THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: January 30, 2007 **REPORT NO. PC-07-010**

ATTENTION: **Planning Commission, Agenda of February 8, 2007**

SUBJECT: STEBBINS RESIDENCE – PROJECT NO. 51076
PROCESS 4

OWNER/APPLICANT: David Stebbins

SUMMARY

Issue(s): Should the Planning Commission approve the demolition of an existing one-story duplex, and the construction of a new 1,749 square-foot, three-story single family residence above a 816 square-foot basement garage on a 2,500 square-foot site, and to allow for a deviation from the regulations for Special Flood Hazard Areas?

Staff Recommendation:

1. **CERTIFY** MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION No. 51076, and ADOPT MMRP; and

2. **Approve** Coastal Development Permit No. 147134; and

3. **Approve** Site Development Permit No. 389939.

Community Planning Group Recommendation: The subject project was presented at the Ocean Beach Planning Board's General Meeting on July 5, 2006. There were two motions concerning this property and neither one passed (Vote 4-4-0) (Attachment 10).

Environmental Review: A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), Project No. 51076, has been prepared for the project in accordance with State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared and will be implemented for Archaeological Resources which will reduce any potential impacts to below a level of significance.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The cost of processing this application is paid for by the

applicant.

Code Enforcement Impact: None with this action. There are no open cases in the Neighborhood Code Compliance Department for this property.

Housing Impact Statement: The 0.057-acre site is presently designated for multi-family residential at 15 to 25 dwelling units per acre in the Ocean Beach Precise Plan which would allow 1 dwelling unit on the project site. The proposal to demolish an existing 2-dwelling unit duplex structure and construct a 1-dwelling unit structure on the 2,500 square-foot lot is within the density range of 15 to 25 dwelling units per acre identified in the Precise Plan. The proposal would result in a net loss of 1 dwelling unit in the coastal zone. However, this does not trigger any remedial action to replace affordable housing within the community because it does not meet the Coastal Overlay Zone Affordable Housing Replacement Regulations requiring, "Demolition of a residential structure with three or more dwelling units or demolition of at least eleven units when two or more structures are involved."

BACKGROUND

The project is located at 5166 West Point Loma Boulevard in the RM 2-4 Zone, and is within the Coastal Overlay Zone (appealable-area), Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone, First Public Roadway, Beach Parking Impact Overlay Zone, Airport Approach Overlay Zone, Airport Environs Overlay Zone, and the 100-year Floodplain Overlay Zone. The 0.057-acre site is within the Ocean Beach Precise Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (LCP) which designates the property and surrounding neighborhood for multi-family land use at a maximum density of 25 dwelling units per acre (Attachment 3).

The single-story, 1,250 square-foot duplex was constructed in 1955. The project site is surrounded by established multi-family residential developments to the west, east, south and Ocean Beach Dog Park to the northwest. The San Diego River is located approximately 650 feet to the north of the proposed development and the Pacific Ocean to the west (Attachment 2).

A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) is required to allow the demolition of an existing one-story, duplex and the construction of a new three-story above basement single family residence, fronting West Point Loma Boulevard.

A Site Development Permit in accordance with Process 4 is also required to allow for a deviation to the Special Flood Hazard Area, per the City's Environmentally Sensitive Lands Regulations (SDMC Section 143.0110 Table 143-01A).

DISCUSSION

Project Description:

The project proposes the demolition of the existing one-story duplex and the construction of a new three-story above basement single family residence, fronting West Point Loma Boulevard.

The proposed 1,749 square-foot single family residence would include an office, master bedroom, two bathrooms and a patio on the first level; a kitchen, dining room, living room, bathroom and two decks on the second level; and a loft and a deck on the third-floor level. The project would also include a subterranean two-car garage with a storage area.

The exterior treatments of the single family residence would include a stucco finish with glass blocks located on the north, south and west sides of the single-family residence. The second and third levels would include a foam shape cornice that would border each of those levels. Pipe railing would border the top of each level, along with a 2 ½ foot glass rail on both the second and third level decks on the west side of the structure. The eastern half of the roof would consist of downward sloping concrete flat tile roofing, while the west half of the roof would consist of a flat roof (Attachment 5).

Community Plan Analysis:

As originally submitted, the project included the demolition of the existing duplex and construction of a 1,751 (original proposal) square-foot three-level single dwelling unit with a subterranean parking garage. Staff initially had concerns regarding the bulk and scale portrayed in the first submittal. The project site is located on one side of a block consisting of 1-story duplexes. The architectural style of the existing 1-story duplexes are virtually identical and have been determined not to be historically significant. Many of the structures are dilapidated and in need of repair/remodeling and the proposal would be consistent with the Ocean Beach Action Plan's objective to "Renovate substandard and dilapidated property" (Residential Element) and "Promote the continuation of an economically balanced housing market, providing for all age groups and family types" (Residential Element).

