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Stan Wisniewski
Director

Kerry Gottlieb
Chief Deputy

AGENDA

MARINA DEL REY DESIGN CONTROL BOARD

Thursday, August 31, 2006, 6:30 p.m.

Burton W. Chace Park Community Building
13650 Mindanao Way ~ Marina del Rey, CA 90292

Design Control Board Members

Susan Cloke – Chair	- First District
Katherine Spitz, ASLA – Vice Chair	- Third District
David Abelar – Member	- Second District
Peter Phinney, AIA – Member	- Fourth District
Tony Wong, P.E. – Member	- Fifth District

1. Call to Order, Action on Absences, Pledge of Allegiance and Order of Agenda

2. Old Business

None

3. New Business

A. Parcel 64 – Villa Venetia – DCB #06-015
Consideration of redevelopment project

4. Comments From The Public

Public comment within the purview of this Board (three minute time limit per speaker)

5. Adjournment

ADA ACCOMMODATIONS: If you require reasonable accommodations or auxiliary aids and services such as material in alternate format or a sign language interpreter, please contact the ADA (Americans with Disability Act) Coordinator at (310) 827-0816 (Voice) or (310) 821-1737 (TDD), with at least three business days' notice.

Project Materials: All materials provided to the Design Control Board Members are available (beginning the Saturday prior to the meeting) for public review at the following Marina del Rey locations: Marina del Rey Library, 4533 Admiralty Way, 310-821-3415; Department of Beaches and Harbors Administration Building, 13837 Fiji Way, 310-305-9503; MdR Visitors & Information Center, 4701 Admiralty Way, 310-305-9546; and Burton Chace Park Community Room, 13650 Mindanao Way, 310-305-9595.

Please Note: The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted Chapter 2.160 of the Los Angeles County Code (Ord. 93-0031 §2(part), 1993) relating to lobbyists. Any person who seeks support or endorsement from the Design Control Board on any official action must certify that they are familiar with the requirements of this ordinance. A copy of this ordinance can be provided prior to the meeting and certification is to be made before or at the meeting.

Departmental Information: <http://beaches.co.la.ca.us> or <http://labeaches.info>

Si necesita asistencia para interpretar esta informacion llame a este numero 310-305-9547.



"To enrich lives through effective and caring service"

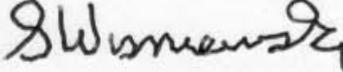


Stan Wisniewski
Director

Kerry Silverstrom
Chief Deputy

August 23, 2006

TO: Design Control Board

FROM: Stan Wisniewski, Director 

SUBJECT: **AGENDA ITEM 3A – PARCEL 64 – LYON VILLA VENETIA APARTMENTS & CONDOS – DCB #06-015**

Item 3A is submitted by Lyon Capital Ventures, LLC (Applicant) for consideration of conceptual approval for the redevelopment of Parcel 64, Villa Venetia Apartments & Condos. Following Design Control Board (DCB) review, Applicant will proceed with land use entitlements from the Department of Regional Planning and Coastal Commission and will return to your Board for further review and approval of final design plans, including landscaping, lighting, signage, fencing, exterior treatments, colors/materials, and hardscape elements.

Brief Description of the Proposed Project

Applicant proposes to demolish all existing landside improvements on the 6.39-acre Parcel 64 (224 dwelling units and appurtenant parking and landscaping) and to construct a new residential complex within the existing parcel boundaries. The architectural program consists of three distinct buildings (appearing as four) rising from a raised podium and plaza level over an expansive covered parking garage/service area. Buildings of varying heights will consist of the following program elements:

- Three buildings containing 479 new dwelling units (263 apartments and 216 condominium units; net increase of 255 units);
- An expansive central landscaped plaza;
- Two levels of appurtenant covered parking (1,047 spaces);
- Recreational facilities, including a pool and health club/gym;
- Visitor and resident-serving waterfront retail and appurtenances (~3,000 sq. ft.); and
- New boat anchorage (21 to 34 slips) and accessible boating-related facilities.

Development Rights and Regulations

The Marina del Rey Local Coastal Program ("LCP") contains provisions for prospective redevelopment of Parcel 64 within land and water use allocations for Development Zone (DZ) 11, the Harbor Gateway Development Zone. The subject DZ 11 currently has an available development allocation of 255 additional dwelling units and 34 boat slips.

