

MINUTES
CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION
February 23, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom

Chair Cooper called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He read a special message concerning the conduct of the virtual meeting in accordance with provisions related to COVID-19.

A. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Chair Scott Cooper, Commissioners Doug Allan, Rick Kaiser, and Michael Vaughn. Commissioners absent: Vice Chair Tim Wilkes. Staff present: Planning and Building Director Jeff Mitchem, Associate Planner Samantha Thomas and Planning Secretary Claudia Aceves.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

D. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA

The meeting agenda was adopted as presented.

E. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

Associate Planner Thomas reports that all comments received were forwarded to Commissioners and posted on the website.

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the January 26, 2022 meeting.

The consent calendar was adopted with corrections unanimously.

G. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Three-unit Multifamily Residence at 1514 Washington Street – Design Review DR 2020-2: Consideration of a design review application for the construction of a three-unit multifamily residence and related improvements at 1514 Washington Street (APN 011-202-011). This proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Associate Planner Thomas presents the staff report providing an overview of the zoning and permitted uses. She describes the proposed project scope, including two three-bedroom units and one 4-bedroom unit with private open space for each unit, as well as second story balconies for two units. She provides details on the landscaping plan, required parking spaces, and trash enclosure location, as well as architectural features including windows, doors, roofing, and other finishes. Thomas provides a history of the previous application approvals from 2018 and the subsequent appeal denied by the City Council and recommendation to return to the Planning

Commission. She notes that the architect submitted the current proposal after the comments received from Planning Commission and City Council. She provides an overview of the General Plan policies, including Land Use, Housing Element, and development standards including setbacks, height limitations, open space and parking requirements, which she notes are consistent with the proposed project and recommends approval based on those findings.

Commissioner Vaughn asks if the exterior of the building was changed from the original approval in 2018 and Associate Planner Thomas says the relocated decks were the only change.

Commissioner Allan asks if there is a requirement in parking space size as the back parking corner seems compact and wonders about ingress and egress space.

Director Mitchem confirms that the proposed design is in compliance with development standards, including the parking and trash enclosure locations, noting that it is preferred those kinds of activities be out of public view.

Commissioner Allan asks if the Planning Commission has authority to regulate usage of front decks and Associate Planner Thomas responds it's regulated through code enforcement.

Commissioner Kaiser asks for clarification on front setbacks as it appears greater than 15 feet and Associate Planner Thomas confirms the 15-foot setback is accurate from front and rear.

Commissioner Kaiser comments on the architectural style not resembling that of Napa Valley or Calistoga and wonders if it can be changed. Associate Planner Thomas responds that the developer was trying to match the Holy Assumption Monastery across the street.

In response to **Commissioner Kaiser's** setback question, project architect **David Kesler** confirms the building will be roughly 30 feet from the curb and will include a lot of greenery as the renderings show.

Commissioner Allan comments that the design is missing the architectural detail to match the Monastery and without that attention to detail the building just looks like a brown façade, but says he understands that detail costs more.

Mr. Kesler describes the decorative details that he incorporated into the design including the posts, beams, siding and railings, and explains that it also matches many structures like wineries throughout Napa Valley.

Commissioner Allan asks Mr. Kesler if he would be open to doing something with a more distinct connection to the monastery without ruining the overall architecture.

Mr. Kesler responds he's happy to work with Planning staff to pick up additional detail and is in agreement with the developers.

Chair Cooper comments that the project was approved in 2018 and on appeal was reviewed by City Council and denied, adding that the applicant came back with revisions made to most, if not all, of the neighbor's concerns so after three years, hopes to make a decision at this meeting.

Chair Cooper opens the public hearing and reminds the public to keep comments to three minutes.

During public comment, **Donna Higgins** comments that there were several violations in the previous design that was appealed. She adds that she doesn't think the barn look matches the residential neighborhood it is in and asks for explanation on open space availability related to the parking and trash enclosure and privacy. She asks how tenants will access front doors.

Norene Moses expresses her concern with the excessive street parking and the unsafe turn at the corner of Washington and Fourth Street. She asks who is responsible for doing code enforcement.

