SERA
ARCHITECTURE
URBAN DESIGN + PLANNING
INTERIOR DESIGN

Date	2021.02.10
Project Name	The Magnolias
Project Number	1903082
Attention	Gina Paolini, City of Morgan Hill
Subject	Project Narrative

The Magnolias – SB330 Project Narrative

Part I. - The Magnolias - Project Description

A. Project Site

The 1.5 acre site is located at 17965 Monterey Street in Morgan Hill (APN 764-12-006), a 6-minute drive after exiting US-101. Just north of Downtown Morgan Hill, the site, zoned MU-F, sits in a mixed-use but mostly residential, developing neighborhood. There are small vacant structures that will be demolished, and minor grading will be required due to flood plain requirements.
Two grocery stores are located within 1 mile of the site; Morgan Hill Community Adult School is across the street; Walgreens is 1.5 miles away; and Morgan Hill Library and City offices are is less than a mile away. the Hale & Hillwood bus stop is a half mile away with service by bus route 68 between Gilroy and San Jose, which has a frequency of 15 minutes during commute times. The Morgan Hill Caltrain station is 0.6 mile away, with weekday commute service to and from San Francisco.

B. Population Served

First Community Housing (FCH) plans to build 66 units of multifamily housing for households earning 30% to 60% AMI. Currently, the project consists of 16 studios, 16 one-bedroom units, 17 two-bedroom units, and 17 three-bedroom units. One three-bedroom unit will be reserved for on-site staff. Half of the project units are planned to be a combination of permanent supportive housing (PSH) and rapid rehousing (RRH) units, restricted for households at 30% AMI, and for which the County will provide rental subsidies and case management services. The remaining 50% of units would target families earning up to 60% AMI.

C. Building Description

The project is anticipated to be five stories. The building will be employing modular construction. Common areas will include the Property Management and Social Service Coordinator's offices, open lounge/seating areas, a central laundry facility, indoor and outdoor play spaces for kids of all ages, secured bicycle storage, and a community garden area. Parking will be provided at a rate of 1 space per unit in a surface lot behind the building. FCH also plans to include pet relieving and washing areas on the property.
The project consists of the ground-up construction and development of a 66 unit affordable housing project at the site of 17965 Monterey Rd, Morgan Hill, CA 95037. This work includes the architectural design, landscape design, civil design, structural design, and MEP/FP design of all elements of the building and site for an assumed construction cost that is yet to be confirmed.

The building consists of a Type IA ground floor housing on-site amenities such as community rooms, bike parking and administrative offices, and 4 levels of housing units of Type VA construction above. Level 5 also has two amenity unenclosed roof decks for tenant use.

Upper level construction is intended to be completed in a modular manner offsite at a local special modular manufacturing plant. The modular scope is to be performed by the Modular Builder, which has a

design assist contract with the Owner, and a supplier contract with the General Contractor. SERA, under its contract with the Owner has agreed to perform design work for the housing unit sector of the scope (the portions of the building above the Type 1A podium) in accordance with the limitations of the Modular Builder's system.

Parking: 67 stalls at ground level.

Areas:
Level 1: 15,960 SF
Levels 2-5: 73,840
Total: 89,800

Lot re-grading, storm water mitigation, and floodplain design is carefully considered to keep the project safe and to avoid spillage to adjacent properties.

D. Applicant Description

FCH is a recognized leader in creating highly sustainable, affordable housing and like FCH's other new construction projects, this development will be designed as a LEED Platinum project. In addition to sustainable building strategies such as selecting healthy building materials, incorporating water and energy efficient measures, and providing each household with free Eco Passes, FCH will seek out innovative new technologies to showcase in this signature building.

Part II – Design

The design development of the project is driven primarily by three design imperatives:

Design Charter:

1. Provide Positive Vision of Community
2. Express Habitation and Diversity
3. Express Identity in Environmental Responsibility

Inside and out, all decisions are driven and checked against this Design Charter with the intent on providing high-quality, beautiful, affordable place to live to a historically under-served population. At the same time the project must prove to be an asset and enhancement to the City of Morgan Hill.

It is difficult for a population to develop a sense of identity with their home, just as it is difficult for a community to identify with their City, if that place does not have its own sense of identity. Inhabitants should feel they have a level of ownership and responsibility for that place. They should feel that their city, and their habitation represents a portion of their own identity. The Magnolias is designed so that tenants can identify their own units from a distance by presenting unique features such as differing balcony treatments, window treatments, or different color accents. The unique, yet harmonious identity of the development within the context of the City should be a source of pride to the families calling it home.

Environmental sustainability is a prime factor in all projects by First Community Housing. Leading by example, The Magnolias seeks to illustrate and educate the basic lesson that sustainability can be beautiful. From its early inception, the project has based every decision on the question of environmental impact. The building roof is vegetated to mitigate the urban heat island effect and to pre-treat rainwater runoff. Large, prominent PV arrays display the aspirations of renewable energy. Several Electric Vehicle charging stations support the effort towards a future with clean energy. Material selections prioritize long-lasting, high-quality, healthy, sustainably resourced, options over first-cost considerations. Invisible to the naked eye, but just as important, the building's mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems are designed for the highest-efficiency, lowest power and water consumption, longest life cycle possible. Reduction in consumption is still the most effective strategy in mitigating ecological degradation and global warming.

