

**CITY OF CARPINTERIA
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
Meeting of November 12, 2009**

Agenda Item #2

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
PROJECT REVIEW**

Project: 09-1527-DP/CDP/LLA: Dahlia Court Expansion **Planner:** Steve Goggia
Address: 1300 Dahlia Court
APNs: 003-590-052, -051 and -042
Zoning: Planned Residential Development (PRD 20)
Applicant: Peoples' Self-Help Housing Corporation

Project Review: Conceptual
 Preliminary
 Final

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is the Preliminary review of a request to construct 33 new apartments in four separate two-story buildings sharing parking and community facilities with the 55 existing Dahlia Court Apartments. There would be 19 new 2-bedroom units and 14 new 3-bedroom units. A small mobile temporary classroom where Peoples' operates a highly successful after school Youth Education Enhancement Program (YEEP) for the school-age residents would be removed. The YEEP program would continue and be relocated to a learning center in a new community building. The proposed new 4,347 square foot community center would include a multi-purpose room, kitchen, reception area, two offices, two classrooms, health center, restrooms, laundry room, storage and mechanical rooms. Services offered at the community center would be restricted to Dahlia Court residents only. Oversight and maintenance of these facilities would be provided by the onsite manager assisted by maintenance staff.

Outdoors, a new play area and BBQ picnic area would be centrally located adjacent to the community center patio. Twenty six additional parking spaces would be added, bringing the project total up to 125 spaces; of these, 54 spaces would be located within carports. An area for parking up to 24 bicycles would be included. Two covered trash and recycling areas would provide space for six large bins. The existing gated one-way out access out to Santa Ynez Avenue would be relocated south in order to line up with the Santa Ynez Avenue/Via Real intersection. A 100-foot wetland buffer located adjacent to the southern property boundary would be enhanced and graded as a detention basin providing storm water treatment and storage. Project grading is estimated to be 1,000 cubic yards of cut and 4,800 cubic yards of fill. All overhead utility lines would be placed underground.

Plans are attached as Exhibit A.

PROJECT SETTING

Addressed as 1300 Dahlia Court, the existing Dahlia Court apartments include 55 residential units, 97 parking spaces, two existing tot-lot playgrounds and an area of vacant land at the rear of the parcel. Access to the apartments is provided by a gated driveway located at the end of the Dahlia Court cul-de-sac. U. S. Highway 101 is located directly south of the project site, with the Santa Ynez overcrossing located to the west. The nearly one acre parcel directly to the south is owned by the City of Carpinteria (APN 003-590-042). South of the City's parcel and just north of U. S. Highway 101 is the parcel just over one acre in size that Peoples' Self-Help Housing Corporation has recently entered into an agreement to purchase (APN 003-590-051). As all three parcels are zoned Planned Residential Development (PRD 20), Peoples' proposes to acquire APN 003-590-042 from the City, adjust lot lines and merge parcels to allow the existing development to remain on one parcel, with the proposed new structures on a second parcel.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

On August 3rd of this year, the Planning Commission and City Council held a Joint review of a similar Conceptual project, with 40 apartment units proposed. While overall the comments included praises for Peoples' work in the community and the overall site layout with the central open space, some concerns were raised regarding the height of the new structures given the possible need for fill. Concerns were also raised regarding the proposed entry gates. Story poles have been erected to show the location and height of the structures closest to U. S. Highway 101 and Santa Ynez Avenue.

Carpinteria Municipal Code

The project would be developed pursuant to Chapter 14.14, the Planned Residential Development (PRD 20) Section of City's Zoning Code. The project would also be developed pursuant to the State's Density Bonus provisions (Government Code Section 65915) and the Bonus Density requirements of the City's Zone Code (Section 14.77). The applicants have requested three incentives or concessions pursuant to these provisions:

- A reduction in the required vehicular parking spaces. The zone code provisions would require 205 spaces, with 88 of these covered. The proposal would include 125 spaces with 54 of these covered.
- A reduction in the setback for 10 parking spaces adjacent to Santa Ynez Avenue. The zone code provisions would require a 20-foot setback; the proposal provides a five-foot setback.
- A reduction in the required distance between proposed Buildings 3 and 4 as the zone code would require a 25-foot separation; the proposal provides 22'-6".

