



**Design Review Board  
Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 5, 2021, 7:00 P.M.  
AGENDA (REVISED)**

**Virtual Meeting**

**Watch on Webinar: <https://tinyurl.com/drb-2021-10-05>**

**Telephone: (669) 900-9128**

**Meeting ID: 814-0483-9089#**

**CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) ADVISORY NOTICE**

In response to Executive Order N-29-20, the City of San Rafael will no longer offer an in-person meeting location for the public to attend. This meeting will be held virtually using Zoom.

How to participate in the meeting:

- Submit public comments in writing before 4:00 p.m. the day of the meeting to [Leslie.Mendez@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:Leslie.Mendez@cityofsanrafael.org).
- Join the Zoom webinar and use the 'raise hand' feature to provide verbal public comment.
- Dial-in to Zoom's telephone number using the meeting ID and provide verbal public comment.

Any member of the public who needs accommodations should contact the City Clerk (email [city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org) or phone at 415-485-3066) who will use their best efforts to provide reasonable accommodations to provide as much accessibility as possible while also maintaining public safety in accordance with the City procedure for resolving reasonable accommodation requests.

Members of the public may speak on Agenda items.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**RECORDING OF MEMBERS PRESENT AND ABSENT**

**APPROVAL OR REVISION OF ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS**

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF MEETING PROCEDURES**

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Remarks are limited to three minutes per person and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first, remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

*The Consent Calendar allows the Board to take action, without discussion, on Agenda items for which there are no persons present who wish to speak, and no Board members who wish to discuss.*

### **1. Approval of the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of August 3, 2021**

*Recommended Action – Approve minutes as submitted*

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **2. The Neighborhood at Los Gamos**

General Plan Amendment GPA 20-001 (from Hillside Resource Residential to Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use); Zone Change ZC 20-002 (from Planned District – Hillside Development Overlay District (PD-H) and Residential – Hillside Development Overlay District (R2a-H) to Planned Development District (PD); Vesting Tentative Parcel Map (to combine and adjust the boundaries of the existing parcels); and Environmental and Design Review ED 20-058; for a mixed-use project with 192 multi-family residential units; an approximately 5,600-square-foot market; a 5,000-square-foot community center; and 225 at-grade and semi-subterranean parking spaces; on a 10.24 acre site located on Los Gamos Road north of Oleander Drive; on APN 165-220-06 and 165-220-07; Christopher Hart, Applicant and Property Owner; Mont Marin/San Rafael Park Neighborhood.

Project Planner: Jeff Hamilton, Contract Planner

*Recommended Action – Review and recommend approval of site and building design*

### **3. 326 and 308 Mission Avenue (Aldersly Retirement Community)**

Request for Environmental and Design Review for a phased redevelopment of the Aldersly Retirement Community, including demolition and renovation of existing buildings and construction of new buildings; APN: 014-054-31 and -32; Planned Development (PD-1775) Zoning District; Peter Schakow, Owner; Peter Lin, Greenbriar Development, Applicant; File No(s): ED 20-051, ZC20-001 and UP20-022.

Project Planner: Jayni Allsep, Contract Planner

*Recommended Action – Review and recommend approval of site and building design*

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

## **COMMISSION COMMUNICATION**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Any records relating to an agenda item, received by a majority or more of the Commission less than 72 hours before the meeting, shall be available for inspection online. Sign Language interpreters may be requested by calling (415) 485-3066 (voice), emailing [city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org) or using the California Telecommunications Relay Service by dialing "711", at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request.*

*The Planning Commission will take up no new business after 11:00 p.m. at regularly scheduled meetings. This shall be interpreted to mean that no agenda item or other business will be discussed or acted upon after the agenda item under consideration at 11:00 p.m. The Commission may suspend this rule to discuss and/or act upon any additional agenda item(s) deemed appropriate by a unanimous vote of the members present. Appeal rights: any person may file an appeal of the Planning Commission's action on agenda items within five business days (normally 5:00 p.m. on the following Tuesday) and within 10 calendar days of an action on a subdivision. An appeal letter shall be filed with the City Clerk, along with an appeal fee of \$350 (for non-applicants) or a \$4,476 deposit (for applicants) made payable to the City of San Rafael, and shall set forth the basis for appeal. There is a \$50.00 additional charge for request for continuation of an appeal by appellant.*

MINUTES



**San Rafael Design Review Board  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, August 3, 2021, 7:00 P.M.**

**Virtual Meeting**

**Watch on Webinar: <https://tinyurl.com/drb-2021-08-03>**

**Telephone: (669) 900-9128**

**ID: 835 3174 3214**

**Present:** Chair Paul  
Member Kent  
Member Kovalsky  
Vice Chair Rege  
Member Summers

**Absent:** Member Blayney

**Also Present:** Leslie Mendez, Planning Manager  
Steve Stafford, Senior Planner  
Renee Nickenig, Assistant Planner

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. All board members were present, except for Member Blayney.

**STAFF COMMUNICATION**

- Introduction of new Planning Manager Leslie Mendez
- General Plan 2040 and Downtown Precise Plan Updates
- Planning Division hiring update
- Scheduled meetings update

**BOARD COMMUNICATION**

None

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF MEETING PROCEDURES**

Chair Paul invited Planning Manager Leslie Mendez who informed the community that members of the public would provide public comment either on the telephone or through Zoom. She explained the process for community participation on the telephone and Zoom.

Chair Paul reviewed the procedures for the meeting.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. **Approval of the Design Review Board Meeting Minutes of February 17, 2021, May 4, 2021 and June 8, 2021**

Member Kent moved and Member Summers seconded to approve the meeting minutes of February 17, 2021 as submitted.

AYES: Members: Kent, Rege, Summers & Chair Paul  
NOES: Members: None  
ABSENT: Members: Blayney  
ABSTAIN: Members: Kovalsky

Motion carried 4-0

Member Kent moved and Member Summers seconded to approve the meeting minutes of May 4, 2021 as submitted.

AYES: Members: Kent, Rege, Summers & Chair Paul  
NOES: Members: None  
ABSENT: Members: Blayney  
ABSTAIN: Members: Kovalsky

Motion carried 4-0

Member Rege moved and Member Summers seconded to approve the meeting minutes of June 8, 2021 as submitted.

AYES: Members: Rege, Summers & Chair Paul  
NOES: Members: None  
ABSENT: Members: Blayney  
ABSTAIN: Members: Kent, Kovalsky

Motion carried 3-0

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- 2. 800 Mission Ave. (“Aegis Living San Rafael”)** – Request amendment of Use Permit and an Environmental and Design Review Permit approvals to allow a 11’ 2” height bonus for a previously approved senior assisted living and memory care facility on two vacant Downtown parcels with 29,885 sq. ft. of combined area. Amendment of the approvals would increase the height of the building from 36’ to 47’ 2” and increase the unit count from 77 suites to 103 suites. The remainder of the approved site and building design would remain unchanged; APNS: 011-184-08 & -09; Multifamily Residential – High Density (HR1) District Zone; Geoff Forner, Applicant; ASC San Rafael LLC, Owner; Downtown Neighborhood.  
**Project Planner:** Steve Stafford

Steve Stafford, Senior Planner presented the Staff Report.

Staff responded to questions from the Members.

Applicant Bryon Ziegler, Aegis and George Signori, Ankrom Moisan gave a presentation.

Applicant responded to questions from the Members.

Chair Paul invited public comment.

**Public Comment in real-time on telephone or Zoom:**

Nina Lilienthal Murphy, Lincoln San Rafael Hill Neighborhood Association, Walden Valen, President of HOA Board at 820 Mission Avenue, Name withheld

Staff responded to questions from the Members.

Members provided comments.

Planning Manager Leslie Mendez summarized the Members' consensus items:

- Applicant was responsive to the previous comments from the Design Review Board
- The setback and the eroding way around the tower has helped both in making the tower more prominent and has provided the rooftop terrace
- There is still concern about the massing as viewed on Mission Street and that the top story could use more setback
- Outdoor planting as much as possible to the decks

Members provided further comments and applicant responded to questions from the Members.

Staff provided comments.

Member Summers moved and Member Rege seconded to conditionally approve the project based on the consensus items as outlined by the Planning Manager and allow the applicant to work with staff with the Design Review Board's intent on these comments.

Members discussed the motion. Applicant provided comments.

Member Summers moved to conditionally approve the project to allow the applicant to address the consensus items and work with staff and bring this to the Planning Commission with a final review of the Design Review Board on these design elements, prior to submitting for building permit.

Members discussed the motion. Staff and applicant provided comments.

Planning Manager Leslie Mendez summarized consensus wording for new motion and Member Summers indicated that he believes that is what he said before.

Member Summers moved and Member Rege seconded to conditionally approve the project with the consensus items, which is to increase the setback on the Mission Street elevation at the top story and increase landscaping on all outdoor areas, to be incorporated into the project plan set that goes to the Planning Commission and with the recommendation to consider revisiting the northeast elevation and that the project will return to the Design Review Board for final design review prior to building permit submittal.

AYES: Members: Kent, Kovalsky, Rege, Summers & Chair Paul  
NOES: Members: None  
ABSENT: Members: Blayney  
ABSTAIN: Members: None

Motion carried 5-0

3. **292 Fairhills Drive** – Request for an Environmental and Design Review Permit to construct a new 12” – 48”, 997 sq. ft. deck that requires a reduction of the front yard setback by one-half the required 20 ft. front setback (10ft.), and construction of approximately 78 ft. of 5 ft. retaining wall within the Hillside Development Overlay District; APN: 010-142-04; R20-H Zone; Samina Saude, Applicant; Tim Cornwell, Owner.  
Project Planner: Renee Nickenig

Renee Nickenig, Assistant Planner presented the Staff Report.

Applicant Samina Saude gave a presentation.

Applicant responded to questions from the Members.

Chair Paul invited public comment; however, there was none.

Members provided comments.

Member Kent moved and Member Summers seconded to approve this project as submitted.

AYES: Members: Kent, Kovalsky, Rege, Summers & Chair Paul  
NOES: Members: None  
ABSENT: Members: Blayney  
ABSTAIN: Members: None

Motion carried 5-0

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Paul adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
LINDSAY LARA, City Clerk

APPROVED THIS \_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
LARRY PAUL, Chair



**REPORT TO DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**SUBJECT: The Neighborhood at Los Gamos** – General Plan Amendment GPA 20-001 (from Hillside Resource Residential to Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use); Zone Change ZC 20-002 (from Planned District – Hillside Development Overlay District (PD-H) and Residential – Hillside Development Overlay District (R2a-H) to Planned Development District (PD)); Vesting Tentative Parcel Map (to combine and adjust the boundaries of the existing parcels); and Environmental and Design Review ED 20-058; for a mixed-use project with 192 multi-family residential units; an approximately 5,600-square-foot market; a 5,000-square-foot community center; and 225 at-grade and semi-subterranean parking spaces; on a 10.24 acre site located on Los Gamos Road north of Oleander Drive; on APN 165-220-06 and 165-220-07; Christopher Hart, Applicant and Property Owner; Mont Marin/San Rafael Park Neighborhood.

**PROPERTY FACTS**

Location	General Plan Designation (2040)	Zoning Designation	Existing Land-Use
<i>Project Site:</i>	Existing: HRR Proposed: NCMU	Existing: PD-H and R2a-H Proposed: PD	Vacant hillside
North:	PROS, P/QP	P/OS, PD (1963)	Vacant hillside
South:	PROS, VLDR	R2a-H	Single and Multi-family Residential
East:	MDR, OMU, P/QP	R2a-H, O, PD (1963), PD (1508)	Office, Gymnasium
West:	PROS	P-OS	Vacant hillside

<b>Lot Size</b> Required: 2.5 acres min. Proposed: 10.24 acres	<b>Lot Coverage (Max.) OR Natural State (Min.)</b> Standard: No standard for residences; 0.01 FAR for commercial. No Natural State minimum because the property would be in a PD zone Proposed: 17.08% lot coverage; 50% (5.17 acres) in natural state (4.83 ac unimproved open space and 0.34 ac of improved hillside open space); 1.29 acres of improved landscaping near buildings; 0.01 FAR for commercial component
<b>Height*</b> Allowed: 30' Proposed: approx. 58'***	<b>Residential Density OR Gross Building/Floor Area</b> Allowed: 24.2 du/ac Proposed: 18.75 du/ac
<b>Min. Lot Width (New Lots)</b> Required: No min. Proposed: >1,100'	<b>Upper Floor Area (Non-hillside residential)</b> Allowed: n/a Proposed: n/a
<b>Outdoor Area OR Landscape Area</b>	



Required: No standard Proposed: 1.29 acres of improved landscaping; 0.34 acres of improved hillside open space; 4.83 acres of unimproved open space	<b>Setbacks</b> Front:	<u>Required</u> n/a	<u>Existing</u> n/a	<u>Proposed</u> Min. 46' from easterly PL; approx. 80' to street ROW
<b>Grading</b> Total: 88,000 cy Cut: 71,000 cy Fill: 17,000 cy Export: 54,000 cy	Side(s):	n/a	n/a	Over 400' to southerly PL, 165' to northerly PL
	Ext. side:	n/a	n/a	
	Ped. side:	n/a	n/a	Min. 20'
	Bldg. sep	n/a	n/a	
Rear:	n/a	n/a	Min. 51'	

**Tree Removal**

Total (No./Species): 285; 256 oak, 21 bay, 8 other  
55 trees proposed for removal incl. 51 oak, 1 bay, 2 pine, 1 Australian blackwood  
Requirement: 11 trees in parking area; 26\*3 for oaks=78 new trees  
Proposed: 210 trees to be planted in and around development site; (55 Cathedral Live Oak—not a species recommended in the hillside guidelines Appendix B)

**Residential Parking (Affordable Housing)**

	<u>Required (Unit Type)</u>	<u>Total Required</u>
Studio	1/unit	36 Studios: 36 spaces
1 BR	1/unit	48 1 BR: 48 spaces
2 BR	1.5/unit	90 2 BR: 135 spaces
3 BR	1.5/unit	18 3 BR: 27 spaces
Guest	None required	None required
	<u>Required</u> Total: 246 spaces	<u>Proposed</u> Total: 213 spaces (171 resident & 42 guest spaces)

**Commercial Parking**

	<u>Required</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Market (5,574 sf)	1 space/250 sf: 22 spaces	12
Community Center (5,003 sf)	1/250 sf: 20 spaces	0

Total Residential Parking Required (affordable housing standards): 246 spaces      Provided: 213 spaces\*\*  
Total Commercial Parking Required: 42 spaces      Provided: 12 spaces\*\*  
Total Parking Deficit: 63 spaces

\* Hillside building height is measured from natural grade to top of roof/structure at all points of the structure. Standard building height is measured from an established exterior finished grade elevation to mid-point of a sloped roof.

