

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA
Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number
H.L.C. 05/04/05 Item 5.a.2.

File Number
PDC04-029

Application Type
Planned Development Zoning

Council District
7

Planning Area
South San Jose

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
445-05-011,-012

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completed by: Mike Enderby

Location: North side of Curtner Avenue Between Monterey Road and Little Orchard Street (General Electric Plant)

Gross Acreage: 55.1 Net Acreage: 55.1 Net Density: N/A

Existing Zoning: LI-Light Industrial & HI-Heavy Industrial Existing Uses: Industrial (General Electric facility)

Proposed Zoning: A(PD) Planned Development Proposed Use: Retail Commercial Center

GENERAL PLAN

Completed by: ME

Existing Land Use/Transportation Diagram Designations
Regional Commercial

Project Conformance:
 Yes No
 See Analysis and Recommendations

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

Completed by: ME

North:	Industrial	IP-Industrial Park, HI-Heavy Industrial
East:	Commercial	A(PD) Planned Development, CG-Commercial General
South:	Cemetery	A(PD) Planned Development
West:	Residential	R-1-8 Residence, RM-H & RM- Multiple Residence

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Completed by: ME

Environmental Impact Report found complete (Pending)
 Negative Declaration circulated on
 Negative Declaration adopted on

Exempt
 Environmental Review Incomplete

FILE HISTORY

Completed by: ME

Annexation Title: Monterey Park No. 1

Date: 6/18/54

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

Recommend Approval Date _____
 Recommend Approval with Conditions
 Recommend Denial

Approved by: _____

CURRENT OWNER	DEVELOPER/CONTACT	ARCHITECT
General Electric Company 175 Curtner Avenue San Jose, CA 95125	Linda Callon Berliner-Cohen 10 Almaden Avenue, Suite 1100 San Jose, CA 95113	Kenneth Rodrigues & Partners, Inc. 10 S. Third Street, Suite 400 San Jose, CA 95113

PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED

Completed by: ME

None

Other Departments and Agencies

None

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

N/A

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND

The subject site consists of 55.1 gross acres and is home to an existing General Electric facility located on the north side of Curtner Avenue between Monterey Road and Little Orchard Street. The existing facility contains approximately 781,150 square feet of office and industrial floor area contained in 11 buildings. The site is generally flat and is fully developed with buildings, parking lots and landscaping. One of the structures on the site, the 1948 motor plant building (Building E), has been identified as a Historic Resource.

The project proposes to rezone the site from Light and Heavy Industrial to A(PD) Planned Development to allow development of retail commercial uses. A General Plan Amendment was recently approved for the project site in December of 2003 to change the land use designation from Industrial Park and Heavy Industrial to Combined Industrial/Commercial, to accommodate commercial development on the property.

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the General Plan Amendment that addressed the environmental effects of the proposed land use change and provided the basis for much of the analysis in the EIR for the subject rezoning.

The proposed Planned Development Rezoning is proposed to allow development of an approximately 646,000 square foot shopping center on the site. Specific tenants are not known at this time. However, a conceptual site plan showing anticipated layout of the shopping center has been prepared which would include several major anchor tenants, as well as medium to small retail users. Commercial development could include a range of uses as permitted within the CG-Commercial General District set forth in the City's Zoning Ordinance, such as grocery stores, big-box retail stores, home improvement centers, food service establishments, and movie theaters.

The project proposes to retain the office portion of the historically significant 1948 motor plant building. The office consists of an approximately 17,000 square foot, two-story structure that comprises the front portion of the motor plant. The office is architecturally and structurally independent of the rear warehouse portion of the building, which would be demolished under the current proposal.

HISTORIC RESOURCES DESCRIPTION

A historic report, entitled "Historic Evaluation Report- General Electric Plant," has been completed by Ward Hill, M.A. in June 2003 (revised August 2003) and is included in the Draft EIR. Please refer to DEIR for

complete description. The report evaluated the 15 existing structures on the site as noted in the table below. The existing structures were built between 1948 and 1970.

Existing Buildings Use and Size - GE Facility		
Building	Existing Use	Approximate Size (sq. ft.)
A	Vacant	96,300
B	Maintenance/vacant	99,100
C	Shipping/receiving; vacant	55,800
E	Former motor plant bldg	170,000
(E1)	Office/vacant	(17,000)
(E2)	Warehouse	(153,000)
F	Office; cafeteria	17,200
H	Storage; office	31,100
J	Office	115,900
K	Vacant	59,700
L	Office; medical clinic; computer support; vacant	95,500
N	Vacant	25,250
BTF	Testing facility	10,750
Haz Mat Bldg	interim storage of hazardous materials	2,100
Other	Storage	650
TOTAL		781,150

The primary structure of interest that was evaluated was the motor plant (Building E). This structure is actually comprised of three separate buildings butted up to each other. The largest structure is a 200 x 600 foot flat-roof metal building that formerly housed the motor plant. A warehouse/loading dock structure was later constructed along the south side of the motor plant. Located to the east and facing Monterey Road is an approximately 17,000 square foot two-story office. The 1948 motor plant office appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C and the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion A as a distinguished example of a Moderne Style industrial building in San Jose. This Moderne Style design is constructed of reinforced concrete framing and concrete block. The entire motor plant building also appears to be eligible for the National Register under Criterion A and the California Register under Criterion 1, for its associations with the post World War II industrial boom in Santa Clara County. The historic evaluation report assigned a numeric tally of 66 points for the motor plant building making the structure eligible for listing on the City's Historic Resources Inventory as a Structure of Merit.

