

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. 06/01/05 Item 5.a.2.

File Number
H04-050

Application Type
Site Development Permit

Council District SNI
3 None

Planning Area
Central

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
259-35-024, -025, -047

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completed by: Lee Butler

Location: Southeast corner of Almaden Boulevard and Carlisle Street

Gross Acreage: 1.42

Net Acreage: 1.42

Net Density: 271 DU/AC

Existing Zoning: DC Downtown Primary
Commercial Zoning District

Existing Uses: Two vacant commercial buildings and a paved parking area

Proposed Zoning: DC Downtown Primary
Commercial Zoning District

Proposed Use: Up to 385 single-family attached residential units

GENERAL PLAN

Completed by: FLB

Existing Land Use/Transportation Diagram Designations
Core Area

Project Conformance:
 Yes No
 See Analysis and Recommendations

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

Completed by: FLB

North: Commercial and parking lot

DC Downtown Primary Commercial Zoning District

East: Commercial office and parking garage

DC Downtown Primary Commercial Zoning District

South: Commercial office and hotel

DC Downtown Primary Commercial Zoning District

West: Commercial office and parking garage

DC Downtown Primary Commercial Zoning District

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Completed by: FLB

SEIR pending circulation
 Negative Declaration pending
 Negative Declaration adopted on

Exempt
 Environmental Review Incomplete

FILE HISTORY

Completed by: FLB

Annexation Title: Original City

Date: 3/27/1850

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

Recommend Approval
 Recommend Approval with Conditions
 Recommend Denial

Date _____

Approved by: _____

CURRENT OWNER

KT Properties
Attn: Mark Tersini
21710 Stevens Creek Blvd., Ste. 200
Cupertino, CA 95014

ARCHITECT

Ankrom Moisan Architects
Attn: Kevin Sauser
6720 SW Macadam, Ste. 100
Portland, OR 97219

CONTACT

PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED

Completed by: FLB

None attached.

Other Departments and Agencies

None attached.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

None.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**BACKGROUND**

The subject site consists of 1.42 gross acres at the southeast corner of Almaden Boulevard and Carlisle Street. The property currently has a DC Downtown Primary Commercial Zoning designation and is occupied by two commercial structures and a paved parking lot. The applicant, KT Properties, has filed a Site Development Permit, File No. H04-050, to allow up to 350 single-family attached residential units. It is anticipated that the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report will be heard by the Planning Commission in July and the project will proceed to a Director's Hearing in August.

The site is relatively flat and has frontage on four streets: Santa Clara Street, Carlisle Street, Almaden Boulevard, and Notre Dame Avenue. The site encompasses the entire block with the exception of the southeast corner, where the Hotel De Anza is located. The site is surrounded by commercial, office, and surface parking lot uses.

HISTORIC RESOURCES DESCRIPTION

The former Tropicana Club (formerly the Palomar Ballroom, a circa 1946 dance hall) currently occupies a portion of the site. The structure is located at the northwest corner of the site at 47 Notre Dame Avenue. The site is listed on the Historic Resources Inventory as Eligible for the National Register, as Eligible for the California Register, and as a Candidate City Landmark. The structure's significance is based on its age, its importance as a social resource, and its level of architectural integrity. Specifically, the building is the only remaining representation of the Big Band Era in San Jose. It played a role as an integrated public venue during a period when both public and private facilities were segregated. The building also has played an important role in the preservation of the diverse social and cultural traditions of the Latino community in Santa Clara Valley for approximately 50 years. Evaluations of the structure prepared by the Dill Design Group and by Suzanne Guerra are included in the DSEIR. The applicant is proposing to demolish the Tropicana Club as part of the project.