Staff's initial concerns regarding the proposal's bulk and scale were addressed when the applicant, after meeting with staff, incorporated suggestions that served to further break down the bulk of the original submittal in a manner that preserves the character of small-scale residential development in the community.

The revised project would be consistent with the Ocean Beach Precise Plan. At three stories, the project would be of a larger scale than immediately surrounding development. However, the project would more closely match 2-story structures on the block to the immediate north of West Point Loma Boulevard. In addition, the project area is mapped within the 100-year floodplain and the restrictions on development within the floodplain require that the first floor be 2 feet above the base flood elevation, which would effectively render the ground floor uninhabitable for most properties in this area. This condition and the RM-2-4 zone requirement that 25 percent of FAR be utilized for parking led the applicant to waterproof the garage in order to avoid having part of the ground floor level devoted to parking, which, in turn, would have drastically reduced habitable space. The project proposal includes a modest increase in square footage from 1,250 to 1,749 and the applicant has submitted a design that is well-articulated with pronounced step backs on both the second and third stories which would enhance pedestrian orientation along the public right-of-way. The third story roof is also sloped down in front to further break up the scale of the proposal. Further, the proposal observes the thirty-foot height limit of the Coastal

Overlay Zone.

Staff concluded that the proposed design typifies "small-scale" low-density development and would be consistent with both the Ocean Beach Precise Plan and the Action Plan goals for redevelopment and owner occupied housing. This determination was based on the well articulated design which reduces the bulk of the structure and observes the Coastal Overlay height limit while mindful of the site's physical constraints and regulatory issues which include the floodplain and zoning limitations on floor area ratio.

The project is located between the first public right-of-way and the ocean and therefore issues of coastal access (physical and visual) must be addressed. The proposal would not impact any physical access to the coast. In addition, there are no public view corridors identified in the area by either the Ocean Beach Precise Plan or the Ocean Beach Action Plan. Nonetheless, the project would respect setback requirements and a three foot view corridor would be provided along the east and west sides of the property through a deed restriction to preserve views toward Dog Beach and the San Diego River.

Environmental Analysis:

The project site is within the 100 year floodplain and is therefore considered environmentally sensitive land. However, the previous site grading and construction of the existing duplex have completely disturbed the site. The property is relatively flat with an elevation of 8 feet above mean sea level and does not include any sensitive topographical or biological resources. The site is neither within nor adjacent to Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) lands. A Mitigated Negative Declaration dated November 2, 2006, has been prepared for this project in accordance with State CEQA guidelines, and a Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program is required for Archaeological Resources to reduce any potential impacts to below a level of significance.

Project-Related Issues:

The proposed development will be constructed within the 100 Year Floodplain (*Special Flood Hazard Area*), and has a Base Flood Elevation of 9.6 feet mean sea level. The restrictions on development within the floodplain require that the lowest floor, including basement, be elevated at least 2 feet above the base flood elevation in accordance with San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) section §143.0146(C)(6), while the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires that the finished floor elevation be at one or more feet above the base flood elevation (BFE). This project is requesting a deviation to allow development of the residential structure, to be at 7.1 feet below the Base Flood Elevation. The subterranean garage, which would have a depth of 6 feet below existing grades, would be at least two feet below the high groundwater table. However, the project has been designed and conditioned to mitigate potential flood related damage to the principal residential structure by raising the required living space floor area above the flood line per FEMA requirements, and flood-proof all structures subject to inundation in accordance with Technical Bulletin 3-93 of the Federal Insurance Administration. Building conditions Nos. 20 and 21 of the Site Development Permit are required to implement the ESL Regulations and allow the site to be developed below the BFE. All State and Federal flood

requirements shall be satisfied and the project would be consistent with FEMA guidelines through the above mentioned conditions.

As such, the proposed design complies with the requirements for development in a floodplain and the impact would not be significant or otherwise, would be mitigated to below a level of significance. The project is consistent with the land use designation in the Ocean Beach Precise Plan and Local Coastal Program.

Staff can support the proposed deviation as the project conforms to the development regulations through sensitive design practices.

Community Group: The Ocean Beach Planning Board met on July 5, 2006. There were two motions presented concerning this property and neither one passed.