Development Standards

Standard	Requirement/Allowance	Proposal
Adjusted Parcel #1 (APN 003-590-042-052) would be 2.88 acres (125,251 sq. ft.) The new Parcel 2 (APN 003-590-042-051) would be 2.69 acres (117,185 sq. ft.)	20 units per acre Density bonus provisions would allow 25% over the otherwise maximum, or 25 units per acre Parcel 1: 72 units max Parcel 2: 68 units max	 Parcel 1: 55 units (19 units/acre) Parcel 2: 33 units (12 units/acre)
Building Height	30-foot maximum	Building #1: 26'-10" Building #2: 27'-6" Buildings #3 & 4: 25'-0"
Building Setbacks		
Front	50 feet from centerline of street or 20 feet from right-of-way	20 feet from right-of-way
Sides	Between 5 and 10 feet	10 feet and 100+ feet
Rear	No less than 15 feet	15 feet
Distance Between Buildings	Minimum one-half the sum of the heights of opposing buildings: approx 25 feet minimum	Buildings 3 and 4 are shown at 22'-6" apart.* All other buildings this requirement.
Building Coverage	50% maximum	Parcel 1: 31% (38,573 sq. ft.) Parcel 2: 19% (22,570 sq. ft.)
Open Space and Landscaping	20% minimum	Parcel 1: 31% (38,573 sq. ft.) Parcel 2: 19% (22,570 sq. ft.)
Parking Note: Parking and com facilities are shared for parcels.	One covered space for each single bedroom unit, two spaces (one covered) per two or more bedroom units and one visitor parking space per three dwelling units: 205 spaces, with 88 of these covered.	125 spaces, with 54 of these covered*

* Density Bonus provisions allow incentives such as reduced parking requirement and a modification to requirements for separation between structures on the same site for qualifying projects such as this.

General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan

Citywide Community Design Objectives:

Community Design Element Objective CD-1: *The size, scale and form of buildings, and their placement on a parcel should be compatible with adjacent and nearby properties, and with the dominant neighborhood or district development pattern.*

Community Design Element Objective CD-2: *Architectural designs based on historic regional building types should be encouraged to preserve and enhance the unique character of the city.*

The proposed two-story buildings evoke a craftsman feel with wide wood trim, divided windows, shutters, trellises and a dark color palette. The three buildings on the western side of the site would be situated around an open landscaped area so as to shelter the outdoor play and gathering areas from automobile noise. The scale and form of the proposed buildings would appear compatible with other two story structures in the area.

The architectural style of the proposed structures varies from the existing Dahlia Court apartments. **Because the two phases would share access, parking and community facilities, staff would like the ARB to consider the compatibility of the new apartments with the old, and if changes such as paint or architectural detailing should be made to the existing apartments. The Board's comments on the overall site plan and landscape plan would also be appreciated.**

Street Frontage:

Community Design Element Objective CD-10: *Areas with attractive frontage designs should be maintained. New development should be carefully planned with frontage areas which maintain and enhance the quality of Carpinteria's streetscape.*

Policy CD-10b: *Frontages where residential uses abut a major thoroughfare should include buffering elements such as yards, forecourts, courtyards, and tree rows. Sound walls are the most primitive form of buffer and should be used only where other methods are impractical. If sound walls are used they should be attractive and well landscaped.*

Two views of the site are especially important; the view looking down to the development from the Santa Ynez Avenue overcrossing and the views one sees looking across the site from the Highway 101 northbound lanes. Story poles have been erected to outline the south and west building massing. The two-story structures would partially block views of the foothills as seen from the highway and the intersection of Santa Ynez Avenue and Via Real.

Tree plantings within the required 100-foot setback from the wetland adjacent to the southern property boundary would provide an ample visual buffer from the highway. Masses of trees between the westernmost structures and the Santa Ynez Avenue overcrossing would also provide

a visual buffer from the new apartments. It may be possible to add additional landscape plantings within the Santa Ynez Avenue overcrossing right-of-way through an encroachment permit.

The existing six-foot wrought iron fence along the western property line would continue south to the existing fence at the highway. While the site specific noise analysis prepared for the applicant indicates that sound walls would not be required with this proposed site layout, a sound wall may be installed as part of the Caltrans South Coast 101 HOV Lane project. A six-foot wood fence would be placed atop the retaining wall along the eastern property boundary where the project abuts the rear yards of the homes on Chaney Avenue. **Photos of the story poles will be provided at the meeting in order to help assess the visual impact of the proposal and to help direct any site modifications if appropriate.**

Lighting:

Community Design Element Objective CD-13: *Ensure that lighting of new development is sensitive to the character and natural resources of the City and minimizes photopollution to the maximum extent feasible.*

Policy CD-13b: *Lighting shall be low intensity and located and designed so as to minimize direct view of light sources and diffusers and to minimize halo and spillover effects.*

While lighting fixtures are not shown at this preliminary stage, the project will be conditioned, and the ARB will be able to review the proposed lighting fixtures and locations to ensure that photopollution and light spillover will be reduced to the maximum extent feasible.