As noted, Applicant proposes a total of 479 dwelling units on the site, which represents a net increase of 255 dwelling units over the existing development. Applicant's project is, therefore,

consistent with the DZ allocation in terms of the number of additional dwelling units being proposed; as such, an LCP amendment will not be required to achieve the proposed development program. Parcel 64 is zoned "Residential V" in the LCP, which is the highest-density land use classification, affording up to 75 dwelling units per acre. The proposed project is consistent with the maximum density allowed for the 6.39-acre parcel (i.e., 6.39 acres x 75 units per acre = 479 units).

Applicant's proposal to construct a new marina containing between 21 and 34 new boat slips is consistent with the LCP use allocation.

The subject parcel also carries the *Waterfront Overlay Zone (WOZ)* designation, which is an overlay land use category intended to encourage coastal-related, coastal-dependent and visitor-serving land uses while increasing development flexibility. Applicant has proposed to use the WOZ designation to add 3,000 square feet of commercial space to support visitors to the promenade and plaza, South Bay Bicycle Trail users, and visitors to the transient dock, as well as on-site residents.

STAFF REVIEW

Land Use Context

Parcel 64 is located at the south end of Fiji Way and, combined with the adjacent Parcel 65, serves as the southernmost development parcel in Marina del Rey. From the water, the parcel is significant because it frames the starboard (right) approach to the interior of the Marina and is the most prominent waterfront feature for arriving mariners. To the north, the U.S. Coast Guard Station-Marina del Rey, home to USCGC Halibut, and Fiji Way border Parcel 64. To the east and south, the property is bounded by undeveloped State property, comprised of the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve and Ballona Creek, and the popular South Bay Bicycle Trail follows the perimeter of the property. To the west, the UCLA rowing facilities and Ballona Creek define the boundary of Marina del Rey.

Environmental Review Process

Applicant has not yet filed an application with the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) to initiate the environmental review process under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed project scope. Following your Board's action with respect to this application, Applicant will file the project at DRP, where a full project review, including an environmental analysis under CEQA, will be completed prior to consideration by the Regional Planning Commission. Significant issues will be fully addressed in the environmental impact report (EIR) to be prepared as a part of its application. As part of that process, the EIR will be circulated to all relevant agencies and interested parties will be invited to consider public comment. Issues to be considered in further analysis to be undertaken will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Shade/Shadow Effects
- Wind Effects
- Biology/Wildlife
- Traffic and Circulation
- Light and Glare
- Public Access
- Viewshed
- Water Quality
- Navigation
- Landscaping

Special Issues

- Heronry Relocation

Development of the Villa Venetia site will involve the removal of nine mature Monterey cypress and one Monterey Pine trees, four of which are currently used by Great Blue Herons for nesting. These colonial nesters are found throughout the Marina and are accustomed to large trees. The herons also nest in trees around the adjacent U.S. Coast Guard station and the Department of Beaches and Harbors headquarters. Throughout the balance of the Marina, considerable nesting activity is found in and around the Oxford Basin. Attached, as Appendix A, is a report by Dr. Jeffrey B. Froke, documenting the heron nesting activities in the Marina.

As the biologist notes (Appendix A, pg. 12.3), guano deposition is taking its toll on two Villa Venetia trees. Significant portions of the trees are dying, and as the trees' canopy dies, the trees will be less useful to the herons. In addition, the biologist notes that while these herons are relatively tolerant of humans, a better location away from human interactions would benefit the birds. The redevelopment of this site provides the opportunity to fashion a mitigation program that either relocates the trees, or creates a new heronry, all at lessee expense.

No Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) are designated in the LCP. In fact, the Coastal Commission removed all ESHA policies from the LCP in 1996 when the Ballona wetlands were also removed from the LCP. Although those who have commented have asserted ESHA in the area of Parcel 64, there is no legal way of imposing this designation at this point. Additionally, the Coastal Commission has found similar areas in other harbors not to be ESHA (e.g., Boating Instruction and Safety Center in Channel Islands Harbor).

The fact that an area fails to rise to the level of an ESHA hardly signals that it is not important. Quite to the contrary, it simply prevents a finding that the property cannot be developed at all and steers the entitlement effort towards mitigation pursuant to CEQA. A Coastal Development Permit is required for removal of trees wherein birds roost, and the fact that the trees will be removed will be a part of the project description in the Coastal Development Permit application.