Positive vision of community starts with being a good neighbor, and a providing positive influence on the municipal culture. It is no doubt that this project will be a prominent presence in the neighborhood, due to its relative size alone. The challenge is to create something which contributes to fabric of Morgan Hill in a

positive, beautiful, and harmonious way. Towards this end, The Magnolias has utilized multiple architectural strategies resulting in a proposal Morgan Hill will find to be an asset to the City for decades to come. The primary inspiration for the project comes directly from the natural beauty of the Santa Clara Valley. The exterior undulations of the facades are meant to convey the natural mountainous formations nearby, including the El Toro, which is visible from this site.. The color palette along this façade is also inspired by El Toro, as its grasses change colors across the changes in the seasons. The south-side forms are inspired by the dynamic mountain water habitats of the local ecology, especially the waterfalls and creeks of Uvas Canyon. The rippling wave forms of the building offer a cool refreshing display for the arid hot months in Morgan Hill. All along the roof line, parapets vary in height and pitch to create an engaging, optimistic skyline that reflects the rippling streambed at the South façade, and the mountain ridges at the North facade. Building masses have been strategically broken up to diminish the relative size. Exterior stairways, open-air hallways with projecting balconies, glassy lobbies, and step-downs of the massing at the East and West to roof top terraces provide breaks in the massing. Diminishing the scale in this way allows the building read as if it were multiple, smaller buildings.

Positive vision of community also extends internally. The project is supportive housing for underserved family populations in the area. This project fosters and strengthens community by promoting support and stewardship of our fellow humans. Many on-site amenities are provided to tenants to encourage social bonds and strong community and family ties. The south-side yard provides sporting and play opportunities for all ages in a safe, stimulating environment. Padded play areas help keep tots safe, while the court provides half-court basketball, futsal, or other court sports. Community garden plots encourage agrarian education and supports the green thumbs. Community rooms provide opportunities for larger gatherings. The clubhouse contains a full demonstration kitchen for cooking classes, or simply to prep for the picnic. The open barbeque area rounds out the list of family-friendly necessities. In the front lobby, lounge areas are intermixed with free-access computers. The two generous Level 5 outdoor plazas look out over the beautiful Morgan Hill scenery. Tenants and families can gather in these safe, attractive amenities to visit and bond. Inside and out, or from down Monterrey Road, opportunities for gathering and sharing promote community bonding so necessary to transform a mere place to live into a home. Happy healthy residents make good neighbors. And good neighbors make a good city.

Part III – Entitlement Narrative

A. Density Bonus:

Under State Density Bonus Law, Section 65915, the project - as 100% lower income households, defined by Section 50079.5 of the Health and Safety Code – qualifies for an 80% Density bonus over that maximum allowed by the Development Standards.
1.53 acres x 24 du/acre allowed = 36.72 units allowed under Morgan Hill Zoning Code for Zone MU-F.
36.72 units x 80% density bonus = 66 allowable units with density bonus. (30 bonus units)

Parking:

Per. 65915.p.3.B.4, 100% low-income supportive housing - as defined in Section 50675.14 of the Health and Safety Code – qualifies for no minimum vehicular parking requirements.
Parking provided:
Standard: 46
Compact: 16
Accessible: 5
EV: 5
Accessible EV:2
Total: 67 spaces

B. Concessions to Development Standards:

Per 65915.d.2.D, 100% low-income supportive housing qualifies for **four** incentives or concessions to the City's Development Standards.

As defined by the City of Morgan Hill: *Concession* or *incentive* means any of the following, if they result in

the actual and identifiable cost reductions to providing for affordable housing, as defined in Section 50052.5 of the Health and Safety Code, or for rents for the targeted units to be set as specified in subdivision (c). :

- A reduction in site development standards
- A modification of zoning code requirements or
- A modification of architectural design requirements that exceed the minimum building standards.

In order to provide the proposed affordable housing at a cost and density threshold that is feasible, the following concessions to Morgan Hill's Development and Design Standards are requested.

