

**MOORPARK CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA REPORT**

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: Barry K. Hogan, Community Development Director *JKH*

DATE: October 6, 2006 (Special CC Meeting of 10/11/06)

SUBJECT: Consider Resolution Approving Amendment No. 1 to Downtown Specific Plan No. 1995-01, A Request to Amend the Downtown Specific Plan to Provide More Specific Direction Regarding Development and Architectural Style in the Commercial and Residential Areas

DISCUSSION

The City Council continued this item from its October 4, 2006 meeting, to this special meeting, with the public hearing open. Some direction was given with respect to parking and reciprocal access and there was some discussion regarding architecture in the commercial area. To assist the Council in its deliberations and discussions staff has provided below those references to the pages of the Specific Plan contained in Exhibits 1 and 2 that would be affected as well as suggested changes based upon Council's discussion.

Commercial Architecture: In Exhibit 1 the commercial architecture sections are contained in Section 2.2.4 Office (C-O) beginning on stamped page 183, Section 2.2.5 Old Town Commercial (C-OT) beginning on stamped page 188, Section 2.2.6 Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) beginning on stamped page 201, Section 2.2.7 Commercial Planned Development (C-2 CPD) beginning on stamped page 205. Each of these commercial sections contain a subsection, Design Guidelines, which details the architectural character, building form and massing, site planning, entries, accessory buildings, garbage and recycling areas and lighting parameters desired. In some cases, such as the Commercial Office, Neighborhood Commercial, and Downtown Commercial, these parameters are quite detailed. While development in each of these areas is important, the most important is High Street or the Old Town Commercial. Excerpted below is the most pertinent subsection of Design Guidelines, Architectural Character. Suggested changes are shown in legislative format.

1. Architectural Character

High Street was the original "main street" of Moorpark and today is an eclectic mix of architecture including many architectural styles. The eclectic nature of the architecture is part of the charm of the historic street and should be encouraged within the classic 1920's Commercial Style architecture. Care should be taken in the design of new buildings to make sure that the architecture proposed is compatible with existing adjacent and across the street commercial development. It is the City's desire to create a prototypical "Main Street USA" that has that small downtown charm and appeal. While this specific plan had allowed for "western themed" architecture with liberal use of wood siding and decoration, that architectural style is not as true to what might have been found in a downtown constructed in Southern California at the turn of the twentieth century. Buildings with a Some Spanish Mission or hybrid style of Early American Commercial are found in many older downtowns in Ventura County. In many downtowns you can see a mixture of architectural types from Early American Commercial, Spanish, a hybrid of Early American and Spanish, and some Western architectural types. On High Street examples of compatible architecture would be the High Street Arts Center which has a Spanish, almost Moorish design with its pointed arches, cornices, stucco and use of color. Similar in style, but with more of a Spanish influence is the Market at the northeast corner of High Street and Walnut Avenue. This plan does not require conversion of any of the existing Western themed buildings, unless a major expansion adds fifty percent (50%) or more to the existing square footage. In those instances, prior to the issuance of a Zoning Clearance, the property owner would have to present plans to the Community Development Director which shows consistency with one or more of the architectural styles indicated in this Specific Plan. Santa Barbara Spanish may also be appropriate on certain lots along High Street although it was not specifically used on High Street. Contemporary interpretation of these styles should be used in the Old Town Commercial zone today. The two primary styles below are encouraged as the architecture of preference in the Old Town Commercial Zone.

a. High Street Spanish Mission-Style

This style was not extensively historically used along High Street although it is a common style in the region. Three existing buildings that are examples of such architecture are the High



Street Arts Center, the Mayflower Market, and the Secret Garden Restaurant. While these buildings are not purely Spanish, they have that character. It is characterized by the use of arches, patios, porticos, architectural features such as cornices, decorative plaster and cement ornamentation, and wrought iron. Plastered or stucco walls punctuated with colorful, sometime ornate Spanish, Mexican and mosaic tiles are also prevalent in addition to smooth plastered walls. Interior patios or atriums with fountains and gardens are often found along with red clay tile flooring within and in patio areas of the buildings. Often the use of deep opening for windows and doors are used to accentuate the building façade and to provide relief from the sun.

b. Early American Commercial Style

Throughout America, a significant number of commercial structures were built in the 1920's and 30's which adapted the more ornate styles of classical, Greek Revival, and Chicagoan architecture to a more simplified, plain commercial style. Such architectural treatments were done to emulate these ornate styles in a less expensive way. This architectural solution was especially popular in smaller towns throughout California where property owners were not wealthy enough to construct highly ornate buildings, more typically built Early American Commercial Architecture in larger urban areas. These more modest structures exhibit only some of the characteristics known to the more ornate architectural styles, such as parapets with caps and finials, multi-paned windows, canvas awnings, and decorative base treatments. This architectural style allows for a healthy mix of building details and can be blended with more traditional eastern elements such as brick and mortar buildings or wraps and ornate cornice or frieze details.



