

ATTACHMENT K

ANALYSIS OF ADJUSTMENT REQUESTS FOR STANDARD PACIFIC COMPONENT

Height Adjustments:

Whereas, the RM-16 provisions only permit two-story residential units, a good number of three-story units exist in the immediate surroundings of the site, especially to the west. Most of the proposed three story buildings in the complex will not be visible from the residential streets around the project.

Another important consideration for judging the acceptability of additional height is their relationship to the existing historic buildings on the property, which are primarily two stories in height. At the request of staff, the applicants have prepared an exhibit with several section views showing the relationship of the new buildings to the existing buildings (Tab B of Attachment I). According to Citywide Design Principles, the ends or corners of the buildings for Parcels 5 and 9 should be stepped down to respect the lower heights of the adjacent historic resources, and the applicants have developed schemes to accomplish this to some extent since the Design Commission meeting on December 11.

Parcel 9's design adjacent to the Rankin House has been stepped down with a roof change and a setback of part of the third story about five feet from the second story. This satisfies the Design Commission's second recommendation.

Parcel 5's design adjacent to the Villa Terrace has been improved at the southeast corner by setting the third floor back about ten feet; but the Design Commission expressed concern about the whole east side, and a condition of approval is recommended in Attachment E to further improve the design relationship. As a part of the adjustment permit process, there is an opportunity for an offsetting transfer of height to recapture floor area sacrificed in this effort.

Due to the length of the façade on the east side of Parcel 9 and its location on the hill overlooking the north/south pedestrian walkway, the Design Commission recommended additional height, mass and setback modulation along that elevation, and a condition of approval is recommended.

Length of Façade Adjustments:

RM-16-1, which is the multi-family code for this section of the West Gateway Specific Plan, limits facades to 60 feet in length along a street. Buildings on Parcels 3 and 5 have lengths of 118 feet to 143 feet along Orange Grove Blvd. and Green Street (page 3 of Attachment J). Rather than divide the project into shorter buildings, which would extend the new construction into sensitive sites such as the Italian Gardens, the architects have provided significant articulation to the facades (Tab A of Attachment I). There is a change of planes of at least 4 feet every 60 feet (Tab A of Attachment I), and most articulations are 8 to 15 feet.

Thus the monotony that can result from long facades facing the street does not exist. This is a superior design, given the landscaped features such as the Italian Gardens that are protected by this adjustment.

Lot Coverage Adjustments:

Maximum lot coverage in RM-16-1 is 35%. Although the overall lot coverage across all the parcels will be less than 35%, clustering is proposed to preserve open space around historic buildings and to preserve landscape features such as Grove Walk south of Parcel 9. Some individual lot coverages are in the 43 to 45% range, which is seen as a reasonable design in return for the many benefits received.

Main Garden Adjustments:

City of Gardens requires a main garden that is rectangular and at least 20% of the lot area for the RM-16-1 zone. (In other RM zones, gardens are not required to be rectangular.) The proposed main gardens are, however, not rectangular and range from 9% to 17% of the lot. Staff believes that the vast amount of open space (Italian Gardens, Fowler Gardens, Grove Walk, streams, Great Lawn, etc.) that is available to residents more than compensates for a smaller main garden. This request is appropriate.

A second type of main garden adjustment is the request to delete Parcel 3's main garden visibility from Orange Grove Blvd. In most situations it is important that main gardens be visible from the public sphere because, in general, the main garden is the most substantial landscaping on the site. However, this parcel is adjacent to the Italian Gardens which is highly visible from the street. The view of the Italian Gardens would overwhelm any opening to another garden just 80 feet north of the Italian Gardens and make that opening insignificant.

Another adjustment request is for a reduction in the number of tree wells required in the main garden. In the case of parcels 6, 9, and 16 the structures are proposed to be built around large canopy, protected trees. The benefit these trees provide, given their size, outweighs the benefit provided by the smaller tree wells and 24" box trees that are required by Code.

The one main garden that deserves the most study is Parcel 3, where no existing trees will be retained and no tree wells are proposed. Instead 36" planters are proposed for trees, and the applicants presented several photos to illustrate their effectiveness in other projects. The provision of code-required tree wells would upset the subterranean garage plan, as designed; this is a substantial issue to the applicants. On balance, even for Parcel 3, the abundance of trees and open space on the site as a whole provides justification for relief from the requirement that large trees be provided in the main garden.

Finally, in all of the main gardens, although tree wells are not proposed, the applicant proposes some 36" high planters where only 18" planters are permitted.

These taller planters will permit small to medium trees in the main garden. Staff has seen some successes with taller planters in the photos provided by the applicant and in the downtown's mixed-use courtyards, and staff agrees with the applicant's plans to place trees in the main gardens. Although these trees may not grow to be as large as those in other City of Gardens projects, as noted earlier, very large trees existing trees surround most of the proposed units.

The codes require 50% of the main gardens to be planted. This is because in many infill projects, the only green space is in the main garden and in the front yard setback. However, in this instance, where each condominium grouping is surrounded on four sides by landscaped areas, it is appropriate to allow a larger percentage of the main garden to be in hardscape, as much as 74% in Parcel 3.

Setback Adjustments:

The required setback along W. Del Mar Blvd. is 40 feet. However, the existing structures do not achieve this setback. Manor Del Mar has a large, oversized front porch that is 23 feet from the property line. The new construction was originally proposed as a 20 foot setback; however, the applicants agreed to increase the setback to at least 23 feet. This is compatible and acceptable, again as a measure designed to preserve more significant open space elsewhere on the campus, such as the Great Lawn that will be available for public use. Several other setback adjustments shown on pages 1 and 2 of Attachment 4 (rear yards, corner side yard at Green Street, etc.) are similarly justifiable.

Street Orientation Adjustments

Units facing streets are required by City of Gardens codes to have entries facing the street. However, Parcels 3 and 5 have a significant historic fence associated with the Merritt Mansion along the perimeter of the property. In order to minimally disturb the fence and because the northwest portion of the campus has always had an inward orientation, it is appropriate to delete the street orientation for those units.

Wall and Fence Adjustments

In one location on Parcel 3, a six foot fence is requested to tie into an existing historic fence of that height, even though only a four foot fence is permitted in front yards. On Parcel 9, the applicant requests a five foot fence for privacy of a particular unit adjacent to the only office use on the property. These are limited and reasonable exceptions to the codes.

Stairwell Adjustment

Item E.5.a on page 3 of Attachment J requests flexibility from the City of Gardens code limitation allowing access to a maximum of two units from any stairwell. In order to design a three-story building on Parcel 3 with two-bedroom stacked flats that are smaller than townhouse units and serve a different household type, thereby saving more open space on the project site, this deviation is necessary.