1. **Design Standard #26: Exterior Treatments and Materials:** The design standard requires minimum of two materials to be used on any one building façade, and that each material shall comprise at least 20% of the façade. Though it approaches those requirements, the proposal can not meet the requirements and maintain the financial viability of the project, or meet the design intent. Each façade is comprised of fiber cement panel (or cementitious plaster), concrete and wood lattice in a balanced ratio averaging 74%, 14%, 12%, respectively. Variations in color and surface orientation provide cost-effective visual breaks to enliven the facades and help break down the scale of the building. The introduction of additional materials would incur undue expense that would necessitate a reduction in density in order to maintain the budget.
2. **Design Standard #30: Building Colors:** The number of colors appearing on any building exterior is limited to no more than four colors. The proposed color scheme presents (3) colors of various tones, and one neutral light gray, for a total of (9) total proposed individual colors. The light gray is the primary field color, with others used primarily as accent or secondary colors. No more than four secondary, plus the primary color is ever used on any individual building façade. The colors have been carefully selected to reflect the colors found in the natural beauty of the Santa Clara Valley ecosystem, which is the main inspiration for the architecture. They have been applied to the façade in complimentary locations to tell a story about the colors of the changing seasons, and the natural features of the valley. A significant reduction in the color palette to four hinders the rich palette of the building and runs the risk of appearing monotonous and massive. Due to the size, and prominent silhouette of the building, the color variations are a complimentary and necessary architectural component providing a delicate gradient of visual relief. The use of color was selected to achieve design goals without introducing more expensive mixes of materials that this affordable housing project cannot support. Though the intent of this design standard is fulfilled, a concession of the prescriptive standard is requested to maintain project cost feasibility with the target density. A reduction in the color variety of the project would cause the project to adopt more expensive materials or construction methods in order to provide the visual quality required of a building of this size which would reduce the cost feasibility of the project.
3. **Design Standard #31: Window Design:** Due to the contemporary architectural language of the proposed design, it is not clear if the windows meet the letter of the standards; however, every effort has been made to meet the intent. The design proposal provides a trim-less window detailing. Due to the chosen modular construction method the depth of wall characteristic of the modules will not allow a full 6" depth to the glass surface. Many selected windows are equipped with solar shades in a decorative trim. Others are recessed fully in recessed and shaded balconies. In addition to the varied façade articulations and elevations setbacks, these provisions enrich the shadow play and surface plane variety characteristics at the heart of the intent of this

standard. Though the intent of the standard is fulfilled, a concession of the prescriptive standard is requested to maintain project cost feasibility with the target density.

4. **Design Standard #39. Multi-family roof form:** Due to the contemporary architectural language of the proposed design, it is not clear if the roofline meets the letter of the standards; however, every effort has been made to meet the intent. The proposed design reflects contemporary design without the use of more traditional roof types (such as gable, hip, shed, etc.) To take advantage of the modular building techniques used in the proposed design, a flat roof with parapets has been selected. Various heights and slopes have been introduced to the profile of the parapets to add variety and visual interest to the silhouette of the building at the skyline. True to the intent, the variations in the parapet heights and slopes do not extend beyond more than two side-by-side units. Towards the goal of breaking down the building massing to human-scale volumes, significant façade features have been incorporated, such as façade articulations, recessed balconies, extended balconies, selected window shade treatments and shade trellises. Though the intent of the standard is fulfilled, a waiver of the prescriptive standard is requested to maintain project cost feasibility with the target density.

C. Design Waivers:

As described by the City of Morgan Hill, Waivers to Design or Development standards may be requested if those standards physically prevent the development of the housing at the density allowed?

Per the provisions of 65915.e, the following Design Waivers to the Morgan Hill Residential Development Design and Development Standards are requested in order to maintain project financial feasibility, and to provide the target density on the project site.

1. **Design Standard #12: Trees:** The lot at 17965 Monterrey Road has been historically un-developed and partially wooded. The backlot is overgrown with both indigenous and non-indigenous trees in the significant and non-protected range. Due to the heavy tree load on this site, the project team has determined that replacement of significant trees as a 2:1 ratio is not feasible, though a strategy exceeding 1:1 replacement ratio is proposed. (8) significant indigenous trees to be removed + (10) significant non-indigenous trees to be removed = (18) total significant trees to be removed. At the 2:1 replacement ratio, (36) new trees are required. The current proposal provides (20) new trees on site, (6) new trees in the median and (2) in the park strip for a total of (28) new trees. The difference is a shortfall of (8) trees. Upon careful consideration, the provision for (36) trees would prove physically infeasible within the lot area without removing required amenities and reducing the density of the project.
2. **Development Standard F.A.R.:** Allowed F.A.R. for Zone MU-F: 0.5. Proposed F.A.R.: 1.4
3. **Development Standard Building Height:** Allowed Building Height for Zone MU-F: 45’-0”. Proposed Building Height: 68’-0”
4. **Development Standard Front Setback:** Min Allowed for Zone MU-F, Res.: 15’-0”. Proposed: 10’-0”.

D. Conditional Use Permit:

Parking Area Landscaping:
Per Morgan Hill Municipal Code Section 18.72.070, parking lots providing over 60 spaces require a 20% dedication of area to landscaping. The design team has provided the maximum landscaping feasible on site without reducing parking spaces below client requirements or reducing the density of the project. Per 18.72.070.H Green Parking Exemptions, parking lots incorporating solar panels, bioswales and other similar green features are eligible for reduced parking lot landscaping requirements. Towards that end, the project provides both bioswales and solar PV canopies.

Total Area of Parking Lot: 26,056 sf
Required Area of Landscaping (20% Parking Lot): 5,212 sqft
Provided Area of Landscaping: 3,370 sqft
Provided Area of Bioswale: 2,899 sqft
Provided Area of Photovoltaic Canopy: TBD – Canopy over parking in selected areas.