\*\*Building height and parking waivers and concessions sought through Density Bonus provisions.

## **SUMMARY**

The subject project is being referred to the Board for review of site and design improvements of a mixed-use project with 192 residences, 225 parking spaces, a 5,574 square foot market, and a 5,003 square foot community center. The project is subject to review by the Design Review Board because it proposes a Major Physical Improvement (with 3 or more dwelling units) as defined in SRMC Section 14.25.040(A). The Board's recommendation would be forwarded to the Planning Commission. Staff requests feedback from the Board and provide a recommendation on compliance with all pertinent design criteria. Based on review of the applicable design criteria, staff asks the Board to specifically consider the following:

### *Architecture*

- Whether the design of the buildings has sufficient vertical and horizontal articulation 1) to avoid creating a "wall" effect; 2) to avoid large expanses of a wall in a single plane on the downhill elevations; 3) to create sufficient shadows; 4) to avoid extended horizontal lines.
- Whether the gable ends should face downhill.
- Whether the east-facing elevation of the market/community center building is an appropriate design.

### *Landscaping*

- Whether the use of trees not on the approved list in the Hillside Design Guidelines is appropriate.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Site Description & Setting:**

The 10.24 acre site is on a hillside, generally east-facing slope. The site is located below the ridgeline west of the site. The average slope of the property is 36.9%; it is 34.1% for the area to be developed.

According to the arborist's report there are 285 trees on the property, including 256 oaks of various species and 21 Bay Laurel. Other trees include Stone Pines, Toyon and Australian Blackwood.

The site is within the Mont Marin/San Rafael Park neighborhood. It is north of the Oleander Park neighborhood, west of Redwood Highway (State Highway 101), south of the homes along Montevideo and Salvador Ways, and east of the homes along Las Gallinas Avenue. There is an existing office building east and below the site at 1401 Los Gamos Drive. The Marin YMCA at 1500 Los Gamos Drive is northeast of the site.

The site does not have frontage on a public street. The Los Gamos Drive right-of-way currently terminates just east of the site. Access to the site is proposed via an easement running generally east-west from the site to the existing terminus of Los Gamos Drive. The applicant currently owns this easement. The easement would connect to the existing driveway serving the office at 1401 Los Gamos Drive. See Figures 1 and 2 below.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map

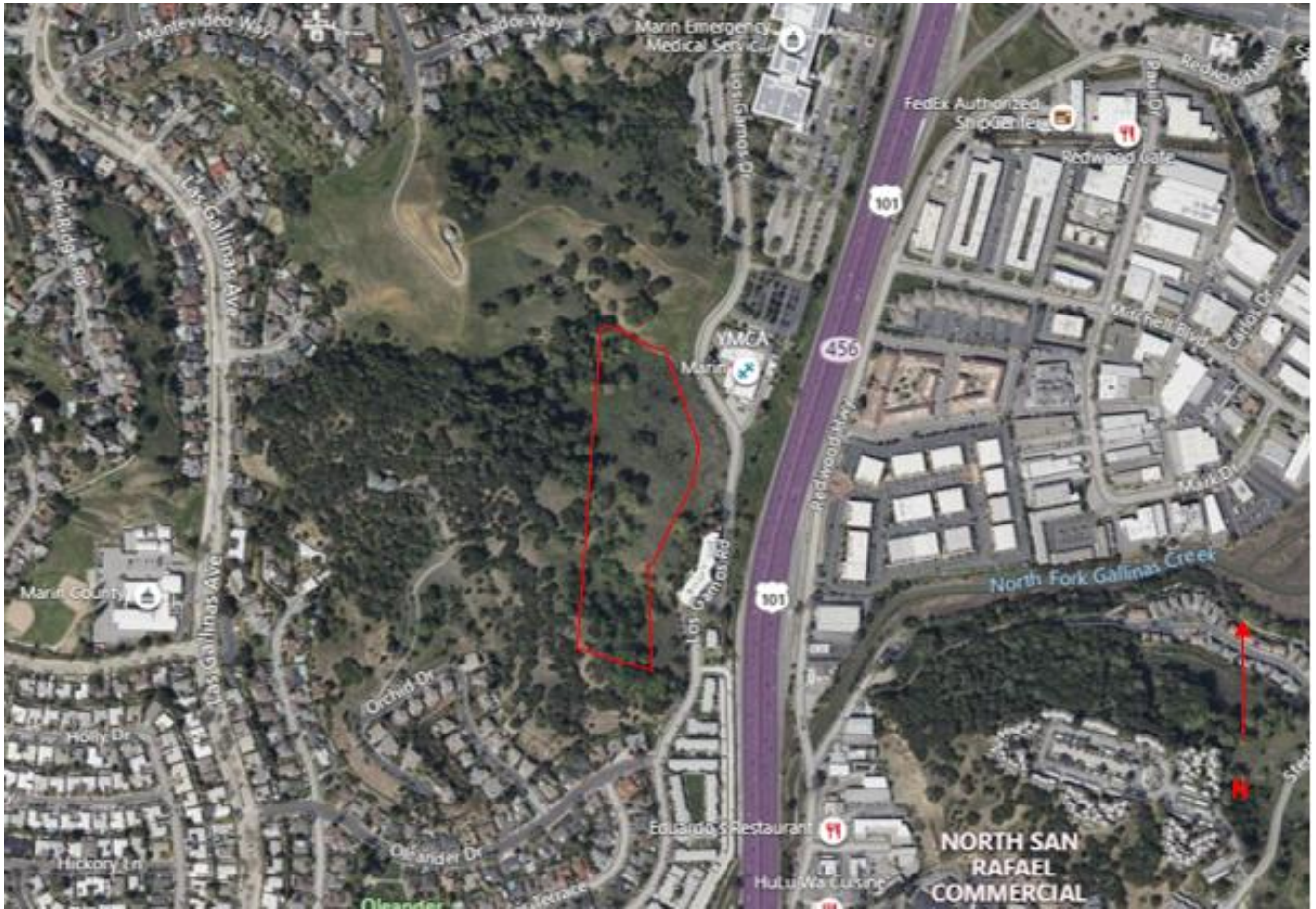


Figure 2: Proposed Development



According to the hydrology study for the project, there are two existing drainage paths that cross the site from west to east, and another that skirts the northerly edge of the development site.

**History:**

A preliminary version of the project was submitted in 2019 for consideration. At a hearing on January 14, 2020, the Planning Commission reviewed the project and individual commissioners offered the following comments:

- It is time to re-evaluate zoning for this site;
- Intensity could be ok if properly designed and with thorough review of environmental impacts;
- Clustering is good idea;
- The project would contribute to the City’s housing need;
- Would not support any more than 180 units;
- Would like to see the applicant address work force housing;
- Make market more visible;
- Continue reaching out to County for access swap;
- Consider reducing the amount of trails within the private open space areas;
- Need to define whether trails would be accessible to public;
- Specify how trails would be maintained;
- Address how trails and recreational equipment impact natural state;
- Recreational equipment should be located closer to buildings;
- Contribute as much green/low energy elements as possible;
- EV; Solar; roof orientation and design;
- Prepare more photo-simulations including views from street level to get a better sense of what the project would look like;
- Demonstrate compliance with Hillside design;
- Height might be okay if bulk and mass can be addressed and proforma supports; use hillside definition of height;
- Consider adding carports over parking areas to reduce the appearance of bulk and mass;
- Address views from open space;
- Landscaping design and materials needs to be appropriate;
- Environmental review needs to consider all impacts including traffic impacts of other projects.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The mixed-use development project proposes to change the Land Use designation of the site in the General Plan from Hillside Resource Residential to Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use. The site is proposed to be rezoned from Planned District – Hillside Development Overlay District (PD-H) and Residential – Hillside Development Overlay District (R2a-H) to Planned Development District (PD). A Vesting Tentative Tract Map is proposed to combine the two existing parcels into one and to reconfigure the boundaries. The project is subject to Environmental and Design Review because the project proposes a Major Physical Improvement (with 3 or more dwelling units) as defined in SRMC 14.16.030.

**Use:** The project proposes multifamily residential use, a small grocery store, a recreational facility consisting of a “community center” and the leasing office, parking, landscaping, private and common open space, and physical improvements including a circular driveway and retaining walls necessary to support the project. The residential component includes 192 dwelling units. The apartments range in size from 496 square-foot studios to 1,153 square-foot three-bedroom units. There would be 36 studios, 48 one-bedroom units, 90 two-bedroom units, and 18 three-bedroom units. The two-bedroom units would be offered in three floor plans; the one and three-bedroom units would each have one floor plan. Each

unit would have a private balcony or deck ranging from 72 square feet for the studios to 143 square feet for the three-bedroom units. The applicant is proposing that ten percent of the units be affordable. There will be 225 parking spaces for the project including 171 covered spaces, 42 at-grade spaces and 12 covered spaces serving the recreational facility. The small grocery is at the ground floor of a two-story building that would also contain the recreational facility and leasing office. The grocery store would be 5,574 square-feet. The recreational facility totals 5,003 square-feet including the leasing office of just over 900 square feet. There is common recreation space on the roof of the recreation facility including a children's play area and a pergola providing a shaded seating area. There would be more common open space on a series of terraces south of the building that would contain the grocery store and recreational facility.

Access to the site would be via a private driveway from Los Gamos Drive. The driveway would connect to a large loop internal driveway. Buildings 1 and 2 would have 36 parking spaces for the 36 apartments in each building. Buildings 3, 4 and 5 would have 33 parking spaces for the 40 apartments in each building. Since the applicant has stated that at least 10 percent of the units will be "Below Market Rate", the project qualifies as an affordable housing project, and since the applicant has applied for a density bonus and the reduced parking standards of State Density Bonus Law (Government Code Section 65915(p)). A total of 225 parking spaces are provided where 288 are required. As part of the density bonus application, the applicant has requested that a parking reduction be granted as a concession.

The buildings range from 47 to 58 feet in height above the natural grade. The allowed maximum height is 30 feet per the 2040 General Plan, Figure 3-3. As an affordable housing project and as part of the density bonus application, the applicant has requested that the height increase be granted as a waiver. In no case may the City apply any development standard that will have the effect of physically precluding the construction of a qualifying density bonus development (Govt. Code section 65915(e)).

**Site Plan:** The property totals 10.24 acres, or 446,054 square feet. Approximately 5.07 acres of the site would be improved with buildings, roads and landscaping. Landscaping in the development area would total approximately 1.29 acres. Another 0.19 acres of the site would be improved with bio-treatment areas to manage stormwater before it enters the storm drain network. South of the development area is the proposed improved open space totaling approximately 0.34 acres. Approximately 4.83 acres of the site would remain as unimproved open space which would primarily be west and upslope from the buildings and south and surrounding the improved open space area. A total of 50 percent of the site would remain as natural open space as defined in the City's Hillside Design Guidelines. As shown on the building elevations (page A105 of the plans), the peaks of the proposed buildings are all below the ridgeline behind and west of the site.

There would be five apartment buildings. Buildings 1 and 2 would be three stories tall above semi-subterranean parking. Buildings 3, 4 and 5 would be four stories tall above the parking. The market and community center would be two stories tall above the parking level. At-grade, above and adjacent to the market/community center building would be a public plaza (the "Village Commons") of almost 10,000 square feet that includes seating, a water feature, a children's play area and other recreational amenities. South of the apartment buildings, the applicant proposes to improve the hillside with a recreational area while leaving most of the existing woodland intact. There would be a walking path, play structures and exercise stations in this area.

