

Planning Commission Staff Report

June 27, 2007

Item 5.a.

SUBJECT: PDR-563

**APPLICANT/
PROPERTY OWNER:** Michael Aminian / Stanley Center, LLC

PURPOSE: Application for design review approval to construct an approximately 31,180-square-foot retail building, an approximately 3,940-square-foot retail pad, parking stalls, and landscaping on a vacant lot.

LOCATION: 3595 Utah Street

GENERAL PLAN: Retail/Highway/Service Commercial; Business and Professional Offices.

ZONING: PUD-C (Planned Unit Development – Commercial) District.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit A, Site Plan, Lighting Plan, Grading and Drainage Plan, Landscape Plan, Sign Information, and Elevations dated “Received December 15, 2006”
2. Exhibit B, Draft Conditions of Approval
3. Location Map
4. Exhibit C, List of Uses in Stanley Business Park

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Michael Aminian of Stanley Center LLC, proposes to develop a retail center containing four separate buildings on two parcels on the eastern side of Wyoming Street and northeast corner of Utah Street in the Stanley Business Park. Mr. Aminian is also the owner/operator of the self-service gasoline station that adjoins the east side of the site. In May of 2005, the Planning Commission approved Mr. Aminian’s request for design review and conditional use permit approvals for a full-service car wash including a gift shop and detailing services at 3595 and 3597 Utah Street. Mr. Aminian has since decided not to construct the full-service car wash and instead is asking for approval to construct four commercial buildings on

two adjoining vacant parcels. The site is located within and subject to the Stanley Business Park PUD guidelines. The applicant does not intend to change the uses that are currently allowed. The project is before the Planning Commission to consider the project and take action. Staff notes that design review applications do not continue to the City Council unless appealed.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property consists of two parcels located on the corner of Wyoming and Utah Streets with the proposed development being constructed on flat, vacant sites located adjacent to developed sites. Surrounding properties and uses include a variety of automotive-related and service-oriented businesses.



The sites can be accessed from Utah and Wyoming Streets with access to the interior sides of the sites provided by north/south and east/west by access easements/interblock driveways. The portion of the easement/driveway between McDonald's and the site was constructed with the McDonald's project. The applicant would construct the interblock driveway adjoining this site's east side with the service station and would construct the interblock driveway between the two subject sites and along the site's north side, on Wyoming Street, with the construction of this project. The easements/access driveways are shown below.

McDonald's and service station access drive



Proposed location



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing four individual buildings located on two parcels, totaling 2.67 acres. As shown on the elevations, the buildings have been broken into a total of 12 tenant suites and the pads could be leased from 1 to 5 tenants. Vegetative bio-swales will border the property with 15 gallon trees along the streetscapes (Stanley Boulevard, Wyoming and Utah Streets). Direct access to the site is provided from both Wyoming and Utah; 1 entrance on each. The site can also be accessed from the easements/interblock driveways off of Stanley Boulevard and Bernal Avenue. The site provides a total of 126 parking spaces on the two sites.

Two single-story buildings will be constructed on the northwest and southwest portion of the lot with building 1 proposed at 12,369 square-feet and building 2 at 12,363 square-feet. Buildings 1 and 2 offer various roof heights to help break up the massing of the buildings. The lowest point of the roof for building 1 is 25-feet with the maximum height at 35-feet (measured from finished grade to the top of the parapet). The lowest point of the roof for building 2 is 31-feet with the maximum height at 37-feet 9-inches (measured from finished grade to the top of the parapet). There will be a landscape buffer between the two buildings to assist in breaking up the building walls.

Retail Pad "A" will be approximately 3,894 square-feet, located to the northeast of the Stanley lot, and Retail Pad "B" will be approximately 2,700 square-feet, located to the southeast of the Utah lot. Pad "A" and "B" have architectural details that help break up the appearance of the buildings. The maximum height of Pad "A" is 27-feet with the parapet height being 30-feet 6-inches. Pad "B" will have a maximum height of 30-feet 6-inches with the parapet height being 36-feet 6-inches.

