



Staff Report

File #: 22-0289

PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: 04/11/2022

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Planning & Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

PP2019-0009: A Precise Plan application to review the site plan, architecture, and landscaping associated with the construction of six apartment units on 0.34 acres in the R-3 (Multiple Family Residential) zone located at 1109 Circle City Drive, Corona. (Applicant: Anthony Lopez, Castlegate Properties, LLC, 4534 Carter Ct., Chino, CA 91710)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission adopt Resolution No. 2587 GRANTING PP2019-0009 based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval.

PROJECT SITE SUMMARY:

Area of Property: 0.34 acres (14,810 square feet)

Existing Zoning: R-3 (Multiple-Family Residential)

Existing General Plan: HDR (High Density Residential, 15-36 dwelling units/acre)

Existing Land Use: Vacant

Proposed Land Use: Multiple family residential, six apartment units

Surrounding Zoning/Land Uses:

N: R-3 / Multiple Family Residential and Vacant

E: R-3 / Multiple Family Residential

S: R-3 / Multiple Family Residential

W: R-3 / Single Family Residential

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the PP2019-0009 is to review the site layout, architecture, and landscaping associated with the development of a multiple family residential project consisting of six (6) attached apartment units on a vacant 0.34-acre parcel located at 1109 Circle City Drive. The project site is zoned R-3, which permits multiple family residential development. The project site has a General Plan designation of High Density Residential (HDR), which permits a density range of 15 to 36

dwelling units permit acre (du/ac). As proposed, the project's density is 18 du/ac, which is within the allowable range.

Project History

The project was preliminarily reviewed by city staff as DPR2018-0004 on April 26, 2018. The applicant formally submitted the precise plan application on November 14, 2019. The proposed project was reviewed by city staff at the Project and Environmental Review Committee (PRC) meeting on December 5, 2019. A letter from the city dated January 2, 2020, was mailed to the applicant identifying the missing application items. The missing application items were mostly related to corrections to the project's technical studies such as the preliminary Water Quality Management Plan, drainage study and site plan corrections. Once the incomplete application items were resolved, the application was determined to be complete and scheduled for the April 11, 2022 Planning and Housing Commission meeting.

SB 330 Housing Legislation

On October 9, 2019, Governor Newsome signed into law Senate Bill 330, known as the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, which is intended to address California's housing shortage. The bill went into effect on January 1, 2020. Under the bill, a housing development may only be required to comply with the ordinances, policies, and standards that are adopted by a local agency, and in effect when a preliminary application (i.e. DPR application) is submitted. Essentially this means a residential developer only needs to meet the minimum code requirements that were in effect at the time the developer submitted his/her DPR (Development Plan Review) application. For example, if the residential project meets the minimum parking requirement and open space requirement under the Corona Municipal Code (CMC), the City cannot require additional parking or open space, even if the project is subject to a discretionary review process.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site plan

The site plan, as shown in Exhibit 4, depicts two buildings separated by a shared driveway at the center of the property. The shared driveway provides direct access to private garages located on the ground floor of each unit. Each building contains three attached apartment units with entrances along the west (Building A) and east (Building B) side yards. Adjacent to each unit's entrance is a dedicated private ground floor patio with a wood trellis structure and a metal wall trellis for climbing plants. The project provides sidewalk and driveway approach to facilitate access on site. Guest parking spaces, common open space areas with recreation amenities, and a trash enclosure are located at the northern portion of the project site. The proposed site layout complies with required yard setbacks, building separation, and lot coverage requirements prescribed in the Corona Municipal Code for the R-3 zone.

Architecture

Development standards for the R-3 zone do not prescribe a specific architectural style or theme, and there is not an identifiable architectural theme on the subject block. However, the applicant does implement building articulations consistent with the city's adopted residential development design guidelines for multiple family residential. The applicant has chosen a design and color palette that can be easily integrated with the existing streetscape. The proposed Spanish Colonial styled buildings

are coordinated with earth tone colors traditionally associated with the style and roof tiles with a blend of tan, reddish brown, and brown colors. The buildings provide textured exterior stucco walls in an off-white color and architectural features such as rafter tails, wood brackets, balcony railings, wrought iron trellis will be painted in a flat medium brown color to create contrast with the primary off-white color.

Additional decorative elements are provided on the south and north elevations to further enhance the Spanish Colonial design. These details include clay vents under the gable eaves, square recessed wall areas with wrought iron cross bars on top, faux "Juliette" balconies under the arched molding trims, and Spanish motif ceramic tiles at the base of the columns. The proposed design, colors, and materials for the residential buildings depict character defining features of the Spanish Colonial style. The overall massing and scale of the project is compatible with multiple-family residential uses on adjacent properties.

The buildings have varying rooflines with an overall height of 38 feet and 9 inches, which is below the 40-foot building height allowance in the R-3 zone. The elevation plans show an 8-foot plate height for the ground level, and a 9-foot plate height for the second and third floors that consist of living areas. Building articulations such as covered balconies and column projections serve to reduce the three-story massing. The arched windows and decorative wrought iron cross bars over the recessed wall areas provide visual interests to the façades. The architectural elevation details and colored renderings are shown in Exhibit 6.

