



PROJECT NARRATIVE

Application Type	Conditional Use Permit
	Tentative Map Subdivision (5+ Lots)
	Planned Development Permit
	Design & Landscape Review
	Lot Line Adjustment
	Demolition Permit
Project Name	254FSE
Project Sponsor	North of the Mission LLC
	Kilby Stenkamp
	Kelso Barnett
	Local Investors
Project Architect	Marcus & Willers Architects, Sonoma
Landscape Architect	Ron Wellander Landscape Architect, Sonoma
Civil Engineer	Adobe & Associates, Santa Rosa
Geotechnical Engineer	Bauer & Associates, Forestville
Accessibility Consultant	Access Compliance Consulting, Sacramento
Lighting Consultant	Associated Lighting Representatives, Oakland
Environmental Consultant	Rincon Consultants, Oakland
Traffic / VMT Consultant	W-Trans, Santa Rosa

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

254FSE is a proposed infill residential development consisting of 31 for-sale condominium residences, distributed between one- and two-bedroom units. The small-format condominiums will be grouped within six buildings, with residential structure sizes ranging from 5,000-sf to 5,979-sf. All proposed buildings are low-profile two-story structures, with five units having minimal third floors and roof decks. The development will provide a swimming pool amenity for its residents and their guests along with an accessory pool structure. 41 uncovered parking spaces will be provided on-site, five more than the development code requires. Primary vehicle ingress and egress is provided by a new driveway off First Street East, with secondary emergency egress via a roadway easement north through the Spanish Pueblos condominium development. To meet the 25% inclusionary affordable housing requirement for the nine units that exceed 850-square feet, two units will be made available for a low-income and moderate-income buyer, with the additional ¼ unit being paid as an in-lieu fee into the City’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund. 254FSE will have extensive landscaping, incorporating existing mature oak trees and vegetation along with new plantings chosen to complement the project design and setting. The total project combined building area is +/- 34,047-sf inclusive of the pool structure, trash enclosure, and bike storage areas.

FIGURE 1: PROPOSED SITE PLAN



FIGURE 2: PROPOSED RENDERING AERIAL

TABLE 1: SITE & LAND USE DATA	
Address	254 First Street East, Sonoma, CA 95476
APN	018-131-018
2020 General Plan Designation	Mixed-Use
Zoning	Mixed-Use
Zoning District	Northeast Planning Area
Historic Overlay Area	Yes
Housing Element '23-'31 Site	Yes
SITE AREA	
Square Feet	88,592 (current), 85,339 (proposed)
Acres	2.03 (current), 1.96 (proposed)
SURROUNDING LAND USES	
North	Spanish Pueblos condominiums. Developed in the early 1970s.
South	Vintage House parking lot
East	Meadow Garden condominiums. Developed in the mid 1970s. Meadow Gardens parking lot and carport.
West	Teeter & Hughes Fields, home of Sonoma Valley Little League. 216 & 230 First Street East, mid-century homes built by the original developers of the project site.

FIGURE 3: SITE CONTEXT NORTHEAST VIEW



FIGURE 4: SITE CONTEXT SOUTHERN VIEW



EXISTING PROJECT SITE

The current parcel size is 88,592-sf (+/- 2.03-acres) and is located at 254 First Street East, just northeast of the Historic Sonoma Plaza. After the lot line adjustment, the project site will be 85,339-sf (+/- 1.96-acres). The southern, developed portion of the site consists of three commercial structures (two industrial-style cinder block buildings with flex/office space, one metal warehouse), a large carport and a warehouse canopy. Three storage containers also currently sit on the southern portion of the site. A significant portion of the developed area is paved, except for a mature oak grove in the southeast corner. The northern portion of the site (+/- ¾ acre) is undeveloped raw grassland. Oak trees of varying size extend along and surround the parcel boundary.

SITE HISTORY AND RECENT CONTEXT

According to the historic resource evaluation, this site was originally part of General Vallejo's original vineyard. The site continued as a vineyard under several owners. Phylloxera destroyed the vines on site just as the railroad arrived in the neighborhood, but remained undeveloped until 1949, when the Acme Leather Products company acquired the site and built the cinder block buildings, as well as the homes at 216 and 230 FSE. Acme Leather sold the property to the Peterson family in 1963, who operated Peterson Mechanical there until the early 21st century. Since 2015, 3-4 different redevelopments have been proposed for the site.

FIGURE 5: SITE AERIAL



TABLE 2: EXISTING USES			
STRUCTURE	SIZE +/-	EXISTING USE	PROPOSED DISPOSITION
Building A	5,000-sf	Cannon School of Music, Sonoma Car Club	Demolished
Building B	3,200-sf	Embassy Flag, Private Recording Studio	Demolished
Building C	3,200-sf	Armando's Party Rentals	Demolished
Carport	1,000-sf	Sonoma Car Club	Demolished
Warehouse Canopy	750-sf	Vacant	Demolished
Containers	Various	Sonoma Film Festival, Storage for Tenants	Removed

FIGURE 6: SITE CONTEXT NORTHEAST VIEW



DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES

A total of approximately +/- 13,000-sf of existing commercial buildings and accessory structures will be demolished, and all existing pavement/hardscape will be removed for the project. The following buildings will be removed from the Project Site prior to the construction of the project:

- Building A: +/- 5,000-sf (Primary Commercial)
- Building B: +/- 3,200-sf (Northern Commercial)
- Building C: +/- 3,200-sf (Metal Warehouse)
- Carport
- Warehouse Canopy & Storage Containers

A 2013 Historic Resource Evaluation of the existing commercial buildings concluded the structures are not historically significant. The report concluded, “the structures at 254 First Street East are not historically significant based on the criteria established by the State Office of Historic Preservation.”

A 2023 evaluation validated this conclusion, stating, “(we) recommend the property at 254 First Street East ineligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR and locally under all criteria for lack of historic and architectural significance.” These reports are included as appendices in the Rincon Consultants Categorical Exemption report.

In addition, the cost of rehabilitating the unreinforced masonry structure is outweighed by the benefit of providing additional housing units for the community. Importantly, no existing residential units will be demolished.

CONSISTENCY WITH GENERAL PLAN & NORTHEAST PLANNING AREA ZONING REQUIREMENTS

254FSE’s planning and design approach is consistent with and complies with Sonoma’s Urban Growth Boundary, the 2020 General Plan policies and associated Development Code guidelines. The project site is located within the Northeast Planning Area and is zoned Mixed-Use with a Historic District overlay.

Table 3 indicates the Project’s consistency with the General Plan and Northeast Planning Area. Table 4 demonstrates the Project’s conformance with the Northeast Planning Area’s zoning requirements.