Energy Efficiency:

Community Design Element Objective CD-14: *Protect and preserve natural resources by reducing energy consumption.*

Policy CD-14a: *To ensure the effective utilization of energy resources, design measures shall be incorporated into project design that allow for development projects to comply with and exceed the minimum energy requirements of the City's Uniform Codes.*

CD-14-Implementation Policy 7: *Building orientation shall be designed to maximize natural lighting and passive solar heating and cooling.*

CD-14-Implementation Policy 8: *Landscaping shall be designed to maximize the use of native drought-tolerant species and deciduous trees to shade buildings in summer and allow for passive solar heating in winter.*

The proposed site layout provides ample space between buildings in order to maximize natural lighting and passive cooling. The proposed landscape plan uses a variety of native and deciduous trees to allow for passive solar heating in the winter.

Subarea 3, Santa Monica, Canalino and El Carro Neighborhoods:

Community Design Element Objective CDS3-1: *Preserve and strengthen the visual and physical connections between this subarea, the downtown and other neighborhoods and districts in the City.*

Community Design Element Objective CDS3-2: *Preserve and enhance the existing residential neighborhood and ensure that new development enhances the neighborhood character.*

Community Design Element Objective CDS3-3: *Ensure that new development is sensitive to the scale and character of the existing neighborhoods, and consistent with the City's "small beach town" image.*

Policy CDS3-b: *Enhance the pedestrian character of the neighborhoods' streets, parks and lanes.*

CDS3-Implementation Policy 40: *As a part of new development projects, fences fronting on collector and arterial streets shall be decorative and set back sufficiently to provide for landscaping that enhances the street corridor and eliminates potential for the fencing to cause a sight-distance obstruction. Existing wire or wood fencing along arterial streets shall either be replaced to comply with the setback and landscaping requirement above, or screened with landscaping (shrubs or vines) where feasible.*

CDS3-Implementation Policy 43: *Utility hardware, such as water meters and backflow preventers, electrical transformers, and similar devices should be located underground or in parkway strips whenever possible. These elements are not attractive in front yards. Parkway strips can also accommodate fire hydrants, traffic control signs and traffic signal controllers, keeping them away from sidewalks and pedestrians.*

CDS3-Implementation Policy 44: *Community mailboxes should be located in specially designed locations that are comfortable for the user. These locations should be visible from adjacent streets and houses to enhance security.*

CDS3-Implementation Policy 46: *Front building facades for commercial and multifamily residential buildings should face the street.*

Because the project site is located below the Santa Ynez Avenue overpass, the proposed two-story structures will not appear as tall as seen from Santa Ynez Avenue. Building #3 would have the most visual impact as it is located 20 feet from the property boundary and approximately seven feet lower than pavement elevation as it fronts the structure. While the setback area is proposed to be planted with a variety of shrubs and trees, it may be possible to provide additional landscape planting within the road right-of-way between the property line and the Santa Ynez Avenue sidewalk. The existing wrought iron fence that fronts Santa Ynez Avenue is proposed to continue south, until it connects with the existing chain link fence adjacent to the highway. The wrought iron fence would allow opportunities for landscape screening where it can be seen from Santa Ynez Avenue. The mailboxes associated with the expanded development would be located near the existing mailboxes in a secure location near the Dahlia Court entrance. **Staff is particularly interested in comments from the Board regarding the project's visual impact along this street frontage.**

Subarea 3 Residential Design Guidelines

DG-3: *Exterior architectural treatment and detail should be carried around all sides of the building.*

DG-5: *The use of bay windows, dormers, balconies, covered porches, and other decorative elements, are encouraged when appropriate to the architecture of a building, particularly when these elements would be oriented toward a public street or public space.*

DG-9: *Materials should be high quality and durable (taking into consideration its use and climate), and authentic to the chosen architectural style.*

The materials shown on the building elevation drawings appear to be of high quality and durable, and incorporate natural or natural-appearing materials. The materials and architectural treatments are consistent throughout the building exteriors, and the building design consists of a variety of elements, including large windows, balconies and porches.

Water Resources:

Open Space, Recreation & Conservation Element Objective OSC-10: *Conserve all water resources, and protect the quality of water.*

Policy OSC-10a: *Minimize the erosion and contamination of beaches. Minimize the sedimentation, channelization and contamination of surface water bodies.*

Policy OSC-10b: *Continue to support water conservation measures to provide an adequate supply of water to the community. Water conservation may measure as low-flow plumbing fixtures and drought tolerant landscape plans for new development.*