

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 10, 2022	
To: Brian Froelich, Senior Planner	Organization: City of Capitola
From: RRM Design Group	Title: Design Review Team
Project Name: Capitola Senior Living	Project Number: 1783-04-CU22
Topic: 3720 Capitola Road Conceptual Review	

Dear Brian,

We have reviewed the proposed conceptual project design for compliance with the City of Capitola Design Review Criteria (DRC), found within Chapter 17.120.070 – Design Review Criteria as well as the Objective Standards (OS) Ordinance, found within Chapter 17.82 – Objective Standards for Multifamily and Mixed-Use Residential Development within the City Municipal Code.

Conceptual project documents reviewed include T Tile Sheet, A1 Architectural Site Plan, A2 First Floor Plan, A3 Second Floor Plan, A4 Third Floor Plan (Fourth Floor Similar), A5 Exterior Elevations, and A6 3D Views.

Neighborhood Character and Patterns

According to the City of Capitola Zoning Map, the portion of the project site located within the City is zoned Community Commercial (C-C), with the southern portion (1610 Bulb Avenue) located within the County of Santa Cruz jurisdiction. This County portion of the project site is under consideration for annexation into the City of Capitola, which would apply the same Community Commercial (C-C) zoning.



Project Location

The parcel currently contains two existing single-family residences and dog-boarding facility. Along Capitola Road, the area can be generally described as a commercial context, while on Bulb Avenue, the area can be generally described as a residential context. The area immediately surrounding the project site is characterized by a variety of land uses including commercial to the north, east, and west and single-family residential parcels to the south.

Project Design Review

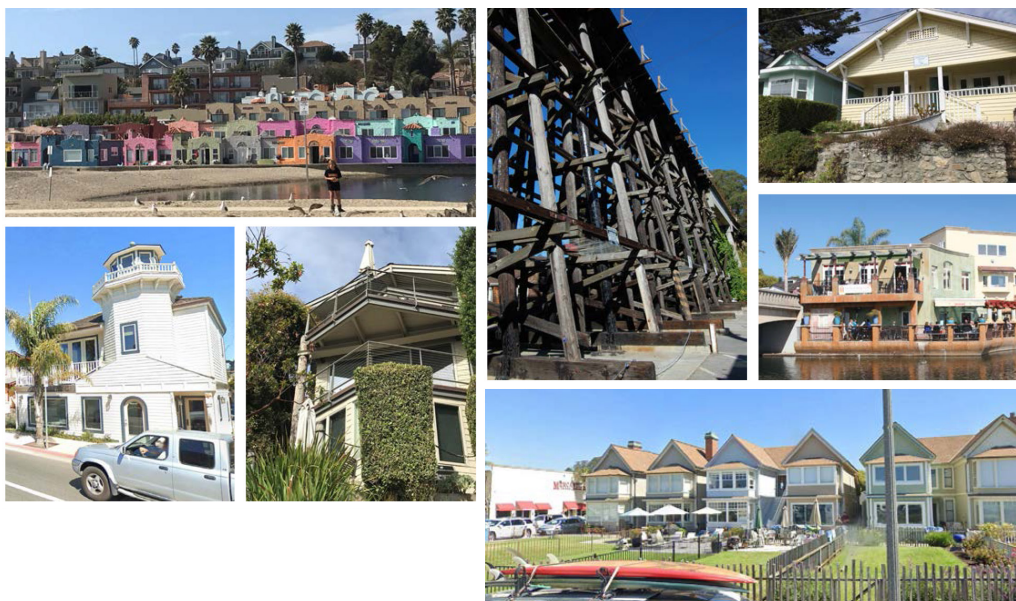
The conceptual project proposes to construct four-story, 80 units of senior housing, which includes 27 memory care and 53 assisted living units on a 0.93-acre site. Thirty-two parking spaces area proposed. Based upon our review of the conceptual project plan set, the applicant proposes an architectural style that most closely resembles an architectural style that “Contemporary Coastal” and has been reviewed as such within this review.