Landscaping would be planted around the proposed buildings, the surface parking areas and along the loop drive system. Other than the surface parking lots, all resident and customer parking would be in semi-subterranean, "tuck under" structures beneath each of the buildings. Trash would be stored in the parking garages. On collection days, bins would be moved to short-term at-grade pads adjacent to the buildings, then put away after collection. A storage enclosure would be provided for each apartment in half of the building level above the parking area.

Views of the site from neighboring properties are shown on pages A801 and A802. Some of the neighboring structures are also shown on A802.

**Architecture:** The buildings are designed in a Contemporary style. Walls would be a combination of stucco, lap siding and painted concrete. Trim would be painted wood. Colors are earth-tones in complementary shades. Large areas of each of the walls of the residential buildings incorporate windows, introducing considerable light into the units. The residential buildings use horizontal and vertical articulation to break up the mass. The rooflines also vary and utilize gables to increase visual interest. The roofs would be a combination of composition shingle on the pitched roofs and rolled roofing on the flat area. Solar panels are proposed for each of the buildings.

The smaller market/community room building is proposed in the same style with the same materials and finishes but includes large windows on the east side of the building. Each of the floors of the building steps back up the hill, creating small sitting and eating spaces on the east side of the façade. The stairway and elevator columns are also styled in a way that breaks up the mass. In addition, the rooftop pergola adds interest while providing some shade for people using the rooftop recreation area.

Perspective drawings of the proposed project are shown on pages L1.02, L1.05, L1.07, and L1.08. Building renderings are shown on pages A301 and A302. Building elevations are shown on pages A105, A202, A205, and A209. Building and site sections are shown on pages A106, A203, A206, and A208.

**Landscaping:** The existing hillside has numerous trees, primarily oaks, concentrated for the most part south of the proposed development area. Almost half of the site (4.83 acres) would remain undisturbed. Of the 285 existing trees identified on the site, 55 are proposed for removal including 51 oaks, 1 Bay Laurel, 2 Stone Pines and 1 Australian Blackwood. A total of 210 trees are proposed to be planted including 55 Cathedral Live Oaks, Coast Live Oaks, California Black Oaks, Scrub Oaks, Brisbane Box, Olive specimens and Crepe Myrtle. The plans include an extensive landscape palette (see plans L3.01-L3.03) that relies on a variety of low-water using trees, shrubs and groundcovers. The overall landscape plan is depicted on pages L1.03 and L1.04 of the plans.

**Lighting:** Light poles with cut-off fixtures would be used along the internal driveway system and the surface parking areas. Low bollards would be used near buildings and along pathways. Recessed lighting would be installed in building overhangs and on stair risers. Examples of the fixtures are shown on sheet L2.04 of the plans. A photometric study was submitted (pages PH-1 and PH-2 of the plans) and shows illumination along the driveway system and near the buildings.

**Grading/Drainage:** Grading would occur to create the 5.07-acre development site, the off-site access road (on the easement owned by the applicant) to Los Gamos Drive, and, to a more limited extent, in the 0.34 acre improved open space area south of the proposed buildings. Grading is necessary to create the access to the site, the internal driveway system, building pads, and the landscaped areas, walls and paths near the buildings. Grading in the 0.34 acre improved open space area is proposed to create a walking path and pads for play structures and exercise equipment. Grading is depicted on the engineering plans, sheets C1, C2, C3 and C4.

A total of 88,000 cubic yards of dirt is proposed to be moved: 71,000 cubic yards of cut and 17,000 cubic yards of fill. A total of 54,000 cubic yards of dirt is proposed to be removed from the site. It is estimated by the City's Public Works Department that this would require 2,500 to 3,500 truck trips.

Several retaining walls are proposed. In addition to the retaining wall that forms the upslope wall of each building, additional retaining walls are located upslope from Buildings 3, 4 and 5. One retaining wall with a maximum height of eight feet is proposed behind Building 3. Three walls, each with a maximum height of eight feet, are proposed behind Building 4. Two retaining walls, each with a maximum height of eight feet, are proposed behind Building 5. The site sections shown on page A106 generally depict the retaining

walls within and behind the buildings. Walls behind the buildings are unlikely to be seen from offsite since the walls are shorter than the buildings.

Other retaining walls are located near the buildings to support landscape planters and pedestrian paths. A number of retaining walls are proposed to support the internal driveway system. In two locations, one on the north curve and one on the south curve, these walls would be over eight feet tall. Parallel walls are proposed to support the downhill side of the loop driveway north and east of Building 1. This becomes a single wall for most of the east side of Building 1 and east of the proposed market/community center building. A single retaining wall is proposed on the downhill side of the loop driveway east of Building 2. Retaining walls are also proposed on both the north and south sides of the entry driveway. These walls have a maximum height of approximately 5 feet.

All retaining walls other than those behind the buildings would be concrete block construction with a stucco finish. Vines would trail over the top of the walls and trees and shrubs would be planted below them to create an effective screen. The walls behind Buildings 3, 4 and 5 would be "soil nail walls", vertical retaining walls with large steel rods inserted deep into the hillside behind the wall. These walls would have a slurry concrete finish. These would also be screened by landscaping in areas where the retaining wall system extends beyond the walls of the buildings.

**Other (such as Signage, Proposed Regulations, Design Guidelines, etc.):** Because the project is a Multi-family Residential Development on an average slope greater than 25 percent, it is subject to the Hillside Design Guidelines ("HDG"). It is also subject to the development standards listed in the 2040 General Plan for Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use projects. In addition, since the property is proposed to be rezoned to Planned Development, the project is required to have a minimum lot area of 2.5 acres. The site is 10.24 acres so the project complies with this standard. The General Plan requires that lots larger than five acres be within a Planned Development zone, which the applicant has proposed. The General Plan establishes a residential density of 8.7 to 24.2 dwelling units per acre. The proposed density is 18.75 dwelling units per acre. The General Plan has a 30 foot height limit for the site and a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.01 for the commercial component of the project since the slope exceeds 15 percent. The commercial component meets the FAR but the proposed maximum height of 58 feet exceeds the allowed height. Since 10 percent of the units are proposed to be affordable, the project qualifies as an affordable housing project and the applicant has applied for a density bonus with a waiver of the height limits as provided under the State Density Bonus law as described previously.

A project identification sign is proposed on the face of the lowest retaining wall at the top of the entry driveway. A mural is also proposed on the retaining wall at the lower level of the recreation area south of the market. Details of the sign and mural, such as size, lettering, and lighting have not been provided. The sign and mural are subject to a sign permit. Since the project would be new construction in a PD zone, the project must prepare a sign program which would be reviewed by the Design Review Board for a recommendation to the Planning Commission (Mun. Code Sections 14.19.043 and .046). This would be required as a condition of approval.

All other development criteria for the site are found in the HDG. These criteria are discussed in detail below.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **General Plan 2040 Consistency:**

The property is proposed to be located within the Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use (NCMU) Land Use Designation. The following General Plan policies are relevant to the project site:

Land Use Policy LU-1.8 (Residential Density): The NCMU allows residential densities from 8.7 to 24.2 dwelling units per acre. The proposed density is 18.75 dwelling units per acre, so the project is consistent with the policy.

Land Use Policy LU-1.9 (Clustering): Clustering is recommended to “conserve environmentally sensitive or hazardous portions of a site....” The project utilizes clustering to keep the development area compact, preserving the majority of the significant trees on the southern portion of the site. The project is consistent with the policy.

Land Use Policy LU-1.10 (Intensity of Non-Residential Development): A maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.01 is allowed for properties with a slope greater than 15 percent. The commercial component of the project has an FAR of 0.01 so the project is consistent with the policy.

Land Use Policy LU-1.17 (Building Heights): The maximum allowed building height is 30 feet for the site. The proposed maximum building height is 58 feet. Since the applicant has applied for a density bonus, the applicant has requested that the height increase be granted as a waiver as provided under the State Density Bonus law as described previously.

Community Design and Preservation Policy CDP-1.3 (Hillside Protection): The Policy seeks to protect the visual integrity and character of the hillsides by controlling development through the Hillside Design Guidelines (HDG). The project is consistent with several hillside design standards, including clustering to minimize grading and to avoid the appearance of larger, more massive structures, and the retention of the majority of significant trees on the property. The buildings utilize vertical and horizontal stepbacks which are encouraged. The top floor of the residential buildings are pushed back from the lower floors, but the buildings still present tall downhill facing elevations in a vertical plane. Gable ends face downhill, which is discouraged, rather than sloping the roofs with the hillside. The market/community center building has a two-story east facing wall consisting mostly of large windows. The floors of this building are also stepped-back up the hill, creating vertical articulation and providing outdoor seating space on the east façade. The use of large windows may be in response to the comment from the Planning Commission during the preliminary review hearing that the market should be given greater visibility. The project has an extensive landscape palette using low water using trees, shrubs and groundcovers. Some of the trees, including Brisbane Box, Cathedral Live Oak, and California Black Oak, are not on the list of approved trees in Appendix B of the HDG. The applicant has suggested that the Cathedral Live Oak is a more appropriate street tree as it generally takes a more vertical form rather than the spreading form of the Coast Live Oak found in the list. Brisbane Box, although not on the list of approved trees, is very commonly used in California landscaping schemes. Staff is seeking Board input on these choices:

- Whether the design of the buildings has sufficient vertical and horizontal articulation 1) to avoid creating a “wall” effect; 2) to avoid large expanses of a wall in a single plane on the downhill elevations; 3) to create sufficient shadows; 4) to avoid extended horizontal lines..
- Whether the gable ends should face downhill.
- Whether the use of trees not on the approved list in the HDG is appropriate.

More detailed discussion of consistency with the HDG is below in that section.

### **Zoning Ordinance Consistency:**

The proposed land use is consistent with the proposed Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use (NCMU) designation in the Land Use Element of the General Plan and the proposed Planned Development (PD) zoning. As noted in the Property Facts and Project Description, the project complies with the allowed residential density, commercial FAR, and required lot size. The project would not comply with the following standards:



*Building Height (Land Use Policy LU-1.17)*

Buildings up to 58 feet tall are proposed where the Policy allows a maximum height of 30 feet. Although this is a policy from the Land Use Element of the General Plan, there is no comparable standard in the proposed PD zone. The applicant is requesting a waiver pursuant to State Density bonus law.

*Resident and Customer Parking (Mun. Code Sec. 14.18.040)*

A total of 171 covered parking spaces and 42 guest parking spaces are proposed where 246 are required, and 12 customer spaces serving the market/community center building are provided where 42 are required. The applicant is requesting a concession from the standard provided for under State Density Bonus law.

**San Rafael Hillside Design Guidelines:**

The Hillside Design Guidelines serve as a guide for evaluating development on hillside properties. The project is a mixed-use development with residential and commercial components. The project complies with the following criteria:

- Grading should be kept to a minimum and performed in a way that respects significant natural features and visually blends with adjacent properties.
- Be compatible with the natural features, building location and existing open spaces of neighboring properties.
- Respect existing views, privacy, access to light and safety of neighboring properties.
- Avoid the unstable or hazardous portions of the site.
- Preserve “existing natural features” including:
  - Mature trees
  - Significant or unique vegetation grouping(s) which contributes to the character of the site
  - Topography
  - Drainage.
- When significant trees must be removed, replanting with approved species is recommended.
- Circulation and parking should be located and landscaped to minimize views from the valley floor, roads and neighboring properties.
- Parking should be located beneath buildings.
- Avoid building facades that are designed with a ground level wall of repetitive garage doors.
- Avoid long continuous building masses that create a “wall” effect and inhibit views.
- Facades should be articulated to produce shadows.
- Rooflines should avoid extended horizontal lines.
- Group usable open space should be provided and include a children’s play area of at least 400 square feet.
- Each unit should have private usable open space. Ground level spaces should have a minimum dimension of 12 feet and decks above-ground should have a minimum dimension of 8 feet.
- Color selection should show evidence of coordination with predominant colors and values of the surrounding landscape.
- Site lighting should minimize intrusion into adjacent properties, roadways, the hillside silhouette and the night sky.

The project utilizes clustered, compact development to minimize grading. Grading is generally confined to the northerly portion of the site which preserves the majority (230 of 285) of the existing trees and avoids one of the drainage paths crossing the site. A variety of low water using trees are proposed, though some (Brisbane Box, Cathedral Live Oak, California Black Oak) are not on the list of approved trees in Appendix B of the HDG. The Cathedral Live Oak is a tall spreading tree which seems like a good choice as a “street tree” alongside the driveway system. California Black Oaks are native to the state and widely distributed. Brisbane Box is a tall tree native to Australia that is commonly used in California landscaping.