Floor Plan

The project consists of two buildings (Buildings A and B) which are three stories with three side-by-side units in each building. The floor plan layout of Building A is the mirror image of Building B. All six apartment units share an identical layout with a two-car garage and storage area on the ground floor, the common living areas (living, dining rooms and a powder bathroom) on the second floor, and two bedrooms and two bathrooms are located on the third floor. Two balconies are provided for each unit, a second-floor balcony adjacent to the living room and a balcony on the third floor accessible through the master bedroom. Each units offers two bedrooms and two-and on-quarter baths with a total livable area of 1,012 square feet. The ground floor provides a two-car garage and overhead storage cabinets. Each unit has a pedestrian entrance along the side yard of the site and vehicular access from the shared driveway.

Landscaping

The conceptual landscape plan, shown in Exhibit 7, proposes two 15-gallon Red Crape Myrtle trees and accent shrubs within the front yard area. Additionally, landscaping is proposed in eth common open space areas and along the rear property line; noticeably two 24-inch Brisbane Box trees will be planted to visually enhance the development along the rear property line.

To ensure the side yards received landscaping to soften the visual appearance of the three-stories buildings, staff recommends the installation of evergreens along the side property lines to enhance privacy for the adjoining structures and the proposed project. A condition of approval is included to reflect this recommendation.

Site Amenities

A minimum of 200 square feet of open space is required per unit. This project requires a total of 600 square feet of open space that is required to be provided on-site. The project is providing 861 square feet of open space area, which are proposed at the rear of the property. Outdoor amenities within the open space include permanent landscaped areas, play equipment, and picnic tables along with a barbecue cooking island under a trellis structure. Private outdoor living areas are provided for each unit. These areas comprise of ground floor patio, along with balconies on the second and third floors.

Pursuant to Section 17.79.030 of the Corona Municipal Code, the project is required to provide a trash enclosure to serve the six-unit development. The trash enclosure is located at the end of the shared driveway along the east property line in the rear yard of the project site. The trash enclosure will be constructed out of decorative masonry walls, pilasters, and consistent metal trellis as those provided on the residential units. Details of the trash enclosure are shown on Exhibit 8.

The project proposes to remove an existing block wall along the north and west property lines. The new perimeter wall along the north (rear), east, and west property lines will be a six-foot tall split-face concrete block wall with cap block in a medium beige color.

Access, Circulation and Parking

Access into the project site will be provided from Circle City Drive via a 28-foot wide new driveway approach at the center of the property. The shared driveway is the only route for on-site vehicular circulation which provides direct access into individual garages and guest parking spaces located at the north end of the project site. In accordance with the minimum parking requirements under Section 17.76.030 of the CMC for multiple family residential developments, each unit is provided with a two-car garage, and two uncovered guest parking spaces are provided for the six-unit development.

Public Improvements

The property owner is required to dedicate four (4) feet along the project frontage to Circle City Drive to meet the city's collector street standard of 34 feet for the north half width of the street. The dedication will allow for the missing public improvements to be constructed adjacent to the project site. This includes a 7-foot-wide landscape parkway and 5-foot wide sidewalk. The owner is also required to grind and overlay the roadway pavement within the north half of the street adjacent to the project site.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Per Sections 15303(b) and 15332 of the State Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 3.21 of the City's Local CEQA Guidelines, a Notice of Exemption has been prepared for the project because the project qualifies as a Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and Class 32 (In-Fill Development Projects) categorical exemptions. The project consists of the construction of six apartment units in an urbanized area; the project is consistent with the General Plan, zoning requirements, and would not result in any significant traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality impacts. Moreover, none of the exceptions to the Categorical Exemption apply, nor will the project result in a significant cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place over time or have a significant

effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances or damage a scenic highway or scenic resources within a state scenic highway. The site is not located on a hazardous waste site and will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. The Notice of Exemption is attached as Exhibit 10.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The applicant has paid the applicable application processing fees for the project.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A 10-day public notice was mailed to all property owners within a 500-foot radius of the project site, as well as advertised in the Sentinel Weekly News and posted at the project site. As of the preparation of this report, the Planning Division staff has not received any comments from the public in response to the public notice.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The proposed six-unit residential project is consistent with the R-3 zone and General Plan designation of High Density Residential. The project is also a classic infill development surrounded by existing development. The site plan complies with the development standards prescribed by the CMC for the R-3 zone. The proposed design, scale, and density of the project is appropriate for the subject site as the multiple family residential use is compatible with the existing neighborhood, which consists primarily of multiple family residential developments. The recommended condition of approval to provide evergreen trees along the side property lines enhance privacy and reduce potential light and noise impacts to the adjoining neighbors of the subject site. The project's conceptual landscape plan will be updated based on the recommended condition of approval mentioned above. The final landscape plan will be subject to further review for compliance with the City's residential landscape design guidelines and landscape ordinance (Chapter 17.70) in the Corona Municipal Code.