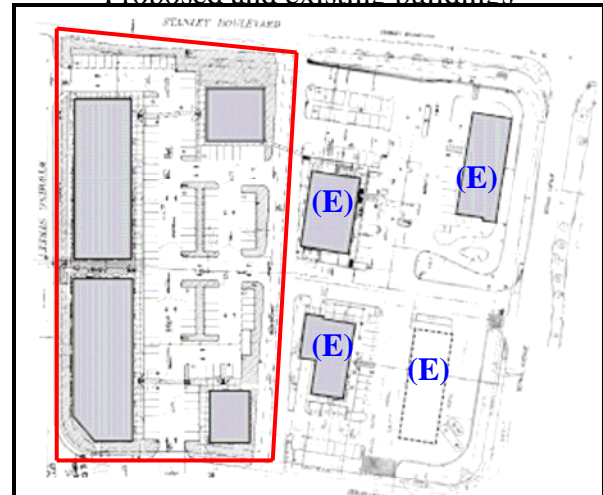
The proposed buildings/pads would have a modern architectural style with earthtone colors, brick and stacked stone. A covered trash enclosure, matching the architectural style of the

buildings, will be located on the east side (facing the back side of the services station on the next lot) and screened by landscaping. No further grading is proposed at this time except for compaction and small fill areas. All utilities, including storm drainage and fire hydrants, will be extended to the new building pads.

Focused aerial view



Proposed and existing buildings



ANALYSIS

General Plan and Zoning

General Plan

The subject property follows the General Plan designation for Retail/Highway/Service Commercial; Business and Professional Offices land uses; which allow retail and commercial uses. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan land use designation. The project would provide a combined building total of 31,326 additional square-feet; which is consistent with Policy 4 of the General Plan's Land Use Element; “ensure that neighborhood, community, and commercial centers provide goods and services needed by residents and businesses of Pleasanton and its market area.”

Zoning: Stanley Business Park PUD Development Plan

The City Council approved the Stanley Business Park PUD on December 8, 1981, under PUD-81-25. The PUD approval references the development standards of the City’s C-S (Service-Commercial) zoning district for building height, setbacks, floor area ratio, and parking. The front and rear yard setbacks are required to be a minimum of 10-feet with the side property setbacks set at 0-feet. The proposed project is maintaining at least a 10-foot setback buffer around the entire site. The maximum height allowed for the buildings is 40-feet. The heights of

the buildings are as low as 25-feet with the maximum height (measure from finished grade to parapet) being 37-feet 9-inches, which puts the buildings below the maximum allowed height. There is a 100% floor area limit allowed. With the buildings (26.9%), landscaping (15.7%), and impervious areas (57.4%), the project will not exceed the maximum allowed limit. The parking requirement is 1 space for every 300 square-feet of building. Based on the building square footages (31,326) 105 spaces would be required; however 126 spaces are being provided. The proposal meets or exceeds the development standard requirements of the Stanley Business Park PUD approval for this site.

The applicant will lease the tenant spaces to businesses that are similar and/or complementary to the existing uses located within Stanley Business Park. Some of those uses are permitted uses by the Stanley Business Park PUD, and some are conditionally permitted requiring a conditional use permit by the Planning Commission. Exhibit C is a list of the uses allowed for the project by the Stanley Business Park PUD development plan.

Traffic Considerations

The site conforms to the General Plan and zoning land use designations and proposed uses that are compatible with the Stanley Business Park PUD. These uses were evaluated at the time of the PUD approval. However, at the time the uses and traffic were analyzed, the volumes were significantly less when comparing today's traffic volumes. The City has required traffic studies to be prepared for projects that change land uses, or, if uses are in sensitive, in high traffic volume areas that may add additional trips. As an example of this, the Bernal Retail Center (PDR-421) was required to prepare a traffic study although conforming to the General Plan and zoning land use designations. The Planning Commission did not agree with the assessment of the traffic study and therefore required the applicant to pay only traffic impact fees and not install or retrofit any additional intersection improvements.

At the time this application was submitted, staff believed that the project would need to prepare a traffic study. However, off-setting that need, it appeared that the two traffic studies that had been recently prepared could be used to analyze the impacts of the subject site: one for the Bernal Retail Center and the other for Home Depot. Staff believed that an analysis could be done based on these two documents and a determination of traffic impact fees, therefore nullifying the need to conduct one at this site. However, closer review proved that the project sizes, uses, etc were not similar enough for staff to draw conclusions and determine a fair share traffic impact fee based upon the development.

The purpose of a traffic study is to evaluate what impacts a specific project may have on the street system and what, if any, additional improvements ought to be provided to mitigate a development. Staff believes the applicant will need to pay somewhere between \$150,000 and \$300,000 in traffic impact fees. The applicant also agrees that this obligation is likely within

this range. Rather than negotiating an arbitrary number, staff requested that a traffic study be conducted after all.

The timing of the determination to request the study be done is now inopportune for the applicant due to various scheduling constraints, there are several business obligations related to the site which requires action by the Planning Commission on the project before June 30. Given this financial constraint, the applicant requested City staff to look into alternatives that could be employed to move the project forward. Staff discussed this request and found that it was appropriate, in this singular case, to condition the project with such language as appropriate to ensure traffic impact fee amounts are paid based upon a traffic study that would need to be completed prior to issuance of building permits. The applicant has confirmed support for this approach which will enable him to continue with the funding of the project.