Although the site is visible from State Highway 101 and properties to the east, development is located below the ridgeline behind the site. Keeping the developed portion of the project to the north side of the property helps preserve the existing views and privacy of the residential areas south of the site. The internal driveway system and parking are designed to be screened by the proposed buildings and landscaping. The project is divided into six buildings with each of the building pads at a different elevation. The distribution of massing into six separate buildings helps the project better conform to the hillside than if the project used fewer, more massive buildings.

The buildings utilize horizontal and some vertical articulation to reduce the apparent building mass. Large windows introduce natural light and provide views to the east. There are both vertical and horizontal stepbacks in the building form as are encouraged by the HDG. The design includes gable ends on downhill elevations which are discouraged.

The project utilizes natural colors in exterior finishes for walls and roofing materials. Finishes are varied and include stucco and siding. The market/community center building has a two-story, east-facing wall primarily composed of large windows, which the HDG discourages. This could be mitigated by the introduction of the outdoor seating areas at each of the levels of the building on the east façade, and the proposed trees east of the building that would provide a substantial screen. This may also be a design choice influenced by the request from the Planning Commission to make the market more visible. In addition, large windows are reasonable design choices for the intended use as a market and community center, providing the interior with considerable natural light and views to the east.

The HDG discourages the use of retaining walls taller than 4 feet upslope from structures, and 3 feet downslope. As noted previously, in some cases walls would be up to 8 feet tall behind buildings, up to 8 feet tall upslope from the driveway, and up to 5 feet tall below roadways. The tallest portions of the walls behind the buildings are completely screened by the buildings. Walls elsewhere, including the walls up to 16 feet high between the market building and residential Building 2, are proposed to be screened by trees and shrubs below the walls and landscaping trailing over the top of the walls.

Each proposed dwelling unit would have a private balcony or patio of 72 to 143 square feet with a minimum dimension of 8 feet. Group useable open space would include a large plaza with seating and large-scale chess board above the market. A children's play area totaling approximately 610 square feet with more seating would also be above the market. The recreational area above the market, including the children's play area, totals over 4,000 square feet. South of the market, there would be three terraced outdoor areas, with a lawn at the upper level, a covered seating area with a water feature on the middle level, and more seating around a fire ring at the lower level. Each of the terraces can be accessed by stairs. This recreational area is roughly the same size as the area above the market. There would also be a large (approximately 3,000 square foot) children's play area with a variety of play structures in the "South Park" area of the hillside south of the apartment buildings. This area would also include a circuitous path, seating areas and considerable undisturbed hillside. This area would be accessed via a metal bridge over the natural drainage gully that bisects the site from west to east.

Virtually all of the proposed parking is located beneath each of the buildings. Just 42 of the 225 parking spaces are at-grade and these are located on the driveway that is bordered to the east and west by the proposed buildings. None of these parking spaces would be visible from surrounding properties.

Light poles with cut-off fixtures would be used along the internal driveway system and the surface parking areas. Low bollards would be used near buildings and along pathways. Lighting is designed to minimize spillover onto neighboring properties.

In summary, the project appears to meet the overall intent of the Hillside Design Guidelines with certain exceptions.

**Staff seeks the Board’s guidance regarding the following:**

- Building Design
  - Whether the design of the buildings has sufficient vertical and horizontal articulation 1) to avoid creating a “wall” effect; 2) to avoid large expanses of a wall in a single plane on the downhill elevations; 3) to create sufficient shadows; 4) to avoid extended horizontal lines.
  - Whether the gable ends should face downhill.
- Landscape Design
  - Whether the use of trees not on the approved list in the HDG is appropriate.

**NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENCE**

Pursuant to the noticing requirements found in SRMC Section 14.29, notice of the Design Review Board hearing was provided by mail on September XX, 2021, to the applicant and property owner; the Mont Marin/San Rafael Park Neighborhood Association, all property owners, occupants and tenants within a radius of 300 feet of the property boundaries; the Marin Sanitary Service; Pacific Gas & Electric Company; Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District; and various City departments including the Department of Public Works. Notice was posted on the property in the manner required on September 17, 2021. Notice was also published in the newspaper on September 18, 2021.

**CONCLUSION**

The project proposes additional housing on a challenging site. The project generally meets the intent of the Hillside Design Guidelines in that it minimizes grading and maximizes the preservation of the existing landscape and topography. Separating but clustering the buildings helps the project conform to the hillside while minimizing the building footprint. The tradeoff is that the buildings are rather tall and boxy. The proposed landscaping scheme, although it includes trees not on the approved list, appears reasonable; the use of replacement oaks is especially welcome. Staff seeks the Board’s guidance.

**EXHIBITS**

1. Project Plans, dated 2/22/21 and amended on 5/19/21 available online:
  - Part I: [https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/10/Exhibit-1\\_Los-Gamos-Residential-Plan-Set-Reduced\\_Part1.pdf](https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/10/Exhibit-1_Los-Gamos-Residential-Plan-Set-Reduced_Part1.pdf)
  - Part II: [https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/10/Exhibit-1\\_Los-Gamos-Residential-Plan-Set-Reduced\\_Part2.pdf](https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/10/Exhibit-1_Los-Gamos-Residential-Plan-Set-Reduced_Part2.pdf)
  - Part III: [https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/10/Exhibit-1\\_Los-Gamos-Residential-Plan-Set-Reduced\\_Part3.pdf](https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/10/Exhibit-1_Los-Gamos-Residential-Plan-Set-Reduced_Part3.pdf)

For more project information, visit the project website:  
[https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/los\\_gamos\\_apartments/](https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/los_gamos_apartments/)

- cc: Christopher Hart, property owner and applicant, 899 Northgate Dr., Ste. 301, San Rafael, CA 94903  
Riley F. Hurd III, attorney for applicant, 1101 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., Ste. 100, San Rafael, CA 94901  
Colin Russell, architect for applicant, 1430 4<sup>th</sup> St., San Rafael, CA 94901  
Michael Tarnoff, civil engineer for applicant, 1442 A Walnut St. #428, Berkeley, CA 94709



**SAN RAFAEL**  
THE CITY WITH A MISSION

Community Development Department – Planning Division

Meeting Date: October 5, 2021  
Case Numbers: ED20-051  
Project Planner: Jayni Allsep, Contract Planner  
Agenda Item: 3

**REPORT TO DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**SUBJECT: 326 and 308 Mission Avenue (Aldersly Retirement Community)** - Request for Environmental and Design Review for a phased redevelopment of the Aldersly Retirement Community, including demolition and renovation of existing buildings and construction of new buildings; APN: 014-054-31 and -32; Planned Development (PD-1775) Zoning District; Peter Schakow, Owner; Peter Lin, Greenbriar Development, Applicant; File No(s): ED 20-051, ZC20-001 and UP20-022.

**PROPERTY FACTS**

<u>Location</u>	<u>General Plan</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Existing Land Use</u>
<b>308 Mission:</b>	<b>HDR</b>	<b>P-D</b>	<b>Single Family Dwelling</b>
<b>326 Mission:</b>	<b>HDR</b>	<b>P-D</b>	Residential Care Facility/ Assisted Living/Memory Care (35 beds)  Extended Care/Convalescent/ Skilled Nursing Beds (20 beds)  Residential/ Independent Living Units (55 units)
North:	LDR	R10; R5	Single family Residential
South:	Downtown Mixed Use	MR2.5; PD	Retail/Multifamily Residential (San Rafael Commons Senior Apts.)
East:	LDR	R5	Single Family Residential
West:	MDR	MR3; DR	Multifamily/Duplex Residential
<b>Development Standards below are based Ordinance adopted January 2002 - Aldersly PD Zoning Development Standards (see Exhibit 2, attached)</b>			
<b><u>Lot Size</u></b>		<b><u>Maximum Lot Coverage</u></b>	
Required:	2.5 acres	Required:	60%
Proposed:	2.88 acres (no change)	Proposed:	52.6% (at buildout of Phased Development Plan)
<b><u>Height</u></b>		<b><u>Maximum Density**</u></b>	
Allowed:	36 feet	Allowed:	125 (1,000 s.f./unit)
Proposed:	35 feet*	Existing:	55 Independent Living Units
	40 feet** (new Mission Ave. Building)	Proposed:	69 Independent Living Units
		** only Independent Living units count toward density calculations	
* Based on average height of south elevation			
** Measured to average height of tallest pitch roof.			

<b><u>On-Site Parking</u></b> Required: Flexible based on net new parking demand Proposed: 56 spaces at buildout	<b><u>Minimum Lot Width (New lots)</u></b> Required: None Required		
<b><u>Minimum Landscape Area</u></b> No minimum area specified in PD Development Standards	<b><u>Setbacks</u></b> <i>Front - Mission Ave.</i> <i>Side - East</i> <i>Side - West</i> <i>Rear - Belle Ave.</i>	<i>Required</i> 15' 5' 5' 10'	<i>Proposed</i> 15' 5' 5' 10'

## SUMMARY

The project is being referred to the Design Review Board (Board) for review of a proposed amendment to the approved Development Plan for the Aldersly Retirement Community. The project proposes phased improvements over the next ten years that include demolition and renovation of existing buildings, and construction of three new buildings on the Aldersly Campus. The project would result in fourteen (14) additional independent living units, an increase from 55 units to 69 units. The number of Assisted Living/Memory Care beds (35 beds) and Skilled Nursing beds (20 beds) would remain unchanged.

The proposed project requires a Zoning Amendment to revise the approved Development Plan, amendment to the Master Use Permit, an Environmental and Design Review Permit, and environmental review as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

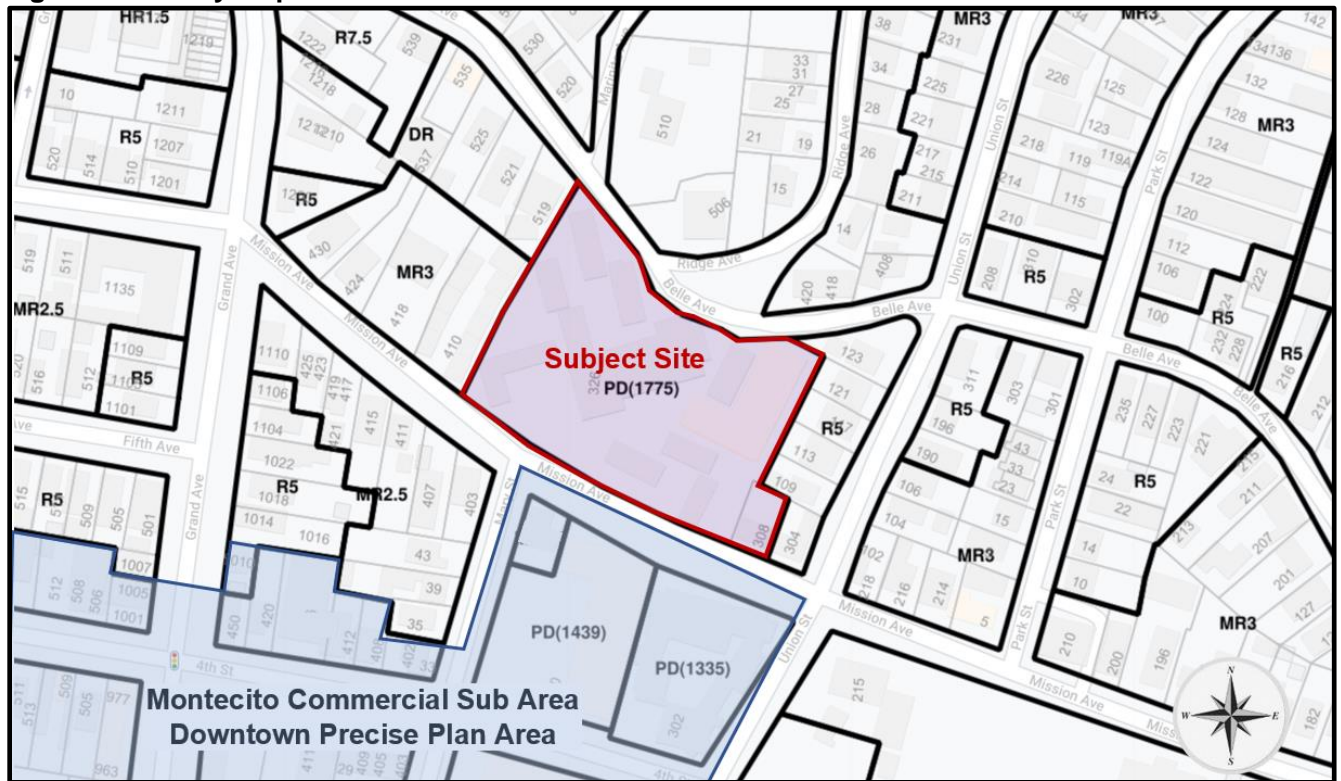
- On August 5, 2020, the Design Review Board Subcommittee conducted a conceptual design review of the project. The comments offered during conceptual design review include the following: Parking is a concern given the addition of 14 new units. Buildout should include additional on-site parking. A parking study should be undertaken if not required.
- Landscaping will be important, particularly along the Mission Avenue frontage.
- Stormwater drainage requirement, including bioretention planters and permeable pavers, shall be evaluated and included in the plans.
- Massing will be important, particularly along the Mission Ave. frontage. Consider mass-reducing techniques such as upper-story stepbacks and material and color choices.