Jeff Stambor thinks the design stands out too much compared to the neighboring homes and thinks it would be nice to blend in more. He comments that he shares the same concerns previously mentioned.

Ms. Higgins asks for clarification on the open space and lighting under parking.

Mr. Kesler clarifies that there are no decks in the front, only individual landings into the building and mentions the walkway to access the buildings from the parking lot. He addresses the trash enclosure location, fencing and recessed lighting under second story.

Commissioner Allan comments that it is good that the design offers another access to building other than the front door.

Director Mitchem comments that project conditions need to be consistent with legally mandated findings, noting that stylistic preferences is not a legally mandated finding and offers a possible condition of approval. Referring to street access, he notes that the project has met standards and safety measures to access street network and would not be supportive of having the architect re-orient the proposed project.

Chair Cooper comments that he thinks a condition is a good compromise with certain things to be dealt with at a staff level.

Commissioner Allan notes that the open space question from Ms. Higgins was not addressed. Associate Planner Thomas adds that it is in relation to the number of parking spaces and the trash enclosure at unit A.

Mr. Kesler responds that he worked with consultant planner Justin Shiu to create a private courtyard space, noting that the trash bins are in the rear yard with covered fencing.

Commissioner Allan comments that the owners have a right to develop the property according to its zoning and have worked with staff on the scope of the project. He believes a balance has been struck with the exception of wanting to see the architectural detail more closely tied to the Monastery.

Commissioner Kaiser agrees that a lot of changes have been made to make the project acceptable and asks for clarification that it would be between staff and the developers if there were any modifications to the exterior design.

Director Mitchem seeing the consensus for the architect to improve the exterior design to match the Monastery proposes a condition of approval: the applicant shall work with the Planning and Building Department via administrative design review procedures to explore additional design detail referencing local vernacular such as the Holy Assumption Monastery to better comply with design guidelines B4, C4 and F1.

Chair Cooper and **Commissioner Kaiser** agree with the proposed condition.

Mr. Kesler is agreeable to the condition noting he'll work with planning staff to choose the design wisely.

Commissioner Vaughn agrees with commissioners noting that this will become a busy street.

Chair Cooper reopens the public hearing.

Ms. Higgins clarifies that Ms. Moses did not mean to re-orient the building to address the parking and ingress, egress issue. She also asks for clarification on how the tenants will access their back doors from the parking lot.

Ms. Moses clarifies that she was referring to street parking that causes a blind turn from Fourth Street to Washington Street adding that it's up to the city to mitigate that danger. She agrees that the building should resembled the Monastery more and again asks who is responsible for code enforcement of the balconies.

Chair Cooper closes the public hearing. He adds that he would think code enforcement would be complaint driven to some degree.

Associate Planner Thomas confirms that those requirements are included in the property CC&Rs and is communicated with tenants.

Commissioner Allan wonders if the design renderings were old showing porches, as he understood they were eliminated and the only thing at the front would be the stoop and landscaping and Associate Planner Thomas confirms.

Commissioner Vaughn says that in looking at the plans, there are back doors to each unit.

Mr. Kesler confirms that there is a side yard to access the back doors to each unit.

Chair Cooper regarding parking comments that there are two parking spaces per unit noting that it's hard to control the city parking.

Commissioner Kaiser adds that he thinks street parking is an issue with or without the construction of this building but thinks it can be addressed.

Director Mitchem responds that is a challenge presently and several departments are addressing those safety concerns. He comments that he'll commit to studying that section and resolve accordingly.

A motion by **Commissioner Allan** that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution approving Design Review DR2022-2 for a three-unit multi-family residence and related improvements at 1514 Washington Street with conditions as amended is seconded by **Commissioner Vaughn** and approved unanimously (4-0).

H. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Mitchem provides a Housing Element update including the upcoming community engagement schedule.

I. MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSIONERS

Discussion ensues related to water pumping into the Napa River from a residential project on Cedar Street, which Director Mitchem says he will investigate.

J. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from **Chair Cooper** that is adopted unanimously (4-0), the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Claudia Aceves, Secretary