The County and its consultants contacted the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to determine its level of interest in relocating the trees to the Ballona Ecological Reserve. (The County's letter and the response from DFG are provided in Appendix B.) DFG is at the beginning of its program to restore the Ballona wetlands and, thus, has not yet completed its vision for resource locations. Therefore, it is unable to agree to any particular mitigation at this point, including a financial contribution to a heronry it is not yet sure of developing. However, the Department sees the long-term value of having a rookery in the area – it is simply a question of where.

Removal of the trees on the project site is not anticipated to have an adverse effect on the heronry currently used between the Villa Venetia site and the County offices, although this determination will ultimately be made in coordination with the EIR. Only six nests are involved at Villa Venetia, and as these birds are colonial nesters and the trees at the Coast Guard and County offices (and elsewhere in the Marina) are not proposed for removal, the herons will continue to have resources.

Early comments on the idea of removing the trees entirely from the Villa Venetia site have focused on why the trees cannot remain while the site is redeveloped. The County does not consider retaining the trees in their present location as feasible or prudent. As earlier stated, portions of the trees are already dying. Secondly, the birds – and their guano – will continue to interfere with the public's use of the site and the proposed new promenade and associated public amenities that will be built by the Applicant. Finally, the continued impacts of construction and human interference strongly suggest that a relocation of the heronry is a suitable alternative.

The County will continue to study this matter with DFG and the Coastal Commission during the entitlement process for this project. However, for the purposes of the DCB review, the trees are to be removed from the site.

- Development Review

- Architectural Style – Applicant has selected a prestigious team of architects and designers worthy of the prominence of this site. The project is a collection of residential buildings and high quality land and water amenities and retail uses composed on the site to maximize the marine experience both interior and exterior. Three buildings varying in height from 84 feet to 140 feet surround a central landscaped plaza constructed over two levels of parking. The building elevations are notched and graduated to soften the impact of the project when viewed from a distance and to allow penetration of wind and light.

Drawing inspiration from fine sailing yachts, the design is purposeful and elegant in its simplicity. Although the building exteriors will vary according to location, orientation and interior function, the expression will be minimal without extraneous embellishment. Building materials will derive from the surrounding natural colors of the landscape, water, and stone and will include exposed concrete, limestone, and glass.

- Public Access/Promenade – The project expands pedestrian activities along the waterfront with a promenade that will be accessible to the public. Currently, the existing promenade fronting the Marina's main channel has limited access by the public. Applicant proposes to make strong connections between the public sidewalk on Fiji Way and the South Bay Bicycle Trail (along the middle jetty) to create a continuous trail through and around the subject property. The project's new Waterfront Pedestrian Promenade will be highly developed to encourage everyone to enjoy the waterfront. Handrails, ground materials, lighting, seating, ramps and docks will be of the same high quality as is being proposed on the interior of the site. The existing bike path along the south edge of the property will be improved with enhanced surfaces, site furniture, lighting, and landscaping. Additionally, a series of exercise stations will be located along the path. Both the Waterfront Pedestrian Promenade and the bike path will be upgraded to fully accessible standards. The Waterfront Pedestrian Promenade opens to broad "Spanish Steps" fronting a public plaza providing views directly over the Marina.

- Traffic and Parking – Vehicles would continue to enter the site from the north via Fiji Way. Residents, visitors and guests will enter the subterranean garage or proceed to an entry pavilion for valet parking. The two-level garage is organized to allow easy navigation and convenient parking for first-time users and guests on the main parking level, and the lower parking level is

utilized for long-term residents. Leasing center parking is located just inside the garage entry. Marina (boater) parking is located close to the promenade and will be clearly indicated within the garage for added convenience. Parking for the project will be provided consistent with County Zoning Code standards. There will be limited valet stacking at the entry pavilion and several short-term parking stalls located in front of the apartment leasing center.

o Viewshed/View Corridors – The subject parcel is not subject to the view corridor requirement, however, Applicant has strived to provide enhanced views of the water through and within the project. For example, Building A, situated directly on the waterfront, is dramatically elevated three stories to fully expose the entry court to the water from the terminus of Fiji Way. The central landscaped plaza is also visible from the entry and approach drive, providing a sense of openness and transparency across the interior of the site.