Staff is seeking the Board's evaluation of the project's consistency with design criteria contained in the applicable design-related General Plan policies, Zoning/Planned Development regulations, and San Rafael Design Guidelines as discussed below. Staff is requesting that the Board provide recommendations on the following:

- *Architecture, Building Height and Mass* - Whether the design proposed by this phased development plan is appropriate given the existing buildings that will remain on the Aldersly campus, as well as its compatibility with the Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood and the adjacent Downtown Precise Plan Area.
- *Colors and Materials* - Whether the colors and materials are appropriate.
- *Landscape Plan* - the placement, type, and size of proposed landscaping, exterior lighting, hardscape, and screening of parking areas from the public right-of-way.
- *Site Plan* - Whether the proposed site plan demonstrates efficient use of the site.

The Board's recommendations will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for a decision on the Environmental and Design Review permit.

**Figure 1: Vicinity Map**



## BACKGROUND

### Site Description & Setting

The Aldersly Retirement Community occupies 2.88 acres on the north side of Mission Avenue and extending to Belle Avenue to the north. The property slopes uphill from Mission Avenue frontage (13-16 ft. elevation) to Belle Avenue (40-60 ft. elevation). The campus is developed with residential, administrative, and healthcare buildings connected by an extensive network of landscaped pedestrian paths and gardens. The campus is located within the Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood, one of San Rafael's oldest neighborhoods. The area surrounding the Aldersly campus contains a mix of residential, retail, and community services. The site has a General Plan Land Use designation as High Density Residential and is zoned PD - Planned Development (Ordinance No. 1775). The Aldersly campus is located just north of the Montecito Commercial Sub-Area of the Downtown Precise Plan Area (see Figure 1 above).

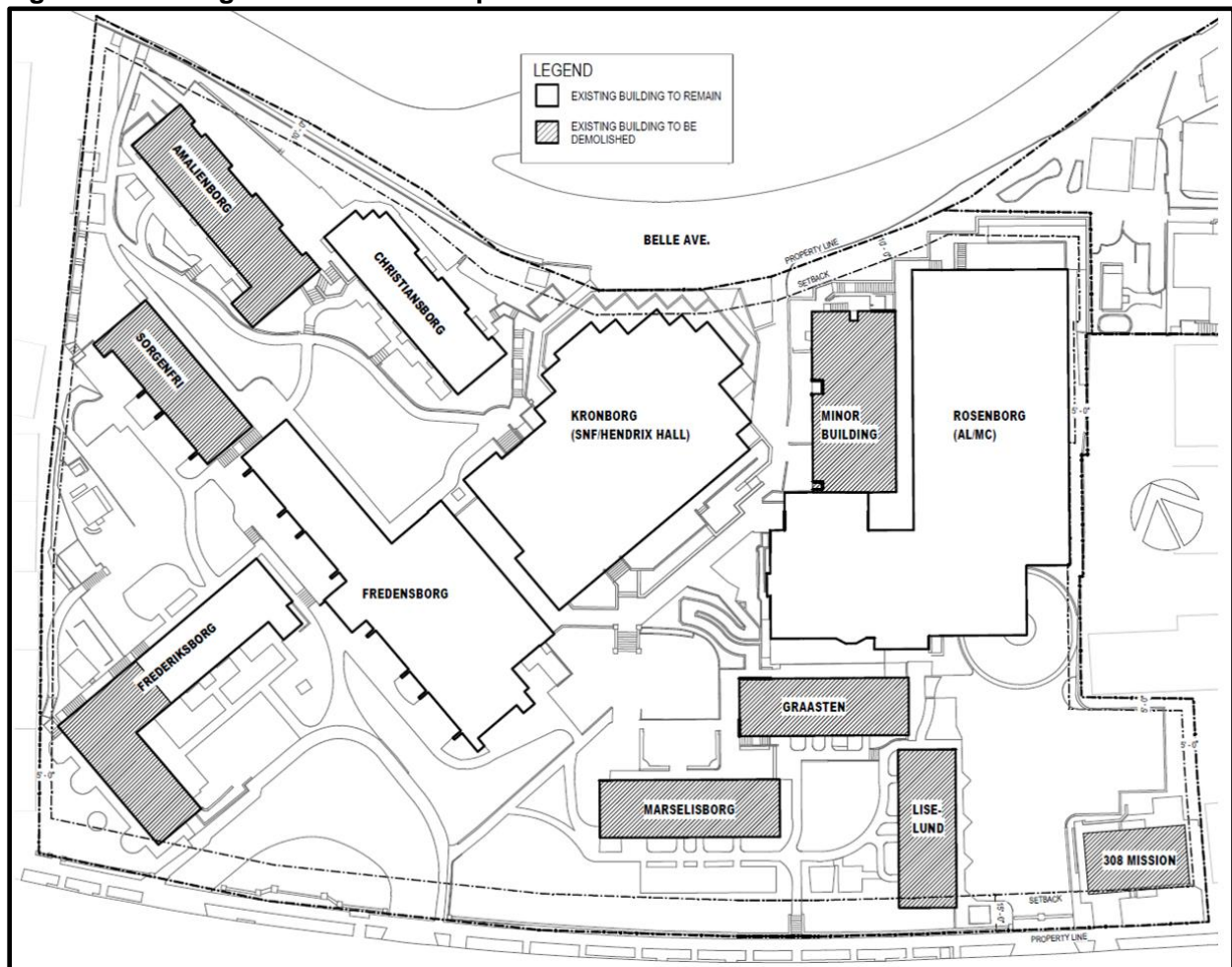
Founded in 1921 as a retirement community for Danish immigrants, Aldersly has been transformed numerous times over its 100 years to meet the changing needs of residents and new concepts of community care. None of the original buildings of the Aldersly campus remain, and the existing buildings on the campus represent a variety of styles reflecting the four periods of redevelopment in the 1940s, 1960s, 1990s and early 2000s.

Though none of the buildings on the campus are listed in the National or State Historic Registers, or on San Rafael's Historic Properties list, a 2017 Historic Resources Evaluation

prepared by Page & Turnbull determined that the Aldersly Retirement Community property is eligible for listing as a historic district in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), see Exhibits 5 and 6. The eligibility is based in part on the campus's age-eligible buildings (45 years or older) constructed in the 1961-1968 time period, which appear to be early exemplary works of Rex Whitaker Allen, one of the region's most prolific and innovative mid-twentieth century healthcare institutional architects. The Minor Building, constructed in 1945, would also be considered a contributor, as it is the oldest building remaining on the campus, and its brick cladding likely influenced the materiality of Allen's buildings. In addition, while the contributing buildings are the primary components of the historic district, it is the historic relationship of the campus's buildings with the landscape and site topography, and the resulting cohesive nature of the entire property, which forms the basis of the property's eligibility for significance as a historic district.

The most recent major development on the campus is the 30-unit assisted living facility and attached parking garage (Rosenborg), completed in 2004 under the current Planned Development (PD) District adopted in January 2002 (Exhibit 2 - Ordinance No.1775). The 2002 PD District is intended to maintain Aldersly's role as a community asset by maintaining the campus as a quiet, landscaped buffer between the single-family areas and multifamily/commercial zone.

**Figure 2: Existing Site Plan with Proposed Demolition**



## Application History

**Pre-application Review.** On February 10, 2020, staff provided the applicant with pre-application review comments.

**Conceptual Design Review.** On August 5, 2020, the Design Review Board Subcommittee conducted a conceptual design review of the project. Comments from conceptual Design Review are addressed in the analysis section of this report

**Formal Environmental and Design Review Permit.** A formal application was submitted in November 2020 (along with zoning and master use permit amendment applications) and deemed complete in March 2021.

**Neighborhood Meeting.** A neighborhood meeting was held on June 9, 2021, via Zoom, at which time the submitted plans were shared with neighbors in attendance. The applicant had already done considerable outreach with neighbors and neighborhood associations prior to the application submittal, and the comments made during the meeting were overall positive.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION & ANALYSIS

The short-term and long-term goals of the Aldersly Community are to make Aldersly a better place for residents and staff; keep Aldersly a place where residents can affordably live the rest of their lives; and, to create a revenue stream to support the residential community into the future. The project proposes phased improvements over the next ten years that include demolition and renovation of existing buildings, and construction of new buildings on the Aldersly Campus to address these goals. As noted in the proposed PD Zoning and Development Standards, the overall goal the master plan is “to keep Aldersly a boutique residential community for older people looking for a home with *hygge* - Danish for the experience of coziness and comfortable conviviality that engenders feelings of contentment and well-being”.

At buildout of the Development Plan in approximate ten years (2031), the project would result in a new three-story Independent Living (IL) building along Mission Avenue, a new Independent Living building on the western portion of the site, a new service building along Belle Avenue, three renovated/reconfigured buildings, and new outdoor spaces including a memory care garden, activity lawn, and rose terrace. The project, which includes demolition of six existing buildings, construction of three new buildings, and additions/renovations to four existing buildings, would result in fourteen (14) additional independent living units, an increase from 55 units to 69 units. The number of Assisted Living/Memory Care beds (35 beds) and Skilled Nursing beds (20 beds) would remain unchanged. The number of on-site parking spaces would increase from 48 to 56 spaces at buildout of the Aldersly Development Plan.

The proposed phasing of the Aldersly Development Plan is shown on Sheet A2.1 (Phasing Diagram) and is outlined below:

### PHASE 1 MISSION AVENUE INDEPENDENT LIVING

Phase 1A: New Mission Ave Independent Living (IL) Building:

1. Demolition of Marselisborg (4,500 sq. ft.), Graasten (4,320 sq. ft.), Lieslund (1,800 sq. ft.) Independent Living buildings
2. Construction of new independent living apartments along Mission Avenue
3. 8 (net new) parking spaces located near the new east driveway (308 Mission property)
4. Redesign of the site entry



5. Expansion of community space and improve central courtyard

Phase 1B: Frederiksborg Independent Living (Remodel/Addition):

1. Interior renovation of 15,000 sq. ft. Fredensborg (no discretionary review required; consistent with approved Development Plan)
2. Partial rebuild of 5,000 sq. ft. Frederiksborg with a 1,200 sq. ft. addition for a total of 7,200 sq. ft.

Phase 1C: Fredensborg Terrace

1. Improve outdoor space

### **PHASE 2A & 2B - KRONBORG RENOVATION**

1. Renovate existing 14, 250 sq. ft. Kronborg (20 Skilled Nursing beds; no net increase)
2. Renovate lower level to provide Wellness and additional amenities
3. Remove the 6,510 SF Minor Building currently used for Independent Living
4. Add a new service connector with an elevator to support and improve site circulation
5. Expand outdoor garden for Memory Care

### **PHASE 3 - CHRISTIANSBORG RENOVATION**

1. Renovate and expand Christiansborg (5,500 SF) Independent Living units
2. Improve outdoor spaces with landscaping; define a core active space for the residents

### **PHASE 4 - WEST CAMPUS INDEPENDENT LIVING ADDITION**

1. Replace Amalienborg (5,500 sq. ft.) and Sorgenfri (3,800 sq. ft.) with a new Independent Living building (+1 unit net)

Sheet A1.1 Existing Site Plan, indicates the existing buildings that are proposed to be demolished in order to implement the proposed Development Plan.

Given the proposed ten-year+ timeframe for the proposed development, the focus of this review is on Phases 1 and 2; future stages may be subject to further design review either as a new Environmental & Design Review Permit or as required by conditions of approval, prior to issuance of building permits for these phases. The DRB, however, should feel free to offer comments and recommendations on the overall site plan and all phases of proposed development (Phases 1-4).

**Site Plan:** One of the main site design challenges of this project is to provide new facilities to better meet the needs and expectations of 21<sup>st</sup> century seniors (who tend to be age 80+ rather than age 60+) on a sloped site that is already developed with buildings constructed at different elevations. Other challenges include providing additional on-site parking, improving food service delivery, maintaining existing landscaping and making outdoor spaces more functional and accessible. Sheets A3.1 - A3.5 call out site elevations +16, +26, +36, +46 and +56, which are key to maintaining and improving on-site circulation and connectivity between existing and proposed buildings.

The proposed design introduces an accessible entrance as part of the new Independent Living building on Mission Avenue, new parking, elevator service and direct connections to the existing food service building. A new service building along Belle Avenue (Phase 2A) would also provide internal connections between buildings on the north side of the site and improved dumpster storage and access.

**Architecture:** As noted above, the existing buildings on the Aldersly campus represent a variety

of styles reflecting the four periods of redevelopment in the 1940's, 1960's, 1990's and early 2000's. The proposed project includes the demolition of existing buildings to make way for new buildings, and renovation of existing buildings on the campus. Sheet A5.0 of the plans packet includes photos of existing buildings on the Aldersly campus and notes their character-defining elements, as identified in the Page & Turnbull Historic Resources Evaluation.