Adjacent to the subject site at the southeast corner of the block is the De Anza Hotel. The site is listed on the Historic Resources Inventory as a National Register Site/Structure and as a City Landmark Site/Structure. No direct changes to the De Anza Hotel are proposed as part of the project, however, the proposed construction

would impact the visual setting of the De Anza Hotel, which roofline and rooftop sign have dominated the skyline since its construction in 1931. The Historic Resources Report by Suzanne Guerra discusses these impacts in the Draft SEIR.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The approximately 385 residential units are proposed to be built in two phases. The first phase would include approximately 350 residential units in a 22-story structure on the northern two-thirds of the site. As part of the first phase, three levels of sub-grade parking, one level of at-grade parking, and one level of above-grade parking would be constructed. Above the highest parking level would be a podium deck serving as common outdoor open space for the project. The second phase would include approximately 35 residential units at the southwest corner of the site. This phase would again include three levels of sub-grade parking, but the second phase proposes only a six-story structure adjacent to the De Anza Hotel. Each phase would have a commercial component on the ground floor. In the first phase, live/work units are proposed on the Almaden Boulevard ground floor elevation, and in the second phase, ground floor commercial space is proposed. The most recent plan set reduction is attached.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) for the subject project is circulating at this time. Potential significant impacts resulting from the project are as follows: (1) impacts to unknown buried cultural resources including artifacts and human remains, (2) demolition of the former Palomar Ballroom, (3) impacts to the visual setting of the De Anza Hotel, (4) traffic impacts to the regional freeways, (4) noise impacts as a result of the project's proximity to the San Jose International Airport flight path, and (5) temporary noise impacts to the De Anza Hotel. The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report can be accessed online from <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/eir/eir.htm>.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The site has a General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Core Area. The Core Area designation encourages office, retail, service, residential, and entertainment uses in the Downtown Core Area. The General Plan text states, "higher density residential uses at 25+ dwelling units per acre or mixed use development of commercial and residential uses are appropriate" in areas with a Core Area designation. The subject project conforms in that it proposes high density residential uses (greater than 25 du/ac) with ground floor commercial space below.

ANALYSIS

Two issues are of primary concern for the Historic Landmarks Commission. The first is the proposed demolition of the Palomar Ballroom. The second is the visual impact that the proposed development would have on the De Anza Hotel.

Demolition of the Palomar Ballroom

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report addresses the reasoning behind the applicant's request to demolish the Palomar Ballroom. The DSEIR presents various preservation alternatives to the subject proposal

that would either retain the Palomar Ballroom in its current location or move it to other portions of the site.

While it does not reduce the impact of the proposed demolition to less than significant, the applicant is proposing a commemorative mural on the Notre Dame Street elevation. Additionally, a display is proposed at the street level that would pay homage to the activities that took place at the Palomar Ballroom.

Visual Impacts to the De Anza Hotel

To both the north and the south, no tall buildings currently obstruct the view of the historic De Anza Hotel. With implementation of the subject project, views of the De Anza from the north would be completely obstructed. From the south, the skyline behind the De Anza would be dramatically affected. With the implementation of the proposed project, the silhouette of the De Anza and its rooftop signage would no longer dominate the skyline on the block. Instead, the hotel would be framed by the much taller residential tower behind it. The Historic Resources Report included in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report has stated that the project design could reduce impacts to the De Anza setting by incorporating design features such as stepping back the upper stories, and using color, materials and proportions that are compatible with the historic hotel.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This proposal was brought to the Historic Landmarks Commission Design Review Committee in November of 2004. A community meeting was held to discuss the proposal, and all occupants and owners within a 1000-foot radius received notice. A Notice of Preparation of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report was also distributed. Planning Staff has been available to discuss the proposal with members of the public.

Additionally, prior to the HLC public hearing, an electronic version of the staff report was 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 the Director of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement regarding the historic preservation issues of the proposed project. Specifically, Planning staff would like to receive feedback on the following:

1. Alternatives within the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report,
2. Options to reduce the visual impacts to the De Anza Hotel, and
3. Suggestions for the commemorative displays.

Attachments: Maps
Historic Evaluations of the Palomar Ballroom
Plan set