



Planning Land Use and Mobility Committee

Case Report - Final

Project: The Jefferson Green Mixed Use Project, 20600 Ventura Boulevard, Woodland Hills, CA

Applicant: Integral Communities, John Stanek and Marcus Cook

Architect: Architects Orange, RC Alley and Tobin Symmank

Submitted by: Dennis T. DiBiase, PLUM Committee Member

Date: July 7, 2010

Project Description

The Jefferson Green at 20600 Ventura Boulevard will be a mixed-use complex with 332 luxury apartments, 8 live-work units and 6000sf of retail space. The apartments will be 'wrapped' around two separate, above grade, parking structures providing a total of 807 parking spaces. The amount of parking provided will allow conversion from apartments to condominiums in the future.

A public plaza, water feature and a kiosk for public notices will be included in the project.

Project Background

A previous project similar to the one that is proposed was approved on February 12, 2007 and the entitlements are current. The project was for 340 condominiums, 17,688sf of retail space and subterranean parking structures. At the time a zone change to allow the site to be used for its proposed intent and a height district change were included in the approvals. On September 26, 2006 a specific plan exception, a variance, a project permit compliance and a site plan review were approved.

The applicant's intent is to use the entitlement previously approved for the property and thus the existing conditions of approval will remain except that the new project differs from the previously approved project as follows:

- The project's aesthetic has been greatly improved.
- The project's environmental impact has been greatly reduced. The new design dramatically reduces the amount of dirt exported offsite. In addition, the project will now be LEED or Green Point Certified.
- The amount of retail is reduced, but the viability of the remaining retail space is greatly enhanced.

- Live/ work units are included to maintain activation of the street front across the entire property frontage.
- The parking structures are above grade. All tandem spaces have been eliminated.
- The units will initially and may be permanently 'for rent', but may be changed to 'for sale' in the future.
- Average unit size has been reduced from +/- 1,283sf to +/- 942sf – reducing the total area of the building, and providing more recreation and open space.
- The previous project was primarily a 2 and 3 bedroom unit project. The new project will be 46% 1 bedroom, 41% 2 bedroom, 5% 3 bedroom, 5% studio, and 2% live-work units.
- The project's smaller unit sizes are anticipated to be more affordable.

PLUM Committee's Discussions/ Analysis

The applicant met with the committee on multiple occasions, with a final presentation on June 15, 2010 responding to the committee's previous comments and input.

General Project Discussions and Conclusions

The project's aesthetic has been greatly improved compared to that which was previously approved. There is more variety at the pedestrian level and where the retail transitions to the residential levels. Overhangs have been added to the roof lines, more and deeper recesses have been provided at windows, more trellises are used and awnings have been added. Colors selections are richer and the project responds to the slope in a more appropriate manner.

At the request of PLUM, the public plaza was increased in size to better expose the curved facade at the drop off area and to expose the western side of the commercial/ restaurant space. The project has more open space and more affordability.

Retail/ Live/ Work

The applicant consulted with two independent real estate brokers that both concluded that the particular location on Ventura Boulevard could not support as much retail as was previously approved. In addition, because the original project design was not properly engineered, approximately 50% of the previously approved retail space was below the sidewalk level, making it even less desirable to potential tenants. In an effort to provide a more viable retail environment, the applicant is providing deeper retail space at the northwestern corner of the building at the bottom of the slope (the most visible location on the site) to accommodate a more vibrant mix of possible commercial uses including a restaurant. In order to maintain the PLUM committee's desire for an activated sidewalk and street environment, the applicant is proposing live work units along the remainder of the street frontage. These units would include retail, commercial, professional, creative office and other similar uses at the first floor. The second floor of the unit will be the living quarters. Responding to PLUM comments, large storefront type windows would be located on the first floor of these units to encourage nonresidential uses at these locations. Also the building management would enforce nonresidential uses at the first floor of these units. The live/ work will be directly accessible from the sidewalk and the floors of these units will step up the hill relating better to the street/ pedestrian than the previously approved plan.

