

**CITY OF SAN JUAN BAUTISTA
 HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD /PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
 MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 2010**

Application/Request: Conceptual Review of Proposed Villa San Juan Independent and Assisted Living Community Project

Project Location: Muckelemi Street (across street from Valero gas station and San Juan Foothill Pottery)

Assessor's Parcel No.: 002-035-030 and 012-014-017

Property Owner: Manning Family Trust Kathleen Manning, Trustee

Applicant(s): Sierra Pacific Financial Services and Arthur D. Davis
 13668 Paseo Terrano
 Salinas, CA 93908

Environmental Review: For its Concept Review, this project is Exempt (Section 15061(b)(3)). Additional environmental review may be required associated with submittal of an application for a Use Permit and Design Review.

General Plan: Commercial

Zoning: General Commercial

Existing Land Use: Vacant parcel – open field

Attachments: 1. Conceptual site plan and building elevations
 2. Resolution

<p>Recommendation – Historic Resources Board: It is recommended that the Historic Resources Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive the staff report; • Open the public hearing; • Close the public hearing; • Discuss the project; and • Based on your independent review and judgment of the staff report, public comments and pertinent facts presented, make a recommendation to the Planning Commission that it approve a resolution approving the proposed concept plan (as is or w/amendments). 	<p>Recommendation – Planning Commission It is recommended that the Planning Commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive the staff report; • Open the public hearing; • Close the public hearing; • Discuss the project; and • Based on the recommendation of the Historic Resources Board, based on your independent review and judgment of the staff report, public comments and pertinent facts presented, approve the resolution approving the proposed concept plan (as is or w/amendments).
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REQUEST

As stated in the City's application for Conceptual Review, a Conceptual Review is for applicants that would like the Planning Department and the Planning Commission to provide a preliminary review of their development project. The purpose of Conceptual Review is to provide the applicant with a comprehensive understanding of the planning and environmental issues involved with their project. Conceptual Review provides the applicant with direction on how the project should be modified or changed to meet the overall goals and objectives of the City as expressed through the General Plan, Design Guidelines, and Municipal Code. After Conceptual Review, the applicant can choose to pursue his or her project by filing a formal application with the Planning Department.

In addition to Conceptual Review, the applicant has requested that the Planning Commission provide a resolution to accompany the Conceptual Review. The applicant envisions this resolution as a marketing tool to help generate interest in the project and so increase probability for development of the project by acquiring funds to build, or to sell the concept to another developer. Although City staff is confident that the General Plan can stand alone in support of this sort of project it is the applicant's preference to have a resolution accompany the Conceptual Review. By approving the resolution the Planning Commission will not be approving the project, that action may be considered at a future date after a complete application for a Use Permit and Design Review is submitted. However, approval of the resolution will imply agreement with the applicant that the "concept" of an independent and assisted living community is appropriate for the parcels.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

There are two parcels owned by the Manning Family Trust that are subject to this Conceptual Review. One parcel is 1.04 acres (APN 012-014-017) and is at the far west tip of the triangle closest to the Muckelemi Street/Monterey Street/Hwy 156 intersection. This parcel is in county jurisdiction.¹ The other Manning parcel is 2.44 acres (APN 002-035-030). The applicant is proposing 103 residential units of which 83 are called "studio" and 10 are "double occupancy". The total building area is 79,500 square feet (5,000 square feet is the maintenance building, garage, and trash enclosure). Total building lot coverage is 44,500 square feet. Building lot coverage (impervious surfacing) represents 46 percent of the combined parcels. Impervious surfacing, which includes the parking areas and hardscapes, adds another at least 20 percent. There are 50 parking spaces proposed (10 covered and 40 uncovered).

As shown in the conceptual project plans the facility would have one egress/ingress on Muckelemi Street and within City jurisdiction. Vehicle circulation is shown on the site plans to be two way with a turnaround at the south end. The health and recreation

¹ It is important to note that the City has a number of parcels that are bifurcated by the City boundary line. This situation creates difficulties associated with land development as property taxes will be distributed to two entities – the City and the County and, in this case, the applicant would have to go to the County to obtain entitlements thereby two review and approvals are required. The applicant is aware of this situation and has designed the project so as to have the health and recreation center on this county parcel (APN 012-014-017).

center has a separate entrance off the main egress/ingress. Residential units could be in two separate structures as shown on the site plan. The architectural style of the building includes stone, board and batten, square columns that support trellises, and stone and brick fencing with iron. Components of the second floor are similar in style to Monterey Revival or Monterey Style.

