

City of Albany



TO: ALBANY PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
FROM: ANNE HERSCH, AICP, CITY PLANNER
SUBJECT: PA 10-019 DESIGN REVIEW & PARKING EXCEPTION 1600 SOLANO AVE.
DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 2012

Property Owner: PL& DK Properties LLC Piedmont, CA 94611	Applicant/Representative: Kava Massih Kava Massih Architects 920 Grayson St. Berkeley, CA 94710
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PROJECT: 1600 Solano Design Review & Parking Exception FILE: PA 10-019 LOCATION: 1600 Solano Ave. GP LU: Community Commercial ZONING: SC-Solano Commercial PLANNER: Anne Hersch	Date Received: May 23, 2012 Date Deemed Complete: N/A Date of Notice Posted/Mailed: 9/14/2012 Date of Public Hearing: September 26, 2012
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REQUEST

The applicant is seeking Design Review & Parking Exception approval to allow the demolition of an existing building and construct a new two (2) story mixed-use 6,410 square foot commercial building. The applicant is proposing a valet service parking garage with eleven (11) self-park spaces, thirteen (13) tandem valet parking spaces, resulting in twenty four (24) spaces total.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Zoning Commission receive the report and provide feedback to the applicant and staff.

SITE LOCATION



Figure 1. Site Location

BACKGROUND/ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject property is a 5,127 square foot lot with an existing 1,543 sq. ft. commercial building on the corner of Solano and Ordway near the Albany-Berkeley border. The building was constructed in 1925. The property to the east is a two-story commercial building, and the property to the south, at the rear of the subject property, is a single-family home used as a psychologist's office, located in the Solano Commercial district.

2010 Submittal

The applicant submitted a request for Design Review in 2010 and proposed to demolish the existing building and construct a new two-story 7,665 square foot commercial building. The proposed building was to be used for dental offices on both levels with four suites ranging in size from 1,170 square feet to 2,160 square feet. Below grade parking was proposed with a request for a parking exception to allow nine (9) off-street parking spaces where thirty eight (38) are required.

The Commission received public testimony at the September 14, 2010 hearing. At that time, the Commission directed the applicant to prepare a revised parking survey for the proposed project.

2012 Submittal

The revised plans were submitted to the City proposal includes a new two-story 6,410 square foot commercial building (-1,255 sq. ft. from the previous proposal). The proposed building is to be used for 4,000 square feet of medical office located on the ground and second floors, 1,200 square feet of ground floor retail, and a partially underground, off-street parking facility below grade. The building will have two dental offices on each level. Approximately 1,300 square feet of medical offices are proposed on the first floor and 2,700 square feet of medical offices are proposed on the second floor. The two main entries to both the medical office and retail spaces are proposed to open to Solano Avenue. The entrance will lead into a 328 square-foot lobby with a staircase and elevator.

The existing building has a front setback along Solano of approximately 14', side setbacks of 3'-6", and a rear setback of 44'. The proposed building will have a zero lot line on the eastern and western sides and a 7' front setback, and a 20' rear setback. The maximum height of the building will be 35'-0", consistent with the requirements of the Albany Municipal Code.

Building Design

The proposed building is modern in appearance. The building will be clad in perforated corrugated metal and will have a canopy over the front entrance on Solano Ave. Window details will be prominent on both the west and north elevation and will extend from floor to ceiling on the north elevation. Open cable handrails will be featured on the north elevation leading to the main building entrance. The main entrance is recessed from the building face and covered with a canopy. Shade screens will be featured on the windows on the west elevation. A clerestory is proposed above the second floor, prominently featured on the north elevation, to allow light in the treatment area.



Figure 2. Exterior Elevation Rendering

ANALYSIS

Parking Demand

The City's standard requirement is that one parking space is required for every 200 square feet of medical office use pursuant to Section 20.28.030 (B). Based on this ratio, the applicant would need to provide 38 total off-street parking spaces.