TABLE 3: GENERAL PLAN & NORTHEAST PLANNING AREA CONSISTENCY	
CITY OF SONOMA 2020 GENERAL PLAN	
Reference	Goal, Policy or Guideline
2020 General Plan, p. 18	Higher density housing in established multi-family areas surrounding the commercial core.
Goal CD-4	Encourage quality, variety and innovation in new development.
Policy 4.2	Encourage a variety of unit types in residential projects.
Policy 4.4	Require pedestrian and bicycle access and amenities in all development
Policy 5.1	Preserve and enhance the scale and heritage of the community without imposing rigid stylistic restrictions.
Policy 5.3	Protect important scenic vistas and natural resources and incorporate significant views and natural features into project designs.
Policy 5.5	Promote higher density, infill development, while ensuring that building mass, scale and form are compatible with neighborhood and town character.
SMC 19.18: NORTHEAST PLANNING AREA	
Reference	Goal, Policy or Guideline
SMC 19.18.020 Desired Future	The general objective for this area... is to preserve the quality and context of land uses and buildings... infill development including intensification in mixed-use areas will require careful attention to surrounding building form, site design, and land uses to preserve the quality of development in the Northeast planning area. The emphasis of mixed-use development should be residential.
SMC 19.18.020.A.4	Environmental amenities including creeks, streams and other drainage courses, mature trees, and rock outcrops shall be preserved and incorporated into the proposed site plan.
SMC 19.18.020.B.3	Proposed... structures should be compatible in scale, massing and height to residential development in the vicinity. Building architecture and design details should maintain a low-key, residential flavor.

Sonoma’s development code separates the town into several planning districts, with different zoning standards for each. The goal is to ensure proposed projects are compatible with existing development patterns. The Northeast Planning Area extends northeast of the Plaza and encompasses a wide mix of land uses, including both single multifamily residential, civic buildings, vineyards/agriculture, winery, and hillside homes.

Table 4 demonstrates 254FSE is fully compliant with the standards for the Northeast Planning Area, except for setbacks, which can be modified per the Planned Development Permit and will be more fully discussed in a later section. In general, and especially compared to previous projects proposed on the site, the project is less dense than allowed, has less mass than allowed, and provides significantly more vehicle and bicycle parking than required, as well as more than double the private and common open space necessary.

TABLE 4: ZONING CONFORMANCE ANALYSIS			
	Allowable/Required	Proposed	Comment
Density	20.0 units/acre	15.8 units/acre	Compliant
Unit Count	39 units	31 units	Compliant
Inclusionary Units	2.25 units	2.00 units (plus 1/4 unit in-lieu fee to A.H. Trust Fund)	Compliant (9 units over 850-sf)
Site Coverage (37,600/85,339)	60%	44.1%	Compliant
Building		18,069 sf	
Parking Driveway		19,531 sf	
Total	53,056 sf	37,600 sf	
FAR (34,086/85,339)	0.6	0.40	Compliant
Total SF (Total Building)	53,056 sf	34,086 sf	
Maximum Height	30 feet	24 feet (typical) 30 feet (max) <i>(less than 7% at 30-feet)</i>	Compliant
Setbacks			Planned Development Permit - Discretionary Request
Front (West)	PC Discretion	17-ft. (min) 23.5-ft. (avg)	
Side (North)	8-ft. (2-story)	5-ft (min) 14-ft. (avg)	
Side (South)	8-ft. (2-story)	5-ft (min) 22-ft. (avg)	
Rear (East)	20-ft. (2-story)	10-ft (min) 19-ft. (avg)	
Common Open Space	300 sf/unit	657 sf/unit	Compliant
Total	9,300 sf	20,373 sf	
Landscape		17,669 sf	
Pool Area		2,704 sf	
Private Open Space			Compliant
1-bdrm unit	75 sf/unit	317 sf/unit	
1-bdrm Total (22-units)	1,650 sf	6,966 sf	
2-bdrm unit	150 sf/unit	960 sf/unit	
2-bdrm Total (9-units)	1,350 sf	8,642 sf	
Vehicle Parking			Compliant
1-bdrm unit	1 spc/unit		
2-bdrm unit	1.5 spc/unit		
Total Spaces Required	36 spaces	41 spaces	
Bicycle Parking			Compliant
Common (40 Bdrms Proposed)	0.05 / Bdrm		
Private (40 Bdrms Proposed)	0.5 / Bdrm		
Common Spaces Required	2 Spaces	12 Spaces	
Private Spaces Required	20 Spaces	62 Spaces	
Parking / Paved Area			Compliant
Parking		6,552 sf	
Driveway		12,979 sf	
Total Parking + Driveway		19531 sf	
Parking Landscape Area	2,344 sf	9,278 sf	Compliant

Building area calculations are shown in Table 5 and correspond with the building names shown in Figure A. Building A, the structure that fronts First Street East, has six 1-bdrm units, including two deed restricted inclusionary homes. The remaining residential structures each contain 5 units. Buildings B&C have a mix of 1- and 2-bedroom units. Buildings D, E & F are identical, each with 4 1-bedroom units, and a large 2-bedroom unit with a private third floor roof deck. Many of the ground floor units have generous private open space.

TABLE 5: BUILDING AREA CALCULATIONS (SF)											
		F.A. + Bike Str	F.A. + Bike Str	Site Coverage	Private Open Spc.			F.A. + Bike Str	F.A. + Bike Str	Site Coverage	Private Open Spc.
Building A						Building D					
Unit A1	1bd/1ba	850	870	870	365	Unit D1	1bd/1ba	850	870	870	986
Unit A2	1bd/1.5ba	850	870	870	332	Unit D2	1bd/1.5ba	850	870	870	333
Unit A3 BMR	1bd/1ba	800	810	810	382	Unit D3	2bd/2.5ba	1,857	1,868	820	1,530
Unit A4	1bd/1.5ba	850	870		133	Unit D4	1bd/1.5ba	850	870		130
Unit A5	1bd/1.5ba	850	870		123	Unit D5	1bd/1.5ba	850	870		118
Unit A6 BMR	1bd/1ba	800	810		109	Breezeway				208	
Breezeway				208		Totals		5,257	5,348	2,768	3,097
Totals		5,000	5,100	2,758	1,444						
Building B						Building E					
Unit B1	2bd/2ba	1,211	1,238	1,238	623	Unit E1	1bd/1ba	850	870	870	956
Unit B2	1bd/1.5ba	850	870	870	333	Unit E2	1bd/1.5ba	850	870	870	333
Unit B3	2bd/2.5ba	1,857	1,868	820	626	Unit E3	2bd/2.5ba	1,857	1,868	820	1,481
Unit B4	2bd/2ba	1,211	1,238		117	Unit E4	1bd/1.5ba	850	870		130
Unit B5	1bd/1.5ba	850	870		123	Unit E5	1bd/1.5ba	850	870		118
Breezeway				208		Breezeway				208	
Totals		5,979	6,084	3,136	1,822	Totals		5,257	5,348	2,768	3,018
Building C						Building F					
Unit C1	2bd/2ba	1,211	1,238	1,238	1,054	Unit F1	1bd/1ba	850	870	870	925
Unit C2	1bd/1.5ba	850	870	870	333	Unit F2	1bd/1.5ba	850	870	870	333
Unit C3	2bd/2.5ba	1,857	1,868	820	1,578	Unit F3	2bd/2.5ba	1,857	1,868	820	1,516
Unit C4	2bd/2ba	1,211	1,238		117	Unit F4	1bd/1.5ba	850	870		130
Unit C5	1bd/1.5ba	850	870		123	Unit F5	1bd/1.5ba	850	870		118
Breezeway				208		Breezeway				208	
Totals		5,979	6,084	3,136	3,205	Totals		5,257	5,348	2,768	3,022
						Building G		520	520	520	
						Trash Enc.		215	215	215	
						TOTAL		33,464	34,047	18,069	15,608