This architectural style came into existence in Monterey, California, between about 1835 and 1840; typically, a two-story house with a full-façade balcony supported by plain wood posts and enclosed by wood railings. Nineteenth-century houses in this style usually were characterized by: thick whitewashed adobe walls; a low-pitched gable roof or hipped roof with its ridge parallel to the façade, usually covered with hand-split wood shingles, but sometimes with tiles; occasionally a decorative chimney cap or chimney hood; double-hung wood-frame windows with mullions; often, window shutters; occasionally, full-length windows opening onto the balcony; and a relatively simple paneled entry door. The applicant is proposing a modified version of this style.

It is important for the Planning Commission to understand that it will not be approving a particular architectural style as part of the Conceptual Review. Although the applicant is showing what could be, the proposed plans could change slightly or dramatically if the property is sold to another party who may have a different idea of what the architecture should be. In addition to the architecture, the physical layout of the project could also change because the adjacent property owned by the Rodriguez Trust could also become part of the project. The City will not know exactly what is proposed until the actual submittal of an application for development.

ANALYSIS

The City of San Juan Bautista General Plan (approved in 1998) shows the property to have two land use designations: Commercial and Mixed-Use. These designations do not follow the parcel boundary lines but instead cross the parcels in a straight line between Muckelemi Street and Hwy 156. The current designations were established by the City to purposely ignore the parcel boundary lines as it was the intent of the City to have “commercial” type uses to the west and closer to the Muckelemi Street/Monterey Street/Hwy 156 intersection, and have “mixed-use” type uses between the commercial area to the west and the existing low-density residential area, in the San Antonio Street neighborhood, to the east. Had these two land use designations followed property boundary lines instead of the existing straight line, the boundary lines would have been dog-legged and confounding to future property owners. The mixed-use area is intended to buffer the low-density residential area from the commercial area.

Commercial

(Maximum Intensity: FAR² of 0.5)

² "Floor area ratio" (FAR) means ratio of the gross floor area measured to the exterior of a wall of a building to the lot upon which that building is located. For example, a 0.20 FAR would allow two thousand (2,000) square feet of gross floor area on a ten thousand (10,000) square foot lot.

As stated in the General Plan, “Commercial” designates areas that are, “...suitable for commercial uses which would not benefit from locations downtown due to their parking or land area requirements, auto-orientation, need for highway visibility, or operational characteristics and space needs. The designation permits retail, service, office, hotel, and tourist-oriented commercial development. Auto or highway-oriented uses such as gas stations and motels are also allowed. Residential and industrial uses are generally not allowed, although commercial uses in warehouse-type buildings and accessory residential uses may be conditionally permitted.”

The “commercial” land use designation covers approximately half of the total land area owned by the Manning and Rodriguez Family Trusts (approximately 6 acres total). As stated above, the assigned commercial and mixed-use areas were not intended to follow parcel lines but to instead create a buffer between the low-density residential to the east and a potential future bustling commercial area to the west. In other words, the Planning Commission has discretion to determine whether a proposed project meets the intent of the General Plan and provides an adequate buffer between commercial, mixed-use and residential land uses.

Absent a precise boundary line such as the property boundary line between the Manning and Rodriguez property, it is reasonable to conclude that the land area for commercial uses and mixed-uses can be modified, but that some amount of the mixed-use area must remain between the commercial use to the west and the low-density residential to the east.

An independent and assisted living community such as the Villa San Juan concept would not be practical in downtown because of its size and parking and land area requirements and operational characteristics and space needs. An independent and assisted living community can be construed as a commercial residential land use similar to a hotel, but the turnover aspect of an independent and assisted living community is entirely different from that of a hotel; turnover of guests/residents in an independent and assisted living community is very low. However, both hotels and independent and assisted living communities are similar in that they both have central eating areas, recreation facilities, grand foyer areas for registration and gatherings, offices, laundry facilities, maintenance facilities, and numerous employees who work on round-the-clock shifts. Staff concludes that the proposed Villa San Juan independent and assisted living community is suitable for the parcels.