Community Character

The idea of community character in and of itself can often times be difficult to describe and adequately captured within an individual project design. Rather than having only one reference point or element to refer to that is emblematic of the character of a place, it is more often than not a series or collection of elements – the natural environment, a sequence of buildings at varying heights, juxtaposed materials and colors, landscape placement and selection, among others – that collectively create the setting for the creation of a distinctive sense of place.

As indicated in the City’s General Plan, one of the primary guiding principles for the City is Community Identity. Community Identity highlights the desire of the Capitola community to ensure new development enhances the small-town feel and coastal village charm while also ensuring that all areas of the City possess a unique, memorable, and high-quality identity (GP-2). Moreover, DRC 17.120.070.A takes this further, identifying that a development’s site plan, height, massing, architectural style, materials, and landscaping all collectively contribute to the unique coastal village character and distinctive sense of place.

Community Character Examples within Capitola

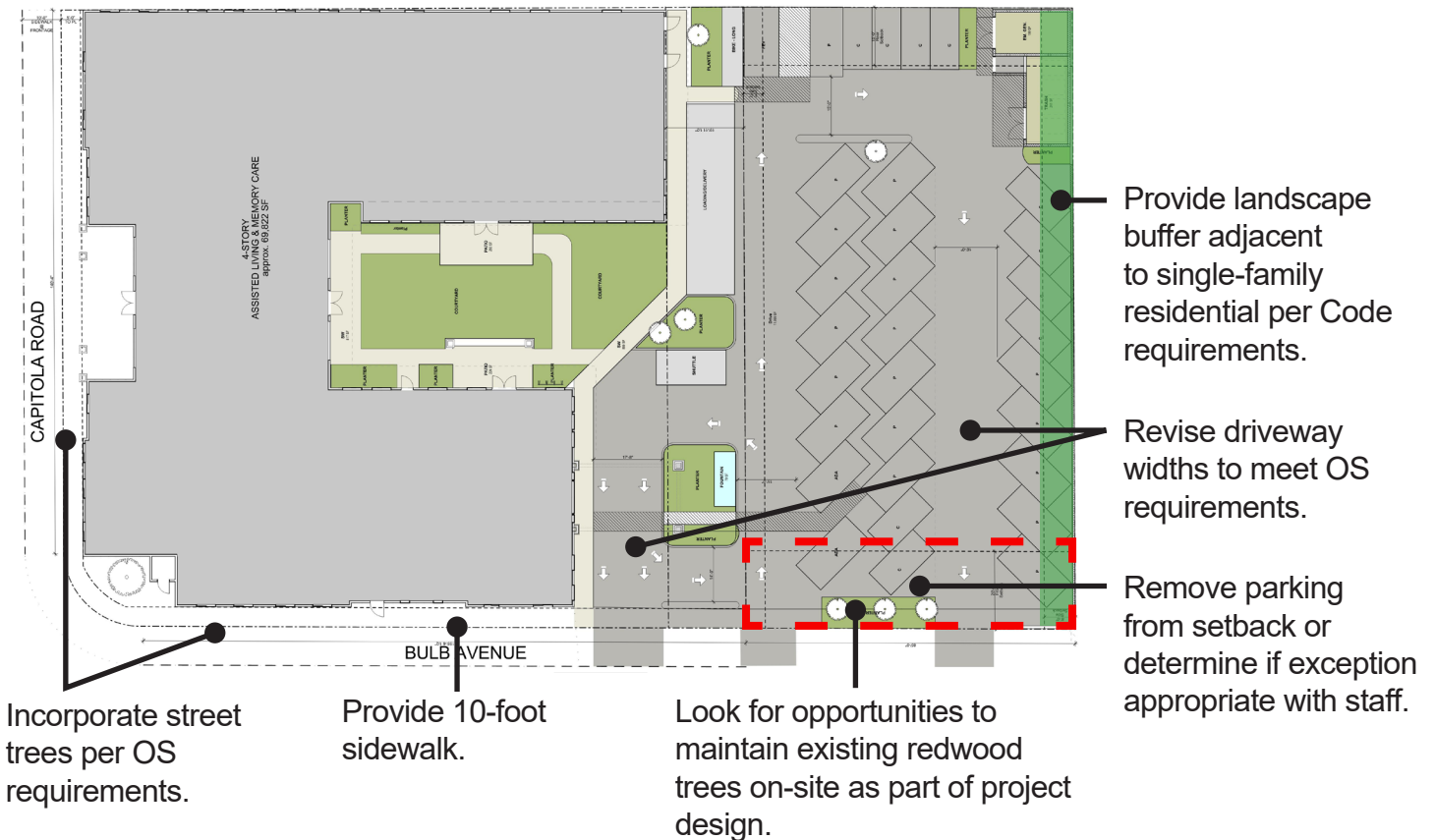


In reviewing the provided conceptual plan set for the Capitola Senior Living project, while the applicant has introduced elements within the project to convey the primary guiding design principals, as discussed in greater detail within this conceptual review, there are a number of opportunities for the applicant to address that would collectively begin to create a project that more closely exudes the unique coastal village character and distinctive sense of place that is Capitola. As this is only the first conceptual project review, it is anticipated that the City will receive a formal project submittal of the project at a future date that addresses the comments herein and will also include a follow-up design review effort.

Site Planning

Site planning involves an understanding of appropriate building placement and configuration, but also the consideration of surrounding context, landscape design, adjacent uses, hardscape, and parking. In general, the applicant has appropriately oriented the building towards Capitola Road, with secondary emphasis along Bulb Avenue. In reviewing the streetscape conditions, Sheet A1 identifies a 10-foot sidewalk along Capitola Road, consistent with OS 17.82.040.B requirements. However, the applicant should provide sidewalks that meet the