- The first motion was to approve the project as presented. The motion failed by a vote of 4-4-0

- The subsequent motion was to deny the project as presented due to the bulk and scale. This motion also failed by a vote of 4-4-0.

Various board members noted that the new residence would represent a significant improvement over the existing duplex, and would improve the character of the general neighborhood. In addition, the change from a duplex to a single family residence would reduce density in the area.

Various board members noted concerns about the height of the project, and that other properties on the block might be re-developed to similar heights, altering the character of the neighborhood. Their concern is that subsequent development might create a corridor of tall buildings on the block. The suggestion was to restrict the project to two stories.

As previously indicated, the project site is mapped within the 100-year floodplain and the restrictions on development within the floodplain require that the first floor be 2 feet above the base flood elevation, which would effectively render the ground floor uninhabitable for most properties in this area. The applicant has submitted a design that is well-articulated with pronounced step backs on both the second and third stories which would enhance pedestrian orientation along the public right-of-way. The third story roof is also sloped down in front to further break up the scale of the proposal. Staff believes these design features would alleviate the concern of tall buildings creating a corridor effect in the neighborhood and that the proposed project would meet goals of both the Ocean Beach Precise Plan and Action Plan regarding redevelopment.

Coastal Commission: A review letter dated August 11, 2006 was received from the California Coastal Commission. The Coastal Commission staff noted that the proposed project should be evaluated for adequate parking, potential public view blockage, and compatibility with the community character of the area. Given the orientation of the residence to the ocean, and since the site is adjacent to the public park and beach, a view analysis should be performed. The

proposed development should address any potential impacts to public access, including impacts related to construction and should be consistent with the policies of the LDC which require open fencing in the side yards, and low level vegetation to preserve public views to the ocean.

City staff reviewed the project for potential public view blockage and noted that neither the Ocean Beach Precise Plan (OBPP), nor the Ocean Beach Action Plan identify any specific public view corridors in the project area. However, the applicant is required to preserve a three-foot view corridor along both the east and west sides of the property through a deed restriction to preserve views toward Dog Beach and the San Diego River. Therefore, no impacts to public access, or any public views would be affected by the proposed project.

Geology: The project site is located within Geologic Hazard Zones 31 and 52 as shown on the San Diego Seismic Safety Study maps. Zone 31 encompasses areas with a high liquefaction potential. Zone 52 is characterized by a low risk of geologic hazards. A geotechnical investigation was conducted that addresses liquefaction potential of the proposed project site. The geotechnical consultant concluded that soils to a depth of about 16-feet are susceptible to liquefaction and they recommend a rigid, reinforced concrete mat foundation to mitigate liquefaction induced settlement and resist hydrostatic uplift.

Groundwater was encountered at a depth of approximately 5 feet. Construction dewatering will be necessary, which might result in minor settlement of adjacent properties. The geotechnical consultant recommends that the dewatering be performed on a localized basis and existing improvements monitored to minimize possible impacts.

Geotechnical reports addressing the project were reviewed by City Geology staff. Based on that review, the geotechnical consultant adequately addressed the soil and geologic conditions potentially impacting the proposed development for the purpose of environmental review. An addendum geotechnical report will be required for submittal of construction plans for ministerial permits.

Conclusion:

Staff has reviewed the proposed project and has determined the project is in conformance with all applicable sections of the San Diego Municipal Code regarding the RM-2-4 Zone, as allowed through the Site Development Permit Process. Staff has concluded that the proposed deviation will not adversely affect the General Plan, the Ocean Beach Precise Plan, and is appropriate for this location and will result in a more desirable project than would be achieved if designed in strict conformance with the development regulations of the applicable zone. Staff believes the required findings can be supported as substantiated in the Findings (Attachment 9) and recommends approval of the project as proposed.

ALTERNATIVES

1. **Approve** Coastal Development Permit No. 147134, and Site Development Permit No. 389939, **with modifications.**

2. **Deny** Coastal Development Permit No. 147134, and Site Development Permit No. 389939, **if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.**

3. **CERTIFY** Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 51076, and ADOPT the MMRP.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Westlake
Program Manager
Development Services Department

Laila Iskandar
Program Manager
Development Services Department

Attachments:

1. Project Location Map
2. Aerial Photograph
3. Community Plan Land Use Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Project Development Plans
6. Site Photos
7. Compatible Structures in Neighborhood
8. Draft Permit with Conditions
9. Draft Resolution with Findings
10. Community Planning Group Recommendation
11. Ownership Disclosure Statement
12. Project Chronology