The architectural style and proposed exterior materials are intended to be compatible with the existing buildings that will remain on the Aldersly campus and buildings in the neighborhood. Exterior materials include a variety of colors and textures, including stucco (four different colors), modular brick to match existing buildings, and fiber cement siding painted (four different colors), a concrete tile roof, concrete reveals and metal balcony railing. Proposed exterior colors and materials for new buildings are depicted on Sheet A5.3 of plans and the exterior building elevations and perspective drawings.

Elevations of the proposed Mission Avenue Independent Living Building are provided on Sheet A5.1. Elevations of the proposed new wing of the Frederiksborg and new service buildings are provided on Sheet A5.2, and perspective views of proposed new buildings are provided on Sheets A5.5 and A5.6. Site sections are provided on Sheet A5.7.

**Landscaping and Lighting:** Aldersly has extensive landscaping and a lush garden setting that contributes significantly to the aesthetics of the property and the neighborhood. There are no minimum landscape or yard requirements specified in the proposed PD Development Standards due to the single ownership of the facilities, the communal nature of the exterior areas, and the desire to maintain planning flexibility. However, parking areas visible from a public right-of way are required to be screened in accordance with requirements contained in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

A proposed master landscape plan (Sheets L0.0 - L6.0) addresses the existing trees on the site, a tree protection plan, preliminary plant list (including plants for bioretention areas), vegetation management, and exterior lighting plan, including lighting cut sheets for proposed fixtures. Sheet L5.2 provides a preliminary landscape plan specific to Phase 1 development, and Sheet L5.3 provides an illustrative landscape master plan for the entire Aldersly campus at proposed buildout of the Development Plan (Phases 1-4). Special attention was given to the Mission Avenue streetscape where some perimeter landscaping and trees are proposed to be removed to make way for new buildings.

The proposed phased development of the Aldersly campus would require the removal of mature trees and other landscaping to make way for new buildings. An inventory of existing trees on the property (Sheet L1.0) identifies trees proposed to be removed at each of the four phases of site development. A total of 77 trees are proposed to be removed; most of them non-native, ornamental species (Japanese maple, juniper, Crape myrtle, flowering plum, fruiting and fruitless mulberry), and one large palm tree along Mission Avenue is proposed to be relocated. While the total number of trees to be removed is substantial, removal of the trees would occur gradually over many years as required to make way for the phased development, many are located within the interior of the site, many existing mature trees would remain, and new landscaping, including a variety of trees, is proposed. As stated in the approved and proposed PD Development Standards "[T]he campus pattern of tightly landscaped pathways, terraces, open courtyards and decks, and garden areas will be replicated to the extent feasible as approved through design review."

Staff seeks feedback from the Board relative to the master landscape plan, including the placement, type, and size of proposed landscaping, and screening of parking areas from the

public right-of-way.

**Access, Circulation and Parking:** Vehicle access to the site would be in approximately the same location as existing, but the location of driveways/curb cuts would be shifted slightly for both entry points along Mission Avenue. The existing main entry along Mission Avenue (horseshoe-shaped driveway) would be reconfigured in approximately the same location, but with fewer parking spaces to improve accessibility. The shift in driveway locations has been reviewed by the City Engineer and no major concerns were identified. However, the Department of Public Works will continue to evaluate the project and recommend conditions of approval as appropriate.

The existing driveway to Rosenborg, located to the east toward Union Street, would shift further east, and some of the existing parking spaces along this driveway would be removed. Eight new parking spaces are proposed east of the driveway (demolition of building at 308 Mission is proposed). Additional parking (nine spaces) would also be provided at the first level of the new Mission Avenue IL Building. At buildout of proposed Development Plan, there would be a total of 56 on-site parking spaces.

There is no specific parking requirement identified in the PD 1775 Development Standards adopted for the Aldersly campus. Instead, the Development Standards require that projects that generate a net increase in demand for parking on campus will attempt to accommodate the increased demand as part of the new project. Net new demand shall be determined by a traffic study and subject to acceptance by the City Engineer. A Traffic and Parking Study prepared by W-Trans (February 2021) addresses the adequacy of on-site parking supply for proposed development by assessing current usage of the parking and consideration of the additional parking to be provided as part of the project as well as city code requirements. Of the 48 existing on-site parking spaces, 30 are reserved for residents of the Independent Living units, six are for staff, eight are for visitors, and four are undesignated. Residents of the independent living units are an average of 88 years old and those who own cars tend to drive infrequently, so most of the residents' parking spaces are in use throughout the day. As a result, peak parking demand was based on the maximum staffing level, which is during the afternoon before the shift change at 2:30 PM. Consideration was also given to parking usage in the neighborhood surrounding the site, as some employees may choose to park off-site given the limited number of on-site staff parking spaces. The study notes that the potential impact of Aldersly staff on the on-street parking supply is lower on weekday evenings and on weekends because administrative staff only work standard business hours Monday through Friday, so the parking demand outside these hours is lower. The W-Trans study also collected data on usage of on-site and off-site parking available for use residents, staff and visitors. Based on this data, it appears that the existing parking supply at Aldersly is adequately serving the site under current conditions. It is noted that Aldersly currently provides valet parking to maximize the use of its space on site when they host events and additional supply is required. The parking study concludes that with the net increase of eight parking spaces proposed on-site, and with the continued use of valet services to expand the on-site parking supply, there will be adequate on-site parking, and the proposed project will not have a detrimental effect on street parking in the area.

The City Engineer has reviewed and accepted the traffic and parking study as complete. As the project moves through the City's review process, the adequacy of on-site parking will continue to be evaluated. The Board may wish to provide feedback and recommendations on the proposed parking location and design.

**Off-Street Loading and Unloading/Refuse Collection.** There is currently one off-street truck loading area on Belle Avenue, installed in 2004 as part of the 30-unit (bed) Assisted Living project (Rosenborg) and serves as the main service entrance for deliveries and refuse collection. The

submitted plans show the proposed new service building and refuse storage enclosure along Belle Avenue (Sheet A5.6), which improve the functionality and appearance of the loading area.

**General Plan Consistency:**

In general, the project is consistent with the applicable design-related policies contained in both the previous General Plan 2020 and the recently adopted General Plan 2040. The site is designated High Density Residential (HDR) on the General Plan 2020 and General Plan 2040 Land Use Maps. As noted previously, the Aldersly campus is located just outside of (and north of) the Downtown Precise Plan Area. Design-related policies applicable to the project and how the project complies with these policies are described below along with specific areas where staff is seeking feedback from the Board.

***Policy LU-1.17: Building Heights.*** Use General Plan Figures 3-3 and 3-4 as the basis for determining “baseline” maximum building heights in San Rafael. Maximum heights should continue to be codified through zoning and any applicable Specific Plans or Precise Plans. In addition, the following specific provisions related to building heights shall apply:

- a) *Height of buildings existing or approved as of January 1, 1987 shall be considered as conforming to zoning standards.*
- b) *Hotels outside of the Downtown Precise Plan boundary have a 54-foot height limit. Within Downtown, the height provisions of the Downtown Precise Plan apply (see Figure 3-4).*
- c) *As provided for by Policy LU-1.18, “baseline” building heights are subject to height bonuses where specific community benefits are provided, where a Variance or zoning exception is granted, or where a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is being implemented.*
- d) *Heights may be increased by up to six (6) feet above the baseline building heights as necessary to mitigate the exposure of properties to sea level rise and other flooding hazards (e.g., raising the first floor of habitable floor space above anticipated tidal flood elevations).*

The maximum building height limit of 36 feet is established by the policy above, as contained in General Plan 2040. However, the methodology for measuring maximum building height is addressed in Section 14.03.03 of the Zoning Code (Definitions). The methodology for measuring height is different depending on whether the building has a flat roof, mansard roof or a pitched roof. Due to the slope (and cross-slope) conditions on the Aldersly property, the corners of the Mission Independent Living building have a “taller” measured height because the slope drops away from the building at certain locations. Therefore, the measured vertical distance is greater than 36 feet. However, the calculated maximum height per Zoning Code definition would be below the 36-foot height limit based on the reference datum used for measurement of height, (elevator and fire exit stairs are considered a mechanical appurtenances and are excluded from height limit requirement). Therefore, staff finds that the project conforms to general plan policies regarding building height.

***Policy LU-1.18: Height Bonuses.*** Allow the granting of height bonuses for development that provides one or more of the amenities listed in Table 3-2, provided that the building’s design is consistent with applicable design guidelines and standards. No more than one height bonus may be granted on each site.

*Use permit requirements for height bonuses are shown in Table 3-2. The bonuses may be used in lieu of those provided by State density bonus programs for affordable housing. Bonuses are*

*not additive. In other words, an applicant using State density bonuses is not eligible for additional bonuses offered through local programs.*

As noted above, the maximum proposed building height for the Mission Avenue Independent Living building is below the 36-foot height limit based on the Zoning Code definition of building height. Therefore, a height bonus is not required nor is one being requested by the applicant.

As a point of comparison, the property south of the Aldersly campus across Mission Avenue (San Rafael Commons Senior Apartments and Salvation Army property) is located within the Downtown Precise Plan Area, and therefore has a base height limit of 40 feet and permits a height bonus of an additional 10 feet if certain criteria are met (Height Bonus Tier 1 Area).

**Policy LU-2.8: Senior and Disabled Care Facilities.** *Encourage facilities and services to meet the needs of older and disabled residents, including senior housing, assisted living, and convalescent care facilities; and facilities providing adult day care and social services, and health care for older adults and people with disabilities.*

See **Goal EDI-6** for additional policies and programs addressing the needs of older adults

**Policy LU-3.2: New Development in Residential Neighborhoods.** *Preserve, enhance, and maintain the residential character of neighborhoods to keep them safe, desirable places to live. New development, redevelopment of existing buildings, and land use changes within and adjacent to residential areas should:*

- *Enhance neighborhood image and design quality*
- *Incorporate sensitive transitions in height and setbacks from adjacent properties*
- *Preserve historic, unique, and architecturally significant structures*
- *Respect and enhance natural features and terrain*
- *Reduce exposure to hazards, including limited emergency vehicle access*
- *Include amenities such as sidewalks, pathways, trees, and other landscape improvements*
- *Maintain or enhance infrastructure service levels*
- *Meet expected parking demand*
- *Minimize reduction of views, privacy, and solar access for neighboring properties*

*While these principles are fundamental, they do not preclude neighborhood change. Neighborhoods are dynamic places, and should adapt to changing tastes, styles, technology, and needs as they evolve.*

**Policy LU-3.6: Transitions Between Uses.** *Outside of mixed-use developments, maintain buffers between residential uses and adjacent commercial and institutional uses. Parking lots, loading areas, trash facilities, and similar activities associated with nonresidential uses should be appropriately screened.*

**Program LU-3.6A: Parking Lot Design.** *Maintain design guidelines for parking lots that address landscaping, buffering, environmental quality, and neighborhood compatibility. Parking lots should not be the dominant visual feature from the street frontage.*

**Policy NH-2.18 Architecture (Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood):** *Maintain a mix of architecture styles in the Montecito/ Happy Valley Neighborhood, compatible with the character*

*of the area's attractive older buildings. Newer buildings should be well designed, blend well with existing homes and provide a pedestrian-friendly street front.*

The exterior materials and colors proposed for the proposed new buildings, especially the Mission Avenue and West Campus Independent Living buildings, are generally compatible with other buildings on the Aldersly campus and help to unify the new buildings with the buildings that will remain. The Mission Avenue IL building would be the most prominent new building because of its location along Mission Avenue. Although most of the existing trees within the 15-foot front yard setback are proposed to be removed, trees within the Mission Avenue right-of-way would be preserved and additional new trees and other landscaping is proposed, which would provide for pedestrian friendly street front.

Staff seeks the Board's comments regarding the compatibility of the proposed development with the overall neighborhood character, especially the existing homes in the area.

***Policy EDI-6.2: Aging in Community.*** *Improve opportunities for older adults to age in place and continue living independently in their San Rafael homes. This should include recognition of the importance of in-home support services and caregivers, At the same time, provide more options for those seeking to "age in community" and relocate to suitable housing in the city that includes supportive services, smaller units, and access for persons with mobility limitations. This includes support services and facilities for those suffering from dementia-related illnesses and those who have become homeless due to medical or mental health conditions.*

***Program EDI-6.2A: Aging in Place.*** *Continue to support programs and services that assist older adults with home modifications that facilitate aging in place. Support home sharing programs that pair empty nesters with rental seekers.*

***Housing Policy H-2 (Design That Fits into the Neighborhood Context)*** *recognizes that construction of new housing can add to the appearance and value of the neighborhood if it fits into the established character of the area.*

The proposed project would provide additional independent living opportunities for older adults while also seeking to maintain compatibility with the surrounding area and the garden setting of the Aldersly campus, especially the height and scale of new buildings. Staff is seeking feedback from the Board as it relates to the overall design of the phased development and its context within the Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood.

