

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD AND CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD
SEPTEMBER 7, 2017

PROJECT TITLE

Sequoia Green Project

APPLICANT

Kevin Skiles

ADDRESS/LOCATION

1297 & 1299 Glenn Street
356 & 358 Ridgway Avenue

PROPERTY OWNER

1285 Glenn Street, LLC (Kevin Skiles, Rick
Newhausser, Mike Skiles)

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

180-720-077, -078, -079, -080

FILE NUMBER

PRJ17-021 (DR17-015)

APPLICATION DATE

March 30, 2017

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

July 14, 2017

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Preliminary and Final Design Review
Major Landmark Alteration Permit

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

No additional discretionary action

PROJECT SITE ZONING

R-2-H (Medium Density Multi-Family
Residential-Historic)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Medium Density Residential (8-18
units/acre)

PROJECT PLANNER

Amy Nicholson

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

For Cultural Heritage Board and Design Review Board Meeting of: September 7, 2017

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD AND CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD

TO: CHAIRS BURCH AND DE SHAZO AND MEMBERS OF THE
BOARDS
FROM: AMY NICHOLSON, CITY PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: SEQUOIA GREEN PROJECT
AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Cultural Heritage Board and the Design Review Board, by Resolution, approve Preliminary Design Review for the Sequoia Green Project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sequoia Green Project includes a proposal to develop four existing vacant single-family lots in the Ridgway Preservation District with four attached single-family dwellings, constructed as duets, with associated landscaping and fencing. Based on the project size, and the location within a preservation district, Preliminary Design Review approval is required by the Design Review Board and Cultural Heritage Board. Final Design Review approval is also required by the Design Review Board. Staff finds the project consistent with the City's General Plan, Zoning Code, Design Guidelines, and Historic Review Preservation Standards, and thus, recommends approval of the project.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The proposed project consists of the development of four attached single-family dwellings, comprised of two duets, located within the Ridgway Preservation District in northeast Santa Rosa. Four architecturally distinct residential units are proposed, each including two-stories and a front porch. Each single-family residence would include an attached tandem one-vehicle garage with a tandem one-vehicle driveway. All four units include private rear yards, to be enclosed with 5-foot tall solid wood fences. New, drought tolerant front yard landscaping is

proposed in each front yard, while three existing mature trees Redwood trees on the project site are to remain.

Frontage improvements are in place abutting the project site as a result of the previously approved seven-lot subdivision. Landscaping within the existing planter strip is proposed as a part of the current proposal.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Developed Public/Institutional

South: Developed Residential

East: Developed Residential

West: Developed Residential

The project site is surrounded by a both single and multi-family residential uses to the south, east, and west. Ridgway Swim Center and the Santa Rosa High School facilities exist directly north.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The approximately 10,442-square foot site is currently undeveloped and is vegetated with native grasses and three mature Redwood trees. Topography of the previously graded site is flat.

4. Project History

On June 1, 2006, the Design Review Board approved Preliminary Design Review for the Sequoia Green Townhomes project, and granted Final Design Review Approval to City staff.

On June 8, 2006, the Planning Commission approved a Tentative Map and associated Small Lot Conditional Use Permit

On November 1, 2007, the Final Map for the Sequoia Green Townhomes Subdivision was recorded.

On March 30, 2017, applications for a Concept Design Review and Design Review were submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Department.

On May 2, 2017, a Joint Concept Cultural Heritage Board and Design Review Board meeting was held for the proposed project.

On June 13, 2017, revised plans were submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Department.

