

Location:	Two blocks bounded by West Grand Avenue, Broadway, Valley and 24th Streets.
Proposal:	Redevelopment of site with a mixed-use project including approximately 398 residential units, 22,854 square feet of retail space, and 583 structured parking spaces.
Applicant:	Signature Properties, Inc.
Owner:	Negherbon Lincoln Mercury, Inc.
Planning Permits Required:	Preliminary Development Plan, Final Development Plan, Major Conditional Use Permit for construction of over 100,000 square feet of floor area, and Design Review.
General Plan:	Central Business District/Community Commercial
Zoning:	C-40 Community Thoroughfare Commercial Zone/C-55 Central Core Commercial Zone/C-60 City Service Commercial Zone/S-4 Design Review Combining Zone/S-17 Downtown Residential Open Space Combining Zone/S-19 Broadway Auto Row Interim Study Combining Zone
Environmental Determination:	Environmental review process underway.
Historic Status:	Site includes buildings rated Cb+3, Cb-2+, and C2+
Service Delivery District:	II – North Oakland/North Hills
City Council District:	1
For further information:	Contact case planner Lynn Warner at 510-238-6168 or by e-mail at lwarner@oaklandnet.com

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide preliminary design review comments for the proposed mixed-use project to be located on a two-block site bounded by West Grand Avenue, Broadway, 24th and Valley Streets. The 4.3-acre site is located at the southern end of Broadway Auto Row and is surrounded by a mix of commercial and residential uses. The project site is comprised of the Negherbon Auto Center, surface vehicle lots, and a few older warehouse buildings. Signature Properties is proposing a phased redevelopment of the site with approximately 398 for-sale residential units, 22,584 square feet of ground-floor commercial space on West Grand Avenue and Broadway, and 583 structured parking spaces. Four residential levels will be constructed on a podium over two parking levels. The parking levels will be wrapped with retail liner space and residential units. The project sponsor is also proposing to widen the portion of Valley Street adjacent to the project, and to provide curb bulbouts along both sides of the 23rd Street project frontage.

Staff is interested in comments from the Design Review Committee and the public regarding the design of the proposed project that may provide direction to the applicant and staff in processing the planning applications for the project, prior to the project coming to the full Commission. The primary design issues identified by staff include impacts on light for adjacent residential buildings; variety in color; roof height and design; the treatment proposed for the pedestrian level of the buildings; the design of buildings adjacent to potential historic resources; the design of the open space and street scape; the type of construction; and window quality and recess.

PROJECT SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The approximately 4.3-acre site is generally bounded by West Grand Avenue, Broadway, Valley and 24th Streets. The project site is comprised of the Negherbon Auto Center, surface vehicle lots, and a few older warehouse buildings. There are four existing buildings adjacent to the project site that will remain and are not part of the project; these include a building at the southeast corner of Valley and 23rd Streets, a building at the northwest corner of Broadway and 23rd Street, a building at the southwest corner of Broadway and 24th Street, and a building near the southeast corner of Valley and 24th Streets. The site is located at the southern end of Broadway Auto Row and is surrounded by a mix of commercial and residential uses. There are also several potentially significant historic resources located on and adjacent to the project site (see Environmental Review section below).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Signature Properties is proposing a phased redevelopment of the site with approximately 398 for-sale residential units, 22,584 square feet of ground-floor commercial space on West Grand Avenue and Broadway, and 583 structured parking spaces (518 residential and 65 retail). There are two blocks that comprise the project site, which are designated Parcel A and Parcel B. Parcel A is the block bounded by West Grand Avenue, Broadway, Valley and 23rd Streets. Parcel B is the block bounded by West Grand Avenue, Broadway, Valley, 23rd and 24th Streets.

The buildings are generally six stories tall, with a maximum height of about 82 feet. This height would provide a transition between the high-rise office buildings and the smaller scale commercial and residential structures in the surrounding area. Four residential levels will be constructed on a podium over two parking levels. The proposed units range in size from 761 to 1,578 square feet and are a combination of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. There are five residential access points on 23rd and 24th Streets, Broadway, and Valley. Vehicle access will be provided on 23rd and 24th Streets, and a loading berth will be provided on 24th Street. The parking levels will be wrapped with retail liner space and residential units. Open space will be provided via a combination of private balconies and common interior courtyards at the podium level. The project sponsor is also proposing to widen the portion of Valley Street adjacent to Parcel B, and to provide curb bulbouts along both sides of the 23rd Street project frontage.

GENERAL PLAN ANALYSIS

There are two General Plan designations for the project site: Central Business District and Community Commercial. The Central Business District designation, which applies to Parcel A, allows a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 20.0, and a maximum residential density of 500 units per net acre. The Community Commercial designation, which applies to Parcel B, allows a maximum FAR of 5.0, and a maximum residential density of 166.67 units per net acre. The proposed project is within the allowable FAR and residential density for each parcel, and the uses are consistent with the General Plan designations.