minimum sidewalk width requirement on Bulb Avenue. Streetscape character is an important visual aesthetic component of the City. According to OS 17.82.040.B.2, one street tree is to be provided for every 30 feet of linear feet of sidewalk length. The applicant should provide an adequate number of street trees are provided, while also meeting other relevant street tree design standard requirements identified in OS 17.82.040.B.2. In addition, per Code requirements, a landscape buffer is required to be provided between commercial and residential zoned properties and the applicant should incorporate relevant landscape setbacks within the

Site Plan



project design. It should be noted that no formal conceptual landscape plan has been included as part of the preliminary project submittal (DRC 17.120.070.M). Going forward, the applicant should provide a conceptual landscape plan to articulate the proposed landscaping for the project in order to allow for adequate staff review. The conceptual landscape plan should also take into consideration the opportunity to maintain existing trees located on-site within the project design, such as the redwood trees located along Bulb Avenue.

To support a pedestrian-friendly streetscape, the OS and DRC dictates that parking facilities be minimized from view from public streets in order to encourage alternative modes of movement (OS 17.82.050.B and DRC 17.120.070.L). As proposed, parking for the project is located at the southern portion of the site and is accessed off of Bulb Avenue. OS 17.82.050.B.1 notes that no parking is allowed within a front or street side setback area. However, as seen on Sheet A1, it appears parking is proposed within the street side setback area. Applicant should clarify with staff if parking within the street side setback is acceptable and if determined to be adequate, should then comply with the design standards noted in OS 17.82.050.B.1.b. Per OS 17.82.050.B.2, the maximum width of a new one-way driveway crossing a public sidewalk is 12 feet and 20-feet for a two-car driveway. One-way driveway widths on the plan are noted at 14-ft, 15-ft, and 16-ft respectively, with two-way driveway widths noted at 17'8". Going forward, applicant should revise driveway designs to ensure consistency with OS 17.82.050.B.2 requirements. Consistent with OS 17.82.050.B.3, the applicant has proposed three curb cuts along Bulb Avenue, two one-way and one two-way. Designated loading area for the project is identified on Sheet A1 at the eastern portion of the parking area, consistent with OS 17.82.050.B.6 requirements.

