

CITY OF CALISTOGA

STAFF REPORT

TO: CHAIRMAN MANFREDI AND MEMBERS OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: ERIK V. LUNDQUIST, SENIOR PLANNER

MEETING DATE: JULY 25, 2012

SUBJECT: CONCEPTUAL DESIGN REVIEW (CDR 2012-02) – 611
WASHINGTON STREET – CALISTOGA AFFORDABLE
HOUSING

REQUEST

Review of conceptual plans (CDR 2012-02) to construct an 18-unit affordable housing project located at 611 Washington Street (APN 011-260-027) within the “R-3”, Residential/Professional Office Zoning District. The applicant is Calistoga Affordable Housing on behalf of the property owner, Charles Gonzalez.

PURPOSE OF REVIEW

This Conceptual Design Review is being presented to the Planning Commission for the purpose of providing a forum for asking questions and offering comments early in the development review process. This process will help the Planning Commission to understand the evolution of the project and will keep the Commissioners abreast of ideas that are being considered as the project evolves. This process also provides an opportunity for the Commission and staff to provide comments, input and suggestions to the applicant before significant funds have been expended in plan development.

PROJECT SETTING AND DESCRIPTION

The subject site is located at 611 Washington Street and is within a High Density Residential land use designation and the Lower Washington Character Area as described in the General Plan. The property is zoned for high density housing and professional office uses (“R3”, Residential/Professional Office). The site is approximately 29,621 square feet (0.68 acres) in size and is currently vacant. Development in the vicinity of the subject site consists of a wide variety of land uses, including commercial services, a medical clinic, a church, single- and multi-family residential, warehousing and public facilities.

30 Calistoga Affordable Housing is contemplating acquiring the property from the
31 owner, Charles Gonzalez and developing an 18-unit affordable housing project.
32 The residential units would consist of two and three story stacked flats. The 8
33 units contained in the three-story structures would include enclosed tandem
34 parking on the ground level. Three of these units would be 3-bedroom units.
35 Parking for the 10 units contained in the stacked two-story units would be
36 adjacent to the structures.

37

38 **BACKGROUND**

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40 The Planning Commission and City Council have previously considered
41 development on this property. On May 3, 2005 a Growth Management Allocation
42 (GMA 2005-24) was granted by the City Council and then on July 13, 2005 the
43 Planning Commission adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration and approved a
44 Variance, Conditional Use Permit and Design Review allowing the establishment
45 of a 12-unit apartment complex on the property.

46

47 Subsequent to these approvals, the Applicant (Rossi Development) submitted
48 Building Permit application No. 4206 (also see 4423, 4255 and 4254) on January
49 30, 2006 for the development of the apartment units. The Building Permit
50 application was ministerial reviewed for compliance by the Planning and Building
51 Department, which included several rounds of building review along with the
52 reviews by the California Department of Fish and Game¹. As a result of this
53 complex review, the previously approved one-year time frames were not
54 adequate to process and issue the building permit and extensions were
55 requested in order to allow additional time to process these Building Permits.
56 The Growth Management Allocation (GMA 2005-24) was administratively
57 extended to May 3, 2007 and the Planning Commission adopted Resolution
58 2006-39 granting a one-year time extension for Variance (VA 2004-07),
59 Conditional Use Permit (U 2004-12) and Design Review (DR 2004-07) to
60 September 30, 2007.

61

62 On September 21, 2006 the Planning and Building Department was prepared to
63 issue the Building Permits and Rossi Development was notified that upon
64 payment of the applicable fees the permits would be issued. However, due to an
65 assortment of concerns, at varying degrees, Rossi Development neglected to pull
66 the Building Permits and all of the entitlements expired.

67

68 Subsequent to the expirations, the Rossi Development submitted a Conceptual
69 Design Review of the same project in order to discuss the emerging policy
70 direction of the Lower Washington Character Area that resulted during

¹ It is anticipated that this project will also warranted review by the California Department of Fish and Game, who has already expressed, in a telephone conversation on July 6, 2012, an interest in mitigating the project's impacts on the Napa River.

