land is developed with homes.

Comparison of Previous and Current Plans

	September 28, 2005 Plans	Current Plans
Location of New House	Top of the knoll	Top of the knoll
Graded Pad Elevations	622 to 625 ft.	627.3 to 630.5 ft.
Finished Floor Elevations	623 to 626.5 ft.	627.5 to 631 ft.
House Size:		
First Floor	9,095 sq. ft.	8,095 sq. ft.
Second Floor	3,300 sq. ft.	2,920 sq. ft.
Basement	770 sq. ft.	770 sq. ft.
Garage	1,345 sq. ft.	1,230 sq. ft.
Total Area without Garage	13,165 sq. ft.	11,785 sq. ft.
Total Area with Garage	14,510 sq. ft.	13,015 sq. ft.
Height (measured vertically from the lowest elevation of the building to the highest elevation of the building, excluding chimneys)	32.3 ft. (at main roof ridge) 37.8 ft. (top of the cupola, excluding the finial)	27 ft. 8 in. (at main roof ridge) 32 ft. 8 in. (top of the cupola, excluding the finial)
Trees Removed	56 ¹	38 ¹

¹ Additional trees may need to be removed to accommodate widening of the lower portion of the private road.

III. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WORKSHOP

This workshop is the Commission’s opportunity to direct the applicants and staff as to issues it wishes to be addressed. The areas noted below are those on which staff would find the Commission’s input most helpful.

Site and Grading Plans

The previous Planning Commission Staff Report (please see Attachment #8) lists several goals, objectives, and guidelines of the VACSP that the Commission may consider when reviewing the site and grading plans.

Discussion Points for the Site and Grading Plans

- *Are the locations of the residence and pool house appropriate? The applicants feel that there are limited opportunities to place an additional house in the HR area while keeping the existing house, which is allowed. The Specific Plan indicates that all HR home sites must be located within the designated development areas as generally depicted on the land use plan. The land use plan shows the new home site immediately south of the existing home site. Staff notes that land use plans are not usually meant to be precise, but can be flexible. For the Reznick PUD, the Commission determined that the relocation of some of the home sites was consistent with the intent of the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan*

and acceptable.

- *Is the revised grading for the new home location appropriate? The proposed grading and retaining wall near the northern side of the house would help screen the lower portion of the house when viewed from the adjacent Reznick and Roberts residences and other off-site areas to the northeast to northwest.*
- *Is the proposed tree removal acceptable? Staff notes that the 18 additional trees to be saved are located north or west of and below the proposed home, which would help screen it from views from the adjacent Reznick and Roberts residences and other off-site areas.*

Building Design/Architecture

The previous Planning Commission Staff Report (please see Attachment #8) lists several goals, objectives, and guidelines of the VACSP that the Commission may consider when reviewing the building design/architecture.

Discussion Points for Building Design/Architecture

- *The proposed house would be located on existing elevations of 626 to 667 feet (after grading, the proposed house pad elevations are from 627.3 to 630.5 feet) and, therefore, is limited to 25 feet in height and one story. As indicated on page 23 of the Specific Plan, site development standards such as building height may vary for unusual site conditions as long as any new standards are consistent with the intent of the Specific Plan. The height is approximately 27 feet 8 inches at the top of the roof ridge and approximately 32 feet 8 inches at the top of the cupola, excluding the finial. In addition, the house is two stories plus a basement. Staff notes that for the Reznick PUD, the Commission (4-1 vote) supported building heights on existing elevations exceeding 540 feet to exceed 25 feet, but no greater than 27 feet, and may be two-story on a case-by-case basis if the finding can be made that the additional height will not create more of a visual impact to offsite locations and adjacent neighbors than a structure 25 feet or less in height. Does the Commission feel that the height and number of stories is acceptable for the subject home?*
- *Is the reduced house size/massing acceptable?*
- *Are the example colors and materials acceptable?*

IV. CONCLUSION

With the revisions shown on the current plans, staff feels that the applicants are on the right track to proceed with finalizing the plans for the Commission's and Council's formal review of the PUD.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Notices regarding the workshop were mailed to property owners and tenants within 1,000 feet of the subject property. At the writing of this report, staff has not received any comments from any of the adjacent property owners or tenants. As indicated above, public comments were received at the prior workshop.

VI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take public testimony, discuss the items identified in the report, and any others it may identify, and provide direction to the applicants and staff.

For questions or comments about this proposal, please contact: Steve Otto, Associate Planner at 925-931-5608 or sotto@ci.pleasanton.ca.us.