### **Zoning Ordinance Consistency:**

As noted earlier in the staff report and in the development summary table, Ordinance No. 1775 adopted by the San Rafael City Council in January 2002, established a PD (Planned Development) District, including the Aldersly PD 1775 Development Standards (Exhibit A of Ordinance No. 1775—see Exhibit 2 of this staff report), that addresses maximum building height, setbacks, lot coverage, parking and loading, and landscape/open space requirements. These standards were crafted to blend with the adjacent neighborhood at the perimeter of the campus while allowing reasonable flexibility in interior portions of the site. The approved PD 1775 also establishes the range of allowable land uses allowed on the property. There are no new or different land uses requested as part of the proposed PD beyond the uses allowed by the approved PD 1775. However, the proposed project would result in a net increase of 14 independent living units as well as substantial changes throughout the entire campus.

As part of their application package, the applicant submitted a zoning amendment application to amend the previously approved PD District Plan, including revised Aldersly PD Development Standards. The proposed/revised Development Standards (Exhibit 3) are very similar to those

approved PD Ordinance No. 1775, with a few exceptions as discussed throughout this report by topic. The zoning amendment and revised PD Development Standards will be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council, along with the master use permit and environmental and design review permit.

### **San Rafael Design Guidelines:**

The San Rafael Design Guidelines serve as a guide for evaluating new construction. The project proposes phased construction of new independent living buildings, a new service building and other improvements on the Aldersly campus, and therefore needs to demonstrate compliance with the Design Guidelines for residential development. Criteria applicable to the project are as follows:

- Where necessary to replicate existing patterns or character of development, design techniques should be used to break up the volume of larger buildings into smaller units. For example, a building can be articulated through architectural features, setbacks and varying rooflines to appear more as an aggregation of smaller building components.
- Transitional elements, such as stepped facades, roof decks and architectural details that help merge larger buildings into an existing neighborhood should be used.
- Adjacent buildings should be considered, and transitional elements included to minimize apparent height differences
- There should be a clear, well-defined sense of entry from the street to the building.
- Where possible, the entrances of street front units should be oriented towards the street rather than to the interior of the lot or to the parking lot. The placement and size of windows in the building should be consistent with the overall building design and the neighborhood streetscape. Where windows do not reflect an existing pattern, greater attention should be paid to other means such as balcony overhangs, porches, materials, colors, etc. of articulating the facade.
- Window proportions should be consistent with the proportions of the building and with other windows on the building.
- Windows should overlook the street, parking and public areas to permit surveillance and increased safety.
- Driveway cuts and widths should be minimized and designed in compliance with zoning.
- Where possible, ground level parking areas should be recessed or placed to the rear of building's facade.
- Design for adequate vehicle maneuverability in parking areas. Vehicles should not back out from a parking space onto the street.
- Minimize large paved areas, for example by using alternative materials (i.e., turf block, stamped concrete or pavers).
- For multifamily buildings, parking should be distributed to provide easy access to units and/or building entrances. Visible front or structured parking should be screened, landscaped or have an articulated design.

- Landscaped areas adjacent to sidewalks are encouraged.
- Limit the intensity of lighting to provide for adequate site security and for pedestrian and vehicular safety.
- Shield light sources to prevent glare and illumination beyond the boundaries of the property.
- Lighting fixtures should complement the architecture of the project.

Staff believes that the proposed phased development of the Aldersly campus is consistent with design criteria applicable to this type of development. The project incorporates terraces, varied rooflines and building setbacks that break up the mass of the buildings from key vantage points along Mission and Belle Avenues. There are a variety of building styles with varying setbacks in the Montecito/Happy Valley neighborhood and throughout San Rafael. The entry design to the Mission Avenue IL building is better defined and more visible for visitors and guests by virtue of its location and architectural design features. Windows and decks provide visibility to the street on all sides of the street frontage. Proposed light fixtures are appropriate for the use of the site and would be required to comply with the City's lighting requirements.

**Previous Design Review:**

As noted above, on August 5, 2020, the Design Review Board Subcommittee conducted a conceptual design review of the project. The comments offered during conceptual design review include the following:

- Parking is a concern given the addition of 14 new units. Buildout should include additional on-site parking. A parking study should be undertaken if not required.
- Landscaping will be important, particularly along the Mission Avenue frontage.
- Stormwater drainage requirement, including bioretention planters and permeable pavers, shall be evaluated and included in the plans.
- Massing will be important, particularly along the Mission Ave. frontage. Consider mass-reducing techniques such as upper-story setbacks and material and color choices.

The overall site design, landscaping, parking, and building mass has not changed substantially since the August 2020 Conceptual Design Review. Refinements and changes to the proposed Mission Avenue IL building include the following:

- The exterior materials, color palette and window styles were revised to better coordinate with elements from the Aldersly campus and to help minimize the mass of the building, especially along Mission Avenue.
- Vertical elements were introduced to the south elevation along Mission Avenue to break up the length of the roofline.
- Some of the taller portions of the building, such as the fire exit stairs, have been recessed and set back further from Mission Avenue in order to reduce the perceived mass of the building from Mission Avenue.
- The entry design on the east and west ends of the Mission Avenue IL building were revised to evoke Danish/Scandinavian architecture to celebrate the Danish heritage of the Aldersly community.



Staff believes that the changes made to the Mission Avenue IL Building help to reduce the perceived mass along Mission Avenue and improve the overall appearance of the building.

**Staff seeks the Boards guidance regarding the following:**

- *Architecture, Building Height and Mass* - Whether the design proposed by this phased development plan is appropriate given the existing buildings that will remain on the Aldersly campus, as well as its compatibility with the Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood and the adjacent Downtown Specific Plan Area.
- *Colors and Materials* - Whether the colors and materials are appropriate.
- *Landscape Plan* - the placement, type, and size of proposed landscaping, exterior lighting, hardscape, and screening of parking areas from the public right-of-way.
- *Site Plan* - Whether the proposed site plan demonstrates efficient use of the site.

**NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENCE**

The City has received no public comment as of the printing and distribution of this staff report. Any correspondence received will be included in Exhibit 7.

The next step in the review process is to complete an Initial Study for public review and comment in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Notice of availability of the CEQA document will be provided to property owners and occupants within 300 feet of the Aldersly campus. Subsequent notices will include date of a Planning Commission hearing for consideration of this project.

**CONCLUSION**

The applicant has submitted an Environmental and Design Review Permit application as part of their application package for a phased development of the Aldersly campus. The applications will be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council, along with the Zoning Amendment and Master Use Permit Amendment. Staff is seeking input from the DRB regarding architectural design approach, site plan and landscape/site design. The Board's recommendations will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for a decision on the Environmental and Design Review permit.

**RECOMMENDATION:** *Recommended Action – Review and recommend approval of site and building design.*

**EXHIBITS**

1. Site and Architectural Plans prepared by Perkins-Eastman, dated January 15, 2021, available online: <https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/09/REDUCED-21-0930-Aldersly-Revised-Submittal.pdf>
2. Ordinance 1775 - Aldersly Planned Development District, including Exhibit A, Development Standards, adopted January 22, 2002

3. Proposed PD Development Standard, available online:  
<https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/09/2020-1104-PD-Zoning-and-Master-Plan-Dev.pdf>
4. Memo from Perkins-Eastman Architect re Design Revisions, dated September 9, 2021
5. Draft Project Impact Analysis, Page & Turnbull, October 27, 2020, available online:  
<https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/09/Historic-Resource-Evaluation-2020-compressed.pdf>
6. Project Impact Analysis, Page & Turnbull, December 21, 2020, available online:  
<https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/09/Aldersly-Project-Impact-Analysis-Fin.pdf>

cc: Peter Lin, Greenbriar Development  
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Soo Im, Associate Principal  
Perkins Eastman  
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San Francisco, CA 94104

# Attachment 1

Site and Architectural Plans  
prepared by Perkins-Eastman, dated  
January 15, 2021 available online:

<https://storage.googleapis.com/proud-city/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/09/REDUCED-21-0930-Aldersly-Revised-Submittal.pdf>

Ord 1775  
Aldersly Garden Retirement  
308 & 326 Mission Avenue

ORDINANCE NO. 1775

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SAN RAFAEL AMENDING THE ZONING MAP TO RECLASSIFY CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY FROM PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (PD) DISTRICT TO A REVISED PD DISTRICT WITH ADOPTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ZONING REGULATIONS FOR THE ALDERSLY GARDEN RETIREMENT COMMUNITY AT 308 AND 326 MISSION AVENUE (APN 014-054-31 and 32) (ZC01-04)

WHEREAS, on June 15, 2001, NCB Development Corporation submitted an application to the City of San Rafael requesting approval of a Rezoning from Planned Development (PD) District to a revised PD District with an adopted Development Plan for the Aldersly Garden Retirement Community; and

WHEREAS, the Rezoning request was accompanied by related project applications which were processed concurrently; and

WHEREAS, upon review of the subject applications an Initial Study was prepared consistent with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has approved a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project by adoption of a separate resolution; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Planned Development (PD) District contains development standards for the Aldersly Garden Retirement Community, including a facility containing 30 assisted living units, as outlined in Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the application for Rezoning to a PD District includes a Development Plan consisting of project plans submitted for approval with the development standards, which contain the information required pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Section 14.07.060; and

WHEREAS, a notice describing the proposed Rezoning was: a) published in a local newspaper of general circulation in the area; b) mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the subject property; and c) mailed to special interest groups; and

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2001, the San Rafael Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Rezoning and related project applications including a Master Use Permit and Environmental and Design Review Permit, accepting all oral and written public testimony and the written report of the Community Development Department staff and recommended approval to the City Council in Resolution No.01-56; and

Ord. 1775

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2001, the City Council held a public hearing and accepted all oral and written public testimony and the written report of the Community Development Department staff.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN RAFAEL DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

DIVISION 1. The City of San Rafael Zoning Map is amended to incorporate the revised Planned Development District for the Aldersly Garden Retirement Community at 308 and 326 Mission Avenue, as presented in Exhibit A of this ordinance, based on the following findings:

1. The Development Plan and Planned Development District (PD) amendment are consistent with the General Plan, adopted Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood Plan and other applicable City plans and policies in that:
  - a) The project implements General Plan Land Use policy LU-9f by maintaining a density consistent with that allowed by the High Density Residential land use designation.
  - b) The project would implement Land Use Policies LU-19 through 36 by proposing high quality building design, and includes an appropriate level of site landscape treatment including landscaping along Mission Avenue. Furthermore, the Design Review Board considered the development plan, and after modifications were incorporated into the plans, voted to recommend that the design was compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.;
  - c) The project would be consistent with Circulation Policy C-18 by contributing appropriate traffic mitigation fee;
  - d) The project would comply with Housing Policies H-8 and H-9 which require the retention of rental units and that most of the City's existing stock of lower cost units be maintained. The project would comply with Housing Element Policy H-15, which requires that future development be planned based on public facility and service capacity, community needs, and sound neighborhood planning in that the project has been reviewed by the City and other public agencies with regard to public facility and service needs and conditioned accordingly. Housing Element Policy H-32 encourages a mix of housing units throughout the City, including those for lower income seniors and the disabled, and encourages accessible units in all projects. The proposed assisted living facility would provide a non-institutional, residential care setting for frail older persons who do not require skilled nursing care. The assisted living project would provide current Aldersly residents and residents of the surrounding community with a long-term care alternative that is specifically designed to maintain older person's privacy, dignity, and maximum independence.
  - e) The project would comply with Housing Policies H-19 and 21 by providing 30 assisted living units that would provide a continuum of care for the Aldersly residents, and would retain the existing residence at 308 Mission Avenue as a rental unit;

- f) The project design has been evaluated in a variety of technical reports, including a geotechnical and air quality study, and through implementation of conditions of approval and mitigation measures would be consistent with Health and Safety Policies S-1, S-3, S-4, S-5, S-6, S-9, S-11 and S-21.
  - g) The project design including conditions of approval would be consistent with the Noise Element policies for residential use N-1 through N-7;
  - h) The project would comply with Residential Neighborhood Policy RES-1, which requires that new developments be harmoniously integrated into existing neighborhoods in terms of density, intensity and design. The Design Review Board considered the development plan at three meetings, and after modifications were incorporated into the plans, voted to recommend that the design was compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
  - i) The project would be consistent with the applicable policies of the Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood Plan in that proposed new buildings would be compatible with the existing buildings on the Aldersly campus. The proposed fenestration, brick wainscoting and architectural details of the assisted living facility would promote a residential character. Architectural elements such as towers and two-story bays would reduce the apparent scale of the building, and the increased setback of the upper levels on the east side of the building would help to reduce the building's prominence, as viewed from adjacent residential properties to the east along Union Street. Furthermore, trees and a variety of shrubs and ornamentals proposed along Mission Avenue, and retention of the existing sidewalk along Mission Avenue would provide a pedestrian friendly streetfront, as called for in the Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood Plan.
  - j) Conditions of approval are included in the accompanying project applications to ensure consistency with all applicable General Plan policies including policies discussed above by requiring that: 1) interior noise levels not exceed 40 dBA for bedrooms and 45dBA for other rooms; 2) exterior noise levels not exceed 60 dBA; 3) utility systems will be installed and designed to serve the site; and 4) traffic mitigation fees will be collected to contribute to long-term traffic improvements.
2. The applicant has demonstrated that public facilities would be provided to serve the anticipated population in that the project development is well within the density limits anticipated by the General Plan 2000, the site is served by San Rafael Sanitation District and Marin Municipal Water District, and the City's Police, Fire and Public Works Departments have reviewed the project and determined that services are available. The accompanying project applications are proposed to be conditioned accordingly.
  3. The development would be improved by deviations from typical Zoning Ordinance property development and parking standards by: a) increasing the number and conformity of on-site parking and circulation; b) providing improved loading facilities for the campus; and c) providing landscaping that enhances the project entry and parking areas.
  4. The auto, bicycle and pedestrian traffic system is adequately designed for circulation needs and public safety in that internal access and circulation meet City standards and walkways are provided from parking areas with handicapped parking available in the

proposed parking garage near the proposed elevator entrance to the assisted living facility and emergency vehicle access is provided to serve the proposed development, in compliance with City standards.

