

**CITY OF CARPINTERIA
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
Meeting of December 17, 2009**

Agenda Item #1

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
PROJECT REVIEW**

Project: 07-1407-TM/TPM/DP/CDP **Planner:** J. Campbell
Address: 6380 Via Real
APN: 001-190-017
Zoning: M-RP
Applicant: Michelle Velarde, Investec Real Estate

Project Review: Conceptual Final
 Preliminary In Progress

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Lagunitas Mixed Use Project includes 73 residential units (36 condominium units and 37 single family dwellings) and an office building of 85,000 square feet with 340 parking spaces. Site improvements include private roadways, trails, a tot lot, two detention basins and infrastructure for all site utilities, including a bus stop on Via Real. This review addresses only the landscaping and lighting associated with the residential portion of the project.

Plan sets in 11" x 17" size are attached as Exhibit A. A full size set of plans will be reviewed at the ARB meeting.

PROJECT SETTING

This 25-acre site is on the north side of Via Real, about 2,000 feet east of Bailard Avenue. Lagunitas Creek traverses the site and Lomita Lane, a private road easement, runs along the eastern portion of the property. Surrounding properties include industrial research park properties to the east, The Storage Place and Bega US to the west, rural residential homes to the north within the County, and Via Real/Highway 101 to the south. The site was previously used for agriculture, but there is currently no agriculture nor any structures on the site. The parcel is zoned Industrial Research Park (M-RP) and has a Research Development Industrial (RDI) land use designation. These designations allow for mixed use development.

BACKGROUND

The Lagunitas Mixed Use Project was approved by the City Council in September 2008. That approval was appealed to the Coastal Commission. In November 2008 the Commission found that the appeal did not raise a substantial issue, thereby allowing the City's approval to be finalized.

With final approval, the applicant began working on revised preliminary drawings for the residential component of the project. After several in-progress meetings, the ARB recommended preliminary approval of the residences at its meeting of June 11, 2009 and directed the applicant to return with preliminary plans for landscaping and lighting.

Since that time, the applicant received approval of a Time Extension to allow four more years to obtain grading and building permits for the project. The project approval will expire in November 2013.

DISCUSSION

The Lagunitas project was reviewed extensively in several public hearings. Ultimately, the City Council approved the project subject to 180 conditions of approval. The specific conditions which address landscaping and lighting are presented below with a discussion of how the proposed landscaping and lighting plans jibe with these required conditions. Conditions addressing the site landscaping are discussed first.

1. *Landscaping - The landscape plan includes a 50-foot riparian vegetated buffer as measured from the top of creek bank on either side of the creek. This results in a 100-foot creek buffer for the length of the creek on the subject property. In addition to this buffer, a 30-foot buffer is proposed along the north property line where native vegetation would be planted to provide a natural separation between the residential development and existing homes to the north. The landscape plan also includes a detention basin for the project's drainage system.*

50. *Prior to issuance of any Grading or Building Permits, the applicant shall submit, for the review and approval of the City Biologist, two sets of final restoration plans for the proposed 100-foot creek corridor and open space area. The plans shall include landscaping and erosion control plans prepared by a qualified habitat restoration consultant. The landscaping and erosion control plan shall not be dependent on permanent irrigation systems. The landscaping and erosion control plan shall be reviewed and approved by the consulting civil and geotechnical engineers to ensure that the plan is in conformance with the applicable recommendations regarding site stability. The restoration and revegetation plans shall include, but not be limited to the following components and criteria:*
 - A) *A riparian habitat restoration / revegetation program shall be developed and implemented for the proposed 100-foot creek corridor to be located along the existing onsite drainage referred to as Lagunitas Creek. The riparian habitat restoration / revegetation plan shall be prepared by a qualified habitat restoration consultant and shall clearly delineate the proposed continuous 100-foot wide riparian habitat corridor along Lagunitas Creek which shall be planted with appropriate native riparian plant materials consistent with species found in the surrounding Carpinteria watershed. The riparian habitat restoration / revegetation program shall be implemented upon completion of major grading operations.*

- B) *An open space restoration / revegetation program shall be developed and implemented for the proposed open space area to be located on the south portion of the site. The open space restoration / revegetation plan shall be prepared by a qualified habitat restoration consultant and shall clearly delineate the proposed open space which shall be revegetated with appropriate native grassland plant materials consistent with species found in the surrounding Carpinteria watershed to provide for maximum native grassland habitat. The open space restoration / revegetation program shall be implemented prior to Certificate of Occupancy of the office building.*
- C) *The restoration / revegetation plans shall specify the preferable time of year to carry out the restoration and describe the supplemental watering requirements that will be necessary, including a detailed irrigation plan. The plans shall also specify performance standards to judge the success of the restoration effort. The revegetation plans shall identify the species, location, and extent of all plant materials and shall use a mixture of seeds and container plants to increase the potential for successful revegetation. The plans shall include a description of technical and performance standards to ensure the successful revegetation of the restored area. A temporary irrigation system may be used until the plants are established, as determined by the habitat restoration consultant, and as approved by the consulting civil and geotechnical engineers.*
- D) *Revegetation shall provide a minimum of 80% survival, by species, the first year and 100% survival thereafter or shall attain 75% cover after three years and 90% cover after five years and shall be repeated, if necessary, to provide such coverage. The Community Development Director may extend this time period for good cause. No single species shall constitute more than 50% of the vegetative cover and no woody invasive species shall be present. Plantings shall be maintained in good growing condition throughout the life of the project and, whenever necessary, shall be replaced with new plant materials to ensure continued compliance with the revegetation requirements for the life of the project.*
- E) *The applicant shall provide irrigation when natural moisture conditions are inadequate to ensure survival of plants. Irrigation shall be provided for a period of at least two years from planting. Irrigation shall be phased out during the fall/winter of the second year unless unusually severe conditions threaten survival of plantings. All plants must survive and grow for at least three years without supplemental water for the restoration phase of the project to be eligible for acceptance by the Department.*
- F) *The restoration / revegetation plans shall include provisions for removal of non-native and invasive species (including details regarding the type and use of herbicides in and near aquatic habitat and sensitive species).*
- G) *A monitoring program shall be prepared by a qualified environmental resource specialist. The monitoring program shall demonstrate how the approved revegetation and restoration performance standards prepared pursuant to section D) above shall be implemented and evaluated for compliance. The program shall require the applicant to*