71 preparation of the City's Urban Design Plan, which occurred subsequent to the
72 expiration of the previously approved project. The Planning Commission
73 considered the matter at their regular meeting of September 26, 2007. An
74 excerpt of the Planning Commission meeting minutes of September 26, 2012 are
75 provided in Attachment No. 3 to this report.

76
77 On March 20, 2012 the City Council amended the General Plan implementing the
78 Urban Design Character Areas. The project property is now within the Lower
79 Washington Character area as identified on Figure LU-7 in the General Plan
80 Land Use Element.

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82 **STAFF ANALYSIS**

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84 **A. GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY**

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86 High Density Residential Land Use Designation: This property is within the High
87 Density Residential/Office General Plan Land Use Designation. Allowed uses are
88 multi-family housing, including dedicated affordable housing and senior housing
89 and offices. The following uses may also be permitted in this designation if they
90 conform to all relevant General Plan policies: convalescent care, community care
91 and congregate care; visitor accommodations other than bed-and-breakfast
92 units, but only where the Visitor Accommodation Overlay District is applied; bed-
93 and-breakfast units; live work units and home occupations; and houses of
94 worship. The proposed multi-family use is an allowed use.

95
96 Additionally, the High Density Residential allows ten (10) to twenty (20) dwelling
97 units per gross acre or one (1) unit per 1,000 square feet if provided units are
98 designated affordable. Since dedicated affordable housing units are proposed
99 the General Plan would allow a maximum of 29 dwelling units on the property.
100 The proposed 18 units is less than the maximum allowed.

101
102 Lower Washington Character Area: The Land Use Element of the City's General
103 Plan applies Character Areas to areas that will play an integral role in the quality of
104 life and economic vitality of Calistoga. The Character Areas provide guidance for
105 development to ensure that the values and vision of the community are realized
106 and that Calistoga's identity as a small town is preserved. This is achieved
107 through "land use considerations", "development and design considerations" and
108 "connectivity considerations". These considerations are identified on Pages LU-51
109 through LU-53 of the General Plan (Attachment No. 5). Several of the key
110 considerations are summarized below:

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115 *Land Use Considerations*

116

117 • *Land uses in this area should primarily serve local needs, such as*
118 *resident-serving uses, commercial storage, office space, artist studios and*
119 *restaurant uses.*

120

121 • *Development of new rental housing and “live-work” space is encouraged.*

122

123 • *Mixed use development is strongly encouraged.*

124

125 • *Current parking standards should be evaluated to minimize the impact of*
126 *parking requirements on new development and to reduce redundant*
127 *parking.*

128

129 *Development and Design Consideration*

130

131 • *Architecture should be creative and timeless in design and feature high*
132 *quality materials such as brick, sheet metal, stucco and true wood vertical*
133 *siding.*

134

135 • *New development should embrace the Napa River as an open space,*
136 *recreational and social resource. Where appropriate, new development*
137 *should provide design orientation towards the river and accommodate*
138 *river access. River access shall only be provided where there is*
139 *demonstrable public benefit and shall be designed to respect the private*
140 *property rights single-family residences.*

141

142 • *Development along Washington Street shall provide for streetscape*
143 *improvements, including installation of street trees and effective traffic*
144 *calming elements.*

145

146 *Connectivity Considerations*

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148 • *Consider establishing public access along the Napa River, where*
149 *appropriate and with exception to developed single-family residences, in*
150 *conjunction with major development proposals or with the willing*
151 *cooperation of private property owners. Public access shall be designed*
152 *in consideration of the security and privacy of adjacent residences.*

153

154 The Planning Commission should discuss these Character Area considerations
155 and provide feedback to the Applicant whether or not this proposed affordable
156 housing project is consistent with the Character Area development guidelines.
157 Where the Planning Commission notes inconsistency, the Planning Commission
158 may suggest design modifications. For example, the Planning Commission may
159 suggest the project provide street orientation for greater pedestrian connectivity,
160 provide orientation toward the Napa River and provide opportunity for future
161 commercial use(s)².