As indicated above, the Sequoia Green Townhomes project was originally entitled in 2006 by the Design Review Board and Planning Commission. This proposal included a seven-lot subdivision, which included the retention of three existing historic residences, the creation of four vacant single-family lots, and the architecture for the four attached units submitted for Concept Design Review in May 2017. The Final Map was recorded in 2007, and building permits were submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Department to construct the four new units. The building permits were not issued based on the economic climate, and the Design Review entitlement expired in 2008. As the project site is now within an Historic District, the Design Review entitlement requires approval by both the Cultural Heritage Board and Design Review Board.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The General Plan land use designation for the site is Medium Density Residential, which allows a range of 8.0-18.0 units per acre. The project is proposing a consistent density of 16.7 units per acre, to implement the existing recorded map, which created four vacant lots. The following are the most relevant General Plan goals and policies that are applicable to the project:

Land Use:

LUL-F Maintain a diversity of neighborhoods and varied housing stock to satisfy a wide range of needs.

LUL-F-3 Maintain a balance of various housing types in each neighborhood and ensure that new development does not result in undue concentration of a single housing type in any one neighborhood. Downtown is excepted.

Urban Design:

UD-F-4 Provide visual interest in building, site, and landscape design that avoids the sense of a monotonous tract development. *Visual interest can be created in many ways: varied massing and roof types, floor plans, detailed planting design, or color and materials. Overall harmony should be maintained while providing smaller scale variety.*

UD-G-6 To promote social interaction, houses in new developments should contain porches, front gardens, and windows overlooking front yards and sidewalks.

UD-G-7 Ensure that garages do not dominate streetscapes by setting them back from the front of houses, locating them at the rear of the site, accessed by an alleyway, or clustering them on shared driveways.

Historic Preservation:

HP-B Preserve Santa Rosa’s historic structures and neighborhoods.

HP-B-1 Ensure that alterations to historic buildings and their surrounding setting are compatible with the character of the structure and the neighborhood.

In general, the proposal has been designed to comply with the above-noted General Plan goals and policies. The proposal includes the addition of housing within an existing neighborhood to accomplish the wide range of housing needs within the City, while respecting the historic character of the surrounding neighborhood. Specifically, the inclusion of covered front porches and less than dominant single-vehicle garages promote social interaction, while providing compatible architectural features to relate the proposed buildings to the existing buildings within the Ridgway Preservation District. Visual interest is provided in the proposed development through the diversity of selected colors, materials, and architectural features including roof pitches and styles, and landscaping.

2. **Zoning**

North: PI (Public Institutional)

South: R-2-H (Medium Density Multi-Family Residential-Historic)

East: R-2-H and R-1-6-H (Medium Density Multi-Family Residential-Historic and Single-Family Residential-Historic)

West: R-2-H (Medium Density Multi-Family Residential-Historic)

Development Standards

The subject site is currently within the R-2-H (Medium Density Multi-Family Residential-Historic) zoning district. The R-2 and R-3 zoning districts are applied to areas of the City appropriate for residential neighborhoods with medium and higher residential densities, to provide home rental and ownership opportunities, and to provide a full range of choices in housing types to improve access to affordable housing. The R-2 and R-3 zoning districts implement and are consistent with the Residential—Medium Density and Medium High Density land use classifications of the General Plan. Because the existing subdivision includes lot sizes smaller than the R-2 minimum lot size of 6,000 square-feet, a Conditional Use Permit was required and approved for the existing development. The Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit with a site plan, in conjunction with the Tentative Map, which considered setbacks for proposed Development. As the Tentative Map has been recorded, this Conditional Use

Permit is considered vested, and the setbacks and private open space areas are established.

The proposed project meets each of the requirements related to lot coverage, setbacks, and parking, as required by the previously approved Conditional Use Permit, and the City of Santa Rosa Zoning Code. In addition, the maximum allowed building height is 35 feet, and each of the proposed units is approximately 10 feet less than this required standard. Two on-site parking spaces are provided (one in a tandem garage and one in the driveway), in addition to three on-street parking spaces along Ridgway Avenue and Glenn Street, directly abutting the project site. Consistent with the Zoning Code requirements for attached single-family dwellings which requires two and a half parking spaces per residence, this proposal complies by providing 2.75 parking spaces per unit.

