Item No: 1
Meeting Date: 12/10/2013

**To:** Planning Commission

**Date:** 12/3/2013

**Authorized By:** Ron Munekawa
Chief of Planning

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**Subject:** PA 13-058 CLASSICS AT SAN MATEO PRE-APPLICATION;
106, 110 & 120 Tilton Ave, San Mateo, CA; APNs: 032-311-120, & -130

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission review the proposed residential project on a preliminary basis and provide input to the applicant and staff.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The project site is composed of two parcels, totaling approximately 33,450 square feet, and is located on Tilton Ave, between North San Mateo Drive and North El Camino Real. The surrounding uses include single-family residences to the west, multifamily residential uses to the north and south, and medical office use to the east. (Refer to Attachment 1 – Vicinity Map.)

Presently, the on-site structures include a one-story duplex residence, a two-story 20-unit multi-family building and accessory structures. The existing buildings were evaluated by Architectural Resources Group for their potential as historic resources. Their evaluation concluded that the buildings do not qualify as resources (see Attachment 2 – Historic Review).

The site is zoned R5 (Multiple Family Dwelling – High Density) and is designated in the General Plan as High Density Multi-Family. This zoning allows for residential uses to be developed on the project site in accordance with the High Density Multiple-Family Dwelling development standards and the Multi-family Dwelling Design Guidelines.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project consists of the demolition of all existing buildings on the project site. The applicant has indicated that affordable units will be provided as per the City's requirement (see Attachment 4 – Project Description and Applicant's Affordable Housing Memo). The proposed residential project would consist of a mix of 27 one-bedroom and two-bedroom units, ranging from 1,229 square feet to 1,408 square feet in size. The residential density is approximately 35 units per acre, which is within the allowable density for R5 zoned properties.

As presently designed, the project would require Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR), a Tentative Map merge the two parcels and create condominium residential units for sale, and a Site Development Planning Application for grading and removal of major vegetation (including Heritage Trees). Sample findings for these entitlements are included as Attachment 8. It is also anticipated that an environmental document will be prepared to address any potential environmental impacts of the project, including traffic, noise, greenhouse gases and air quality.

As noted in the applicant's project description, the proposed residential development is designed to present a row of four three-story townhome-style homes along the Tilton Avenue frontage with a central pedestrian entry leading to other dwelling units in the development. The architectural style is contemporary Craftsman with proposed exterior materials such as stucco, horizontal siding, timber trellis and porches, and standing seam roofs.

A one-level underground garage with 57 spaces is proposed for the development with a driveway access located on the east side of the development. The applicant is aware that the garage parking is required to comply with the City's Security Code requirements for secured resident parking. The visitor parking and accessible parking are also provided in the garage.

The zoning code does not require the provision of a loading zone for residential developments with less than 50 units; however, the applicant has indicated that they are still reviewing loading zone options at this time. Trash and recycling would be collected in a central area in the garage. At this time, it would appear that the trash/recycling/compost would have to be taken out to the street for pickup for service. An off-street trash/recycling "staging area" has not yet been identified at this preliminary stage of the project.

Open space for the project is provided primarily to the adjacent to each of the proposed units in a private yard that is delineated on the plans with fencing. A majority of the existing heritage trees are proposed to be removed in order to develop the project. While not shown on the proposed plans, the applicant has indicated an interest in preserving the large heritage redwood tree located at the southeastern corner of the project site. The project will include new landscaping and trees, which will be reviewed in further detail during the formal Planning Application stage of the project.

Overall, the proposed buildings' height is approximately 40 feet which is under the permitted height of 55 feet. The underground garage is fully subterranean as detailed in the Building Sections on sheet A4-1 and A4-2 (refer to Attachment 6).

## CODE AND POLICY COMPLIANCE

General Plan:
The General Plan Land Use Diagram designates the project site as High Density Multi-Family. General Plan policies are provided as Attachment 9. The policies that apply to this project address a variety of topics, including land use, traffic, housing, design, and noise.

Specifically, the City's Housing Element policies include protection of established single-family and multi-family residential areas, encouraging the provision of affordable housing by the private sector, and incorporating sustainability into future multi-family housing. The preliminary project appears to meet a number of these policies at this time and will be subject to further review during the formal Planning application stage. The applicant proposes to include affordable housing units, retain one heritage tree on the existing site, and proposes open space areas for each of the units.

The General Plan's Urban Design Element policies call for new multi-family developments to conform to the City's Multi-family Design Guidelines that address the preservation and enhancement of neighborhood character through building scale, materials, architectural style, open space, location of parking and lot size. The project will be reviewed during the formal Planning Application stage when more details are provided to determine conformance with these guidelines.

