

DESIGN ASSISTANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

January 17, 2007, 10:30 pm – 12:00
Grande Colonial Hotel La Jolla Room
La Jolla, San Diego, CA

SITE VISIT AND SPECIAL MEETING NOTES

1. ATTENDANCE

Boardmembers: David Marshall (Chair), Laura Burnett and John Eisenhart, Otto Emme, Delores McNeely
Staff: Nina Fain, City Attorney's Office; Michael Tudury, HRB
Guests: Grande Colonial Villas: (Special Meeting only) Marie Lia, attorney; Terry Underwood, manager; Brian Giguere, architect
Other: Barbara Baxter, neighbor

2. Public Comment

None

3. Projects

- Grande Colonial Villas Hotel Project:

Background: The proposed project is the construction of a new building on three parcels of land on Coast Blvd. South, downhill from the Grand Colonial Hotel and north of the historically designated Little Hotel by the Sea and the Terrace Apartments. This proposed project has been reviewed by the DAS in two previous meetings, August and October, 2006. PTS# 102447. At the January 3, 2007 DAS meeting, Marie Burke Lia, on behalf of the owner, suggested an on-site visit and meeting. At that meeting, Boardmembers agreed that the site visit would be a good way for all DAS members, including new members Delores McNeely and John Eisenhart, to be informed of the proposed project. Also at the January 2007 DAS meeting, David Marshall suggested to Ms. Lia that a site map, showing the elements of the entire site and their proposed disposition, needed to be available for Boardmember review as well. Ms. Lia emailed the DAS Boardmembers a color-coded map prior to this Special Meeting.

City Attorney's Office Comment:

Attorney Nina Fain noted that due to the required Site Development Permit (SDP) and the related proposed demolition of historic resources that the proposed project must be brought before the full Historical Resources Board for action. She indicated that she had no objection to this site visit and DAS Special Meeting as it was properly noticed. On two occasions, Ms. Fain stated that the project must go before the full HRB for a vote as it is being processed as a Site Development Permit. At that future full board meeting, these Meeting Notes will be provided to all boardmembers.

Board Comment:

Chair David Marshall stated that the site visit was an excellent way for all the Boardmembers to have the same information and that the site visit allowed all to be aware of issues and details that would not have been possible without the site visit.

Delores McNeely stated that the site visit made her realize that some of the existing trees may also have significance.

Mr. Marshall discussed the comparative importance of the three historically-designated structures and all Boardmembers agreed that the most architecturally important of these was 921 Coast Blvd. South (921), the brick veneer over wood frame structure constructed in 1927.

John Eisenhart stated that the site visit pointed out the importance of the site context (the front yard setback) of the brick structure. This issue was discussed and all agreed that it would be OK to remove the front yard in order to construct a new underground parking structure there, but that new landscaping (lawn and planting) that recalled the existing landscaping should be placed on the roof of the garage. All agreed that no new or relocated building should go in the front yard area of 921. Also, Boardmembers stated that this reconstructed lawn area and landscaping should be at the same grade that currently exists. This would allow continued public visibility of the brick structure from Coast Blvd. South, as well as public visibility of the adjacent wood shingle structure to the north. The current overgrown trees in the front yard need to either be heavily pruned or removed because they block public view of 921.

Otto Emme stated that he felt that the brick structure should be kept undisturbed on its original site without any relocation. He reinforced the need to keep the public view "corridor" to the brick structure.

David Marshall then discussed the issue of historical integrity of the two wood clad structures, 927 and 925 Coast Blvd. South. 927 Coast Blvd. South (927) is the wood shingle and horizontal wood siding structure that is located directly on the street that was constructed in 1914. 925 Coast Blvd. South (925) is the wood shingle structure behind 927 that was constructed in 1919.

All agreed that 925 appeared to be historically intact. It was noted that, as it was built behind the street-facing structure, it does not appear to have a "front" elevation.

John Eisenhart stated that façade viewed from the path from the street is the front elevation.

All agreed that 927 appeared to be altered with new horizontal wood siding at the lower level, new garage doors, and new or relocated windows at the storage area above the garages. In addition it appears that there were infill windows at the original street-facing porch that were built very soon after its initial construction. It was noted that the side and rear facades of 927 appeared to be primarily intact.

All agreed that 927 and 925 were not dependent upon each other, and could be evaluated separately.

It was noted that the pedestrian lane at the rear of the 40 foot wide properties (parallel to Coast Blvd. South) was a public easement which will be retained.

Laura Burnett asked if there was any way that the public easement could be extended to the north to connect to Prospect Street. It was stated that the portion of the public easement beyond the subject properties was closed several years ago as part of a permit

associated with the property on Prospect Street, and that that portion of the public easement was not part of this project.

The DAS members then further discussed the relative importance of the three resources.

Otto Emme stated that he felt that both 921 and 925 should be kept.

David Marshall stated that, in addition to 921, that 925 should be kept due to the fact that it was intact and due to the public visibility of it from the (rear) public easement. The retention of the open landscaped front yard at 921 would also allow visibility of 925.

Mr. Marshall also stated that, although underground parking could be provided below the recreated yard in front of 921 that a garage entry/exit should not occur at this location.

The developer indicated that this was problematic since there would be two and one-half levels of underground parking with spaces for 58 cars. The garage entry was anticipated to be located on the north end of the development.

Again, all DAS members stated that the open front yard setting of 921 needed to be maintained in order to meet the Standards.

John Eisenhart stated that it was important that the new above-grade structure(s) must retain the rhythm of the structures on the 40 foot wide lots, rather than as a multi-parcel volume.

Ms. Burnett noted that the palm tree on Coast Blvd. South and the ficus tree on the northernmost lot were not historically significant and that it was not critical to retain them.

At the request of DAS members and staff, the developer and the hotel manager responded to questions.

The developer confirmed that the underground parking was not counted toward the FAR or the required 50% max lot coverage.

Mr. Underwood stated that currently, the hotel has 75 rooms.

Public Comment:

During the course of the Boardmember discussion, neighbor Barbara Baxter stated that beach cottages were an important element of La Jolla, and that the two wood clad structures were representative of the character of the Village, as was the open "space" between them that was their context. She also expressed that the new development might be built as condominiums and sold off separately. Manager Terry Underwood and architect Brian Giguere stated that the project was only parking and 17 new hotel rooms, which bring a greater return than condos. It was also stated that in order to create condos, another process would be required. Mr. Underwood stated that there are no plans for condos on this site.

Ms. Baxter also expressed concern regarding the possible cracking of the chimney of her house during construction. Her concern was addressed by the developer.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.

The next DAS meeting is February 7, 2007.