



## Sonoma County Design Review Committee STAFF REPORT MEMO

FILE: PLP19-0044  
DATE: 3 June, 2020  
TIME: At or after 2:00  
STAFF: Eric Gage

### SUMMARY

**Applicant:** David Brown for Adobe Associates  
**Property Owner:** Springs Investors Group, LP  
**Location:** 135-175 Verano Avenue, in Sonoma Valley  
**Supervisory District No.:** 1  
**APN:** 127-071-002, 003, and 005  
**Subject:** Preliminary Design Review  
**Proposal:** Preliminary Design Review for a Hotel and Affordable Housing  
**Environmental Determination:** Subject to CEQA; review level pending  
**General Plan Land Use:** Recreation and Visitor Serving Commercial; Urban Residential 8 units per acre  
**Specific/Area Plan Land Use:** The Springs Specific Plan (not yet adopted)  
**Ordinance Reference:** 26-24-010(k) and -020(k) [Housing Opportunity Area Type A], 26-42-020(q), [hotel], 26-82-060, 26-89-030 [density bonus],  
**Zoning:** K, R2 B6 8 DU, F2 RC 50/25  
**Recommendation:** Review the preliminary design plans and provide feedback addressing any potential opportunities for design improvement where appropriate, including emphasis on the following design elements:

- General massing and design of building addition
- Exterior lighting and fixtures
- Parklet landscaping



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposal includes a 72-unit affordable housing units and a mid-priced 120 room hotel. There is an approved lot line adjustment, creating two properties – a 2.5 acre property for the hotel and a 3.29 acre property for the housing. The proposal includes creek restoration and maintenance near the affordable housing along the northern parcel boundary. The site design proposes to preserve trees wherever feasible. For the purposes of CEQA compliance, the proposal will be considered to be a single project. Proposed site and building design improvements are specified below:

- A three-story, 94,853 square-foot hotel, featuring 120 guest rooms, a rooftop lounge, swimming pool, gym, and meeting rooms.
- A three-story, 100% affordable rental apartment complex contained in six buildings with a total floor area of 65,358 square feet, featuring 72 units, outdoor courtyards, and a community room.
- A landscaped passive recreation area in the ROW of Old Adobe Avenue extending to the adjacent FAHA residential property.
- Separate landscaped parking areas providing 133 parking spaces for hotel guests and employees, and 97 parking spaces for residents.

## **Background**

The development proposal is on the site of the former Paul's Resort, across from Maxwell Farms Regional Park. None of the former resort structures exist and the site is currently undeveloped. The site is centrally located and provides pedestrian and bicycle access to shopping, jobs, and recreational opportunities. The applicants hold three community meetings in 2019 to share ideas and obtain feedback from the community before finalizing their project description and designs.

The project received conceptual design review on July 17, 2019 with favorable comments. The project was reviewed at the February 26, 2020 meeting of the Sonoma Valley Community Advisory Commission, and the Commission unanimously recommended approval. Several commissioners expressed concern about increased traffic and left turn maneuvers onto and off of Verano Avenue.

## **Discussion**

### **1. General Plan Consistency**

The site is within the Urban Service Boundary, as shown on General Plan Figure LU-2i, the land use map for Sonoma Valley. The proposed project includes a General Plan Amendment and rezoning the affordable housing site to R3, High Density Residential 16 units per acre. The provision of affordable housing within urban service areas is a county priority and the housing proposal is consistent with this priority. An upzoning of the site from its current General Plan Land Use designation of Urban Residential 8 units per acre to Urban Residential 16 units per acre would be necessary.

The Recreation and Visitor Servicing Residential (RVSC) land use designation allows indoor lodging, including hotels with up to 200 rooms in urban service areas, subject to the granting of a use permit. The applicants propose a 121 room hotel, which is consistent with the allowable uses in the RVSC land use designation.



## 2. Zoning Code Consistency

**Housing.** The proposed housing project is allowed by zoning code, including its density bonus provisions, and the proposed 3 story construction of up to 40 feet is allowed by the applicable R3 development standards. Additionally, state density bonus law for affordable housing projects (Government Code 65915) requires that the county grant 3 incentives or waivers from development standards, which can include things like height, parking, open space or setbacks. It is not yet known if incentives will be needed for the housing projects.

**Hotel.** The hotel use is allowed with a conditional use permit in K zoning. The maximum height allowed without a use permit is 35 feet, and the maximum lot coverage is 50%. The hotel is proposed with a maximum height of 54 feet at tower elements, and the lot coverage is approximately 28% of the lot. The development standards for this zone (26-42-030) allow extra height by use permit, but only if the building intensity is not exceeded:

- (a) Building Intensity. The maximum building intensity of the use of a site shall be determined by multiplying the maximum building height limit and the maximum lot coverage. The specified height or lot coverage limits may be modified if a use permit is first secured and if the maximum building intensity is not exceeded.

The allowable lot coverage for the hotel parcel is 50%, and maximum height is 35 feet. The proposed height and lot coverage identified above do not exceed the maximum building intensity and are approvable with a use permit.

## 3. Architecture and Landscaping

**Housing.** The housing is envisioned as a 72-unit, three-story walk up with a mix of 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units distributed across six buildings with 95 parking spaces. The housing design emphasizes the natural environment, preserving existing mature oak trees in common spaces. The materials and colors are selected to blend with natural environment, using board and batten painted with earth tones. The housing includes community rooms, courtyards, and passive recreation opportunities. The proposal also includes tree preservation and creek restoration.

**Hotel.** The hotel will be the “public face” of the project and will be visible from Maxwell Farms Regional Park. The hotel proposes to evoke the “Mission Revival” architectural style to harmonize well with iconic architecture in the Springs area. The proposed hotel design has “four-sided architecture” to be aesthetically pleasing from all angles. The proposed design includes recessed balconies to create relief from a flat façade and to add shadow and depth.

### Attachments:

Applicant’s description dated April 2, 2020  
Hotel plan set dated March 12, 2020  
Residential plan set dated March 23, 2020  
SVCAC meeting minutes for February 26, 2020