AFFORDABLE COMPONENT

In response to the housing crisis, the Sonoma City Council made changes in June 2021 to SMC 19.44, the affordable housing section of the development code. The percentage of required units to be deed restricted increased from 20% to 25% and levels of area median income were specified. To balance this change, and to encourage the creation of smaller housing units theorized to be “affordable by design”, the Council exempted units at 850-square feet or less from the inclusionary requirement.

254FSE was inspired by this provision in the development code. The bulk of the units, 22 out of 31, will be 1-bedroom units at 850 square feet or less. The remaining 9 units will be 2-bedroom units, ranging from 1,211-sf to 1,857-sf.

To satisfy the inclusionary component, 25% of 9 (2.25) units must be provided as deed restricted affordable units. The project provides 2 affordable units in Building A. One unit will be offered to a household earning not more than the “Low” category (80% of area median income) and one unit will be offered to a household earning not more than the “Moderate” category (120% of area median income). The remaining ¼ unit will be paid as an in-lieu fee into the City of Sonoma’s affordable housing trust fund.

OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

254FSE will consist of mapped condominium lots. The owners of the condominiums will be members of a Homeowners Association (HOA). It is likely the HOA's leadership, elected by the condominium owners as defined in the governing documents / CC&Rs, will engage a management company to ensure proper operation. While specific elements of future operations will be decided by the future HOA and the likely management company, general assumptions can be made, which follows.

Except for the interiors of each condominium unit, the HOA will be responsible for the maintenance of the entire development, including the residential buildings themselves, the roadway/parking lot, hardscape, all landscaping, the pool and pool building. A monthly assessment will fund reoccurring charges, such as landscapers, garbage, and insurance, while larger capital projects will either be funded by special assessment or through a reserve fund as outlined in California's Davis-Stirling Act.

The primary amenity, the swimming pool, will have hours of operations as well as access regulations. Specifics will be determined by the HOA. The CC&Rs will comply with the Sonoma Municipal Code, especially as it relates to noise and the ban on smoking in multifamily units.

The condominium units will not have deeded parking spaces, although the HOA may choose to revisit this in the future.

Garbage storage is provided on the north side of the intersection of the driveway and internal roadway in a secure enclosure. The enclosure will contain one 4-yard landfill bin (dumpster), one 4-yard recycle bin, and one 2-yard compost bin. These bins will initially be scheduled to be picked up once a week, although depending on demand, the HOA can elect for more frequent pick-ups.

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

In September 2023, the project sponsor held a meeting with the neighborhood to discuss the proposed project with the neighbors, answer their questions, and receive input. The project was warmly received by the vast majority of neighbors and the feedback has been quite positive. As we all know, that's not easy to do in our town. It is important to note that the Project Sponsors are neighbors of the project itself and have designed a project compatible for the neighborhood in which they live.

A few neighbors have expressed concern about setbacks and the third-floor roof decks. The setback request is discussed at length later in this narrative, and the third-floor roof decks are fully compliant with code. We anticipate we will discuss these concerns further at the Planning Commission hearing.

FIRST STREET EAST LOOKING EAST AT THE SITE: EXISTING, PROPOSED & HYBRID



DESIGN REVIEW DISCUSSION

SITE DESIGN

The site design approach is to seamlessly integrate the project into an established multifamily neighborhood, to be the final puzzle piece in the multifamily development of an area that began over 50-years ago. As such, the project mimics the site design of the neighboring developments, to the north, Spanish Pueblos, and to the east, Meadow Gardens. The site plan and architectural design were also inspired by the guidelines established in SMC 19.42.050: Guidelines for Infill Development in the Historic Zone (See Table 6).

Due to the unusual parcel configuration, only one building is proposed to face First Street East, resulting in minimal visual impact to the streetscape and surrounding neighborhood. This building, Building A, is set back 17-feet from the front property line. The remaining five (of six) residential buildings have been sited in a similar pattern as the existing multifamily housing developments to the north and east: rotated off-axis from the property lines.

The rotated development pattern creates a more dynamic experience internally, as well as has the added benefit of reducing the impact of the proposed massing on the neighboring developments. As a result, views to and from the proposed development are oblique rather than frontal and preserves access to daylight, views, and privacy for the neighbors of 254FSE.

TABLE 6: GUIDELINES FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT IN THE HISTORIC ZONE (SMC 19.42.050)	
Section	Guideline
Purpose	These guidelines are intended to encourage new infill development in the historic overlay district to be compatible in scale and treatment with the existing, older development and to maintain the overall historic character and integrity of the community. At the same time, these guidelines are intended to promote the visual variety that is characteristic of Sonoma allow for contemporary architectural designs, and to provide reasonable flexibility in accommodating the tastes, preferences and creativity of applicants proposing new development.
	Sonoma should continue to be characterized by variety in terms of land uses, building types, and housing, and this diversity should be consistent with preserving the town’s small-scale and historic character.
Site Plan Considerations	New development should continue the functional, on-site relationships of the surrounding neighborhood.
Architectural Considerations	New infill structures should support the distinctive architectural characteristics of development in the surrounding neighborhood, including building mass, scale, proportion.
	Because new infill structures are likely to be taller than one story, their bulk and height can impose on smaller-scale adjoining structures. The height of new structures should be considered within the context of their surroundings.
	Color schemes for infill structures should consider the color schemes of existing structures in the surrounding neighborhood in order to maintain compatibility and harmony.
Sustainable Construction	Building forms that reduce energy use may be radically different than traditional architectural types. Careful and sensitive design is required in order to produce a contrast that is pleasing rather than jarring.
	Roof gardens, solar panels, and other sustainable construction features should be fully integrated into the design of new construction, rather than applied at the conclusion of the design process.
Accessory Structures	New accessory structures (e.g., garages, second units, sheds, etc.) that are visible from the public right-of-way should incorporate the distinctive architectural features (e.g., color, materials, roof pitch and style, etc.) of the main structure.