5. The public health, safety and general welfare are served by the adoption of the proposed amendment in that it implements the General Plan and the development plan conforms with City standards as discussed in Findings 1 through 4. Furthermore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared and adopted for the project that evaluated potential environmental impacts of the project and determined impacts would be less-than-significant based on incorporation of mitigation measures.

DIVISION 2. A summary of this Ordinance shall be published and a certified copy of the full text of this Ordinance shall be posted in the office of the City Clerk at least five (5) days prior to the Council meeting at which it is adopted.

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect thirty (30) days after its final passage, and the summary of this Ordinance shall be published within fifteen (15) days after the adoption, together with the names of those Councilmembers voting for or against same, in the Marin Independent Journal, a newspaper of general circulation published and circulated in the City of San Rafael, County of Marin, State of California.

Within fifteen (15) days after adoption, the City Clerk shall also post in the office of the City Clerk, a certified copy of the full text of this Ordinance along with the names of those Councilmembers voting for or against the Ordinance.

  
ALBERT J. BORO, Mayor

Attest:

  
JEANNE M. LEONCINI, City Clerk

The foregoing Ordinance No. 1775 was read and introduced at a Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of San Rafael on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2001, and ordered passed to print by the following vote, to wit:

AYES: Councilmembers: Cohen, Heller, Miller, Phillips & Mayor Boro

NOES: Councilmembers: None

ABSENT: Councilmembers: None

And will come up for adoption as an Ordinance of the City of San Rafael at a regular meeting of the Council to be held on Tuesday, January 22, 2002.

  
JEANNE M. LEONCINI, City Clerk

EXHIBIT A: Aldersly PD Zoning Development Standards



## EXHIBIT "A"

### Aldersly PD Zoning Development Standards

Establishing a Planned Development (PD) zone for the Aldersly campus is intended to allow the Aldersly Board the flexibility to meet the future needs of their older residents with facilities designed to support evolving best practices in services and environments. This is likely to include a combination of facilities renovation, expansion, and new construction. The PD is also intended to maintain Aldersly's role as a community asset by maintaining the campus as a quiet, landscaped buffer between the single-family areas and the multifamily/commercial zone.

To this end, the PD proposes the following standards. Each is crafted to blend with the neighborhood at the campus' perimeter, while allowing reasonable flexibility in interior portions of the site.

#### **A. Land Uses**

Allow all land uses currently permitted in HR1.8 category with the following modifications:

- residential care for older persons
- adult day care, subject to approval of a use permit
- ancillary commercial, medical, and office uses incorporated into the buildings to serve residents' needs (e.g., laundry, beauty, dining, retail, recreation facility, clinic, offices, maintenance or storage buildings, etc.)

Any change in use of existing buildings on the site shall require an amendment to the Master Use Permit.

#### **B. Minimum Lot Area**

While the campus is intended to be considered as a whole for planning purposes, the minimum lot size shall be 6000 SF (same as HR1.8) where a separate lot must be created for financing purposes. The lot size established for financing shall not be used for the purposes of maximum unit number calculations.

#### **C. Minimum Lot Area per Dwelling Unit**

The Aldersly campus currently houses a unique array of housing types, including 64 independent senior housing units, 33 skilled nursing units, and 7 assisted living units. The proposed assisted living project will modify this to 62 independent senior housing units, 20 skilled nursing units, and 30 assisted living units. Only the independent senior housing qualifies as a "dwelling unit" for the purpose of this proposal. The minimum lot area per dwelling unit is proposed to be 1000 SF of lot area per unit. This figure is established using the 1000 SF of lot required for the HR1.0 designation as a guide.

#### **D. Minimum Lot Width**

Because of the existing configuration of campus and its compact, high-density character, no minimum lot width is established. In most cases there is not expected to be a separate lot for a specific project due to the campus structure of the site. However, separate lots may need to be established for financing purposes.

#### **E. Set Backs/Minimum Yards**

- i. Maintain a 15' building setback along the campus' front (Mission Avenue).
- ii. Maintain a 5 foot building set back along the campus' side property lines. The two upper levels of the assisted living facility shall be set back a minimum of 11 feet from the east property line.
- iii. Maintain a 3' parking and paving set back from campus side property lines or a 0' parking and paving set back and a privacy fence (5' minimum height) where a 3' set back is not provided. (The 0' set back with fence is necessary in some cases to maximize parking on the site.)
- iv. Maintain a 10 foot building set back along the campus' rear property line (Belle Avenue).
- v. Provide building set backs on campus (internal set backs) that conform to life-safety codes governing the Aldersly campus.
- vi. Existing Conditions: Buildings existing at the time this plan is adopted and out of compliance with set back standards established above shall be allowed to remain as "grandfathered" buildings.

#### **F. Distance Between Residential Structures**

Provide and maintain building separations at the interior and perimeter of the property which meet minimum building code standards for lifesafety in place at the time of construction permitting.

#### **G. Maximum Height of Structure**

Maximum height of structures are proposed to meet City standards (36') with exceptions for towers and other elements allowed as per the City exceptions process. Existing Conditions: Buildings existing at the time this plan is adopted and out of compliance with the height standards established above shall be allowed to remain as "grandfathered" buildings.

## **H. Maximum Lot Coverage**

Lot Coverage: Total building footprints on the campus shall not exceed 60% of the campus' land area as previously allowed under the former HR1.8 land use designation. Maintaining the former 60% coverage is proposed to remain in keeping with the 40% to 60% coverages allowed on similar adjacent sites. The 60% lot coverage allows the campus to meet future community demand for independent, assisted, and nursing care housing as well as an opportunity to increase economies of scale over time to maintain a sound financial position.

## **I. Minimum Usable Outdoor Area per Dwelling Unit**

Given the unique residential character and needs of the campus, no minimum shall be established for usable outdoor area per dwelling unit in order to maintain Aldersly's flexibility in locating projects in the most efficient and appropriate part of campus. Aldersly's garden campus provides communal outdoor areas for the use of all residents.

## **J. Landscaping/Yard Areas**

- i. Landscaping and yard areas requirements will not be established for the Aldersly campus due to the single ownership of the facilities, the communal nature of exterior areas, and the desire to maintain planning flexibility.
- ii. Open Space: The current pattern of tightly landscaped pathways, terraces, large open courtyards, and garden areas will be replicated as feasible in future projects. A balance between parking needs and landscaping will be sought.

## **K. Paving Setback**

The paving set back from campus boundaries will be 3 feet where possible to provide the required buffering and 0 feet where parking or access requirements prevent a 3 foot set back from being practical. In the event that the 3 foot set back is not practical, a privacy fence (minimum of 5 feet tall) will be erected anywhere the full 3 foot buffer is not in place.

## **L. Parking**

Aldersly's historic land development patterns, starting in the early 1920's, and the campus' topography have severely limited parking availability on campus. These factors also make the introduction of additional parking difficult to achieve. Where parking can be introduced, it is often at the expenses of landscaping. For these reasons, parking is an area of the PD standards where substantial flexibility is sought. The following parking related standards are designed to provide the necessary flexibility.

### *Parking Capacity*

At peak hours, the campus currently generates a demand for 78 spaces for residents, staff, visitors, and vendors. Aldersly's existing campus provides 39 parking spaces. During peak hours, 39 on-street parking spaces are utilized.

The new assisted living project will provide a net addition to campus of 18 spaces, while generating a need for 8 new spaces (see attached traffic study). The assisted living project will result in a net addition of 10 parking spaces to meet the current campus demand, reducing demand for peak hour on-street parking by 25%, or from 39 cars to 29 cars. In addition, the new loading area at Belle Avenue (see next section) will provide vendor parking, further improving on-campus parking capacity.

The current campus plan is not configured to allow the easy introduction of additional parking on site. As a result, the current campus has parking needs that will continue to require a combination of on-campus spaces as well as on-street parking. Future campus projects will attempt to reduce the current demand for on street parking where feasible.

Future projects, where they generate a net increased demand for parking on campus, will attempt to accommodate the increased demand in the new project site area or on campus. Where it is not possible to accommodate all increased parking at the new project site area or on campus, Aldersly will work with the City of San Rafael to identify acceptable strategies to accommodate the additional parking demand generated by the project under consideration.

Net new demand shall be determined by a traffic study and subject to acceptance by the City's Traffic Engineer.

### *Parking Space Dimensions*

Parking space dimensions shall comply with City standards.

### *Allowable Compact Spaces*

The allowable percentage of compact spaces shall comply with City standards.

### *Tandem Spaces*

Tandem spaces will be allowed on campus per City standards.

## **M. Parking Lot Screening**

### *Parking Visible from Public Right of Way*

Parking visible from a public right of way shall be screened in accordance with the requirements contained in The City of San Rafael's Zoning Ordinance.

### *Parking Visible from Adjacent Private Property*

Parking located next to adjacent residential properties shall be screened with a solid barrier and landscaping in order to shield headlight glare.

### *Canopy Trees at Parking*

One tree for every four spaces will be provided within parking areas or at an alternate location as close to the parking area as feasible. Flexibility in the location of the trees is required in order to maximize the parking available. Innovative strategies for locating trees within parking areas without diminishing parking capacity will be implemented.

### *Planting Areas Between Spaces*

No planting areas will be provided between parking spaces due to the need to maximize on-site parking. Alternate strategies for landscaping the parking areas will be implemented as feasible.

## **N. Off-Street Loading and Unloading**

One off-street truck loading and unloading area will be provided for the campus along Belle Avenue and will be constructed as part of the 30-unit assisted living project. The proposed loading zone, sized to accommodate the current range of delivery vehicles, is shown on Drawing C3: "Proposed Site Development Plan" that is included in the plans submitted for the 30-unit assisted living project.

## **O. Phasing Plan**

Currently, the assisted living building and a small 200 square foot addition to the campus dining room are the only identified development projects for the campus. The assisted living project is anticipated to break ground as soon as possible and be completed 12 months later. Planning for the dining room addition is not anticipated to begin until 2002.

While no additional projects are currently identified, Aldersly's mission to maintain best practice services for its residents will lead to future construction and renovation. When these projects are identified, they will be planned and integrated into campus based on the provisions contained in this PD proposal and as accepted by the city of San Rafael.

## Attachment 3

Proposed PD Development  
Standard, available online:

<https://storage.googleapis.com/proud-city/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/09/2020-1104-PD-Zoning-and-Master-Plan-Dev.pdf>

# PERKINS — EASTMAN

September 9, 2021

Jayni Allsep  
Planning Consultant  
City of San Rafael

Project Name: Aldersly Retirement Community  
Project Number: 70762.00.0  
Subject: Planning Submittal Elevation Revision Narrative

Dear Ms. Allsep,

Following changes have been implemented in the latest elevation development in response to our last conversation during the Concept Design Submittal.

- Massing of the building is consistent with the designed presented at Concept Design submittal.
- Buildings material was coordinated with the existing campus to utilize material that is consistent with the existing campus, which includes brick, fiber cement panels (in lieu of wood), fiber cement siding and stucco. See Elevations on A5.1 and A5.2.



Revised Renovation (1/2021)



Concept Design Submittal Elevation (5/2020)



# PERKINS — EASTMAN

- Window style was coordinated to be consistent with the elements from the main campus including mullion locations, color, and the panels around the windows. See A5.0 for existing campus character)
- Top floor of the building is set back to help minimize the massing on Mission Avenue. See drawing 2/A5.1
- The entry design on east and west ends of the building evoke Danish/Scandinavian Architecture to celebrate the Danish heritage of the community.
- Vertical elements on the south end of the elevation break the length of the roofline.

## Attachment 5

Draft Project Impact Analysis, Page  
& Turnbull, October 27, 2020,  
available online:

<https://storage.googleapis.com/proud-city/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/09/Historic-Resource-Evaluation-2020-compressed.pdf>

## Attachment 6

Project Impact Analysis, Page &  
Turnbull, December 21, 2020,  
available online:

<https://storage.googleapis.com/proud-city/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/09/Aldersly-Project-Impact-Analysis-Fin.pdf>