The FAR on commercial designated parcels is 0.50. The total land area of the Manning property is 3.48 acres (151,589 square feet); half of 151,589 is 75,794. If the total building area proposed is 79,500 square feet then the proposed concept plan is approximately 4,000 square feet more than the FAR would allow. However, as the parcels are partially bisected by the mixed-use district, and it is not the intent of the General Plan to fix the boundary line between Commercial and Mixed-Use in a particular location, it is reasonable to conclude that the more generous FAR (i.e., 0.75) of the mixed-use district should be applied to the Manning parcels, thereby allowing the 79,500 square foot project. Furthermore, it is reasonable for the Planning Commission

to apply the more generous FAR to a larger area of the Manning property, or its entirety, if requested. It is the discretion of the Planning Commission to determine how to interpret the General Plan in this case where the land use boundary line does not follow property boundary lines.

Mixed Use

(Maximum Intensity: FAR of 1.5 Downtown and 0.75 elsewhere; Maximum Density for projects including housing: 15 units per acre)

As stated in the General Plan, “Mixed-Use” areas occur where a mixing of commercial and residential uses is desired, at intensities that support a pedestrian presence. The intent is to promote a continuation of the established Downtown development pattern. Permitted uses include retail stores, tourist services, restaurants, offices, business and personal services, hotels and inns, and similar uses that are conducive to a pedestrian-oriented shopping environment. Upper-story or ancillary housing also is permitted. Municipal parking lots also are permitted. Downtown, the emphasis is on two-story buildings with retail and service uses on the ground floor and office or apartment uses above. Parking would generally be provided off-site. In the “Gateway” areas³ to the west and east, parking would generally be provided on-site. Projects which are exclusively commercial are permitted in the Mixed Use area where it is infeasible to include multiple uses. New projects which are entirely residential are not permitted, unless the project meets an identified affordable or special housing need. Existing housing in the Mixed Use district, and other existing structures which have historically been used as residences, may continue in residential use.

General Plan Policy H-25 states that the City shall support housing that is accessible to or specifically reserved for seniors and persons with physical disabilities. The proposed Villa San Juan independent and assisted living community is an affordable and/or special housing project and so consistent with this Policy.

Gateways

As stated in the General Plan (page 8-7), gateways are significant points of entry into a community. They can help shape the identity of a community and provide a clear sense of its boundaries. Because they often provide the first impression of a community, gateways represent an important opportunity to convey a positive and lasting image. The gateways to San Juan Bautista are located on Highway 156. Entering the community from either direction on the highway, the absence of “strip” development, scenic views of farms and wooded hills, and sweeping curves of the highway enhance the sense of arrival for visitors. The lack of billboards and commercial uses along the highway distinguish San Juan from other cities in the area and prepare the visitor for a step back in time.

The gateways to the business district are also important. On the east, the Alameda Plaza Shopping Center provides the eastern anchor to Downtown. This gateway would

³ The Villa San Juan independent and assisted living community is within one of three City “Gateways” (1998 General Plan, page 2-12; page 8-5; Figure 8-2).

benefit from an artfully crafted “welcome” sign or marker. On the west, the gateway currently consists of vacant land on either side of Muckelemi Street. As this area develops, it will be important to ensure that land uses, buildings, and signs convey a positive image of the City to visitors. As development occurs south of Highway 156, San Juan Canyon Road and San Juan Hollister Road also will become City gateways. Here too, signage and landscaping should be well designed.

Community Design

As stated in the General Plan (page 8-9), the City’s goal is to accommodate additional growth without sacrificing local character. The General Plan also sets forth five key elements to the achieving this goal. The second and fourth elements are relevant to the proposed project concept as follows:

Second, the City will make sure that new infill projects maintain the character of the community and are compatible with surrounding development. This applies to both commercial and residential projects. The Land Use Element emphasizes mixed use, pedestrian-oriented development on the remaining commercial parcels in the City. The objective is to promote small, attractive projects, similar in scale to the buildings along Third Street, rather than “big boxes” surrounded by parking. Commercial architecture should reflect the City’s historic character and be compatible with the scale and form of Downtown buildings. Parking should be provided where feasible, but should not be the dominant feature of a development. Development should be inviting to pedestrians.

Fourth, the City will require its new employment areas to be attractively designed and landscaped. This is particularly critical on the large commercial, business park/commercial recreation, and industrial sites south of Highway 156. In each case, development approval should include requirements for landscaping, screening, buffering, and protecting surrounding properties from possible negative impacts. Building heights should not exceed two stories, and should not block views from nearby roads and rural home sites. Quality architecture and construction will be required. Where feasible, these projects should incorporate amenities that benefit the community at large, including parks, bike trails, and public services.

