

City of Albany
Planning and Zoning Commission
Staff Report

Meeting Date: July 22, 2008

Prepared by: _____

Agenda Item: 6c

Reviewed by: _____

Subject: 845 Cleveland. Planning Application 06-078. Lot Line Adjustment. Planned Unit Development. Design Review.

Applicant/
Owner: Debo Sodipo with Carona Engineers, Inc.

Recommendation

Approve:

- A. Amendments to the Planned Unit Development allowing building height up to 38' in height measured from natural grade;
- B. Amendments to Design Review approval to allow the acoustical windows as constructed;
- C. Amendments to Design Review to allow tongue and grove wood siding in lieu of corrugated metal siding wrapping the top story, front elevation, rear elevation, and on the side bay windows, subject to staff analysis that water intrusion and rapid weatherization issues cannot be resolved in an aesthetic and cost effective manner.

Project Description

On April 24, 2007, the applicant received Planning and Zoning Commission approval for a Lot Line Adjustment, Planned Unit Development, and Design Review approval for construction of four residential units. The subject property is located at the corner of Cleveland and Solano Avenue. The units are of a townhouse-style with three stories above a garage. The original staff report and Notice of Action are attached.

The maximum height of the structures were approved at 36'; however, during construction the buildings resulted in a height of approximately 37'-6". The hearing is a continuation of previously scheduled hearings to consider an amendment to the PUD allowing the increase in height. The applicant also is asking for approval of changes to window trim and changes to exterior building material on the bay windows.

On July 8, 2008, the Commission opened the public hearing and discussed proposed changes to the building height and design review, and continued the hearing to July 22, 2008. Revised plans were received on Friday July 18, 2008.

Discussion

Building Height

The City's zoning ordinance specifically states that building height is measured from natural grade to the top of the roof. The project was approved with a PUD allowing building height up to 36 feet. Actual construction has resulted in building height ranging from 36' 6" to 38'. A variation of two feet in building height on a project of this size is considered by staff to be an important matter. The two-foot increase in height, however, does not appear to have a significant impact on views from neighboring properties, and the overall massing of the building will not change. The height of the buildings was not a substantial issue during the course of the approval process. The alternative of requiring that the existing construction to be removed and site re-graded, would impose an expense on the application that out of proportion to the impacts of the additional height of the buildings. Therefore, staff recommended that adding an additional special condition J-12 that states that the buildings may have a height of 38 feet above natural grade modify the findings and conditions of approval.

Front Elevation Windows

Attached in the staff report associated with the original approval is the acoustical report that was submitted as part of the project approval. Item 10.d and 10.e in the report requires acoustical windows on the Solano Avenue element.

Substitution of Horizontal Wood Siding and Stucco for Corrugated Metal Siding

Due to concerns about water intrusion issues and rapid weatherization, the applicant is requesting permission to substitute horizontal wood siding for the corrugated metal siding originally approved by the Commission. The metal siding was originally approved on around the top of each building on all three elevations, on the side bay windows, around the front elevation garage door, and on the rear elevation around the sliding door into the main floor.

Staff believes that the corrugated metal siding was an important design element that accented the contemporary design and was appropriate for the site given its location across from railroad tracks and Interstate 80. Unfortunately, staff has not had the opportunity to research particular siding products or construction techniques that might be available to address water intrusion and rapid weatherization concerns. Ultimately it is important that water intrusion issues be avoided. However, if the water issues can be dealt with, then staff recommends that the design as originally approved should be retained. Regardless of the material, staff believes that any location where corrugated metal was originally approved should be replaced with wood siding rather than stucco. Given the status of construction, it is likely a decision on this matter will need to be made during the Commission's August recess. The Commission could either make a final decision, or provide general direction and delegate to staff final approval of design review amendments.

Attachments:

1. Staff Report and Plans for April 24, 2007 Commission Meeting (including acoustical report)
2. Notice of Action
3. Proposed revised plans received July 18, 2008