

ITEM 7-B

CITY OF ALAMEDA

Memorandum

To: Honorable President and
Members of the Planning Board

From: Henry Dong
Planner II

Date: November 14, 2016

Re: PLN16-0185 – 1629 Webster Street – Applicant: Daniel Hoy for Sam & Michelle Koka. Public Hearing to consider Design Review and Parking Exception to construct a new approximately 14,300-square-foot three-story mixed-use building located on the southwesterly corner of Webster Street and Pacific Avenue. The new building contains approximately 5,000-square-feet of ground floor retail with an approximately 9,300 square-foot senior boarding house within the second and third stories. The site is located within the C-C Community Commercial Zoning District.

BACKGROUND

The project site is located within the Community Commercial (C-C) Zoning District at the southwesterly corner of Webster Street and Pacific Avenue. The site contains an auto repair shop located on the southwest portion of the property that was approved by Use Permit No. UP06-0001. The proposed 14,300 square-foot mixed-use building would be constructed within the vacant northwestern portion of the lot between the Otaez Restaurant and Pacific Avenue. Two driveways provide access to the site from Pacific Avenue. The surrounding properties are located within the C-C Zoning District and include commercial businesses and parking. (Exhibit 1 – Project Plans)

The project site originally contained a Unocal gas and service station that dated back to at least 1950, and operated until 1996. After closure of the Unocal station, in 1998, the underground tanks were removed from the site and soil remediation was initiated. The site remained vacant until 2001.

In 2000, the City adopted revised zoning regulations for the Webster Street Commercial District. Use Permit No. UP01-01 was approved on May 14, 2001, to operate an auto repair use on the property. On May 8, 2006, the Planning Board approved Use Permit No. UP06-0001 to continue operation of the existing auto repair use on the property. Following the environmental remediation, the Alameda County Environmental Health Department initiated a closure case for the property which was approved on September 30, 2015. A letter received from ACEHD found the proposed plans for the mixed-use project are consistent with the approved closure case (Exhibit 2).

DISCUSSION

The applicant is proposing to build an approximately 14,300-square-foot three-story mixed-use building at the front of the property along Webster Street. The new mixed-use building will contain approximately 5,000 square feet of ground floor retail space and an approximately 9,300 square-foot senior lodging house on the second and third floors. The existing auto repair business would continue to operate at the rear of the property at its existing location.

The second and third floors of the proposed building would include 12 rooms for senior lodgers with a mix of one or two beds, with up to 16 total beds in the boarding house facility. Each room will contain a full bathroom, closets, one or two beds and counter space suitable for a small sink with side board areas, cabinets and personal refrigerator. On the third floor, the building includes a full service commercial kitchen, communal dining area, communal living room area, gym, toilets with showers, a multipurpose space with viewing lounge to the west, manager's quarters and office space.

Parking, landscaping, and bike lockers are located behind the building. There is also access to the facility from the rear entrance. Two bike racks are located on the sidewalk along Webster Street. The existing 1,700 square foot auto repair shop on the property will remain (Exhibit 3 – Project Description).

Compliance with Site Development Standards

As shown in Table 1 below, the project is in compliance with development standards in the C-C zoning district with the exception of the parking requirements.

Table 1: Project Compliance with C-C District Development Standards.			
	Requirement:	Proposed:	Compliance:
Maximum Building Height	40 ft.	38 ft. 3 in.	Complies
Maximum FAR (3:1)	3:1	1.6:1	Complies
Front Yard Setback (Lincoln Ave)	0 ft.	0 ft.	Complies
Minimum Side Yard Setback	0 ft.	0 ft.	Complies
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	0 ft.	63 ft.	Complies
Parking	24 spaces	17 provided	Reduction requested
Bicycle Parking	4 short term 4 long term	4 short term 4 long term	Complies
Open Space	0	0	Complies

Parking: The project does not meet the parking requirements of the AMC. As shown in Table 2, the AMC requires 24 off-street parking spaces. The applicant is providing 17 parking spaces.

Table 2: Project Compliance with Off-street Parking Requirements		
Parking	Rate	Total
Auto Repair Shop (1,700 sf)	2.9 spaces per 1,000 sf	5
Senior Housing Rooms (12)	0.75 spaces per unit	9
Manager's unit (1)	1 space per unit	1
Commercial Retail (3,100 sf)	2.9 spaces per 1,000 sf	9
Total Parking Required		24
On-site Parking Provided	8	-8
Leased Parking at Hawthorne Suites	9	-9
Parking Balance Remaining		7
Increased On-street Parking		3

The project provides eight on-site parking spaces and will lease nine additional off-street parking spaces from the Hawthorne Suites across the street for a total of 17 spaces. The proposal is conditioned to provide a seven year-lease for the nine (9) leased parking spaces with an option to extend the lease for an additional seven (7) years.