The following policy and program articulates this strategy and is intended to provide guidance to landowners, City staff, and officials.

POLICY C-4: Encourage the design of buildings that are in scale with adjacent development and harmonious with the surrounding community.

PROGRAM C-2: Develop design guidelines or standards specifically for the vacant land along the west end of Muckelemi Street. These guidelines

or standards should emphasize the area's role as a gateway, create a design focal point for the City, and provide a buffer for existing development on the perimeter of this area.

Because the Muckelemi Street Gateway area includes the City's largest high density residential development site (Mission Gardens Apartments), as well as several commercial and mixed use sites, it will be important to ensure high quality design and compatible uses. The City is particularly interested in projects which incorporate both housing and commercial uses on the large "Mixed Use" sites in this area. A follow-up study should identify specific design standards for this area. [the City of San Juan Bautista Design Guidelines were approved April 20, 2004]

Preliminary review of the concept plan indicates that the plans are generally consistent with the intent to provide the highest degree of aesthetics.

Environmental Review

Though staff has concluded that this Concept Plan is Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), any future application for development will require reconsideration of the CEQA Guidelines to determine what, if any, additional environmental analysis will be required. It is important to note that City staff will investigate all available avenues to avoid additional environmental review. Supporting this approach is CEQA Guidelines section 15332.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

The applicant shall study the City's General Plan, Design Guidelines and Municipal Code prior to submitting an application. The following are from the City's Design Guidelines.

1. Building designs should demonstrate a compatible use of colors, materials, and detailing throughout all elevations of the building. Elevations that do not directly face a street should not be ignored, nor should they receive only minimal architectural treatment. Full, "360-degree" architectural treatment should be provided on all building facades;
2. Architectural materials will vary throughout the community dependent upon the architectural style. Materials used, including those for building, roofing, and design elements, should adhere to the basic character defining features and historical correctness of the selected vernacular style, as described in Chapter 3.0. The use of quality materials is a priority;
3. Architectural gimmicks shall be avoided. The designer shall avoid the use of visual contrast from neighboring structures as an advertising tool or attention-getter.
4. Mass and scale are important considerations in San Juan Bautista because of the City's "small town character". The preservation and enhancement of this character should be a primary consideration of any development proposal. The proposed Monterey Style architecture of the Villa San Juan is headed in the right direction;

5. Project proponents should demonstrate evidence in their designs that they have studied predominant scale and proportions of the area in which they are proposing to build. Elevation sketches, photographic montages, and other graphic studies shall be provided to assist the Planning Commission in making determinations;
6. The scale of building elements, especially at the ground floor level should be kept intimate and close to human scale using relatively small parts and accents. New infill commercial structures shall be designed to provide storefront windows, doors, entries, transoms, canopies, balconies, and other architectural features designed to complement existing structures;
7. Large undifferentiated wall planes are strongly discouraged. Buildings should be designed to avoid a “box-like” appearance. Significant horizontal and vertical wall articulation is required in order to reduce the apparent mass of a building. This should be expressed through variation of the roof eave line or roof structure, changes in the wall plane, recessed windows and entries, full roofs with overhangs, second floor setbacks, covered arcades, and similar elements consistent with the architectural theme of the building;
8. Architectural elements such as roof forms, pilasters, columns, balconies, window details, and building façade articulation should be effectively used to maintain an historic character. Architectural design elements should be incorporated on all building facades, not just the main entry façade.
9. There are a number of details, often thought of as mundane, which may be incorporated into the design to add a degree of visual richness and interest while meeting functional needs. Such details include the following items:
 - Light fixtures, wall mounted or hung with decorative metal brackets
 - Iron grillwork or woodwork, at vent openings or as decorative features at windows, doorways, or gates
 - Decorate scuppers, catches, and downspouts
 - Balconies, rails, finials, corbels, plaques, etc.
10. The thickness of walls should be revealed at door and window openings, and depending on the architectural style of the building, in archways and arcades;

The attached resolution finds that the project, in concept, will meet the intent of the City’s policies, standards and guidelines and reflects the need for the applicant to submit a full and complete application to allow further consistency analysis and consideration.