The primary roof lines for the six residential buildings are 24-feet (two stories), with five of the buildings having minimal third floors and roof decks with a maximum height of 30-feet. More specifically, of the five buildings with a third floor and roof deck, the vast majority of the roof, over 90% of the roof's area, will be at 24-feet. The flat roofs further minimize the perceived massing of the buildings.

The rear setback matches the 10-foot setback of the residential neighbors to the east (Meadow Gardens) and we are proposing 5-foot setbacks from the northern and southern property lines. While these requests are fully discussed in the Planned Development permit section of this Project Narrative, it is important to note that very small portions of the buildings fall within this setback reduction request because the buildings are rotated relative to the property lines, resulting in far less impact than if the proposed buildings were sited parallel to the property lines. (see Planned Development permit discussion). Common facilities, the pool, and the refuse structure have been centrally located within the site to minimize their sound impacts on the surrounding residences.

Stylistically, the proposed development emulates the mid-century modern architecture of the four neighboring, existing single-family dwellings facing First Street East. The architecture is contemporary, and incorporates patios, balconies, and breezeways to reduce massing. The buildings are similar to each other in appearance, just as the multi-family developments to the north and east are similar within each development.

The palette of materials is controlled to create a simple, cohesive, rhythmic pattern of buildings within the development. This palette includes high quality cement plaster, with porcelain tile infill panels of a contrasting color to help reduce large facades, aluminum-clad windows and doors, decorative metal balcony railings, privacy screening at patios, and thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) roofing membrane roofs. The proposed color palettes are neutral to blend in with existing development.

254FSE is designed to meet the requirements of CALGREEN 2022 Tier 1 as required by the Sonoma Municipal Code, including the required number of Electric Vehicle (EV) ready charging stations as well properly preparing future EV capable spaces. Sustainable construction features and solar panels have been fully integrated into the design of our buildings

The pool house accessory structure incorporates the distinctive architectural features of the primary structure, specifically the color and materials. Please refer to Project Submittal Sheets A1.6 for the proposed project spectrum of materials and colors.

TABLE 7: MATERIALS & FINISHES	
Type	Product
Windows & Doors	Kolbe VistaLuxe Al Line Thermally Broken, All-Aluminum.
Metal Railings	Decorative Metal Panels & Railings, Painted Finish
Wall Sconce	Cubed Outdoor Wall Sconce by ET2
Step Lights	Casa Square Outdoor Wall Light by Kurzco
Infill Panels	Neolith Porcelain Cladding (Sofia Cuprum)
COLOR PALETTE	
Location	Color
Cement Plaster	Benjamin Moore Silver Fox
Soffits and Exterior Ceilings	Benjamin Moore Simply White
Metal Fascia and Railings	Benjamin Moore Willow

LANDSCAPE PLAN & TREES

The landscape plan intends to complement and enhance the project’s built environment. In a brand-new development, it is essential that a landscape is not only welcoming and draws one in but creates a true sense of place. Although distinct, the landscape at 254FSE will blend in with the surrounding neighborhood.

The existing site has 78 trees at a trunk diameter greater than 2 inches. Of these, only 13 will be removed as a result of the project, and 1 will be removed due to disease. The site plan was designed with these trees in mind. As such, many of the mature oak trees along the southern edge of the site will be retained, along with the mature landscape buffer between 254FSE and the existing single-family residences that face First Street East. Adding to these mature trees will be the planting of many additional large and small stature trees throughout the site. These more than eighty new trees will provide a “softening” of the building massing, while also addressing the mandated shade requirement.

Plant selections will vary to create visual interest, yet will have a degree of repetition that will create a sense of unity and continuity. Maintenance requirements have influenced the process, and the overall landscape plan and plantings will comply with the Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance. The overall landscape plan can be viewed on Sheet L1.0.

TABLE 8: PROPOSED TREE PALETTE		
TYPE	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
Grand Entry Tree	<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	Cathedral Oak
Street Tree	<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	London Plane 'Columbia'
Parking Lot Tree	<i>Acer x freemanii</i>	Freeman Maple
Infill Tree	<i>Calocedrus decurrens</i>	Incense Cedar
Parking Lot Tree	<i>Arbutus andrachnoides</i>	Marina Strawberry
Upright Screening Tree	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	European Hornbeam
Flowering Tree	<i>Lagerstroemia indica x fauriei</i>	Natchez Crepe Myrtle
Statuesque Statement	<i>Cedrus atlantica</i>	Atlas Cedar
Unique & Colorful	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Gingko
Striking & Dynamic	<i>Continus coggugria</i>	Grace Smokebush
Small Tree 1	<i>Acer palmatum</i>	Japanese Maple
Small Tree 2	<i>Parrotia persica</i>	Persian Ironwood
Small Flowering 1	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Forest Pansy
Small Flowering 2	<i>Cornus 'Eddie's White Wonder'</i>	Eddie's White Wonder
Espalier	<i>Malus 'Snowdrift'</i>	Snowdrift Crabapple

Six different styles of fencing and screening are proposed, specifically: the property line fence between 254FSE and the neighboring homes at 216 and 230 FSE, the property line fence between the project and the Vintage House parking lot, backyard fences dividing private open space, two types of screening around the pool area, and screening around the ground-floor private open space terraces.

A mix of materials are proposed, such as wood, steel and polycarbonate. Green walls will contribute to the project’s natural and lush aesthetic. The proposed fencing and screening are fully demonstrated on Sheet L1.2.



First Street East, looking south.
Just north of 254FSE, across from 216 FSE / Teeter Field





First Street East, looking north.
Just south of 254FSE, across from the Vintage House parking lot





Spanish Pueblos Roadway, looking south.
Looking south into 254FSE on Roadway Easement at emergency egress



LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT

The parcels located at 216, 230 & 254 FSE have been owned by the same entity since their creation. While these three parcels were planned to be merged into one as a component of recent development proposals for this site, in late 2022 both 216 and 230 FSE were sold, leaving the project site as an oddly shaped parcel surrounding 216 and 230, with a narrow (25-ft.) strip of land located between 196 and 216 FSE (LLA in Figure 7). The strip was maintained to allow for an access point to the raw land, with associated flexibility for future site design. Due to the Roadway Easement (E1 in Figure 7) discussed below, the Project Sponsor no longer requires this remainder strip, and will be vacating the land (3,253-sf) in favor of 196 FSE. Preliminary Title Reports for both properties, copies of the respective legal descriptions resulting from the lot line adjustment, and a Plat Map prepared and stamped by a registered civil engineer are provided.



