

**DATE ISSUED:** November 3, 2005

**REPORT NO. PC-05-305**

**ATTENTION:** **Planning Commission, Agenda of November 17, 2005**

**SUBJECT:** SIGSBEE ROW HOMES - PROJECT NO. 60907. PROCESS 4

**OWNER/** Glenn Wilbor, Sigsbee Row, LLC

**APPLICANT:** Jeff Burns, Pubic Architecture

**SUMMARY**

**Issue:** Should the Planning Commission approve a Coastal Development Permit (CDP), Site Development Permit (SDP), Planned Development Permit (PDP), Tentative Map (TM), and grant a Waiver from the requirement to underground existing overhead utilities, to allow for the construction of 14 residential for-sale housing units in the Redevelopment Subdistrict of the Barrio Logan Planned District, on a 14,060 square-foot (0.32 acre) site at 1702-1710 National Avenue?

**Staff Recommendation:**

1. CERTIFY Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 60907 and APOPT Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (MMRP);
2. APPROVE Planned Development Permit (PDP) No. 180436
3. APPROVE Site Development Permit (SDP) No. 182068
4. APPROVE Coastal Development Permit (CDP) No. 182067
5. APPROVE Tentative Map No. 194739 and
6. APPROVE Waiver from the requirement to underground overhead utilities.

**Community Planning Group Recommendation:** The Barrio Logan Project Area Committee (PAC) considered the project at their meeting on Wednesday, October 20, 2004 and voted 8-1-0 to recommend approval of the project, expressing concerns about gentrification.

**Environmental Review:** A Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 60907 has been prepared for the project in accordance with the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. A Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (MMRP) will be implemented which will reduce, to below a level of significance, the potential environmental impacts identified from the environmental review process for health and safety.

**Fiscal Impact:** The cost of processing this application is paid for by the applicant.

**Code Enforcement Impact:** None with this action.

**Police and Fire Impact:** Existing police and fire service are available for this community. Emergency fire response to the intersection of National Avenue and Sigsbee Street is provided by Engine E7 from Fire Station 7 at Cesar Chavez Parkway and National Avenue at 1.4 minutes. Police service for the above mentioned project would be provided by officers from Central Division, located at 2501 Imperial Avenue.

The identified project is located in the Neighborhood of Barrio Logan, which is located within the boundaries of police beat 511. The 2005 (February 15 to June 30, 2005) average response time for priority one calls on beat 511 was 11.13 minutes. The citywide average response time for that same time period was 14.11 minutes. This project will add additional police related calls for service to an area station that is currently staffed at 61.2 percent of optimal patrol strength. However, the project has been designed with principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design as further discussed in this report.

**Housing Impact Statement:** The Inclusionary Housing Ordinance requires all new residential development of two units or more to provide at least 10% of the units as Affordable housing. This project will set aside one unit (Unit 6) as Affordable Housing. Unit 6 would provide approximately 510 square feet of living space as a one-bedroom, two-car garage unit with exterior deck area where the average unit size is 1,584 square feet. Because the project is setting aside less than the 10%, the Municipal Code allows payment of a prorated amount to make up the difference. As the applicant proposes to set aside 1 of 14 units as Affordable, where the Ordinance requires 10% or 1.4 units, the remaining in-lieu fee is therefore based on the remaining 0.4 fractional unit and is calculated as \$15,82 . The proposed project would result in a net gain of 14 units in the Barrio Logan community planning area and would help the City address its shortage of affordable housing stock during a time when the City Council has determined that the City of San Diego is in a Housing State of Emergency.

## **BACKGROUND**

The project site is within the Barrio Logan Redevelopment Project area, but is not a recipient of Redevelopment Agency funding. The project, however, is in accordance with redevelopment goals for this area. The Redevelopment Plan for this area was adopted on May 20, 1991 to reconstitute Barrio Logan as a viable mixed-use community, to encourage compatible land use patterns, and to

encourage private investment in the community. The Redevelopment Plan objectives include the need to eliminate urban blight and deterioration, and to reconstitute the community as a viable mixed-use area with compatible land use patterns. The proposed project is in line with the goals of the Redevelopment Project area and plan. The project site is currently developed with a two-story, 25-foot high, 2,404 square foot concrete block structure (former welding shop, constructed in 1982) which would be demolished. This building is not identified as a potentially historic structure in the Barrio Logan historic inventory reports. Environmental Site Assessment reports indicate no evidence of underground storage tanks, elevated petroleum hydrocarbon soil vapors, or other previously existing recognized environmental conditions on this site. Existing site elevations range from approximately 30 – 40 feet above mean sea level.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Project Description:**

