



Meeting Date: 11/18/2024
Item Number: 4a
Time Estimate: 45 minutes

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

SUBJECT: 466 DANA STREET (ARCH-0329-2022) CONSTRUCTION OF 20 LOW TO VERY LOW INCOME AFFORDABLE HOMES AND REHABILITATION OF THE HISTORIC ROSA BUTRÓN ADOBE

FILE NUMBER: ARCH-0329-2022

ADDRESS: 466 Dana Street

BY: David Amini, Housing Coordinator
Phone Number: (805) 781-7524
Email: damini@slocity.org

FROM: Rachel Cohen, Principal Planner
Phone Number: (805) 781-7574
Email: rcohen@slocity.org

APPLICANT: Smart Share Housing Solutions **REPRESENTATIVE:** Dana Hunter

RECOMMENDATION

Review the proposed project in terms of its consistency with the Community Design Guidelines and applicable City Standards and provide recommendations to the Planning Commission.

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The applicant, Smart Share Housing Solutions, is proposing a new residential project, Waterman Village, located at 466 Dana Street that consists of the construction of 20 low to very-low income, prefabricated affordable homes ranging in size from 220 to 264 square feet (see Attachment A, Project Plans). The new construction units are clustered around the historic adobe and utilize raised pier foundations to accommodate the 100-year flood plain requirements. Each unit is accessible via a raised boardwalk with ramps and stairs. The project includes a request for a concession pursuant to California State Density Bonus law for a reduction of parking requirements from 29 required vehicle spaces to 4 provided spaces, as well as a reduction of bicycle parking from 40 required spaces to 24 provided spaces. The project is located in the Downtown Core within short walking distance of shopping, restaurants, and other amenities. The project also proposes to rehabilitate the Master List Historic Rosa Butrón Adobe. The historic adobe will be used as a community gathering space as well as office and administrative space for the on-site manager. The project scope includes the demolition of non-historic additions at the rear of the adobe, as well as removal of 12 trees with a compensatory planting plan that provides the required 1:1 replacement of trees on site. The City has prepared a [Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration](#) of environmental impact that assesses the potential environmental effects of the project, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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General Location: The 0.58-acre project is located towards the west end of Dana Street.

General Plan and Zoning: Medium-High Density Residential (R-3) Zone. Downtown Historic District Overlay

Surrounding Uses:

East: (R-3-H) Meeting Hall

West: (R-3-H) Single-Family Residential

North: (R-1-PD) Stenner Creek and Multi-family Residential

South: (R-3-H) Single-Family Residential



Figure 1: Subject Property Location

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of San Luis Obispo has owned the Master List Rosa Butrón Adobe property since 1989, after acquiring the property as a life estate gift from Ms. Mary Gail Black. The City provides basic maintenance and upkeep to the house and grounds, but the house is currently vacant and is at risk of ongoing deterioration and threats to its long-term preservation. On March 6, 2020, at the direction of the City Council, staff issued a [Request for Interest](#) (RFI) document seeking community partners to help the City rehabilitate and re-use the Rosa Butrón Adobe in accordance with program guidance found in the Conservation and Open Space Element (2006) of the General Plan.

As a result of this process, in September 2021, Council approved an [Exclusive Negotiating Agreement](#) (“ENA”) with Smart Share Housing Solutions and the Peace Project that set forth a shared vision between those two organizations for the “Waterman Peace Village.” The City Council further approved an Amended and Restated ENA in February 2024 with Smart Share Housing Solutions only, and the current project scope entails rehabilitation and re-use of the adobe structure with the construction of 20 low- to very-low income housing units on the site.

The intent of the ENA is to set forth certain parameters, terms, and conditions precedent to consideration of a long-term lease with Smart Share Housing Solutions for the site that would enable the opportunity to achieve both the City Council’s goals for providing affordable housing ([Housing Element Program 6.17](#)) and the rehabilitation and long-term preservation of the Rosa Butrón Adobe. The ENA required the Cultural Heritage Committee to review the Waterman Village Project in order to ensure consistency with Historic Preservation Policies, Secretary of Interior Standards, and Historic Preservation Program Guidelines.