The applicant requests the Planning Commission consider this request reasonable under the circumstances recognizing the highly sensitive area, and find that since he is willing to accept a condition requiring fees to be paid in an unknown amount, that the Planning Commission allow the project to move forward, support staff's recommendation knowing that the traffic study is under way in order to pay the traffic impact fees. The applicant has submitted the funds necessary to complete the study, which is anticipated within 1-2 months. A condition of approval has been provided to address this.

Site Design

The buildings are well laid out and provide screening to the on-site parking while providing appropriate frontage with two-sided architecture on the streetscapes. Building facades are significantly articulated to reduce and vary the buildings form and volume. Proposed parking exceeds the minimum number of parking spaces required for this project by 21 parking spaces. Landscaped areas border the site and are incorporated between the buildings, driveway entrances and in the parking islands.

Building Design

Staff considers the new building design to be attractive and well executed. The proposed building design differs from surrounding buildings which visually sets it apart from the appearance of these structures; especially those in the industrial area. Staff believes that the proposed design is distinct yet is complementary to the surrounding buildings and other projects that have been approved (Bernal Retail Center). Stanley Business Park is considered a Gateway to Pleasanton and staff believes that the proposed project achieves a high level of design quality that is essential for Gateway areas because the roof heights vary, are minimized, and the color pallet and material proposed for the buildings will achieve a softened appearance by providing depth and articulation.

Landscaping

The conceptual landscape plan illustrates the design concepts for the landscape treatments for these sites. A variety of trees and shrubs are proposed, consisting of 15-gallon size trees and 5-gallon size shrubs. The landscape plan includes native plantings with flowering trees that assist in softening the appearance of the structures and promotes maintaining an attractive street façade and site entrances.

Lighting

The light fixtures that are proposed on the buildings will be wall-mounted sconces with pedestrian path lighting using acorn lamp fixtures. As conditioned, lighting would be designed, installed, and maintained so as not to glare across onto neighboring properties. The parking lot light fixtures are shown on Sheet SD2. As proposed, they would be single post lamps, 20-feet in height, and would be designed to minimize glare and “back-scatter” from the fixtures.

Signage

Sheet SD2 and the building elevations offer size and location of future signs. However, sign types, colors and mounting details are not provided. A condition has been included that the applicant will submit for a sign program prior to installation of any signs.

Urban Stormwater Runoff Measures

The subject sites are relatively flat with up to five-percent slopes providing on-site positive drainage. The landscape areas facing the streets are designed and graded to function as vegetative bio-swales. The paved areas of the sites are graded to drain towards the bio-swales and then to catch basins within the bio-swales before entering the City’s storm drain system.

Green Building

The City’s Green Building Ordinance requires projects containing 20,000 square feet or more of conditioned floor area to meet a LEED™ “certified” level, which is equal to a score of 26 or more credit points on the LEED Green Building Checklist. Since the combined building total is 31,326 square-feet, it is required to meet a “certified” rating. The applicants have proposed to incorporate green building measures into the project to allow the project to qualify for 26 credit points and meet a LEED “Certified” rating as required by the City’s Green Building Ordinance.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this application was sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within 1,000-feet of the site. The proposed project was noticed which described 2 buildings totaling 35,120 square-feet (1 building totaling 31,180 and another totaling 3,940). The project consists of 4 buildings which total 31,326 square-feet. Staff did not re-notice or reschedule the project

because that actual total square footage proposed is less than the overall noticed square footage. Staff has not received any written or verbal comments suggesting displeasure or concern about this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In urbanized areas, the construction of four new commercial buildings not exceeding 10,000 square-feet in area are categorically exempt (New Construction) from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report. Furthermore, in-fill development projects on sites of five acres or less that have no habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species, that can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services, that are consistent with the General Plan and zoning regulations, and would have no significant effects on traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality are also categorically exempt (In-fill Development) from CEQA. Staff believes that the project meets the conditions of the Class 3 and 32 exemptions. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report

CONCLUSION

The proposed project is very attractive and well designed. Staff believes that the proposed project is designed in a manner that is compatible with surrounding properties. The proposed project is providing adequate parking with attractive landscaping. Therefore, staff believes that the proposed development would be an attractive addition to the community and merits a favorable recommendation from the Planning Commission.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Case PDR-563, subject to Exhibit “B”, conditions of approval.

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