The project would construct 14 for-sale condominium units in a four-story building on a 14,060 square foot (0.32 acre) site on the northeastern corner of National Avenue and Sigsbee Street in the Barrio Logan Redevelopment Project Area, Redevelopment Subdistrict, and within a Commercial / Residential Mixed Use area of the Barrio Logan / Harbor 101 Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Plan. The four existing lots would be subdivided into 14 separate ownership interests.

The project would consist of a four-story building at 50 feet in height with 6-foot projections which is within the maximum allowable height. The allowable density is one unit per 1,000 square feet. For this 14,000 square foot site, 14 units are allowed and 14 units are proposed. The maximum allowable coverage is 31,500 square feet, where 28,630 square feet is proposed.

The project proposes a mix of living spaces: one studio (510 square feet), three two bedroom units (1325 -1705square feet), and 10 three-bedroom units (1510 – 1995square feet) . Enclosed two car garages in a lift configuration would be provided for each unit. Seven of the 14 units would have private yard space. Thirteen of the 14 units would have exterior deck space. Common exterior usable open space would be provided in a central courtyard shared with the autocourt. A totalof 22,180 square feet living area, 2,230 square feet decks, 1,495 private exterior open space (yards), and 28,630 gross square feet is proposed.

The parking requirement for this project is based on the rate of 2.0 spaces each for the 10 three-bedroom units; 1.75 spaces each for the three, two-bedroom units; and 1.25 spaces each for the one, one-bedroom unit; for a total parking requirement of 26.5 spaces. The project will provide 28 parking spaces in stacked configuration in 14 individual garage units. Two shared driveway entries would be provided off Sigsbee Street as new curb cuts to serve four of the units. No curb cuts would be provided off National Avenue. Gated alley entry access to a grasscrete auto court leading to enclosed garages would be provided for the remaining units. Garages would use an interior lift system to provide vertical stacked parking for two cars in each garage.

Landscape design would provide a balance between the urban and residential environments in accordance with the design goals in the Barrio Logan / Harbor 101 Community Plan. Pedestrian orientation is provided along the street by jacaranda canopies, low shrubs, and paving preserving the designated view corridor along National Avenue towards downtown. The project proposes 10 street trees where 8 are required: four California sycamores along Sigsbee Street and six jacaranda along National Avenue. The largest expanse of driveway area in the interior courtyard is grass-planted turf block to increase water seepage into the soil and to serve as storm water runoff filtration, yet also serving to provide vehicle access to the covered garages accessible from this space. The project exceeds the plant point requirements in the street yard, remaining yard, and vehicular use areas.

The proposed site work would reduce the impervious area and surface runoff to 1.0 cubic feet per second (cfs). All of the site would be subject to grading removing approximately 700 cubic yards of cut to a depth of 4.5 feet. Existing site conditions provide approximately 49% impervious area with a surface runoff calculation of 1.2 cfs.

The materials plat includes cast-in-place concrete walls 8” – 12” thick, masonry, plaster, painted and metal siding, and aluminum and wood doors and windows. Interior noise reduction would be provided through interior sound walls with an sound transmission class (STC) 50 rating. However, results of acoustical measurements and modeling show that the existing and future noise environment of the project site would not exceed the 65 decibel (dB) Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) noise threshold / land use compatibility standards; therefore no noise mitigation is required.

#### **Community and Land Use Plan Analysis:**

The project location is within the Barrio Logan Planned District Ordinance (PDO), Redevelopment Subdistrict. The PDO regulations of the Municipal Code beginning at Section 103.0901 implement the Barrio Logan / Harbor 101 Community Plan and the Barrio Logan Redevelopment Plan. The Redevelopment Subdistrict was designed to implement the Redevelopment Plan designating land use to create a compact, small scale, pedestrian oriented environment with projects that create an identifiable urban character and community image. The PDO and the Community Plan specify the project site as a commercial / residential land use (Figure 2 of Section 103.0956). Maximum density for residential development is regulated at one dwelling unit per 1,000 square feet thereby allowing the 14 proposed units on the 14,000 square foot site.