162
163 Housing Element – Lower Washington Street In-Fill Sites (G.P. H-83): The
164 project property is identified as a potential housing site in the General Plan
165 Housing Element. The project site is identified (Table H-53) has potentially
166 suitable for 12 affordable dwelling units (4 very low, 4 low income and 4 medium
167 income units). The proposed 18 unit would exceed the projected development
168 potential identified in the Housing Element. Additionally, the Applicant has noted
169 that the resident income levels will range between 40 to 80% of the average
170 medium income, which are very low and low incomes.

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172 **B. MUNICIPAL CODE COMPLIANCE**

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174 R-3, Residential/Professional Office District: The project property is within the
175 “R3” Residential/Professional Office Zoning District. The purpose and intent of
176 the “R3” Zoning District is to promote housing while encouraging compatible
177 commercial establishment. Section 17.19.010 CMC states,

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179 *“The intent of the R-3/professional office district is to increase the*
180 *diversity and affordability of housing stock in Calistoga by providing*
181 *housing close to the downtown services and the convenient*
182 *accessibility to light professional office uses for residents and the*
183 *businesses located in the downtown, while ensuring that care is*
184 *taken to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods.”*

185
186 In addition to the land use provisions, the “R3” District provides specific
187 development standards, which are as follows:

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611 Washington Street (APN 011-260-027)	
Development Criteria	“R3” Residential Professional/Office Zoning District Standards
Allowed Uses	Single-family dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes (Section 17.19.020(A) CMC)

² A mixed use project is strongly encouraged but not required. Structures orientated toward the street could be designed in a fashion that could allow future commercial opportunity.

Uses Permitted w/ Use Permit	Multi-family Dwellings, Churches, Professional Offices (Section 17.19.020(A) CMC)
Density	No more than one dwelling unit for each 2,000 square feet of net land area, except that developments that meet the City's affordable housing programs may have one dwelling unit for each 1,000 square feet of net land.
Parking Requirements	Section 17.36 CMC (2 per unit) 36 spaces required.
Min Lot Size	5,000 - 7,000 square feet
Min Lot Width	50 - 70 feet
Principal Use Min Yard Requirements	15' Front Yard 50' from Centerline of Washington Street 5' Side Yard Interior 35' Napa River Setback
Max Building Height	25 ft
Max Lot Coverage	40%

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As proposed, this project will not meet all of the aforementioned development standards. The three story structures would exceed 25 feet in height and the structures are located 10 feet from the front property line rather than the required 15 feet. The Code requires 36 parking spaces and only 30 are proposed with some in a tandem configuration. As such, variance is warranted to allow a reduced front yard, a reduced street centerline setback, reduction in parking (i.e. number and tandem configuration)³ and to exceed the height limitation. Additionally, it is likely that a variance may be warranted to exceed the maximum lot coverage.

As an alternative to the applicant requesting and the Planning Commission considering the various Variances, the Planning Commission may find that a Planned Development District is more appropriate because departures from the R3 District are desirable to achieve the policy direction of the General Plan. The Planned Development would provide unique development standards that would allow design flexibility.

Design Review: This development will ultimately be reviewed to determine whether the proposed development attains the design review guidelines set forth in Section 17.06.010 of the Calistoga Municipal Code. As proposed, the two buildings would be orientated on the site in a fashion that is perpendicular to Washington Street. The structures have similar textures and design elements, although, it is unclear the exact material types.

³ During the Housing Element Update the Housing Committee discussed its support for reduction in parking requirements for affordable housing projects.