Architecture

The City of Capitola as a whole, and the Village in particular, has an eclectic mix of architectural styles and detailing that have evolved organically over the years and that contribute to the unique coastal village character. Section 17.120.070.I of the Zoning Code articulates that buildings should have an architectural style(s) that is compatible with the surrounding building and natural environment, is an authentic implementation of established architectural styles, and reflect Capitola's unique coastal village character. As previously discussed above, the style portrayed in the conceptual plan set includes characteristics of a "Contemporary Coastal" style. The conceptual project lacks the stylistic detailing and level of applied design elements that would further enhance the unique coastal village character of the community. Going forward, the applicant should look for opportunities to further enhance the architectural style of the project by providing enhanced articulation/detailing, greater variation in material/color application, and/or introducing additional architectural styles that reflect the unique coastal village character.

Examples of Coastal Architecture in Capitola



Building massing, or the way the building is sized and appears, is a primary and important component of building design that provides for human-scale and adequate proportion that provides for transition to adjacent buildings and lower density residential uses (DRC 17.120.070.H). In general, the building design proposes minimal projecting and recessed elements and varying wall heights at street facing elevations, resulting in the appearance of 50-foot-tall unarticulated wall planes, inconsistent with the existing surrounding context. Moreover, the building lacks adequate proportion and scale, appearing box-like and lacking a connection to human-scale. Going forward, the applicant should break-up the 50-foot wall plane with additional projections/recesses and revise to provide greater balance and proportionality within the design to provide greater human-scale (OS 17.82.070.1.a and DRC 17.120.070.H). It appears a prominent massing recess has been provided at ground level along Capitola Road, however the massing recess does continue to the upper stories and no prominent recess is provided along the Bulb Avenue frontage (OS 17.82.070.1.b). While the property to the south of the project site is located within

Capitola Road Concept

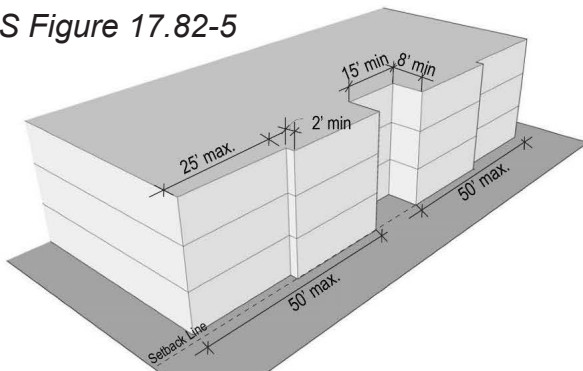


Introduce additional projecting/recessed massing elements from ground level to roof at prominent street facing elevations, to minimize box-like appearance and enhance proportionality.

Vary massing height at ground-level to provide more human-scaled connections with one- and two-story elements.

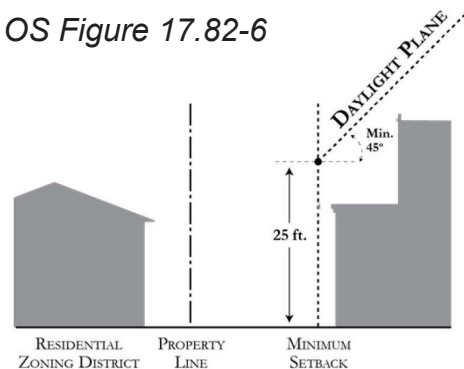
County jurisdiction, the land use designation is single-family residential equivalent and it is recommended that the applicant verify consistency with the daylight plane requirements of OS 17.82.070.2 as well as neighborhood compatibility and privacy requirements of DRC 17.120.070.B and 17.120.070.F, looking for opportunities to step down the building massing to transition to the single-family residential uses, while also minimizing potential traffic, parking, noise, odor, and privacy impacts.