The entire property frontage along the water will be enhanced for public viewing and enjoyment, and views from the "Spanish Steps" fronting a public plaza will offer views of the Marina. A café and/or small resident and visitor-serving retail shop(s) fronting on the Waterfront Pedestrian Promenade will help to make this a vibrant public gathering space. Boundaries between the public spaces and residential uses will be resolved through careful architectural treatments. A landscaped hedge or change in elevation will define where public access is available and to provide security for the residents.

o Shade/Shadow Impacts -- Applicant has provided a shade shadow analysis of the proposed project in winter and summer. The studies demonstrate minor shading effects will occur along the waterfront area during morning hours, between sunrise and approximately 11:00 a.m. in all seasons, with longer shadows occurring during winter months. Afternoon shading from the taller structures will extend over portions of the ecological reserve to the east between noon and sundown, with the primary impacts occurring in the winter months (see Appendix C).

o Navigation – The project will create a new marina containing 21 to 34 new boat slips, each meeting current construction and accessibility guidelines. Because of the more exposed location along the main channel, docks will be constructed to withstand higher wave and wind exposure and will be arranged to facilitate ease of maneuvering in inclement conditions. It is anticipated the new docks will be constructed with current marina industry technology and materials, possibly a proprietary concrete dock system with all new pre-stressed concrete guide piles, and served with a new utility distribution system for power, water, cable and phone connections. The marina will also contain a sewage pump-out station. End ties, launching, kayaking, and instruction facilities are planned as marina components. In addition to new waterside facilities, boaters will have access to boaters' restroom facilities located directly off of the Waterfront Pedestrian Promenade.

o Landscaping – Applicant has provided an illustrative landscape site plan in its submittal packet. The landscape plant palettes will contain many native and/or drought tolerant plants. Non-invasive plant material will be used contiguous with the Ecological Reserve. The landscape will borrow from the forms, colors and textures of the architecture. Oversized active recreation areas, as well as smaller intimate garden courtyards, will loosely reflect the geometry and formality of the buildings. Recessed planters set into the structural deck will provide open vistas while still allowing adequate planting depth for trees and shrubs. Enhanced pedestrian walks

and a public plaza will invite social interaction and activity while providing an attractive circulation corridor for residents and guests. Vehicular areas will be lined with large shade trees and palms and will feature enhanced paving and flowering shrubs and vines to provide a welcoming street level experience.

Utilizing drought tolerant material where possible, plant material will be used to accent architectural features while also serving as a means of "softening the edges" as necessary. Large canopy trees, decorative palm trees, colorful and lush shrubs and seasonal flowers will be used to define spaces, screen undesirable views and provide an attractive environment for residents and guests. An automatic irrigation system will be used to maximize water conservation and water the various hydro zones efficiently. Decorative groundcover and mulch will also be used to minimize water evaporation and discourage weed growth. A rainwater collection system will be used to capture first flush run-off prior to discharge to local drains.

- Wind Impacts -- Applicant has provided a wind study of the proposed project. The study concludes that there will be localized areas of altered wind direction and wind speeds in the Marina during infrequent easterly winds. There will be no effect on the general air circulation patterns along the main channel resulting from construction of the project. The study did not assess changes in prevailing wind direction and speed related to the project's impact on activities on the Ecological Reserve to the east (see Appendix D).
- Signage and Lighting -- Applicant will return at a later time with details of proposed signage and lighting. However, lighting will be designed to minimize spill and glare on adjoining parcels and the adjacent Ecological Reserve and lighting design will be complementary to the architectural style. Outdoor maps and wayfinding signage will promote awareness of the marine environment.

Conclusion

The Department believes Applicant has appropriately addressed the project's building height, circulation, massing, visual impact and public access requirements. The proposal is in conformance with the *Marina Specifications and Minimum Standards of Architectural Treatment and Construction*. The project is designed as a landmark property on the waterfront in Marina del Rey and is being developed to provide significant upgrade to this prime waterfront property at the water gateway to the Marina. In addition to meeting quality development objectives for the property, the project provides additional boater facilities and enhanced public access that will create an important missing link in the Marina's waterfront promenade.

The Department believes, therefore, that it would be appropriate for your Board to move the project forward to the Regional Planning Commission, stating any concerns precisely in your report, thereby allowing the regulatory agencies responsible for making the determinations with respect to the environmental aspects of the proposed project the opportunity to perform this function.

The Department recommends APPROVAL of DCB #06-015, as submitted.

SW:JJC:ks
Enclosures (4)