Preservation of existing street trees and planting of additional trees are key policies in the City's Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan. The applicant is proposing to remove many of the existing on-site trees, preserve one heritage tree, and enhance the development with new landscaping and trees. This will be reviewed further in conjunction with the formal Planning application.

The proposed project appears to generally comply with some of the goals and policies in the General Plan, the Downtown Plan and related City Planning documents. However, the project will be reviewed in more detail for conformance to specific policies and plans (such as the Multi-family Design Guidelines) during the formal Planning Application review as the formal Planning Application submittal will be required to provide further clarification and/or documentation to ensure conformance with all applicable City Plans, polices and guidelines.

Zoning Code:
At this preliminary stage, the proposed project appears to be generally consistent with the development standards of the R5 (High Density Multiple Family Dwellings) zoning classification

in that the proposed 27 units is below the maximum allowable 38 units for the property. A Preliminary Residential Data form is included in the packet (refer to Attachment 5), which summarizes the project's compliance with applicable requirements. However, given the level of details currently available on the preliminary plans, it may not be possible to conduct a full plan check review for compliance with all applicable code requirements. It is anticipated that following the Planning Commission study session, the applicant will revise the project to address public comments or the Planning Commission's direction and submit a formal planning application that documents the project's compliance with applicable code requirements.

The project site is located within approximately a quarter mile radius from the Downtown Caltrain station and, while the site is not zoned Transportation Oriented Development (TOD), the proposed 35 units per acre density is similar to TOD's density range of 35 - 50 units per acre.

The project is located within the City's Central Parking and Improvement District (CPID) area. The Zoning Code specifies that residential parking is required to be provided on-site to meet citywide standards since the site is not within the Downtown Retail Core. As proposed, the project appears to meet the minimum parking requirements; however, the project does not currently meet the City's Building Security Code requirement that all resident parking spaces be secured with an electrically operated closure, typically an electric gate.

Sustainable Building Design*:*
The applicant has provided a preliminary Residential Green Point Rated check list and will continue to work to finalize their proposal during the formal Planning Application stage of the project. Please refer to Attachment 7 - Preliminary Green Point Rated Checklist.

Historical Resource Evaluation:
A historic review evaluation was conducted by Architectural Resources Group (ARG) for the properties at 106, 110 and 120 Tilton Avenue (refer to Attachment 2 - Historic Review dated August 5, 2005). The ARG report concluded that the properties were not eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources and did not qualify as a historic resource under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (refer to page 16 of the report).

**ISSUES**

Multi-Family Design Guidelines:
This project will require design review by the City's Design Review Consultant. His review will focus on conformance with the City's Urban Design Element, Downtown Area Plan and Multi Family Design Guidelines as applicable. The City's Multi-Family Design Guidelines include a design objective to promote providing identity to small groups of units in higher density projects through scale, color, massing and setback changes in addition to unit orientation to the street. Other design elements will also be reviewed such as landscaping. As noted previously, the

project will result in the removal of the majority of heritage trees with the preservation of one heritage redwood tree at the southeast corner of the project site. The proposed landscaping and trees will be evaluated in more detail during the review of the formal Planning Application submittal.

Site Layout and Overall Security:
The proposed project includes a proposed five (5) foot fenced pedestrian pathway along the perimeter of the project site. There is concern that this may promote the area as an access-point for potential criminal activity (such as private yard access over the private yard fence from the rear of these properties). The perimeter fencing and the issue of designing to minimize potential safety issue will be reviewed by the City's Police Department and the City's Design Review Consultant during the formal Planning Application stage.

Resident Relocation:
The Zoning Code requires applicants to provide assistance with the relocation of existing residential rental tenants displaced by proposed development. Specifically, the code requires that the following be provided to each household prior to any notice of relocation:

a) A list of available comparable housing within San Mateo County;
b) A relocation allowance in cash or check equivalent to three (3) months' rent; and
c) Other reasonable assistance and allowance, as determined by the final approval body in a condition of approval.

The applicant has indicated that the residential buildings were vacant at the time the properties were acquired by Classic Communities, Inc.; therefore, the relocation requirement cannot be applied as there are no residential tenants.

**NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT**
The applicant conducted a neighborhood meeting on November 20, 2013. Twenty-three (23) attendees registered at the meeting. The attendees provided several comments/questions, which included the following topics:

- Driveway access and pedestrian safety. Concerns were raised about increased traffic at the intersection of Tilton Avenue and North El Camino Real.
  Responses:
  - The circulation impacts will be analyzed during the formal Planning Application phase.
  - In speaking with the Public Works staff following the meeting, the following information was provided, "The width of the Tilton Avenue right-of-way is 50-feet. The width of the street from face-of-curb to face-of-curb is 32-feet. The existing sidewalk is approximately 6.5 feet; which includes the concreted-in planter strip. The Pedestrian Master Plan for residential areas recommends a 0.5-foot curb, 4-foot landscape strip and 6-foot clear through zone, for a total of 10.5-feet from face-of-curb. In the Master Plan, the "clear through zone" can be

a minimum of 4-feet, though staff would recommend having the 6-foot zone. This would place the sidewalk approximately 1.5-feet onto the private property, which would require a pedestrian access easement from the property owner. (Refer to Pedestrian Master Plan's illustrative graphic #A.5 Sidewalk Standards – Residential Type C New Development on page A-8.)"

- Parking, loading function, and street sweeping. Questions were raised about on-street parking and how loading would occur.

  Responses:
  - The project site is within the North Downtown Residential Parking zone, and the new residents would be eligible to receive permits, just like the residents in existing buildings.
  - Per the zoning code, the project size, at less than 50 units, does not trigger the requirement for a loading zone; however, the applicant indicated to the neighbors that they would look into this.
  - In speaking with the Public Works staff following the meeting, the following information was provided, "The city-wide street sweeping program is being evaluated at this time by the Public Works department. As part of the evaluation, a survey of residents' desire for street sweeping and the different options that will be studied will be done. For further information on the subject, interested persons should attend the January 8, 2014 Public Works Commission meeting that will discuss this topic in more detail."

- Affordable Units. Attendees inquired about the affordable units.

  Responses:
  - It was noted that there would be some affordable units; however, the applicant is still working out the exact ratios.
  - In speaking with the Housing manager following the meeting, it was determined that based on the current composition of units, staff anticipates that the City requirement would be 3 units at the low-income level or 4-units at the moderate-income level.

- Design and layout of the project, and maneuvering around. Questions were raised about how future residents would move around and access/exit the development and individual units.

  Responses:
  - This would be analyzed by the Public Works staff and traffic consultant during the formal Planning Application phase.

- Construction/Demolition Hours.
  Response:
  The standard Building construction hours are:
  Monday through Friday 7:00 am through 7:00 pm
  Saturday 9:00 am through 5:00 pm
  Sunday 12:00 pm (Noon) through 4:00 pm

A copy of the applicant's summary of the Neighborhood Meeting is attached (Attachment 10 - Neighborhood Meeting Summary).

**NOTICE PROVIDED**

In accordance with Government Code section 65090, notice of this hearing was published in the Examiner newspaper 10 days before this Study Session. In accordance with Government Code section 65091 and the City's Municipal Code noticing requirements, this hearing was noticed to the following parties ten days in advance of the November 20, 2013 neighborhood meeting:

- Property owners, residential tenants and business tenants within 1,000 feet of the project site;
- The City's "900 List" which contains nearly 100 Homeowner Associations, Neighborhood Associations, local utilities, media, and other organizations interested in citywide planning projects.
- The interested parties list which includes interested individuals who contacted the City and requested to be added to the project notification list.

At the time of printing of this report, one written public comment had been received (refer to Attachment 11 – Public Comments). Public comments received following the printing will be provided under separate cover to the Planning Commission at their desks on the date of the study session.

**SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS**

At this time, staff is seeking Planning Commission comments and input on the following issues:

- Site Plan – Site plan layout (including the five foot wide perimeter pathway), location of the buildings in relation to the streets,
- Preliminary Design – Architectural style, massing, relationship with adjacent residential buildings, and building form. Input is specifically desired on the proposed residential buildings which have similar features and do not appear to provide variation in unit identify.

Following this study session, the applicant will revise the plans as necessary to respond to comments from staff and the Planning Commission and submit a formal Planning Application.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Vicinity Map
2. Historical Report by ARG dated August 5, 2005
3. Archaeological Report
4. Project Description and Affordable Housing Memo.
5. Preliminary Residential Data Form
6. Reduced Project Plans
7. Preliminary Green Point Rated Checklist
8. Sample Findings
9. Preliminary List of Applicable City Policies
10. Neighborhood Meeting Summary
11. Public Comments

**CC (AR and attachments (hardcopy) via USPS First Class Mail)**
Applicant and Property Owners

**CC (Website link to AR and attachments via Email)**
Interested Parties (if email address was provided)