

PROJECT: 956 Oregon Street – Multi-Use Residential and Commercial Project

Date: September 20 2023

Agency Responding: City of Sonoma City Engineer

Contact Person: Gerard J. Ficello

Contact Phone/E-mail: gjficello@sonomacounty.net

COMMENTS:

See attached staff memorandum date 9/20/2023

If you do not already receive agenda notices from the City of Sonoma; please indicate below if you wish to be notified of public hearings scheduled for this project. If you do not indicate your preference, we will assume you do not want notification or copies of the environmental documents.

Public Hearing Notification ✓ Yes No
Signed by: [Signature] Date: 9/20/2023

Please submit your comments **on or before Monday, September 25, 2023** to the following:

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City Engineer	532-1867

Date: September 20, 2023

To: Emma Goldsmith, Contract Planner
From: Gerard J. Fuccillo, City Engineer

Subject: **Advisory Agency Response from the City Engineer to your Notice of September 11, 2023;
RE: 956 Oregon Street, APN 056-106-004, Design Review, Site Plan Review, Zoning
Amendment, Use Permit and Variance to Permit a Multi-Use Residential and Commercial Project**

Project Description: The project consists of a three story building with 12 apartments on the second and third floors fronting on Oregon Street, with the first floor basement fronting on a parking lot below Oregon Street which proposes 6 commercial units. Total gross square foot of the building from dimensions shown on the Site Plan is 19,020 SF (40 x 158.5 x 3). The project is on a .64 acre assessor parcel, although it uses a portion of the S. Washington Street right of way for its parking lot and entrance, as well as an undeveloped section of Mariposa Street, which is used as an access from the parking lot to Oregon St. The project includes major grading for the parking lot and an entrance from S. Washington Street over a vegetated drainage area running along the S. Washington Street frontage.

Project Plans: Project plans included in the notice are:

1. A Site Plan showing the location of the new apartment building on Oregon Street with commercial under it, the entrance on Washington Street, parking lot, access driveway to Oregon St on the Mariposa Street Right of Way, and adjacent parcels to Tuolumne Street. The site plan appears to be sketched by the owner/applicant on a Land Surveyors plan of the assessor parcel and adjacent areas.
2. For Design Review, a color elevation photo of the proposed elevation of the apartment building along Oregon Street with photos of the siding materials and colors. The elevation photo appears to be a brochure photo of an 8 unit apartment frontage, which has been cut apart and pasted together to be a 12 unit apartment frontage, and without any relationship the site grades.

Review Comments: In review of the project plans, area topography and a field review, I would like to make the following comments:

1. Grading. This project will require major grading of the entire assessor parcel, portions of S. Washington Street right of way as well as the undeveloped portion of Mariposa Street right of way presently used by TUD for a public sewer line. The submitted Site Plan indicates the requirement of retaining walls along 3 sides of the building and portions of the site, as well as a major retaining wall along the southerly right of way of Mariposa Street for the access driveway between the parking lot and Oregon St.

As is shown on the Site Plan, the height of the retaining wall on Mariposa St along adjoining property varies in height from 8' to 17' at the drainage channel to 12' at the westerly right of way of Oregon Street. The retaining wall then crosses the right of way of Oregon St with a height of 12' to 5'. The construction and backfill of this particular retaining wall will render the existing public sewer along Mariposa Street unserviceable and eliminate access to adjoining large parcels to the south of the Mariposa Street which are presently zoned R-2. Although the sewer line can be replaced, the lack of secondary access would seem detrimental to the development of two adjoining parcels to the south of the project totaling 7.5 acres (APN 056-107-02&05).

2. Drainage. The project the would fill in a natural drainage channel through the site and along the S. Washington Street right of way which receives piped storm drainage from upstream areas. The drainage basin to this drainage channel is fairly large and includes areas northerly of the site to Hospital Road, Symons Lane, the old County Hospital and intervening residential areas. We have had flooding in the area of Tuolumne Street just upstream of the project due to blockage of the storm drainage through the site.

The Site Plan submitted does not address drainage through and from the site. For construction on the site , a drainage study should be required to size a culvert through the site and site drainage, as well as access effects downstream. As the vegetated channel presently acts as a detention basin, improvements onsite may also require improvement to the driveway crossing culvert downstream of the project.

3. Tree and vegetation removal. For environmental review of this project, a biological study of the tree and vegetation removal should be conducted for potential riparian vegetation and tree replacement.

4. A Traffic Study should be conducted in regard to the new commercial use entrance on S. Washington Street. S. Washington Street is a two lane Minor Arterial Street in the City with fairly heavy traffic at times. The ultimate active transportation plan for Washington Street is to add bike lanes or a path. and sidewalks similar to Mono Way, which is in the same Minor Arterial category. The Traffic Study should address the safety of the new entrance onto S. Washington Street and access the need for lane widening or a turn lane for the subject use.

5. Plans Submitted. Considering the size and type of this project as a multifamily/commercial mix and with major grading, I feel that we should have more professional level plans for Planning Commission approval of a Site Plan and Design Review. Considering the grading of the site, the Site Plan should include a preliminary Grading Plan which clearly shows the proposed parking lot and roadway grades, cuts and fills as well as retaining walls, on a topographic map. Design Review elevations should show elevations of the 4 sides of the building as related to a profile of the site, not just a pieced together brochure photo of the Oregon Street frontage.

Considering the number of residential units, and commercial usage with major grading, this project is far beyond the exemptions included in the California Business and Code Section 5500 (Architects Practice Act) and 6700 (Professional Engineers Act) where anyone can prepare plans for approval or construction. B&P Code Sections 5537, 5538 and 6737.1 list the type of projects exempt from the requirements of having plans prepared by a California licensed Architect or Engineer, With 12 residential units combined with over 6000 SF of commercial space in one building, this project far exceeds the exemptions and should have had plans prepared by an Architect or Civil Engineer, even for the preliminary approvals such as Site Plan and Design Review prior to building permits.

Summary:

In summary, the plans submitted for this notice should be rejected for Site Plan/Design Review and more professional level plans which address the concerns noted above, be submitted for this proposal.

It is suggested that the proposal be less in density so that the project does not take up the entire frontage of Oregon Street and that a driveway from Oregon Street to the parking area below be provided onsite without changing the grade across Oregon Street. The grade along the Mariposa Street sewer easement should remain the same and Oregon Street should not be blocked for a future extension southerly to adjacent properties.

A reduction in density could also eliminate the need for a side setback variance. Side setback for a two story multifamily residential should be 10' as is noted in the C zone reference to CO zone regulation. A reduction in density would also provide more open space and landscape areas for replacement of the trees and vegetation removed by the project, as well as add some common space for the future residents.



Gerard J. Fuccillo
City Engineer