TABLE 9					
LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT (FIGURE 7: LLA)					
		Square Feet		Acres	
<i>Grantor, vacate land in favor of:</i>		Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Address	254 1st St E	88,592	85,339	2.03	1.96
APN	018-131-018				
<i>Grantee:</i>		Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Address	196 1st St E	9,750	13,003	0.22	0.30
APN	092-010-018				
EASEMENTS					
Grantor	Grantee	Easement Type			
EASEMENT 1972 (FIGURE 7: E1)					
Spanish Pueblos	254 First Street East	Roadway Easement (1972)			
EASEMENT 2024 (FIGURE 7: E2)					
216 First Street East	254 First Street East	Roadway Easement (2024)			

EASEMENTS

- **Roadway Easement (1972), E1 in Figure 7:** As there must be two points of egress from the project per fire code, the Project Sponsor will be using a roadway easement granted to the parcel in 1972. The easement extends through the Spanish Pueblos roadway that extends north from the site to Blue Wing Drive. This point of egress will be gated upon entry to the project site and only used by emergency services.
- **Roadway Easement (2024), E2 in Figure 7:** The owner of 216 FSE has granted 254FSE a roadway easement that runs over the northeast corner of its parcel (+/- 168-sf) so that the project's roadway can more efficiently access the above Roadway Easement (1972) and continue north through the Spanish Pueblos to Blue Wing Drive.

TENTATIVE MAP DISCUSSION

The tentative map proposes a 1-lot subdivision and grading and drainage improvements for 31-condominiums. Per California law, each condominium counts as a "lot", thus the application for a Tentative Map Subdivision (5+ lots). The tentative map, along with detailed analysis of the grading and drainage plan, the utility plan and the stormwater plans can be found in the Tentative Map sheets C1.0 – C8.0.

Note that a condominium is not a building type, but a legal form of ownership and type of subdivision. There are two components of property ownership: an undivided interest and a separate interest. The undivided interest is held in common among all the condominium owners and consists of the land itself, the buildings, and all the common areas of the property. The separate interest is the "airspace" – a three-dimensional space called a unit, which has legally described boundaries shown on a recorded map/condominium plan. These are shown on the Tentative Map sheets C5.0 and C5.1. The Planning Commission can make all the findings required to approve 254FSE's tentative map, outlined in Table 14.

PUBLIC UTILITIES & STORMWATER

254FSE will be served by existing City infrastructure. The project will connect to the City's storm drain system and will be designed to capture and discharge storm water into the system. Potable water will be provided to the Project through new connections. Sanitary sewer service will be provided through new connections. Electricity will be supplied to the project site by PG&E.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

Any project must balance many requirements, such as density, floor to area ratio, site coverage, maximum height, parking, open space, setbacks, etc., all while ensuring the project remains desirable. In this case, strictly adhering to setbacks may require three-story buildings. Or strictly adhering to parking space dimensions may require less open space and the clear cutting of mature oak trees.

Enter the Planned Development permit. 254FSE was also designed with this permit in mind. SMC 19.54.080 states the purpose of the Planned Development permit is, "to provide a process for allowing greater flexibility in site planning and design than afforded by the general development standards, to encourage more innovative and desirable projects, and efficient use of land than may be possible through strict application of conventional zoning regulations." That said, a planned development permit is only appropriate under certain circumstances, outlined in Table 10.

TABLE 10: PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT PURPOSE (SMC 19.54.070.A)		
<i>Planned development permits are intended to address development under the following circumstances:</i>		
CIRCUMSTANCE		JUSTIFICATION
1	Properties with unique, challenging, or valuable topographic or environmental features;	The site design for 254FSE seeks to preserve as much as possible of a valuable environmental feature on site, the southeastern oak grove.
2	Infill properties that are oddly shaped, narrow, or otherwise difficult to design for using normal development standards;	The infill subject property is clearly oddly shaped.
3	Site plans or building designs that are clearly responsive to the objectives of this development code, but which require variations from the normal development standards in order to achieve a useful innovation or a higher level of design quality than would otherwise be possible.	Both the site plan and design were inspired by the objectives and goals of the General Plan and Development Code, strict adherence to the development standards would require 3-story/35-foot structures that could be considered incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
4	Developments that include affordable housing, where departures from normal development standards are used to reduce development costs while maintaining design quality.	The project provides the required number of affordable housing units; 25% of units over 850-sf.

When appropriate, a planned development permit allows for flexibility in the application of development standards regarding “structure location and setbacks, yard areas and open-spaces, parking and loading requirements, ingress and egress location, fences, walls and screening landscaping requirements, and lot area and dimensions.”

While 254FSE made every effort to comply with every general development standard, the project requests relief from development standards related to setbacks, structure location and parking and loading requirements.

While specific findings must be made, outlined in Table 13, the key in determining whether the permit is appropriate is to make sure the modifications remain consistent and compatible with the adjacent uses, and the intent of the design regulations for the planning area.

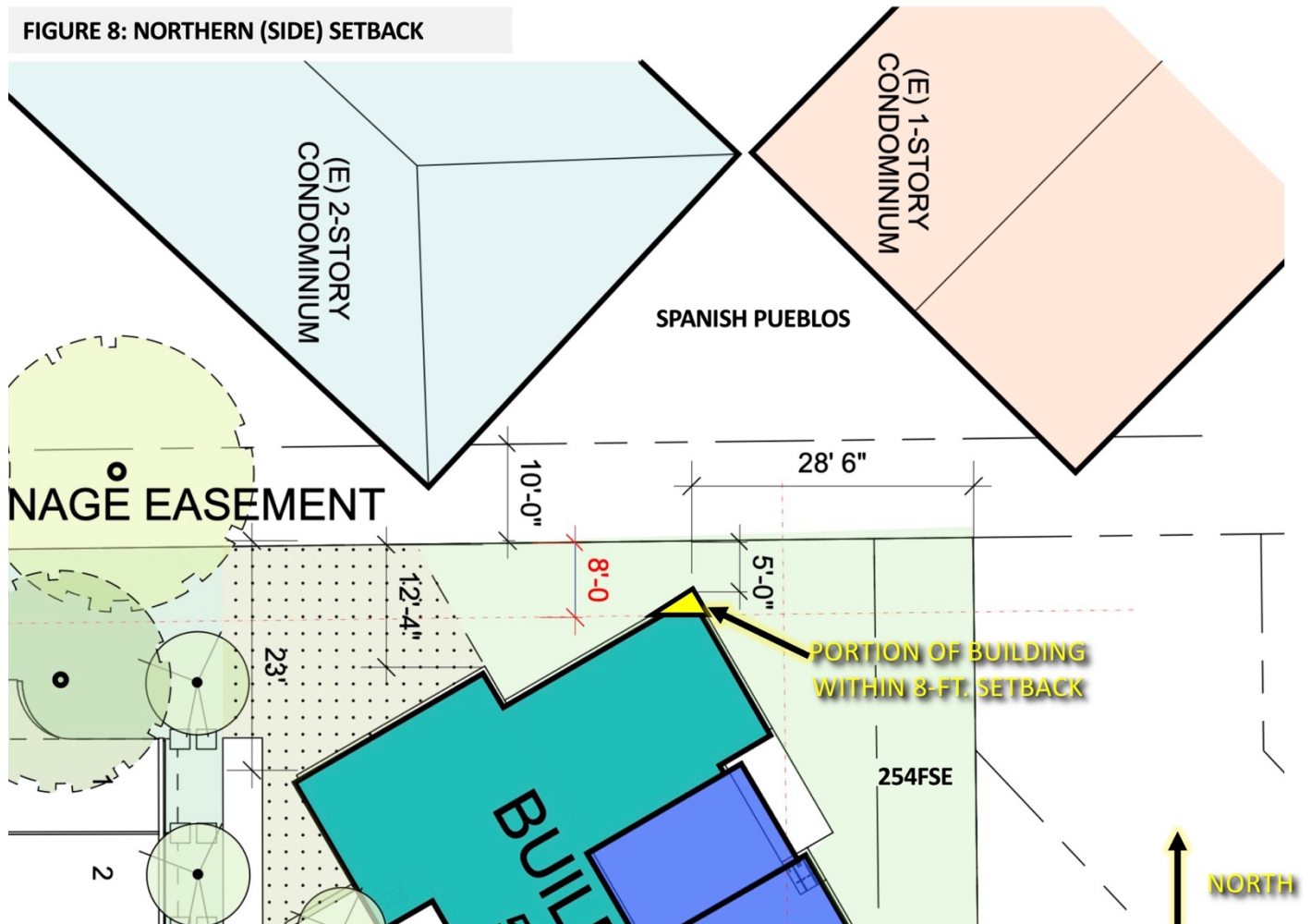
The specific requests and justifications are outlined in Table 11, with further discussion to follow.