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214 As noted, the General Plan Lower Washington Character Area mandates that the
215 “*Architecture should be creative and timeless in design and feature high quality*
216 *materials such as brick, sheet metal, stucco and true wood vertical siding.*” The
217 design is somewhat repetitive and bland. Balconies and cantilevered kitchens
218 help to elevate this somewhat, however, the project could be easily redesigned
219 by providing street orientation and using high quality materials to further enhance
220 the property and the surrounding neighborhood. The Planning Commission
221 should further discuss the overall merits of the site design, site layout and
222 architecture and offer comments related to matters that would enhance the
223 overall appearance of the property through the architectural design.

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225 **C. Public/Private Utilities and Services**

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227 Growth Management Allocation: The property proposes to connect to both the
228 City’s water and sewer service. The Standardized Use Table for the Resource
229 Management System states that multi-family units with one or two bedrooms may
230 be allocated .382 acre feet of water per year per unit and .213 acre feet of
231 wastewater per year per unit. Three bedroom units may be allocated 0.493 acre
232 feet of water per year per unit and 0.308 acre feet of wastewater per year per
233 unit. The total water and wastewater capacity needed for this project is 7.209
234 ac-ft/year of water and 4.119 ac-ft/year of wastewater. A Growth Management
235 Allocation must be awarded and prior to building permit issuance or at
236 occupancy, the applicant will be required to pay the water and wastewater
237 service connection fee at the rate in affect at the time the building permit is
238 issued or at occupancy. Currently, the water service connection fee is \$33,546
239 per ac-ft of water use and the wastewater service connection fee is \$97,942 per
240 annual acre-feet of wastewater use. Therefore, the water connection rate is
241 estimated to be approximately \$241,833.11 and the wastewater rate is estimated
242 to be approximately \$403,423.10.

243

244 Water and Sanitary Sewer Connection: The City’s existing water mainline along
245 Washington Street is adequate to serve the parcel with water. The Public Works
246 Department has indicated that the existing sewer mainline has inadequate
247 elevations to maintain and divert sewage away from the developments toward
248 the treatment facility. Inadequate sewage flow may potentially cause
249 environmental impacts to this development and the surrounding developments.
250 The Public Works Department has further indicated that finished floor elevations
251 will need to be raised one foot above the crown of Washington Street to achieve
252 gravity flow sewer or a private lift station with a back up alarm may be warranted
253 in order to mitigate the potential impacts of connecting to the existing sewer
254 mainline. The applicant will need to demonstrate that the necessary flows can be
255 maintained for the sewage disposal system.

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257 Fire Suppression System: The Fire Department has commented on the
258 proposed project noting that the development will require fire sprinklers
259 throughout the development. The three story structures will require standpipes.
260 Back flow devices will also be required to prevent cross contamination. The
261 public water supply (i.e. flow and pressure) is adequate to service these needs
262 provided no pressure loss occurs due to these added apparatus. Pressure loss
263 may result in the need for a booster pump and back up power supply.

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265 **D. Archaeological Resources**

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267 Properties in the vicinity of the Napa River are known to contain significant
268 archaeological resources. An archaeological study will be required to determine
269 the impacts to archaeological resources. Additionally, the Northwest Information
270 Center as submitted a letter indicating the same. The previously adopted Mitigated
271 Negative Declaration determined that potential impacts to archaeological resource
272 could be mitigated.

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274 **E. Recreation / Quality of Life**

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276 The Community Identity Element of the 2003 General Plan Update contains
277 several policy statements to encourage and help create a strong sense of
278 community for Calistoga. Specifically, Pages CI-20 through CI-24 of the 2003
279 General Plan Update includes several policies and or actions regarding
280 pedestrian and/or amenities. This policies and actions are listed below.

