



Staff Reports

File #: 13-2022, **Version:** 1

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council
From: Vincent Smith, Community Development Director
Prepared By: Bond Mendez, Assistant Planner

TITLE:
Alta East Subdivision

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Adopt a resolution approving a Design Review Permit, Use Permit, and Tentative Subdivision Map for the Alta East Subdivision, a subdivision of an 0.83-acre property into 5 single-family lots at 1568 East Avenue and determine that the actions authorized by this resolution are exempt from CEQA.

DISCUSSION: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Applicant, Alta East LLC, requests approval to subdivide the 0.83-acre (36,154 square-feet) property at East Avenue into five residential lots and to construct five single-family detached dwelling units. The project includes creating a single private driveway along the north side of the project. Lot 1 will have direct street access to East Avenue while lots 2-4 will be flag lots that will access the street by the driveway that spans the length of the property. Site improvements include grading, retaining walls, fencing and landscaping and underground utilities. The property contains an existing single-family house and detached garage which are proposed for demolition with this project.

The Applicant is requesting the following applications:

1. Design Review Permit for the house plans and the Tentative Subdivision Map;
2. Use Permit to apply Flag Lot standards; and
3. Tentative Subdivision Map to subdivide an existing 0.83-acre lot into five parcels.

CONTEXT

The project site is located in the Alta Heights residential neighborhood. The site is slightly sloped and currently contains one single-family residence and one detached garage, a gravel driveway, various concrete patios and a masonry wall surrounding the house. All of the existing structures will be demolished with the project. The surrounding area is fully developed with single-family residential uses.

GENERAL PLAN

The property is located within the Single-Family Infill (SFI-105) General Plan designation. This designation provides for detached and attached single family homes, second units, planned unit and cluster developments, duplexes, triplexes, mobile homes, manufactured housing at a density of 3 to 8 units per acre. The 0.83-acre lot would allow for a minimum of 2 units and a maximum of 6 units. The Applicant proposes five (5) single-family residential units which is at the high end of the permitted density range in compliance with the SFI-105 General Plan Designation. Staff has determined that the proposal may be found consistent with the General Plan and is supported by the following General Plan goal:

Housing Element Policy H1.1 encourages the efficient use of land. Land Use Element Policy LU-4.5 encourages projects to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed residential use is designed to allow for the property to be developed at a density consistent with the General Plan and is compatible with existing residences in the area consistent with these policies.

ZONING

The property is also located within the Single-Family Infill (RI-5) Zoning District, which implements the single-family infill category of the General Plan and applies in areas that are primarily of single-family detached housing, although duplexes, triplexes and attached single-family homes also exist and may be permitted. RI areas include subdivisions typically with regular lot patterns, varied designs and a limited mix of unit types. Single-family detached developments are a permitted use within the RI-5 Zoning District. The RI-5 Zoning District provides for residential development with a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet. The subdivision proposes lot sizes that range from 5,720 square feet (0.13 acres) to 9,790 square feet (0.23 acres). All the proposed lots in the subdivision meet or exceed the minimum lot size requirement for the RI-5 Zoning designation, and the proposed dwellings comply with the RI-5 property development standards.

Four of the parcels would be flag lots. The design of the flag lot parcels conforms to the flag lot requirements. The flag lots provide the required additional off-street parking including forward entry to the street. Also, the required lot orientation and the RI-5 side yard requirements exceed those for setback distances from access drives.

SUBDIVISION DESIGN REVIEW

NMC Section 17.62.050 requires design review by the Planning Commission and City Council for Tentative Maps. The Guidelines describe Evolving Infill Areas as being characterized by a mix of older houses, established landscape and scattered contemporary housing. In these areas, development should fit into the community by incorporating historic and natural features with an emphasis on pedestrian-friendly design. The project conforms to the applicable Guidelines by creating a sense of place, establishing connections to the city, developing unifying and defining streetscape, using block sizes and lot patterns that support a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood, concealing parking, integrating natural features, and visually connecting houses on flag lots to the street.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW

Chapter 17.52.050 of the Zoning Ordinance requires the submittal of house designs in conjunction with design review of the subdivision. Consistent with this requirement, the Applicant has submitted plans for two different houses with five different façade styles, resulting in five individual “looks” on five lots. The applicant has determined which floorplan will be placed on each lot and which façade applies to each lot. For a more detailed design review discussion, see the Planning Commission report (Attachment 2).

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the application on February 17, 2022. The Commission heard a summary of the project from Staff and the Applicant was available for questions.

Chair Huether opened the public comment period and three members of the public spoke in opposition of the project. They opposed the project because of 5 new houses and the two-story design of the structures. They are concerned about privacy that may be lost to their yards as they own property adjacent to the project.

The Commission deliberation included discussion of the architecture of the structures and determined the architecture was good, but there wasn't enough variety. The Commission included a condition requiring additional design aesthetics be incorporated to differentiate the house designs on lots 2, 3, and 4, subject to Staff review and approval prior to building permit issuance.

The Commission found the Project to be aesthetically appropriate for the Site and voted to recommend approval of the project by a vote of 4-0 (Kelley recused).

FINANCIAL IMPACTS:

No direct financial impacts to the General Fund have been identified with this application.

CEQA:

City Staff recommends that the City Council determine that the Recommended Action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 15332 (Categorical Exemptions; Class 32) of the CEQA Guidelines, which exempts in-fill development projects consistent with the applicable general plan designation and on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses, and that the exceptions to categorical exemptions identified in Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines are inapplicable because the land is in an urbanized area with no environmentally sensitive habitats or species of concern on the property, there has been no successive effort to intensify land uses in the area, and no unusual circumstances exist that would pose a reasonable possibility of having a significant effect on the environment. Based on this analysis, no significant environmental effects would result from this project and the exemption is appropriate.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

ATCH 1 - Draft Resolution with Exhibit A

EX A - Letter from NapaSan dated December 13, 2021

ATCH 2 - Planning Commission Staff Report and Minutes Excerpts

ATCH 3 - Project Plans

ATCH 4 - Neighbor Correspondence

NOTIFICATION:

Notice of the scheduled public hearing was provided on February 3, 2022 by US Postal Service to all property owners within a 500-foot radius of the subject property. Notice of the public hearing was also published in the Napa Valley Register on March 4, 2022 and provided to people previously requesting notice on the matter at the same time notice was provided to the newspaper for publication. The Applicant was also provided a copy of this report and the associated attachments in advance of the public hearing on the project.