submit, on an annual basis for a period of five years (no later than December 31st each year), a written report, for the review and approval of the Community Development Director and City Biologist, prepared by an environmental resource specialist, indicating the success or failure of the restoration project. The annual reports shall include further recommendations and requirements for additional restoration activities in order for the project to meet the criteria and performance standards listed in the restoration plans. These reports shall also include photographs taken from pre-designated locations (annotated to a copy of the site plans) indicating the progress of recovery. During the monitoring period, all artificial inputs shall be removed except for the purposes of providing mid-course corrections or maintenance to ensure the long-term survival of the plantings. If these inputs are required beyond the first four years, then the monitoring program shall be extended for a sufficient length of time so that the success and sustainability of the project is ensured. Successful site restoration shall be determined if the revegetation of native plant species on-site is adequate to provide 90% coverage by the end of the five-year monitoring period and is able to survive without additional outside inputs such as supplemental irrigation. The Office and Homeowners Associations associated with the subject development shall pay an annual processing fee to the City of Carpinteria to cover the City staff hourly costs to review the annual biological reports.

- H) *At the end of the five-year period, a final detailed report shall be submitted, for the review and approval of the Community Development Director and City Biologist, that indicates whether the on-site landscaping is in conformance with the revegetation / restoration plans approved pursuant to this Condition. The final report shall include photographic documentation of plant species and plant coverage. If this report indicates that the restoration project has in part, or in whole, been unsuccessful, based on the approved performance standards, the applicant shall submit a revised or supplemental restoration /revegetation program to compensate for those portions of the original plans that were not successful.*
51. *Prior to issuance of a Grading or Building Permit, a final landscape plan shall be reviewed and approved by the City biologist to ensure that all invasive species as listed by the Channel Islands Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and CalEPPC are deleted from the landscape plan, consistent with General Plan Policy CD-11f and the Creeks Preservation Program. All approved landscaping within the 100-foot creek corridor and open space area shall be installed prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the office building. Once installed, the applicant shall install temporary fencing to adequately protect the landscaping from site construction disturbance. The temporary fencing shall remain until such time as the Community Development Director determines it is appropriate for removal.*
76. *Landscaping trees incorporated into the Via Real landscaped frontage shall be of a species that naturally grows to a common maximum of 30 feet in height upon maturity, or shall be pruned and shaped so that a 30-foot profile is maintained. Landscape trees shall be a minimum 15-gallon size. These requirements shall be incorporated into the landscape plan prior to issuance of a Building Permit.*

Per the conditions of approval, the landscaping in the residential portion of the project includes native, drought tolerant species to complement the architectural style of the buildings. Sheet L2 shows California Sycamore and Coast Live Oak trees planted along the Via Real frontage consistent with the requirements of Condition 76 which dictates trees that will reach a common maximum height of 30 feet when mature, or that can be pruned to maintain a 30-foot profile. For the buffer area on the northern property boundary, the 30-foot strip would be planted with Coast Live Oaks and California Sycamore trees. There would also be a screen planting immediately behind the rear yard fence of the most northern row of single family homes. The screen planting would include species such as Avocado, Cedar, Monterey Cypress and/or Brisbane Box trees. Sheet L2 also shows an evergreen canopy provided along the interior residential street as well as some low shrubs and groundcover and small pockets of lawn area. A few skyline trees such as California Sycamore or Eucalyptus are also included. **The ARB should consider whether the Eucalyptus trees are appropriate here, given the requirement for a native plant palette.**

The applicants have also provided an exhibit showing a typical planting strategy for the triplex buildings. This sheet shows a preliminary plant list that includes groundcovers, espaliers, small accent shrubs, small accent trees, upright trees, street trees and vertical accent trees. Some lawn area is incorporated into the courtyard between triplex buildings to provide a common green open space. Private yard areas would be planted by individual owners. **The ARB should provide input as to the appropriateness of the selected plant types and species.**

The proposed revegetation / restoration plan for Lagunitas Creek includes California Sycamores, Coast Live Oaks and either Western Cottonwood or White Alder trees (Sheet L3). Plants include California Sagebrush, Mugwort, Mulefat, Creek Clematis, Saltgrass, Toyon, California Rose, California Blackberry, Arroyo Willow and Blue-eyed Grass (Sheet L4). All of these are native species compatible with riparian areas.

For the 2.5-acre open space area proposed to be dedicated to the City, the landscape plan includes Purple Needlegrass, Clovers and Lupine (Sheet L3). **A previous suggestion by the ARB that some trees be dispersed throughout the meadow area has not been addressed and the ARB should revisit whether there is still a desire to install trees in this area or leave it as an open meadow with only typical meadow plants.**

Lighting

- 1. Lighting - The light standards would be approximately 12 to 14 feet in height. The lighting plan also includes tree and walkway lights as provided within the submitted material as located on the site lighting plan. The plan is a low level lighting plan to avoid impacts to the properties to the north and the creek area.*
- 32. Exterior lighting for the site shall be low level and designed (through appropriate fixture type, location, etc.) in such a manner that direct lighting or glare will affect neither adjacent properties nor public streets or walkways.*