The proposed development is in accord with the goals and objectives of the Barrio Logan / Harbor 101 Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Plan. The project proposes a residential in-fill and redevelopment in an urbanized area that reflects the light industrial quality in a dense urban core designed to provide pedestrian activation of the street frontage and interior common outdoor open space. This type of infill development upholds the goals and objectives of the Barrio Logan / Harbor 101 Community Plan to “encourage residential infill and new development throughout the residentially designated areas” and to “expand home ownership opportunities.” The project would result in no loss of designated industrial lands. The project intends to market the units within the community to encourage local home ownership.

The project is designed with reduced setbacks to engage the street with large glass expanses and stoops that activate the street level with pedestrian activity and provide eyes on the street for neighborhood safety. The proposed zero-foot setback for commercial is consistent with existing development patterns in the area. The architecture maintains visual relationships to the older, colorful buildings nearby. The proposed reduction in setbacks allows for increased exterior open space in the interior courtyard with large windows for city and bay views. Parking is provided for each unit using a lift system. The project is designed to integrate with design guidelines to improve walkability, connectivity, and enhanced community design.

The community plan designates National Avenue as a critical view corridor to downtown, and Sigsbee Street as critical view corridor to San Diego Bay. National Avenue is a wide street which affords views toward downtown San Diego. Numerous other buildings along National Avenue observe a 0' setback allowed in commercial zone areas, yet provides ample view to downtown due to the street width. The community plan recommends setbacks and landscaping configured to avoid obstruction of views. The project applicant has worked with staff to reduce the number of balconies and the balcony encroachments to protect and preserve the view corridors. The building is stepped back from the street at the third floor, and all balconies except for one are at the property line. Street-facing balconies would be open cable allowing for visual access and reduction in appearance. The project bulk, mass, and scale are therefore consistent with the neighborhood and the anticipated growth in this area.

#### *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)*

The project would provide an active presence on the street with individual access to three units along National, five units along Sigsbee, and garages along the alley. Individual units are delineated with entry doors, and planter areas. Large windows provide resident views to neighborhood activity. Decks on upper levels enhance views to the street, and neighborhood, adding to neighborhood security. Features have been proposed to deter vandalism and undesirable activities. Proposed vegetation consists of canopy trees above 8' height, low shrubs at 3' height, and tall vines and shrubs along blank walls. Exterior exposed concrete walls would have a graffiti-resistant coating. Garage doors will have painted surfaces. Required guardrails would be open railings. Alcoves are gated off from public entry.

Entry gates off the streets and ally would be 6 to 8 feet high, and provided with automatic closers. A call box, fire department key box, and keyed entry would be provided at the main entrance. A large automated panel gate with man door would be provided at the alley drive aisle. Unit entry's have view panels. General evening illumination would be provided for safety and security, combined with resident controlled lighting at entry's and balconies. Units surround an open courtyard with decks and low fences between yards, providing an open, self-policed atmosphere. Secure, enclosed parking is provided for each unit. CC&Rs state the garages are for parking purposes only, and will be enforced by an active homeowners committee. The homeowner's committee is provided with the power to provide security services and other services on an as needed basis for the project. Unit entry's have view panels.

### **Environmental Analysis:**

A Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which identifies potential impacts to Health and Safety requiring verification from the County Department of Environmental Health that the site is free of past soil contamination. Previous uses at the site included a gasoline-dispensing service station. The applicant therefore prepared several reports to assess suitability of the site for residential development: A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, a Soil Vapor Survey, and an Addendum. Using ground penetrating radar, no evidence was found of remaining underground storage tanks. Soil vapor probes detected low to non-detectable soil vapor hydrocarbon concentrations, but no BTEX or fuel oxygenate constituents such as MTBE, DIPE, TAME, ETBE, or TBA. The report did not recommend further soil vapor testing. No other environmental issues were identified in the CEQA Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration.

#### *Geotechnical Investigation*

Because the project site is within the Downtown Special Fault Hazard zone, geologic and fault investigation studies were performed: Report of Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation, Geotechnical Exploration, Inc., November 24, 2004; Geologic Fault Investigation, Geocon, May 14, 2004; and Results of Supplemental Geologic Fault Investigation, October 3, 2005. The geotechnical investigation finds the site underlain by dense formational terrace deposits with two-three feet of surface soils that would be removed and recompacted. The fault investigation studies excavated a total of four exploratory trenches. No evidence of faulting was observed. No special seismic design considerations would be required for the new construction.