Entitlements and Review Process

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 20-58.060(C)(3), Design Review is required for any project greater than 5,000 square feet within the -H combining district. The review process for these two entitlements is as follows:

- Preliminary Design Review for a project that is subject to this Subsection will be conducted in a joint meeting of the DRB and CHB.
- Final Design Review. Final Design Review will be by the DRB, in compliance with Section 20-52.030 (Design Review).

Pursuant to Zoning Code Chapter 20-58, no Landmark Alteration Permit is required, based on the lack of historic resource on the project site.

3. Design Guidelines

The following is a list of Design Guidelines applicable to the proposed project:

Single-Family Residential:

3.1.II.A.2. Integrate new development carefully into existing neighborhoods.

3.1.III.A.1. Orient the elements of the house which provide outward signs of habitation, such as the front door, windows, porches and balconies, towards the street.

3.1.III.B.3. Include single story elements such as porches, covered entries, and second stories that are set back from the first floor on two story homes. These elements should be varied along the streetscape.

3.1.III.F.1. Incorporate a variety of features such as overhangs, dormers, bay windows, cantilevers, porches, entries, accent materials, etc. to provide articulation and interest.

3.1.III.F.2. Provide wood trim or stucco surrounds at window and door openings. Windows set in stucco without any trim or surround are strongly discouraged unless the windows are recessed.

3.1.II.G.6. Tandem car garages or one car garages are encouraged as they reduce the visual impact of the garage by utilizing a one car garage door.

Infill Development:

4.3.I.A. To provide for continuity of design between existing and new development.

4.3.II.1. Integrate new development carefully into existing neighborhoods with respect to scale, level of detailing, use of materials, landscaping, and other characteristics of the neighborhood.

4.3.II.4. Design infill development at its edges to: a. approximate the scale and mass of adjacent existing residences; b. include buildings which are detailed and articulated on at least the side facing adjacent existing residences (and preferably on all four sides). Long blank back or side walls are undesirable; and c. avoid blocking significant views.

4.3.II.9. When adding a duplex, triplex or fourplex to an existing single family neighborhood, design the new structure to have the “look” of a single-family home so as to enhance its compatibility.

Historic Preservation-New Construction:

4.7.I.E. To assist property owners and designers in developing plans for historic properties and to encourage the compatibility of new structures in historic districts, and having those plans approved by the City.

4.7.III.G.1. Design new construction so that the architectural character of the neighborhood is maintained. *Specific architectural styles are not mandated. Designs for new construction can also be contemporary.*

4.7.III.G.2. Design new construction to be compatible in height and proportion with adjacent structures.

4.7.III.G.3. Use materials and designs similar to that found throughout the neighborhood.

Staff Response:

Staff finds the proposal to be thoughtfully integrated into the existing neighborhood by including several of the defining characteristics of the historic residences including single-vehicle garages and driveways, architectural details, and the use of a variety of colors and materials. The attached single-family residences, while constructed as duets, utilize garage placement, roof pitch and height, and defining material and colors to present the appearance of detached single-family structures. Further, the proposal successfully balances the required higher density, with heights and proportions in concert with residences found throughout the Ridgway Preservation District.

4. Historic Preservation Review Standards

The project site is located within the Ridgway Preservation District (District). The District is the residential area bounded by Ridgway Avenue on the north; College Avenue on the south; Mendocino Avenue on the east; and U.S. Highway 101 on the west. Contributors to the District are primarily one and two story single-family structures, situated on narrow, deep lots. Character-defining features include gable and hip roofs, horizontal siding, front porches supported by wood columns and craftsman style windows and doors. Italianate and Queen Anne cottages from the late 19th century are common throughout the District. The Ridgway Preservation District was designated by the Cultural Heritage Board in 2006 and the City Council in 2007.