The Cultural Heritage Committee held a Public Hearing on October 28, 2024 ([Agenda Packet](#)). The Committee recommended that the Planning Commission find the proposed project consistent with the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance with the following recommendations:

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1. Evaluate the period of significance in the Historic Resources Report for the potential the historic period of significance extends to 1989.
2. Evaluate the potential that the site is believed to have been the original location of Mission San Luis Obispo from 1775 to 1788.
3. Include requirements for construction staff training for the possibility that burial sites and artifacts may be encountered from the Mission era.
4. Include historical signage that reflects all periods of significance and the cultural narrative of the site.

2.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

Architecture: The historic adobe is representative of Nineteenth Century California architecture. The new residential units would utilize contemporary architecture.

Design Details: The historic adobe has a broad, steeply pitched hipped roof with extended, open eaves. It also has a prominent front setback from the streets, and symmetrical front façade. The new residential units would have shed roofs, extended overhangs, and are oriented in clusters around the adobe.

Materials and Color: The historic adobe has predominantly white clapboard siding and grey roll roofing, which is proposed to be replaced with wood shingles. The new residential units would utilize white hardi-plank siding with dark gray standing seam metal roofs and trim.



Figure 2: Rosa Butron Adobe as viewed from Dana Street



Figure 3: New residential unit, front entry elevation

3.0 FOCUS OF REVIEW

The Architectural Review Commission's (ARC's) role is to 1) review the proposed project in terms of consistency with the Community Design Guidelines (CDG), and applicable City Standards; and 2) provide comments and recommendations to the Planning Commission concerning the proposed project design.

Community Design Guidelines: <https://www.slocity.org/home/showdocument?id=2104>

4.0 COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES / DISCUSSION ITEMS

Staff have evaluated the project for consistency with relevant standards and guidelines of the CDG, including Chapter 2 (General Design Principles) and Chapter 5 (Residential Project Design). Overall, the proposed project appears to be generally consistent with the CDG. Staff have identified several discussion items for ARC review related to the project's consistency with the CDG in Table 1, below.

Table 1: CDG Consistency Discussion Items

Highlighted Sections	Discussion Items
<i>Chapter 2 – General Design Principles</i>	
§2.1 – Site Design	<p>The project site is located within the 100-year flood zone, with Stenner Creek at the northern boundary of the property. Additionally, the existing adobe is centered on the site with a prominent front setback from the street. This front setback was determined to be a character-defining feature of the adobe, which necessitated the organization of the new units towards the rear and sides of the adobe.</p> <p><i>The ARC should consider the front and creek setback constraints with the compatibility of the proposed site layout with the adobe.</i></p>
§2.2 – Building Design	<p>The CDG states that new construction on sites with existing structures need to coordinate with old structures, particularly those of historic value. The new construction units are designed to complement the adobe in scale. Given the 3-foot raised foundation, the roof heights of the new units are higher than the adobe roof heights by up to 3 feet. The elevation to the top of roof of the adobe is 15 feet 4 inches above grade, whereas the elevation to the top of roof of the tallest housing unit is 18 feet 10 inches above grade. Refer to Attachment A, sheet A-8.0 for an exhibit demonstrating the height differences between the adobe and the residential units. The materials of the new construction units are chosen to compliment the adobe while providing differentiation.</p> <p><i>The ARC should discuss the compatibility of the new residential unit design and scale with the existing adobe.</i></p>
<i>Chapter 5 – Section 5.3 (Infill Development)</i>	
§5.3 (A) - General principles	<p>The CDG states that infill development should be compatible in scale, siting, detailing and character with adjacent buildings and those in the immediate neighborhood. The new residential units will be much smaller than the typical single-family and multi-family structures in the neighborhood. The smaller unit sizes allow for greater flexibility given the sensitive site and achieve a similar density to the surrounding neighborhood with minimal site disturbance.</p> <p><i>The ARC should discuss the scale of the residential units and compatibility with the neighborhood's existing scale and patterns.</i></p>