Parking Garages

The parking garages are above ground allowing the project to work better with the existing slope and reducing the required exporting of soil by approximately 30%. Responding to PLUM concerns, the front parking garage was lowered by one level to sufficiently hide the structure behind the residential portion of the building. Site line studies were presented and showed that the southerly parking structure (located to the back of the site) had very little visibility from Ventura Boulevard or the 101 freeway. The very small portion that was visible, at the request of PLUM, will be revised so that no wall openings are used, so that the parking structure is not exposed to view.

Another item agreed to was that some of the parking spaces will be reallocated, at the request of PLUM, for customers and guests of the live/work units.

Sustainability

The project will be sustainable and the applicant has committed to a minimum LEED or Green Point Certified project – a greater level of commitment to sustainable development than is currently required in the existing entitlement. Commitment was made that points leading to these certifications will include a reduction in energy usage of 15% over and above current requirements set forth in the California Title 24 Energy Code. Understanding that this code had recently become 30% more stringent, PLUM concluded that sufficient concentration on the energy portion of these rating systems was being undertaken.

DOT/ Off Site Traffic Mitigations

The previous approval requires intersection improvements at Winnetka and Ventura Blvd. and also at Desoto and Ventura Blvd.. At the request of PLUM and with support from the District #3 Council Office, the applicant is pursuing substituting the Winnetka improvements with a landscaped median on Ventura Boulevard in front of the proposed project. The widening of the streets in front of Taft High School was deemed inappropriate to the pedestrian nature and the amount of students in the area. The landscaped median would aid in the enforcement of the right hand turn only coming out of the project that is a requirement in the approved entitlement conditions. The median would also add to Dennis Zine's effort to beautify Ventura Boulevard. PLUM has had discussions with multiple members of DOT regarding this matter and all are in support of the substitution pending review of the final design of the median. The owner of the project would be responsible for the landscaping and irrigation of the median and maintenance of all elements of the median along the property frontage. These requirements will be tied to the land. Despite the DOT's initial support, it should be noted that the adjacent property owners and Nissan dealership across from the property have not yet been contacted to determine their level of support for the proposed median. Although PLUM's preference is for the median, and is included in the motion proposed below, it is the committee's belief that the median issue would not affect the project's approval if this condition wasn't included.

Motion

The Planning, Land Use & Mobility Committee moves their recommendation that the Board of the Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council approve the revised Mixed-Use Complex

proposed for 20600 West Ventura Boulevard as reflected on the drawings dated and presented on June 15, 2010 with the following conditions:

1. One of the parking spaces for each of the live/work units shall be located in the commercial/public parking section of the parking structure to accommodate customers and clients of those residents
2. The portion of the parking structure exposed to view will not have wall openings and will be finished in a color to blend in with adjacent building elements.
3. Lighting at the top of the parking structures will be shielded, directed downward and the fixtures will not be visible from outside of the property lines.
4. All conditions currently relevant to said property will be met except as noted or reflected in the drawings dated June 15, 2010 and this motion, but may be modified as allowed by precedent, code or law by the City of Los Angeles' Planning Department, the Department of Building and Safety, the Department of Transportation, or other municipal agency.
The project will be LEED or Green Point Certified and will reflect a 15% savings in energy over and above the current Title 24 California Energy Code requirements.
6. The applicant will continue to pursue with the Department of Transportation, the substitution of the previously conditioned improvements to the intersection at Winnetka and Ventura Boulevards with a landscaped median along the property's frontage. If the median is found acceptable to DOT, the owner of the property will provide drought tolerant landscaping and canopy trees to the satisfaction of all agencies including the Woodland Hills Warner Center Neighborhood Council. The owner will irrigate and maintain the plantings and materials, including curbs and hardscaping. This requirement will be attached to the land, regardless of its use, unless other agreements are deemed acceptable to the City of Los Angeles in the future. Design of this median shall be in conformance with the standards set forth by DOT and the Ventura Cahuenga Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan. Applicant's failure to successfully negotiate this substitution shall not impact this project's approval.
7. Final elevations and color boards will be routed through the Neighborhood Council for final review and approval before the granting of a building permit. The project, at that time, will be reviewed only for substantial adherence to the design drawings dated June 15, 2010.