OS Figure 17.82-5



Street facing elevations are required to meet the massing requirements of OS 17.82.070.B.1

OS Figure 17.82-6



Ensure that the proposed South Elevation meets the requirements of OS 17.82.070.2.

DRC 17.120.070.J notes that building facades should be well articulated to add visual interest, distinctiveness, and human scale. The project has begun to include articulation and detailing that are varied and interesting with human-scale design details. While some of these elements assist in reducing the perceived massing and box-like features of the building, additional attention to articulation and detailing is needed to further reduce the building mass and box-like appearance, add visual interest, and human scale (OS 17.82.080.A and DRC 17.120.070.J). For example, while trellis and shed roof elements at the first story aide in defining the human-scale, they appear haphazard and intermittently applied within the design and do little to reduce the box-like appearance. Also, it appears blank wall planes along street facing elevations have been largely minimized, however applicant should verify consistency with OS 17.82.080.B.1, as there appears to be areas along both Capitola Road and Bulb Avenue that exceed the requirements.

North Elevation



Projecting roof eaves shall be minimum of 2-feet in width.

Verify roof form variation percentage of 17.82.080.B.4.b.

Verify blank walls meet the requirements of OS 17.82.080.B.1.

OS 17.82.080.B.3 identifies that each building façade facing a street shall include a minimum of two façade design elements, as identified in the OS. Along Capitola Road, it appears the project intends to include balconies, varied exterior colors, and varied wall materials, while along Bulb Avenue, it appears the project intends to include shutters, a balcony, varied exterior colors, and varied wall materials. While the design intent is generally provided, the applicant should verify façade design element approach as well as consistency with the percentage requirements of OS 17.82.080.B.3 for selected elements. Moreover, while the conceptual plan set provided appears to show consistent architectural application on all sides of the building (OS 17.82.080.B.6), the façade design elements approach should result in a unified design aesthetic. Also it should be noted that no elevation has been provided for the east elevation (internal side) for staff review and should be provided going forward. In addition, while faux closed shutters appear to be placed along the West and South Elevations, they do not appear on the Capitola Road elevation, and the applicant should provide consistent articulation and detailing on all elevations. Rather than faux closed shutters, shutters associated with windows may better facilitate the design direction intended for the project.

The project proposes to include gable, hip, shed, and dormer roof elements within the design, considered appropriate to the selected architectural style direction. Per OS 17.82.080.B.4.a, roof eaves are required to project two-feet from the street-facing building wall and include ornamental brackets or decorative fascia with eave returns. While decorative brackets have been provided at gable ends, it is unclear the projecting width of the roof eaves and the applicant should verify consistency with this requirement. Moreover, while gable, hip, and shed roof elements are shown on the street-facing

elevations, applicant should verify consistency with the percentage roof form variation of OS 17.82.080.B.4.b and the roof detail and ornamentation requirement of OS 17.82.080.B.4.c.

Acknowledging the need for vehicular drop off and ADA access, the primary entry for the project is located on the south elevation, adjacent to the drop-off and parking areas. Another secondary entrance is provided along the Capitola Road frontage. As identified within the OS and DRC, primary building entrances providing interior access to multiple units must face the street (OS 17.82.060.B.3 and DRC 17.120.070.E) in order to provide an active public realm and inviting pedestrian environment. Applicant should look for opportunities to relocate the primary entry to a street facing elevation or work with City staff to approve an exception to this requirement. If an exception is pursued, the primary entry design shall comply with the design standards identified in OS 17.82.060.B.3.c. In addition, the design associated with the secondary entrance should be revised to allow for greater sunlight access and visibility, while also meeting relevant OS 17.82.060.C.1 design criteria. As currently designed, the upper stories tower over the entry, creating additional shading to this entry located on the north side of the building and should also include additional refinements to enhance its prominence and presence along Capitola Road. While an on-site pedestrian walkway is shown on Sheet A1 connecting to the public sidewalk, the applicant should verify it meets the 6-foot minimum width requirement of OS 17.82.060.B.4. The primary entry design contains a covered entry featuring a gabled roof element and supporting decorative columns projecting from the building façade (OS 17.82.060.C.1). While consistent with the design direction of the project, the transitional relationship between the design approach above and the primary entry below creates an abrupt transition that could be softened through various design interventions, while maintaining primary entry emphasis.