The applicant has proposed twenty-four (24) off-street parking spaces. Of those spaces, eleven (11) are self-park. The applicant has indicated that if they used tandem parking based on the existing scheme, fifteen (15) cars could be parked on-site. The applicant has further indicated a valet parking service would allow them to utilize all twenty-four (24) spaces and they have indicated they are willing to provide this service.

The applicant has indicated that the medical uses will not be in full time use. The existing building has two off-street parking spaces and one space in a garage. The on-site parking is currently accessed from Ordway St.

The applicant has conducted a survey based on standard practice and what the International Transportation Engineer Manual (ITE) suggests and concluded the following:

- 1 space per employee, 8 employees = eight (8) parking spaces
- 1 space per exam room, in this case the applicant has used chairs, 7 chairs = seven (7) spaces
- 1 or 2 spaces per waiting room, 2 waiting room = three (3) spaces
- Grand total number of parking spaces required = eighteen (18) spaces

Their expected parking demand details the following:

- Doctor Demand:
 - There will be up to four (4) doctors in the medical offices, none of them full time. The doctors at Berkeley Orthodontics have two (2) other locations, Orinda and Berkeley, and will therefore spend only thirty (30%) percent of their time at this location. The applicant is proposing to allocate one (1) full time parking space for the doctors.
- Staff Demand:
 - At the other dental offices, approximately half the staff arrives to work with a car that needs to be parked. The remaining staff arrives by other means including by public transit, car pool, bicycle, and on foot. The applicant expects staff transportation at 1600 Solano Avenue will follow the same pattern. A staff of eight (8) would requires four (4) parking spaces.
- Patient Demand:
 - The patient load varies from day to day and the duration of stay varies depending on the nature of their visit. The applicant anticipates that for any given hour the average demand for patients will not exceed six (6) parking spaces.

The applicant indicated that they expect a total parking demand of eleven (11) spaces for the dental offices bases on this survey.

Proposed Parking

The applicant has proposed 4,000 square feet of medical office located on the first and second floor. Approximately 1,200 square feet of first floor retail is proposed. A partially underground, off-street parking facility is proposed to accommodate on-site parking. The parking level is proposed to be accessed from Ordway Street.

Based on the size of the building, the applicant must provide 20 parking spaces total. Section 20.28.040 (B) (2) allows up to 1,500 sq. ft. of ground floor retail space to be exempted from off-street parking calculation requirements. The applicant has proposed twenty four parking spaces total. Eleven (11) self-park spaces are proposed and thirteen (13) tandem valet spaces are proposed.

Floor Area Ratio

The existing building has an FAR of .3. The latest proposal has an FAR of 1.25, which fits the City requirement of 1.25 for the SC-Solano Commercial Zone. The FAR has been reduced from 1.5 (7,665 square feet) in the 2010 Proposal to 1.25 (6,410 sq. ft. building/5,127 sq. ft. lot) in the 2012 Proposal.

Daylight Plane

The property located immediately behind the subject site, 909 Ordway, is zoned SC-Solano Commercial. Since the subject site does not abut a residential zone, daylight plane requirements are not an issue. However, it is worth noting that the applicant has designed the rear of the building to provide for daylight to the neighboring property and will also preserve a mature oak tree on-site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Staff anticipates that the proposed project can be determined as categorically exempt from the requirements of California Environmental Quality Act per Section 15332, "In-Fill Development Projects" because the project meets the following conditions:

- a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.
- b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
- c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.
- d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.
- e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The CEQA Guidelines were amended in 2009 and eliminated parking questions from Appendix G of the CEQA checklist. This was the result of case law which distinguished the social impact of inadequate parking from adverse environmental impacts (San Franciscans Upholding the

Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco). The case concluded that parking impacts are not an impact pursuant to CEQA.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Parking Survey
2. Meeting Minutes from September 14, 2010 P&Z Hearing
3. Project Plans received May 23, 2012