TABLE 11: PLANNED DEVELOPMENT REQUESTS		
	REQUIRED NORTHEAST PLANNING AREA SMC 19.18.020	PROPOSED PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT SMC 19.54.070
Front Setback	PC Discretion	17-ft.
	Second story set back an additional 10-ft. from ground floor	Compatible with existing neighborhood development. The massing of the building is reduced by stepping back different portions of the front of the building 17', 20' and 30' from the front property line. Relative to its context, one could make the case stepping the second floor back an additional 10' serves no purpose but to complicate the structure of the building.
Side Setback	8-ft.	5-ft.
	Second story set back an additional 5-ft. from ground floor	Rotated building orientation results in very little area of building within the 8' setback. Had proposed buildings been oriented parallel to property lines, the requested 3' setback encroachment would have had far greater impact on neighbors. Existing neighboring multi-family residential buildings are similarly rotated relative to their property lines. Rotating the buildings allows neighboring residents greater access to light and views. The intent of the second floor additional setback requirement has been satisfied by rotating the buildings relative to the property lines such that a diminishing portion of each building encroaches into the required setback. The request is justified based on site circumstances per SMC 19.54.070.A.
Rear Setback	20-ft.	10-ft.
	Second story set back an additional 5-ft. from ground floor	Matches neighbors' setback along rear property line. Rotating the buildings allows neighboring residents greater access to light and views. Existing neighboring multi-family residential buildings are similarly rotated relative to their property lines. The intent of the second floor additional setback requirement has been satisfied by rotating the buildings relative to the property lines such that a diminishing portion of each building encroaches into the required setback. Request is justified based on site circumstances per SMC 19.54.070.A.
Structure Location	Narrow dimension of building parallel to narrow dimension of parcel. Primary entrance faces public street.	Buildings rotated relative to property lines, comparable to existing neighboring multi-family residential buildings. Primary entrances face breezeways connecting units. Request is justified based on site circumstances per SMC 19.54.070.A.
Parking & Loading Requirements		
Parking Location	Parking areas for multifamily and mixed-use developments shall not be located in a front setback, but shall be provided at the rear or along the side of the site	Parking access aisle is central to the development, which increases efficiency, thereby reducing asphalt, maximizing landscape, increasing storm water retention on site, and reducing runoff. Request is justified based on site circumstances per SMC 19.54.070 A.
Parking Space Dimensions		
90° Standard	10' x 20'	9'6" x 18', Van Accessible Space 12'6" x 18"
90° Compact	9'6" x 18'	9'6" x 18'
Parallel Standard	10' x 24'	10' x 24'
Parking Aisle	27' Width	24' Width
		Per SMC 19.48.050.A1, the Planning Commission may modify the off-street parking requirements in compliance with SMC 19.54.050, Exceptions. This request represents a 5% reduction in parking space width, a 10% reduction in parking space length, and an 11% reduction in parking aisle width. Proposed dimensions fall within the 30% exception maximum that the Planning Commission has discretion to grant per SMC 19.54.050. All proposed parking spaces are fully compliant with the requirements of the California Building Code for full-size Accessible and EV charging station parking spaces. Proposed parking aisle is compliant with City of Sonoma Fire Department requirements. Proposed parking layout results in the provision of five more parking spaces than are required. Request made to reduce the area of the site dedicated to cars, to increase efficiency and landscaped area, while maintaining car maneuverability. Proposed plan allows integration of EV charging stations and greater landscaped open space. Increased landscaped area allows for parking area trees of a stature that will shade the cars, reduces impervious surfaces, improves storm water retention on site, and reduces runoff. Reducing impervious surfaces reduces the demand for the raw materials in asphalt and concrete, reducing the project's carbon footprint. Request is justified based on site circumstances per SMC 19.54.070.A