Development of the project site will provide rental housing units on an undeveloped site intended for multiple family residential. The new development will complete the missing public improvements (sidewalk, parkway, and roadway improvements) adjacent to the site, which is required by the Corona Municipal Code and necessary for the safety and general welfare of the public.

The project is expected to generate 44 vehicle trips per day per a trip generation analysis prepared for the project by a licensed traffic consultant (LSA, dated July 10, 2020). The city's Traffic Engineer has reviewed the project and the analysis and has determined that the 44 daily trips would not significantly impact the area.

The project addresses the goals of current state law, which encourage housing development. The project contributes to meeting the city's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) requirement for the Moderate income/affordability category. Based on the state's affordable income limits published by the Housing and Community Development Department, the maximum affordable rent for moderate income households is between \$1,376 and \$2,135. Staff researched nearby apartments on apartment finder.com and apartment guide and found two-bedroom units with rental prices ranging from \$1,725 to 1,950. Given the proximity of the project to these units, the project's rental

prices should be comparable. Finally, the project serves to fulfill several General Plan policies related to providing a variety of housing types for Corona's residents.

The Planning & Development Department recommends approval of PP2019-0009, based on the recommended conditions of approval in Exhibit 3 and the findings of approval.

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL FOR PP2019-0009

1. A Notice of Exemption has been prepared pursuant to Section 15303(b) and 15332 of the State Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the project qualifies as a Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and Class 32 (In-Fill Development Projects) categorical exemptions under CEQA. The project consists of the construction of six apartment units in an urbanized area; the project is consistent with the General Plan, zoning requirements, and would not result in any significant traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality impacts. Moreover, none of the exceptions to the Categorical Exemption apply, nor will the project result in a significant cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place over time or have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances or damage a scenic highway or scenic resources within a state scenic highway. The site is not located on a hazardous waste site and will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.
2. All the conditions necessary to granting a Precise Plan as set forth in Section 17.91.070 of the Corona Municipal Code DO exist in reference to PP2019-0009 for the following reasons:
 - a. *The proposal is consistent with the High Density Residential (HDR) land use designation of the General Plan because this land use is intended to accommodate multiple family residential developments. Also, the project yields a density of 18 du/ac and is within the allowable density range of 15 to 36 du/ac established by the HDR designation.*
 - b. *The proposal complies with the R-3 zone because the project provides multi-family residential units meeting all development standards prescribed in the R-3 zone.*
 - c. *The proposal has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and all applicable requirements and procedures of the act have been followed. As justified in Finding # 1, the project will not result in significant effects to the environment because the project is a six-unit residential project in an urbanized area, consistent with General Plan and zoning requirements.*
 - d. *The site is of a sufficient size and configuration to accommodate the design and scale of proposed development, including buildings and elevations, landscaping, parking and other physical features of the proposal, as demonstrated in Exhibit 5 of this report.*
 - e. *The design, scale and layout of the proposed development will not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments, will not create traffic or pedestrian hazards, and will not otherwise have a negative impact on the aesthetics, health, safety or welfare of neighboring uses because the proposal complies with the City's development standards for the R-3 zoned property.*
 - f. *The architectural design of the proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood, will enhance the visual character of the*

neighborhood by improving vacant undeveloped property and will provide for harmonious, orderly and attractive development of the site.

g. The design of the proposed development will provide a desirable environment for its occupants and visiting public as well as its neighbors through good aesthetic use of materials, texture, and color that is aesthetically appealing and well- integrate with neighboring properties. The project is conditioned to provide additional trees to enhance the privacy of the project site and the adjoining properties to the east and west.

2. The proposal is consistent with the General Plan for the following reasons:

a. The project meets the intent of General Plan Land Use Policy LU-3.1 which is to permit land use and development consistent with the Coronal General Plan Land Use designations.

b. The project meets the intent of General Plan Land Use Policy LU-8.1 which is to promote the conservation of existing residential neighborhoods, permitting the infill of housing that is compatible with density and scale with existing uses.

c. The project meets the intent of the General Plan Goal H-1 which is to promote and maintain a balance of housing types and corresponding affordability levels to provide for the community's demand for housing within all economic segments of the City.

3. The proposal is consistent with the R-3 zone for the following reason:

a. The project conforms to the development standards prescribed by the Corona Municipal Code for the R-3 zone with respect to building setbacks, parking, building height, fencing, open space, and landscaping.

PREPARED BY: EVA CHOI, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS

1. Resolution No. 2587
2. Locational and Zoning Map
3. Conditions of Approval
4. Site Plan
5. Floor Plans
6. Elevations and Colored Renderings
7. Conceptual Landscape Plan
8. Trash Enclosure Details
9. Applicant's Letter dated February 16, 2021 addressing the criteria for Precise Plans
10. Environmental Documentation

Case Planner: Eva Choi (951) 736-2437