Reciprocal Parking and Access: Parking requirements are listed in each commercial section of the Specific Plan text as shown in Exhibit 1, but only to indicate that the applicant must meet the requirements of the City's Parking Ordinance. In Exhibit 2, Section 3.8 Parking, on stamped page 236, 237, 238, and 239 indicate parking requirement particular to the Specific Plan. Changes to Section 3.8 preamble and Section 3.8.3 are suggested below. The entire text of those two sections is indicated with changes shown in legislative format.

3.8 Parking

Parking in the downtown specific plan area is divided into separate areas, i.e. High Street and Moorpark Avenue. Parking requirements for Moorpark Avenue ~~shall~~ be consistent with the parking requirements of the City's Zoning Ordinance. Special consideration should be given to the High Street area ~~for~~ its parking requirements due to the nature of the area, its state of development and its prominence in the community. While parking should still be convenient, consideration should be given to High Street as a shopping center or district and allow on-street parking to be counted toward the current Zoning Ordinance standard. Off-street parking, both private and public, should be placed behind buildings whenever possible. Parking lots can be created behind proposed and existing buildings and reciprocal access and parking agreements ~~shall~~ be utilized to maximize shared parking and consolidating access. The City's parking ordinance should provide a parking incentive, through the reduction of the required parking standard, to attract businesses to locate along High Street. Care should be taken to require reciprocal access in order to minimize driveway cuts along High Street, provide convenient vehicular access from property to property and to maximize on-street parking. On High Street the City's parking ordinance should allow for a limited number of parking spaces per property to be reserved or designated for those uses on that property when the property owner provides parking above the prescribed standard. Reserved parking should have a time limitation so that the spaces become available for evening or non-peak use. Directional parking signs should also be utilized to guide customers to parking areas.

3.8.3 Parking Recommendations

Parking along the reach of High Street and its surrounding streets will be sufficient to meet current and future demand if the following recommendations are implemented:

- a) Development of the Redevelopment Agency owned property must be at a parking ratio consistent with the Zoning Ordinance.
- b) Parking for the theater must be accommodated in the plans for the future Civic Center.
- c) Reciprocal access and parking agreements shall be required for all new development. When parking is provided above the required standard, those spaces would not be subject to the reciprocal requirement. Additional driveways should be minimized and shared driveway access required where physically feasible.

- d) Parking areas should be located behind the buildings whenever physically possible.
- e) Limited term parking along High Street.

Parking along Moorpark Avenue will be sufficient to meet current and future demand if the following recommendations are implemented:

- a) Development of all property must be at a parking ratio consistent with the Zoning Ordinance.
- b) Properties on the east side of Moorpark Avenue shall utilize the alley for ingress and egress to its parking areas.
- c) Reciprocal access and parking agreements must be required for all new development. Additional driveways should be minimized and reciprocal~~shared~~ driveway access required where physically feasible.
- d) Parking areas should be located behind the buildings whenever physically possible.

Only the change to the parking section of the Specific Plan will require a subsequent change to the companion Zoning Ordinance Amendment. Please see that report for the changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

PROCESSING TIME LIMITS

Time limits have been established for the processing of these amendments through the adoption of the extension of the downtown moratorium which will expire on December 7, 2006. The following timelines have been established for action on this project:

Planning Commission Action Deadline:	September 26, 2006
City Council Action Deadline:	November 1, 2006

If the Council concurs with the proposed amendments, staff would bring back the revised Specific Plan and adopting resolution on the Consent Calendar no later than the regular meeting of November 1, 2006, with an effective date that coincides with the related Zoning Ordinance.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

In accordance with the City's environmental review procedures adopted by resolution, the Community Development Director determines the level of review necessary for a project to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Some projects may be exempt from review based upon a specific category listed in CEQA. Other projects may be exempt under a general rule that environmental review is not necessary where it can be determined that there would be no possibility of significant effect upon the environment. A project which does not qualify for an exemption requires the preparation of an Initial Study to assess the level of potential environmental impacts. The Director has reviewed this project and found it to qualify for a General Rule Exemption in accordance with Section 15061 of California Code of Regulations (CEQA Guidelines). No further environmental documentation is required.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Take testimony and direct staff as appropriate.