Site Plan



Relocate primary entry to face the street.

Verify width of internal walkway meets 6-foot minimum requirement.

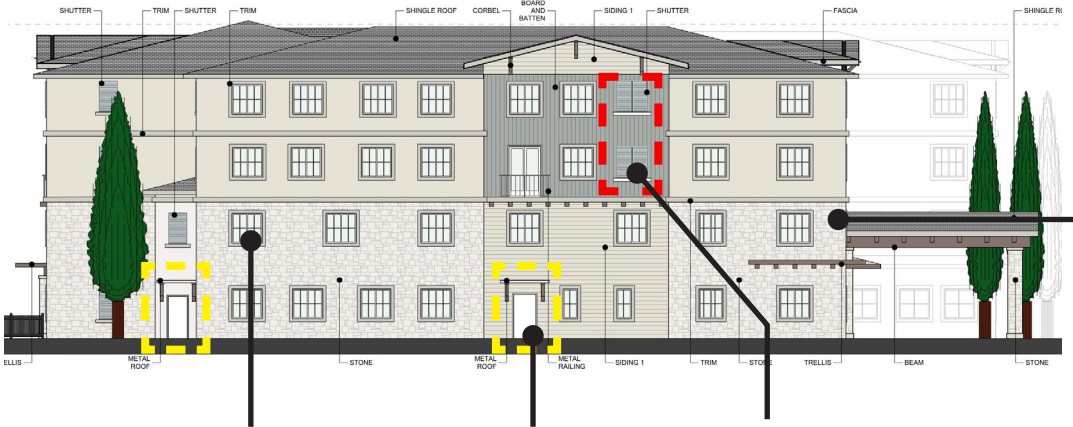
South Elevation



Soften transition of primary entry to box-like building by integrating design interventions to better blend the two design elements. Maintain primary entry emphasis.

Windows proposed along the street facing elevations appear to provide built-up profile trim/framing, consistent with OS 17.82.080.B.2, with detailing continuing onto the south elevation facing the parking area. However, it is unclear whether or not doors along these same street facing elevations contain the built-up profile trim/framing. Applicant should incorporate built-up profile trim/framing at street-facing doors as well as verify consistency with the 2-inch minimum trim offset for windows and doors from the building. In addition, east elevation along the interior property line is shown at a 0-foot setback with windows. Applicant should verify with the fire department to determine whether they can adequately serve the project as shown.

West Elevation



Vary application of materials/colors. Design appears bottom heavy, lacking connection to upper stories.

Verify built-up profile trim/framing of windows and doors meets minimum 2-inch offset.

Provide built-up profile trim/framing at doors.

Associate shutters with windows, rather than as tacked on elements.

DRC 17.120.070.K of the Zoning Code states that projects should include a mix of natural, high-quality, and durable materials that are appropriate to a selected architectural style, enhance building articulation, and are compatible with surrounding development. As noted on Sheet A3, materials proposed for the project include vertical and horizontal siding, board and batten, El Dorado stone veneer, trim, metal roof, and laminate shingles. Colors proposed include Dunn Edwards Trade Winds (Det 647), Dunn Edwards Silver Screen (Det 591), Dunn Edwards Light Gray (Det 789), Iron Creek (Det 5775), Dunn Edwards River Rocks (Det 6061), and Dunn Edwards So Chic! (Det 614). While not inappropriate to a coastal aesthetic, the application of colors/materials appears haphazard, splitting the building in half and further emphasizing the poor building proportions (DRC 17.120.070.K). Moreover, the application of darker colors at the upper stories furthers the appearance of a top-heavy project. Going forward, the applicant should look for opportunities to refine the color/material application to enhance the selected architectural style and relocate darker colors to ground level in order to more clearly define a base, body, and cap.