ZONING ANALYSIS

There are several zoning designations for the site including: C-40 Community Thoroughfare Commercial/C-55 Central Core Commercial/C-60 City Service Commercial/S-4 Design Review/S-17 Downtown Residential Open Space/S-19 Broadway Auto Row Interim Study. All of these zoning districts permit the proposed uses except for the C-60 zone, which does not allow residential or retail uses. However, because the uses are consistent with the Community Commercial General Plan designation they are allowed with an interim conditional use permit. The best-fit zone that will be applied to the portion of Parcel B zoned C-60 would be C-55. The FAR of the retail portion of the project is within the maximum FAR allowed of 7.7 for Parcel A and a portion of Parcel B, and 3.0 for the remainder of Parcel B. The density of the residential portion of the project is within the maximum allowable residential density of 1 unit per 150 square feet of lot area for Parcel A and a portion of Parcel B, and 1 unit per 450 square feet of lot area for the remainder of Parcel B.

The proposed project will require the following planning approvals: a Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) for the entire project, a Final Development Plan (FDP) for Phase I, a Major Conditional Use Permit (for construction of over 100,000 square feet of floor area, and for inconsistency between the zoning classification and the General Plan designation), Design Review, a Variance for a deficit of three loading berths, and a Subdivision Map. All applicable criteria for these entitlements will be analyzed and appropriate findings will be made in conjunction with review by the full Planning Commission.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project will undergo review to assess its potential environmental impacts. It is anticipated that the review will focus on potential impacts of the project on traffic, historic resources, aesthetic resources, and shadow. The historic resources analysis will assess the potential impacts of demolishing a building rated Cb-2+, located at the southeast corner of 24th and Valley Streets; a building rated Cb+3, located at the northeast corner of 23rd and Valley Streets; and two buildings rated C2+, located at the southeast corner of 23rd and Valley Streets. The analysis will also study potential indirect impacts on the adjacent 25th Street Garage District Area of Primary Importance (API), and on an adjacent building at 415 24th Street that is rated B+a1+. The shadow study will analyze potential shade impacts of the project on adjacent residential uses. In addition, an option will be studied to provide more residential units to allow greater flexibility.

DESIGN ISSUES

The building design successfully breaks up the elevations by incorporating different materials and styles to make the different portions of the buildings appear as if they were constructed separately over a period of time. The proposed architectural styles include a combination of traditional and modern design elements, which is compatible with the mix of styles in the surrounding area. The proposed exterior building materials include stucco, brick veneer, zinc

roofing, and fiberglass windows. Proposed colors include a range of earth tones as well as muted red, orange, and yellow tones.

Staff generally believes that the proposed design is attractive, well modulated, and compatible with the surrounding area. Based on the conceptual plans submitted for the project, staff has identified several design issues that are presented in the following section of this report. It is requested that the DRC comment on these issues as well as any other layout or design elements. Staff will then continue to work with the applicant to refine and further develop the design in anticipation of full Planning Commission review once the environmental review is completed.

Outstanding Design Issues

- Potential shade impacts are a concern for adjacent residential uses on 24th Street and across Valley Street from the project site. If the shadow study determines that there are significant impacts, the project sponsor will need to develop alternative design options that reduce these impacts, perhaps by providing a setback and/or building setback adjacent to residential structures.
- More substantial variation in roof heights is suggested in order to provide a better transition between the various portions of the building along each elevation. This would help to minimize the massing of the buildings.
- More variety in color is recommended for the Valley Street elevation on Parcel B. This would help to reduce the uniform appearance of the central portion of the building.
- The use of a mansard style roof is out of context, inauthentic, and appears too contrived. More emphasis should be placed on architectural elements from Oakland's rich history of turn of the century multi-family buildings, such as in the Gold Coast neighborhood near Lake Merritt.
- The design of buildings adjacent to potentially significant historic resources will be closely examined, and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board will be solicited for their comments.
- The design and quality of the open space within the project needs to provide buffered areas that accommodate a variety of uses and amenities.
- The streetscape is an important design element that needs to be further detailed. Given the scale and phasing of the proposed project, public improvements should create the feeling of a district. Street lights, trees, and furniture should be compatible with improvements on Broadway, should be residential in scale, and should provide project identification. The design of the street frontages should take into account the various street widths and levels of activity.

- The type of construction should be explored to determine whether wood frame or concrete is more appropriate. Concrete construction can provide buildings with a more substantial and refined appearance, and is encouraged if feasible.
- Window quality and window recess are an important component of the project design. More detail on the window types, amount of recess, and quality needs to be provided.
- Ground floor design and details are a critical part of how the building will read from the pedestrian level. Durable, high-quality materials such as stone or ceramic tile should be provided at the base in order to add visual interest. These ground-floor materials have not yet been selected by the project sponsor.
- Consider providing a community room so that residents of the project have a place to hold meetings or social functions.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends the Design Review Committee review and comment on the site layout and conceptual design of the proposed project, with emphasis on the issues discussed above, as well as any other issues the Committee may have.

Respectfully submitted:

CLAUDIA CAPPIO
Development Director

Prepared by:

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Attachments: A. Project Plans