The following are the applicable historic review guidelines for the Design Review Board and Cultural Heritage Board to consider in their discussion:

Processing Review Procedures for Owners of Historic Properties

The following excerpt is from the City's Processing Review Procedures for Owners of Historic Properties:

New construction in Preservation Districts can achieve a number of important City of Santa Rosa goals. New construction can reverse blighted conditions - a new building can replace a burned-out structure, or new construction can occur on a debris-strewn or overgrown lot. New construction can increase housing opportunities for the City, bringing new people into the neighborhood who will enjoy the established urban setting and become involved in neighborhood activities.

New construction in historic areas, often called infill construction, has occurred throughout the country. When successful, the new structures have complemented an historic area and enhanced its overall character. In contrast, insensitive new construction can compromise the integrity of an historic area and possibly result in lowered property values.

The purpose of the Design Guidelines for New Construction is to ensure

that the architectural character of Santa Rosa's Preservation Districts is maintained and enhanced. The Cultural Heritage Board does not specify a particular architectural style or design for new construction projects. The scale, mass, and size of a building are often far more important than the decorative details applied. New or infill construction can be contemporary and should not seek to mimic or match exactly existing buildings in the District, as historic reproductions tend to confuse observers, now and especially in future years.

The following guidelines are applicable for the project:

- Height - The majority of the structures in Santa Rosa's Preservation Districts are one to three stories in height. Slightly taller structures are found in the Railroad Square and St. Rose Districts. The height of new construction in a Preservation District should be compatible with adjacent structures.
- Proportion - New construction should match adjacent structures in proportions of width to height. The narrow widths of most lots in Santa Rosa's older neighborhoods will preclude most buildings whose proportions differ greatly from existing buildings.
- Rhythm - The existing historic streetscape is defined by the rhythm (the relationship of windows, doors, porches, and other elements) of individual structures. New construction within Preservation Districts should maintain this rhythm of window and door openings on the main facade. Entrances should be oriented to the street rather than to an alley. Blank walls or garage doors should not dominate the facade.
- Setbacks - Setbacks should be consistent with adjacent structures and should not vary more than ten percent with the adjacent structures. Current City of Santa Rosa zoning regulations generally require a minimum 15 foot front yard setback.
- Materials and Texture - The majority of residential structures within Santa Rosa's Preservation Districts are of wood or stucco construction. New construction should be compatible with adjacent buildings on the block. Wood frame buildings should maintain materials and designs found throughout the neighborhood, e.g., horizontal shiplap siding. The texture and weight of stucco buildings should be compatible with existing stucco buildings. As a general rule, plywood siding, imitation stone, vinyl siding, sprayed stucco, and fascia bricks should not be considered.
- Roof Shapes- Roofs for new construction should be compatible with adjacent structures. Most of the houses in Santa Rosa's Preservation Districts have variations of hipped or gable roofs, so there is some

flexibility in roof design for new buildings. As most lots are long and narrow, it is possible for new construction to have roofs which change roof lines in the rear half of the building. This change could accommodate an additional floor which would not be readily visible from the street.

- Architectural Details and Decorative Features - The details and decoration of Santa Rosa's historic buildings vary tremendously with the different styles, periods, and types. Such details include cornices, roof overhangs, chimneys, lintels, sills, brackets, shutters, entrance decorations, and porch elements.

It is a challenge to create new designs that use historic details successfully. One extreme is to simply copy the complete design of a historic building; the other is to "paste on" historic details on a modern unadorned design. Neither solution is appropriate for designing architecture that relates to its historic context and yet still reads as a contemporary building. More successful new buildings take their clues from historic images and reintroduce and reinterpret designs of traditional decorative elements.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties have been reviewed for consistency with this proposal. As indicated in the Historic Compatibility Letter prepared by Kara Brunzell, M.A., dated June 16, 2017 (Compatibility Letter), while originally intended to shape historic preservation of individual landmark buildings, parts of the Standards are relevant to infill construction in historic districts.

The following is the most applicable Standard related to infill development with historic neighborhoods:

New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. No historic resource would be impacted.