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION: SETBACKS

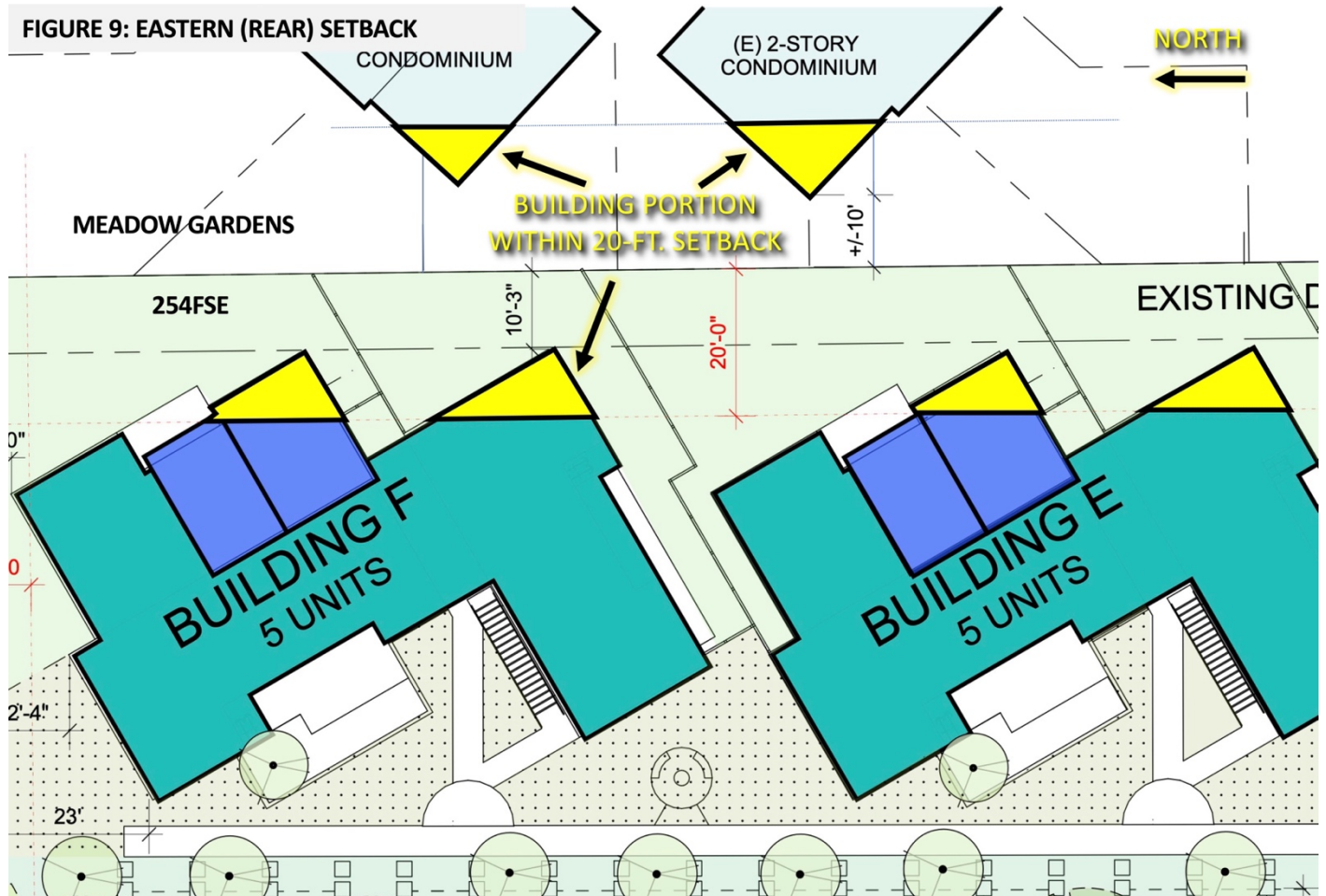
For the **northern property line**, the project requests relief from the 8-foot side setback and proposes a 5-foot setback. The rotated nature of the structure, reflecting the design of the neighboring project (Spanish Pueblos), results in a minimal mass of building area that projects beyond the standard 8-foot setback (see graphic below). Note that the base of the Spanish Pueblos structures to the north are setback 10-feet from the property line, but the roof overhang projects to within 5-7 feet of the property line. The setback modification is requested for two reasons:

- To maintain as much open space as possible between buildings C,D,E and F to enhance privacy and light for future residents, as well as privacy and light for our neighbors.
- To preserve as much of the mature oak grove as possible on the southern property line to benefit both the project and the Vintage House.



For the **eastern property line**, the project requests relief from the 20-foot rear setback and proposes a 10-foot setback. As with the northern property line, the rotated nature of the structure results in a minimal amount of mass of building area that projects beyond the standard 20-foot setback (see graphic below) than if the structures were constructed parallel to the property line. This setback is also appropriate as it matches the setback of Meadow Gardens, also setback 10-feet from the property line. The setback modification is requested for two reasons: **(Eastern Setback Diagram follows next page)**

- To maintain a landscape buffer between the project and the single-family homes located at 216 and 230 FSE; this buffer will consist of existing mature vegetation, new landscaping, and bioretention for our site's stormwater requirements.
- Placing the bioretention area in this location will allow creative landscaping to be developed throughout the remainder of the project's common area, which will enhance the quality of life for future residents and improve the neighborhood as well.



PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION: PARKING REQUIREMENTS

The project proposes to reduce the standard parking space dimensions from 10' x 20' to 9.5' x 18', or from 200-sf to 171-sf. This represents a 5% reduction in width, a 10% reduction in length, and a 14.5% reduction in square footage from the standard. Additionally, the project proposes to reduce the parking aisle dimensions from 27' wide to 24' wide, an 11% reduction from the standard. These proposed dimensions fall within the 30% exception maximum the Planning Commission has discretion to grant per SMC 19.54.050 and are consistent with the average parking space dimensions and aisle widths throughout the region. For example, Santa Rosa, Healdsburg, Cotati, Petaluma, Windsor, Napa and Sebastopol all have minimum parking space dimensions and parking aisle widths less than the City of Sonoma.

All proposed parking spaces are fully compliant with the requirements of the California Building Code for full-size Accessible and EV charging station parking spaces. Our proposed dimensions are fully compliant with Sonoma Fire Department regulations (20' minimum driveway width).

Granting this request will enable the project to provide five (5) more parking spaces than required, while also yielding significant site planning and environmental benefits, which address issues related to the unique shape of the property and the City of Sonoma's climate goals. By adopting more sustainable practices in site planning, Sonoma can contribute to global efforts to combat climate change. For example, the carbon dioxide equivalent reduction for each of our proposed parking spaces is equal to approximately 8,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide. It would take 6 trees on average 30 years to sequester an equal amount of carbon. When multiplied by the 35-spaces for which the project requests minimal reductions, this results in 280,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide, or 210-trees over 30-years to sequester an equal amount of carbon.

Site Planning Benefits

- Increased open space (both common and private)
- Increased landscaping which enhances the overall aesthetics of the design and helps to maintain many of the existing mature trees.
- Reducing pavement allows for a planting strip along the sidewalks wide enough to accommodate large trees that will shade parked cars as well as EV charging stations.

Environmental Benefits

- Increased landscaping contributes to improved air quality and reduced heat island effects.
- Minimizing the paved area with smaller parking spaces decreases impervious surfaces, which lessens the amount of pollutants found in storm water runoff, which has the potential to damage local ecosystems.
- Increasing permeable surfaces and integrating bioswales within reclaimed areas enhances storm water management and reduces the strain on local storm water systems.
- Reduced parking space and aisle dimensions results in less asphalt and concrete usage, reducing the demand for raw materials and the associated energy-intensive manufacturing, delivery, and construction processes.
- As a result, the proposed project has a lower carbon footprint.

Our modest reductions in parking space and aisle dimensions have resulted in a smaller parking lot that accommodates more vehicles in a smaller impervious area. This optimization of parking space and aisle dimensions maintain functionality while aligning with the principles of smart growth that promote denser and more walkable urban environments, in accordance with Sonoma's General Plan. By granting this request, we feel that the City of Sonoma can be proud that it is making quantifiable progress toward the sustainability of our planet.