General Comments

Given the conceptual stage in which this project was reviewed, minimal information was provided regarding the sustainability aspects of the project. Going forward, the applicant should clarify any intended project features related to sustainability, such as on-site energy generation, passive solar design, enhanced energy efficiencies, water

conservation measures, and/or other green building techniques to allow for adequate staff review (DRC 17.120.070.D).

In reviewing the Site Plan, the trash and emergency generator enclosures are located to the southeast at the rear of the site and away from the street view. Applicant should ensure that the trash enclosure is appropriately screened from street view with solid enclosure (OS 17.82.090.B.1.b and DRC 17.120.070.S). Moreover, additional information should be provided regarding the emergency generator enclosure to allow for adequate review.

It is assumed that roof wells will be utilized to screen mechanical equipment atop the roof. The applicant should ensure that all equipment will be adequately screened with sufficient roof height (OS 17.82.090.B.2.a and DRC 17.120.070.S).

As noted in the CZC, exterior lighting should be considered an integral part of a project design, with light fixtures being designed, located, and positioned in order to minimize illumination of the sky and adjacent properties (DRC 17.120.070.Q). As part of the next submittal, applicant should clearly identify type and location of proposed site and building light fixtures for the project while also ensuring selected fixtures minimize illumination of the sky and nearby properties.

Sheet A2 appears to show front patio along Capitola Road projecting into public right-of-way. Applicant should clarify design intent and approach.

Contextual white boxes shown in project renderings should be shown at existing, real-world scale and in context of the project site.

Additional Information Needed

The following project information is needed to ensure adequate staff review going forward:

1. Conceptual Landscape Plan
2. East Building Elevation

Design Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to better respond to the proposed “Contemporary Coastal” architectural style and to enhance the overall project design.

Community Character

1. Revise project design to include elements to convey the primary guiding design principles, as discussed further within this review, and address opportunities to ensure the project more closely exudes the unique coastal village character and distinctive sense of place that is Capitola (DRC 17.120.070.H).

Site Planning

2. Ensure that the sidewalks meet the minimum 10-foot sidewalk width requirement on Bulb Avenue (OS 17.82.040.B).
3. Provide an adequate number of street trees along the street frontage per OS 17.82.040.B.2, while also meeting other relevant street tree design standard requirements identified in OS 17.82.040.B.2.
4. Provide a landscape buffer per Municipal Code requirements between commercial and residential zoned properties within the project design.
5. Provide a conceptual landscape plan to allow for adequate staff review (DRC 17.120.070.M). The conceptual landscape plan should also take into consideration the opportunity to maintain existing trees located on-site within the project design, such as the redwood trees located along Bulb Avenue.
6. Remove parking from side yard setback area per OS 17.82.050.B.1. If staff determines parking in the side yard setback to be acceptable, any parking within the setback should comply with the design standards noted in OS 17.82.050.B.1.b.
7. Revise driveway designs to ensure consistency with OS 17.82.050.B.2 requirements.

Architecture

8. Enhance the selected architectural style of the project by providing greater articulation/detailing, additional variation in material/color application, and/or introducing additional architectural styles that reflect the unique coastal village character (DRC 17.120.070.I).
9. Break-up the 50-foot wall plane with additional projections/recesses and wall heights in order to provide greater balance and proportionality within the design and provide greater human-scale (OS 17.82.070.1.a and DRC 17.120.070.H).
10. Provide a prominent massing recess element along Capitola Road and Bulb Avenue from ground level to roof level to enhance human-scale and proportionality (OS 17.82.070.1.b).