The site plan also provides the opportunity to add three (3) public on-street parking spaces on Pacific Avenue by removing the access driveway on the corner of Pacific Avenue and Webster Street, and reducing the width of the access driveway located at the northeast corner of the site. Although these public on-street parking spaces do not meet the requirements for "off-street" parking, the three new spaces are a public benefit to the larger commercial district.

Although the project is seven spaces short of the AMC requirements, AMC Section 30-4.9A (g) (8) allows the Planning Board to grant an exception to those requirements if the Planning Board can make two specific findings:

1. The parking demand will be less than the requirements in Section 30-7.6., and
2. The probable long-term occupancy of the building or structure based upon its design will not generate additional parking demand.

Staff believes these findings can be made for the following reasons:

- The project is deed restricted to occupancy by senior citizens.
- The project is constructing three (3) new on-street parking spaces for use by the general public.

- The project is conditioned to provide annual AC Transit Passes for distribution to the residents of the senior boarding house and employees of the ground floor retail spaces and auto repair shop.
- Webster Street is a major public transit corridor, with six AC transit bus routes serving the project site. Existing bus stops are located within one block of the facility, which reduces the need to drive for daily needs.
- Webster Street is a major commercial district with retail services located within easy walking distance of the facility, which reduces the need to drive for daily shopping needs.
- The project is conditioned to provide an on-site shuttle service that can take tenants to more distant destinations and appointments as needed.
- A traffic analysis letter received from PHA Transportation Consultants, dated September 13, 2016, recommends reducing the parking requirements for the project based on these measures (Exhibit 4 – Traffic & Parking Analysis Letter).

Architecture

The project is in compliance with the Citywide Design Guidelines and the Webster Street Design Manual. The proposed project design is compatible with the adjacent or neighboring buildings and promotes harmonious transitions in scale and character with surrounding land uses. The project utilizes a traditional commercial building type with design features to complement the surrounding commercial buildings. The street frontage incorporates zero foot setbacks along Webster Street and Pacific Avenue with recessed entries and large store front glazing consistent with the Webster Street Design Manual. The three story height of the building is compatible with the adjacent Otaez Restaurant building and Hawthorne Suites facility across the street. Furthermore, design guidelines encourage the use of taller buildings to anchor the corners of the street block. The continuous commercial street wall and ground floor retail design promote a harmonious transition with the surrounding commercial land uses.

The proposed design, exterior materials, and landscaping are visually compatible with the surrounding development. Design elements have been incorporated to ensure the compatibility of the building with the character and uses of adjacent development. A traditional roof cornice and belt line echo the horizontal elements of architectural features found on Webster Street. The design utilizes store front glazing with transom windows to differentiate the ground floor architecturally. Stucco recess spandrels and lintel moldings on the upper floors help to delineate the three stories. These architectural details help to break up the façade into smaller sections and mitigate the impact of the width of the building. Tall double-hung windows distinguished individually with stucco trim and column features provide vertical articulation to break up the horizontal massing of the building. The design also incorporates decorative tile bulkhead, recessed entries, and an angled corner element that anchors the street

corner consistent with the Webster Street Design Manual. Overall, the design and materials are compatible with the surrounding residential development and the Webster Street commercial district.

Lodging House Use and Zoning Text Amendment

The C-C zoning district allows dwelling units located within the second and third floors above the ground floor, but does not permit lodging houses or boarding houses. The C-1 Neighborhood Business District and the C-2 Central Business District both permit lodging or boarding houses and residential units on the second and third floors.

The purpose of the C-C Commercial zoning district as stated in AMC Section 30-4.9A is to support “pedestrian-oriented retail and service uses on the ground floor level, with office and residential uses on the upper levels.”

Staff believes that permitting lodging houses on the upper floors of buildings in the C-C District is consistent with the intent and purpose of the C-C District. Staff is preparing a report for Planning Board consideration which will propose that the Planning Board recommend a series of zoning text amendments concerning lodging houses, senior assisted living, and other related residential uses to the City Council. Those amendments will include an amendment to permit lodging houses in the C-C District with a use permit. The site currently has a use permit for the operation of the automobile repair service. As described above, staff believes that with the necessary zoning text amendments, the proposed use is appropriate for the property.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project is categorically exempt from further review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 In-Fill Development Projects.

RECOMMENDATION

Hold a public hearing and provide direction to staff regarding Design Review and Parking Exception (No. PLN16-0185) for 1629 Webster Street.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry Dong
Planner II

Exhibits:

1. Project Plans

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2. Alameda County Environmental Health Department Letter
3. Project Description
4. PHA Transportation Consultants – Traffic & Parking Analysis