Staff Response:

The architectural design of the proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood in that the two duet structures have been designed with characteristic and complementary elements of the existing historic residences including covered front porches, single-vehicle garages and driveway widths, roof styles and pitches, and exposed beams and posts. Further, the Compatibility Letter, finds the proposed architectural design to respect the historic neighborhood by avoiding historic materials and through the utilization of a design both differentiated from, and compatible with, historic buildings. The

height of the proposed duets is greater than the abutting single-family residences, but is consistent with a number of structures found throughout the Ridgway Preservation District.

Further, the massing, size, and scale of the proposed buildings do not overwhelm the existing historic residences, and as stated in the Compatibility Letter, the setbacks and rhythm of the proposed project have been designed to fit in with the surrounding neighborhood. Defining and contemporary features of the new structures, recommended by the Secretary of Interior's Standards, include single-light windows without mullions, and shared side walls.

5. Neighborhood Comments

Neighborhood comments received during the Concept Design Review meeting on May 4, 2017, related to the existing zoning and neighborhood compatibility, parking, setbacks, and concerns with the building massing relative to the surrounding residences.

6. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

No public or on-site improvements have been conditioned for this entitlement. All improvements were conditioned, and installed, as a part of the subdivision process.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and qualifies for a Class 32 exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332. The project meets the criteria for the Class 32 (In-fill) exemption in that it is consistent with the applicable General Plan designation and all applicable General Plan polices as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations, occurs within the city limits on a project site of no more than five acres, substantially surrounded by urban uses.

Further, the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species, in that it is not identified as an area with sensitive biological species in the City's General Plan Environmental Impact Report or Geographic Information System, and is surrounded by development. In addition, approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, in that impacts to trip generation would be negligible. The project is anticipated, and required, to operate within acceptable levels of sound as listed in the General Plan and the City's Noise Ordinance. Impacts to air quality, or water quality, are expected to be less than significant based on the project's consistency with the City's Climate Action Plan, and City standards related to stormwater and drainage.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On May 2, 2017, the proposal went before the Design Review Board (DRB) and Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) as a Concept Design Review Item. Feedback from the DRB and CHB included comments regarding four-sided architecture, discouragement of historic era mimicry, use of materials, neighboring views, window length and detail, apparent massing, and garage doors. The applicant has responded to these comments in the attached letter and project plans.

The Design Review Board previously approved the four attached units presented before the DRB and CHB, on June 1, 2006. As previously mentioned, a Tentative Map and Small Lot Conditional Use Permit were approved by the Planning Commission on June 8, 2006, which included the four lots (the project site), in addition to three lots with existing single-family dwellings. The Small Lot Conditional Use Permit considered and approved a site plan, including setbacks.

NOTIFICATION

The project was noticed as a Public Hearing per the requirements of Chapter 20-66 of the City Code. Notification of this public hearing was provided by posting an on-site sign, publishing notice in a newspaper of general circulation, mailed notice to surrounding property owners, electronic notice to parties that had expressed interest in projects taking place in this geographic area of Santa Rosa, and bulletin board postings at City Hall and on the City website.

ISSUES

Staff has no unresolved issues related to the project.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Disclosure Form
- Attachment 2 – Location Map
- Attachment 3 – Neighborhood Context Map
- Attachment 4 – Design Narrative
- Attachment 5 – Site Plan (Approved by Planning Commission)
- Attachment 6 – Architectural Plans
- Attachment 7 – Renderings
- Attachment 8 – Landscape Plans
- Attachment 9 – Color Sheet
- Attachment 10 – Lighting Sheet
- Attachment 11 – Garage Detail
- Attachment 12 – Window Detail
- Attachment 13 – Picket Fence Example
- Attachment 14 – Historic Compatibility Letter
- Attachment 15 – Prior Minutes and Resolutions

Draft Resolution

CONTACT

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