### **Project-Related Issues:**

#### *Municipal Code Requirements*

The project consists of five discretionary actions which are required to be consolidated and considered as a Process 4 decision (Planning Commission) in accordance with SDMC 125.0940.

Site Development Permit (SDP) – A Barrio Logan Planned District Permit [Process 3 action] is required as specified in the Municipal Code due to the Barrio Logan Planned District Ordinance. The Barrio Logan Planned District Permit is processed as a Site Development Permit (SDP). This permit allows for deviations in setbacks and design features, but does not allow deviation for floor area ratio, height, density, parking or use. Discussion of project setbacks is provided below under the Planned Development Permit (PDP) section of this report. Findings for the SPD are substantiated in the attached Resolution.

Coastal Development Permit (CDP) – A CDP [Process 2] is required due to the project's location within the Coastal Overlay Zone (non-appealable) area. Findings for the CDP are substantiated in the attached Resolution.

Tentative Map (TM) - A TM [Process 4] is required to subdivide the existing four lots into 14 separate ownership interests. Findings for the TM are substantiated in the attached Resolution. A Tentative Map for a Condominiums is a Process Four, Planning Commission decision per San Diego Municipal Code Section 125.0430 and may be approved if the decision maker finds that the proposed division of land complies with the requirements of the Subdivision Map Act and the San Diego Municipal Code.

Planned Development Permit – (PDP) – A PDP [Process 4] is required due to the proposed deviations to the Municipal Code regulations for reduced setbacks, balcony encroachments into right-of-way, installation of two curb cuts along Sigsbee Street, reduced alley driveway width, and increased private open space in substitution for reduced common open space. Development which does not comply with all base zone regulations or all development regulations may apply for deviations through a PDP. As stated in the Municipal Code, the purpose of the PDP regulations is to establish a review process for development that allows an applicant to request greater flexibility from the strict application of the regulations. The intent is to encourage imaginative and innovative planning and to assure that the development achieves the purpose and intent of the applicable land use plan, and that it would be preferable to what would be achieved by strict conformance with the regulations. Each of the deviations is further discussed below.

Staff notes that the current Barrio Logan / Harbor 101 Community Plan was originally developed in 1978 and intended to guide development through 1995. Although portions of the Plan were amended in 1992, the plan remains in need of further updates to better guide the proposed growth starting to occur in this area due in part to the recent growth in the nearby Downtown and Centre City areas of San Diego. The Sigsbee Row project, therefore proposes deviations which, although do not meet the current requirements, are envisioned to be consistent with the patterns of growth projected for this area. Staff is therefore able to recommend support of the deviations as discussed below.

### *Reduced Setbacks*

The project proposes reduced setbacks in order to provide and maintain an urban scale of mixed light commercial / residential and increased pedestrian-oriented activity. Front, street-side, side, and rear setbacks are proposed to conform to existing commercial setbacks (0' at National Avenue, Sigsbee Street, and side; 3' at alley). Along National Avenue at the ground floor, the building observes a 0' setback from 39' from the corner, and 3' setback for the remaining length of National Avenue. At the corner, the building steps back on both streets (3'-6" on National Avenue, and 5'-6" on Sigsbee Street). Along the side yard, the project observes a 5' setback, with the exception of a block of five garages which are on the property line. The project proposes these reduced setbacks as a design feature to better integrate with the existing urban setting. The ground floor units would have high ceilings (18 – 20') with large expanses of glass to greet the street frontage to activate the sidewalk and provide eyes on the street to enhance safety and provide enhanced sense of ownership along the sidewalk. Moving the buildings closer to the street edge allows for larger private exterior open space for each unit.

### *Balcony Encroachment*

One, three-foot balcony encroachment into the right-of-way above National Avenue is proposed. The balcony is a second-floor exterior feature on the project corner of National and Sigsbee. The balcony encroachment is requested to provide added human presence overlooking the street and to make the façade pedestrian friendly. Through the course of the project review and design, additional balcony encroachments were desired, but could not be supported by staff and were subsequently removed from the project plans to decrease the number of deviations proposed.