11. Ensure consistency with the daylight plane requirements of OS 17.82.070.2 at the south elevation, looking for opportunities to step down the building massing to transition to the single-family residential uses, and the neighborhood compatibility requirements of DRC 17.120.070.B and 17.120.070.F, minimizing potential traffic, parking, noise, odor, and privacy impacts.
12. Refine articulation and detailing to further reduce the building mass and box-like appearance of the project and enhance human scale (OS 17.82.080.A and DRC 17.120.070.J). For example, while trellis and shed roof elements at the first story aide in defining the human-scale, they appear haphazard and intermittently applied within the design and do little to reduce the box-like appearance.
13. Verify consistency with OS 17.82.080.B.1, as there appears to be blank wall areas along both Capitola Road and Bulb Avenue that exceed the blank wall design standard requirements.
14. Verify façade design element approach as well as consistency with the percentage requirements of OS 17.82.080.B.3 for selected design elements.
15. Provide consistent architectural application on all sides of the building in order to provide a unified design aesthetic (OS 17.82.080.B.6). For example, faux closed shutters appear to be placed along the West and South Elevations, they do not appear on the Capitola Road elevation; rather than faux closed shutters, shutters associated with windows may better facilitate the design direction intended for the project.
16. Provide East Elevation for the building to allow for adequate staff review.
17. Verify consistency with the percentage roof form variation of OS 17.82.080.B.4.b and the roof detail and ornamentation requirement of OS 17.82.080.B.4.c.
18. Verify roof eaves project a minimum of 2-feet from street facing building facades (OS 17.82.080.B.4.a).
19. Look for opportunities to relocate the primary building entry to a street facing elevation (OS 17.82.060.B.3 and DRC 17.120.070.E) in order to provide an active public realm and inviting pedestrian environment. If an exception is pursued, the primary entry design shall comply with the design standards identified in OS 17.82.060.B.3.c.
20. Revise the secondary building entry facing Capitola Road to allow for greater sunlight access and visibility, while also meeting relevant OS 17.82.060.C.1 design criteria.
21. Verify on-site sidewalk connecting to the public sidewalk meets the 6-foot minimum width requirement of OS 17.82.060.B.4.
22. Soften the building transition to the primary building entry through various design interventions, while maintaining primary building entry emphasis (OS 17.82.060.C.1).
23. Incorporate build-up profile trim/framing at street-facing doors (OS 17.82.080.B.2).
24. Verify consistency with the 2-inch minimum trim offset for windows and doors from the building (OS 17.82.080.B.2).
25. Verify with the fire department that 0-foot building setback at east property line can be adequately serviced as shown.
26. Refine the colors/materials application to align with the selected architectural style and relocate darker colors to ground level in order to more clearly define a base, body, and cap in order to enhance the overall project design (DRC 17.120.070.K).

General Comments

27. Clarify any intended project features related to sustainability, such as on-site energy generation, passive solar design, enhanced energy efficiencies, water conservation measures, and/or other green building techniques (DRC 17.120.070.D).
28. Provide trash and emergency generators enclosures to ensure areas are screened from street view with solid enclosure (OS 17.82.090.B.1.b). Provide additional information on emergency generator enclosure for adequate review.
29. Ensure that all mechanical equipment is adequately screened with sufficient roof well height (OS 17.82.090.B.2.a).
30. Identify type and location of proposed site and building light fixtures for the project while also ensuring selected fixtures minimizes illumination of the sky and nearby properties as part of the next submittal (DRC 17.120.070.Q).
31. Applicant should clarify design intent and approach of patio shown along Capitola Road that projects into the public right-of-way.
32. Show contextual white boxes in project renderings at existing, real-world scale and in context of the project site.

Overall, we feel the applicant has proposed a project that is lacking connection to the location and context of the project site. As addressed above, we have a number of concerns identified regarding consistency with the OS related to massing, neighborhood context, articulation/detailing, roof, primary entry, windows and doors, among others, that will have to be adequately addressed by the applicant to ensure a project that appropriately addresses the location and context of the site while also being consistent with City's desire for high quality new developments.

Very truly yours,

RRM DESIGN GROUP