<i>Chapter 5 – Section 5.4 (Multi-Family and Clustered Housing Design)</i>	
<i>§5.4 (A) – Site planning</i>	<p>The CDG states that multi-family developments should be clustered together and have entrances facing the street. The adobe and new units have a deep setback from the Dana Street sidewalk, as this is considered a character-defining feature of the adobe. All unit entrances face the proposed raised walkway, allowing direct access to each unit. This will allow for clear wayfinding from the street, through the adobe grounds, to the front doors of each unit.</p> <p><i>The ARC should discuss whether the proposed site layout and orientation towards the street is compatible with the guidelines.</i></p>

5.0 PROJECT STATISTICS

Staff have evaluated the project for consistency with relevant development standards of the Zoning Regulations and have summarized its compliance in Table 2 below. The project is requesting the following two concessions from development standards under the provisions of state density bonus law:

- Reduction in vehicle parking from 29 required vehicle spaces to 4 provided spaces
- Reduction of bicycle parking from 40 required spaces to 24 provided spaces.

As this project provides 100 percent affordable units, the project is allowed up to four qualifying concessions under state density bonus law. See Section 5.1 below for additional information regarding state law.

Table 2: Project Compliance with Zoning Regulations Standards

Site Details	Proposed	Allowed/Required*
Density	10 density units	11 density units
Setbacks		
Front	35 feet	10 feet
Side	6-12 feet	5 feet
Rear	20 feet	20 feet (creek)
Maximum Height of Structures	18 feet 8 inches	35 feet
Max Lot Coverage	37%	60%
Minimum Lot Area	25,264 square feet	5,000 square feet
Vehicle and Bicycle Parking		
Number of Vehicle Spaces	4 spaces	29 spaces
EV Spaces	3 (EV ready) 1 accessible	3 (EV ready) 15 (EV capable)
Number of Bicycle Spaces	26 total spaces	45 total spaces
Short-term	6 short-term	4 short-term
Long-term	20 long-term	41 long-term
Tree Removal		
Removal / Replanting	12 trees to be removed, 12 to be replanted.	1:1 replacement planting ratio
Environmental Status	A Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared for this project. This document finds that no significant impact will occur with mitigation measures incorporated.	

*2022 Zoning Regulations

5.1 HOUSING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT/DENSITY BONUS LAW

The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Housing Accountability Act and Density Bonus Law provide protections for housing development projects, which include deed restricted affordable housing units. As proposed, the proposed 20 residential units will be for low and very low-income households and is protected by state law. Government Code §65915(d) (1)(B) and (d)(3) prevent an agency from denying the density bonus or the incentive or concession or refusing to waive or reduce development standards, unless the agency can make a finding based on substantial evidence that the density bonus, the incentive or concession or the waiver or reduction in a development standard causes a “specific, adverse impact” upon the public health, safety, or the physical environment, and

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for which there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific adverse impact.

Although the ARC cannot make recommendations that reduce the number and size of the proposed residential units within the project, the Commission may provide direction to the applicant regarding architecture and site planning which includes items such as architectural features, roof design, colors, materials, and site layout.

6.0 ACTION ALTERNATIVES

- 6.1** Recommend approval of the project. An action recommending approval of the application based on consistency with the Community Design Guidelines will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for final action. This action may include recommendations for conditions to address consistency with the Community Design Guidelines or other City Standards.
- 6.2** Recommend denial of the project. An action recommending denial of the application should include findings that cite the basis for denial and should reference inconsistency with the General Plan, Community Design Guidelines, Zoning Regulations or other policy documents. Should the ARC want to pursue this alternative, specific findings must be made on how the project causes a “specific, adverse impact” upon the public health, safety, or the physical environment, and for which there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific adverse impact as required by Government Code §65915(d)(1)(B) and (d)(3) (Density Bonus Law) and Government Code §65589.5(d) (Housing Accountability Act).

7.0 ATTACHMENTS

A - Project Plans