Most of the other buildings are large metal structures of various sizes and heights. Buildings H, J, K, N and L were built in the 1960's and 1970's and are typified as two-story concrete office buildings. None of these buildings are deemed to have historic significance.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The pending certification of the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) by the Planning Commission is anticipated at the public hearing scheduled for June 6, 2005 to satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

For CEQA purposes, the City has considered resources eligible for or designated as City Landmarks as well as those resources eligible for or listed in the California Register of Historical Resources, the National Register of Historic Places, as the threshold of significance. As previously indicated, the motor plant structure is deemed eligible for the National Register and the California Register. The project proposes the retention of the two-story motor plant office component of this structure and demolition of the warehouse. Based on the conclusions in the EIR, the loss of any portion of the motor plant building is considered a “Significant Impact”. In order for the City Council to approve the Planned Development Rezoning as proposed, they will need to adopt a “statement of overriding considerations”.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The General Electric site was the subject of a recent General Plan Amendment in 2004 (File GP03-07-07). This City Council approved the requested General Plan Amendment, which changed the Land Use Transportation Diagram designation from Industrial Park and Heavy Industrial to Combined Industrial/Commercial. The proposed project conforms to this designation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project proposes to demolish all existing structures except the office component of Building “E” (motor plant building). Please refer to the attached exhibits for more information. The site plan as proposed would be divided into four (4) parts by internal private streets. A slightly curvilinear east-west oriented street is proposed which would connect Monterey Road and Little Orchard Street. A new traffic signal is proposed at the intersection of this private street with Monterey Road. The westerly terminus of this street will align with Perrymont Avenue. Two other proposed streets will connect Curtner Avenue to the new east-west street described above. One of these streets will serve as the primary entrance to the project and will be lined with buildings to create a “main street” appearance. Each of the four “blocks” created by this site plan will contain a number of structures with at the least one large anchor tenant space and well placed parking fields that will appropriately relate to the adjacent retail buildings.

ANALYSIS

The key element with this referral to the Historic Landmarks Commission relates to disposition of the three structural components that comprise the motor plant building. At the onset of the review of this project a number of site design alternatives were carefully evaluated which considered alternatives including 1) full preservation, 2) preservation of the two-story moderne design office component and a large portion of the metal clad motor plant structure, 3) preservation of just the office component, and 4) full demolition. With each of these alternatives, the adaptive reuse constraints were considered with regard to both the physical configuration of the existing structures and in the context of the resulting site orientation.

The location of the existing structure, relatively equal-distant between the north and south property lines, bisects the site in such a manner that creates areas of less than ideal configuration to accommodate the important east-west internal street and appropriately sized areas for both structures and adequately placed and sized parking areas. Numerous alternative site designs were evaluated, including the reuse of the motor plant, all of which, in the opinion of the developer, failed to yield a marketable site plan for either the adjacent new buildings or the preserved structure. The creation of appropriately screened loading areas for a preserved motor plant structure also proved challenging.

Upon reconsideration from early proposals, which called for full demolition, the retention of the existing office component in a context of its physical relationship to other proposed buildings was agreed upon. Further, it was determined that the office component could be marketable in a retail context.

Compatibility with the Existing Neighborhood

Building elevations have not been submitted at this time; however, these will be developed as part of the subsequent Planned Development Permit process. The new structures in the vicinity of the motor plant office building will be designed to compliment the historic structure. Given the large size of the site, the design of structures at the westerly end of the site may not be viewed in the same context as the historic structure, therefore greater variation in building designs may be acceptable.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This proposal was discussed with the community in concept as part of those conducted as part of the General Plan Amendment process. Prior to the formal public hearings in June, a neighborhood meeting will be conducted for this specific project. Noticing for this project will conform to the City's Outreach Policy. Key comments from the neighborhood will be identified and discussed in the staff report for the Planning Commission. Staff has been available to discuss the proposal with members of the public. Additionally, prior to the public hearing, an electronic version of the staff report has been made available online, accessible from the Historic Landmarks Commission agenda, on the Planning Divisions' website.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the Historic Landmarks Commission make recommendations to the Planning Division and Planning Commission regarding the historic issues of the proposed project.