Precedent

This request has precedent. In 2017, this Planning Commission approved a similar request made by the developers of the Oliva Apartments on West Spain Street behind Sonoma Market. Specifically, 2/3 of their spaces were modified, including 26 spaces at 9.5'x18' (the same size as this project's request), and 11 "compact" spaces at 8.5'x18' (smaller than this project's request). Additionally, their parking aisle dimension was modified at 25' wide, similar to our 24' wide request. Of note: these modifications were encouraged by the Planning Commission itself. During a 2016 Study Session, the developer was encouraged to come up with more creative ways to shield parking and to create a streetscape that enhances West Spain Street. Planning Commissioners voiced they would support modifying parking standards so that the developer could better design and plan the site. The project has since been built, and the parking plan works well with no issues.

FINDINGS & JUSTIFICATIONS TO APPROVE

TABLE 12: CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FINDINGS (SMC 19.54.040.E)		
FINDING	JUSTIFICATION	Y/N
1	The proposed use is consistent with the General Plan and any specific plan.	Yes
2	The proposed use is allowed with a conditional use permit within the applicable zoning district and complies with all applicable standards and regulations of this development code (except for approved variances and exceptions).	Yes
3	The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed use are compatible with the existing and future land uses in the vicinity; and	Yes
4	The proposed use will not impair the architectural integrity and character of the zoning district in which it is to be located.	Yes



TABLE 13: PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FINDINGS (SMC 19.54.070.F)

FINDING		JUSTIFICATION	Y/N
1	The planned development permit is consistent with the General Plan, any applicable specific plan, and the intent and applicable objectives of this section.	As already demonstrated in the use permit discussion, 254FSE is both consistent and inspired by the General Plan.	Yes
		Additionally, the intent of the Planned Development permit is to provide flexibility for “oddly shaped parcels.”	
2	The design of the development is consistent with the intent of applicable regulations and design guidelines of the development code.	Both the site and architectural design of 254FSE is consistent with both the subjective guidelines and objective standards discussed both in the General Plan and the Development Code’s Northeast Planning Area.	Yes
3	The various use and development elements of the planned development relate to one another in such a way as to justify exceptions to the normal standards of the development code.	Requested relief on two elements, parking dimensions and setbacks, will preserve natural features, increase landscaped areas, allow for better bioretention placement, and increase privacy/light for both 254FSE and neighboring development. See further detailed explanation in Table 11, Planned Development Requests	Yes
4	The design flexibility allowed by the planned development permit has been used to creatively address identified physical and environmental constraints and/or meet identified housing needs.	Similar to our justification for Finding 3, the flexibility associated with the Planned Development permit will allow for the preservation of important natural features, as outlined in the guidelines for the Northeast Planning Area.	Yes
5	The proposed development will be well-integrated into its setting, will relate appropriately to adjacent uses, and will retain desirable natural features of the site and the surrounding area.	Setbacks are an important tool to determine whether a development relates appropriately to adjacent uses; we have demonstrated our setbacks are appropriate as they mimic the setback of adjacent uses.	Yes
		Further, the rotated nature of the buildings yield an average setback that complies with the intent of the zoning standards.	
		In addition, the height and massing of the development are consistent with the surrounding developments.	
		The flexibility associated with this permit will allow us to retain desirable natural features of the site.	



TABLE 14: TENTATIVE MAP PERMIT FINDINGS		
REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL (SMC 16.04.070.A)		
FINDING	JUSTIFICATION	Y/N
1 The commission may approve a tentative map only when it shall first find that the proposed subdivision, together with the provisions for its design and improvement, is consistent with the General Plan, and any applicable specific plan, and that none of the findings for denial in subsection (C) of this section can be made. The findings shall apply to each proposed parcel as well as the entire subdivision, including any parcel identified as a designated remainder in compliance with Map Act Section 66424.6.	The subdivision, design and improvements are consistent with the General Plan and none of the following findings for denial can be made.	Yes
SUPPLEMENTAL FINDINGS		
FINDING	JUSTIFICATION	Y/N
1 Construction of Improvements. It is in the interest of the public health and safety, and it is necessary as a prerequisite to the orderly development of the surrounding area, to require the construction of public improvements within a specified time after recordation of the parcel map, where public improvements are required.	All required public improvements, such as curb, gutter, curb cuts, etc. will be conditioned in the use permit.	Yes
2 Condominiums. Any applicable findings required by SMC 16.06.030(F) for condominium conversions.	The project complies with all elements of SMC 16.06.030.	Yes
3 Dedications or Exactions. Any applicable findings required by SMC 16.10.020, Findings required for dedications and exactions, if dedications or exactions are required.	All required dedications and exactions, if required, will be conditioned in the use permit.	Yes
4 Waiver of Parcel Map. The findings required by SMC 16.05.030, Waiver of parcel map, if waiver of a parcel map has been requested with the tentative map application.	A parcel map has not been requested with the tentative map application.	Yes
FINDINGS REQUIRING DENIAL		
FINDING	JUSTIFICATION	Y/N
1 The proposed subdivision including design and improvements is not consistent with the General Plan or any applicable specific plan;	The subdivision IS consistent.	No
2 The site is not physically suitable for the type or proposed density of development;	The site IS physically suitable for the type and proposed density of development.	No
3 The design of the subdivision or the proposed improvements are likely to cause substantial environmental damage or injure fish or wildlife or their habitat;	The project will neither cause any environmental damage nor injure fish or wildlife.	No
4 The design of the subdivision or type of improvements is likely to cause serious public health or safety problems;	The project will not cause any public health or safety issues.	No
5 The design of the subdivision or the type of improvements will conflict with easements, acquired by the public at large for access through, or use of, property within the proposed subdivision. This finding may not be made if the commission finds that alternate easements for access or use will be provided, and that they will be substantially equivalent to ones previously acquired by the public. This finding shall apply only to easements of record, or to easements established by judgement of a court of competent jurisdiction, and no authority is hereby granted to the review authority to determine that the public at large has acquired easements of access through or use of property within the proposed subdivision;	The project will not conflict with easements acquired by the public at large for access through, or use of, property within the proposed subdivision.	No
6 The discharge of sewage from the proposed subdivision into the community sewer system would result in violation of existing requirements prescribed by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board;	Sewage discharge complies with requirements prescribed by the CRWQCB.	No
7 A preliminary soils report or geological hazard report indicates adverse soil or geological conditions and the subdivider has failed to provide sufficient information to the satisfaction of the city engineer or the commission that the conditions can be corrected in the plan for the development; or	The preliminary soils report does not indicate adverse soil or geological conditions.	No
8 The proposed subdivision is not consistent with all applicable provisions of this chapter, the development code, any other applicable provisions of the municipal code, and the Subdivision Map Act.	The project is consistent with all elements of the code and the Subdivision Map Act.	No