281

282 *Page CI-21, P4; "New developments should provide accessible public and*
283 *semi-public areas and efficient and inviting pedestrian and bicycle*
284 *connections to existing Calistoga streets."*

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286 *Page CI-21, P5; "Neighborhood circulation patterns should encourage*
287 *walking and cycling."*

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289 *Page CI-21, A1; "Review development for characteristics that affect the*
290 *image of the community including, but not limited to, landscape context,*
291 *architecture, land uses, scale and intensity of uses relative to the historic*
292 *standards."*

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294 *Page CI-23, P8; "The development of pedestrian amenities within the*
295 *downtown area shall be encouraged."*

296

297 Thus, as indicated in the 2003 General Plan Update, the rear portion of the
298 properties located along the Napa River are an appropriate location to provide
299 these pedestrian amenities. Given this location, a pathway or trail should be

300 developed along the entire stretch of the Napa River located within the City limits.
301 The trail would provide connectivity to downtown and create an educational
302 environment for the citizens and tourists of Calistoga. In order to pursue this
303 vision for the City properties along the river should provide the necessary
304 easement needed to accommodate such a trail. In this particular case, the
305 Planning Commission should consider whether the developer should be required
306 to provide a pedestrian access easement along the riverbank or provide open
307 space area(s) for gathering. Easements upstream and downstream have been
308 secured for the future construction of a river trail.

309

310 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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312 A neighboring property owner, Dan Farris provided verbal comments to the
313 Planning and Building Department. Mr. Farris expressed several items of
314 concern, as summarized below:

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- 316 • Concerned about the tandem parking. Mr. Farris thinks that only
317 one space will be used the remaining area will be storage.
- 318 • Concerned regarding the number of parking spaces. It seems to
319 few and providing handicap parking will further reduce the spaces
320 possible.
- 321 • Concerned that the project will impact on-street parking in the area
322 where on-street parking is already congested.
- 323 • Thinks that the project should include some commercial/mixed use.
- 324 • Architecture not compatible with the neighborhood
- 325 • Does not like the Washington Street elevation.

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ENTITLEMENTS

328 Depending upon the Planning Commission's direction, entitlements required for
329 approval of the project may include: (A) rezoning of the project site to a Planned
330 Development District, including preparation of preliminary and final development
331 plans for the site; (B) Variances, (C) Conditional Use Permit, and (D) Design
332 Review approval.

333 Staff would support concurrent processing of the above entitlements in the
334 interest of facilitating expeditious review of the project.

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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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338 It is anticipated that an Initial Study and Negative Declaration will be prepared
339 and circulated to the State Clearinghouse for review upon receipt of a formal
340 application. However, this Conceptual Design Review does not warrant review
341 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as no approvals or
342 entitlements have been requested or will be granted.

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RECOMMENDATION

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346 Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the conceptual site plan,
347 receive comments from the applicant and the public, and provide preliminary
348 comments to the applicant and staff on the following as well as other issues of
349 Commission concern.

350

351 1. Is the project consistent with the Lower Washington Character Area as
352 described in the General Plan? If not, what design modifications would
353 ensure consistency?

354

355 2. Does the project warrant rezoning to a Planned Development in order to
356 create unique development standards?

357

358 3. The Planning Commission should further discuss the overall merits of the
359 site design, site layout and architecture and offer comments related to
360 matters that would enhance the overall appearance of the property
361 through the architectural design.

362

363 4. Does the project warrant the dedication of a public pedestrian access
364 easement along the Napa River bank or provision for usable open space?

365

366 It should be noted that the Planning Commission comments during conceptual
367 design review are advisory only and should not be considered by the applicant to
368 be requirements or an endorsement of the project until a complete application is
369 considered through the formal review process.

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ATTACHMENTS

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373

1. Vicinity Map

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2. Project Description dated June 15, 2012

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3. Planning Commission Meeting Minute Excerpt September 26, 2007

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4. General Plan Land Use Map, Figure LU-4 and High Density Residential
Land Use Designation Text

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5. General Plan Character Area Overlay Districts Map, Figure LU-7 and
Lower Washington Character Area Text

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6. R-3, residential/Professional Office Zoning District (Chapter 17.19 CMC)

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7. 2012 Napa County Annual Income Limits

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8. Northwest Information center letter dated July 2, 2012

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9. Project Plans (Site Plans/Floor Plans and Elevations)

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