### *Curb Cuts, Reduced Driveway Width*

Two curb cuts would be installed along Sigsbee Street where one curb cut is allowed. Each curb cut would be 18' wide with a curb separation to accommodate access to four garages. The project proposes to remove two curb cuts along National Avenue restoring the curb and sidewalk, and proposes reduced width alley access of 18' where 20' is required to serve as the primary entrance / exit point for on-site vehicle circulation. The majority of the project traffic flow would therefore take access off the alley and into the interior vehicular access area which would provide two-way drive aisles in the 24-foot wide interior court. Only four units would have direct street access off Sigsbee Street. The applicant prefers this configuration to enhance the feeling of ownership and to provide the pedestrian with an understanding of an active presence at the street level. No access would be provided off National.

### *Parking*

The project proposes a vertical, stacked parking configuration inside the individual garages using a lift system to count as two spaces for two vehicles, rather than the typical side-by-side configuration. Staff supports this alternate configuration as a space-saving mechanism for the project.

### *Increased Private Open Space and Reduced Common Open Space*

The Municipal Code requires common and private exterior usable open space of 1,574 square feet for this project. This project proposes 3,815 square feet of private exterior open space. Each unit has private yards and openings to the interior courtyard which also serves as a vehicular use area. This central courtyard area of 24' x 44' will have a grasscrete surface and will be used as an informal common space shared as a vehicular use area and stormwater runoff filtration area. To enhance this informal common open space, an outdoor barbeque area is provided as well. The project intentionally reduced the common outdoor area in deference to private outdoor area to enhance the feeling of ownership and to increase the likelihood that the private outdoor areas would remain in better care than common space.



Undergrounding Waiver – There are existing overhead facilities adjacent to the project site. San Diego Municipal Code Section 144.0240 allows the subdivider to apply for a waiver of the requirement to underground the existing overhead utilities within the boundary of the parcel or subdivision. Staff has determined the undergrounding waiver request qualifies under the guidelines of Council Policy 600-25, Underground Conversion of Utility Lines at the Developers Expense, in that it involves a span of under 600 feet, the conversion would represent an isolated undergrounding with a minimum probability of extension in the future, and would not represent a logical extension to an undergrounding facility. The project’s implementation requires the undergrounding of any new utilities to any new or proposed structures within the parcel or subdivision. The City of San Diego Utility Underground Conversion project Master Plan for Fiscal Year 2006 identifies the project site within the Residential Underground Projects Block 8H with a proposed funding year of 2019.

**Conclusion:**

The proposed housing project meets the need to provide quality for-sale housing in the Barrio Logan community and is providing one unit set aside as “Affordable.” Other than the requested deviations, the proposed project conforms to all applicable development regulations outlined in the San Diego Municipal Code and the Barrio Logan PDO. Staff finds that the requested deviations exhibit imaginative and innovative planning and result in a more desirable project than if designed in strict conformance with the Code. Staff finds that the project as proposed would be in accordance with the provisions of the City’s Municipal Code; the California Environmental Quality Act; the City’s Progress Guide and General Plan; and the Barrio Logan Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Plan. Staff therefore recommends certification of the Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 60907 and adoption of the Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (MMRP); approval of Coastal Development Permit (CDP) No. 182067, Site Development Permit (SDP) No. 182068; Planned Development Permit (PDP) No. 180436; Tentative Map (TM) No. 194739 ; and the Waiver of the requirement to underground existing overhead utilities.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Recommend approval of Coastal Development Permit (CDP) No. 182067; Site Development Permit (SDP) No. 182068; Planned Development Permit (PDP) No. 180436; Tentative Map (TM) No. 194739 ; and the Waiver of the requirement to underground existing overhead utilities; with modifications.
2. Recommend denial of Coastal Development Permit (CDP) No. 182067; Site Development Permit (SDP) No. 182068; Planned Development Permit (PDP) No. 180436; Tentative Map (TM) No. 194739 ; and the Waiver of the requirement to underground existing overhead utilities; if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Jeffrey Strohminger**  
**Acting Deputy Director,**  
**Customer Support and Information Division**  
**Development Services Department**

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**Cory H. Wilkinson**  
**Development Project Manager,**  
**Customer Support and Information Division**  
**Development Services Department**

**Attachments:**

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Project Location Map
3. Community Plan Land Use Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Parking Lift
6. Permit
7. Resolution
8. Tentative Map Resolution
9. Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (MMRP) Resolution
10. Community Planning Group Recommendation
11. Ownership Disclosure Statement
12. Undergrounding Schedule
13. Project Plans