

UMPS 14-04
32-UNIT DETACHED LIVE/WORK DEVELOPMENT
1672 PLACENTIA AVENUE

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The proposed 1.84-acre site is zoned MG (General Industrial) and has a General Plan land use designation of Light Industrial. The site is surrounded by storage and industrial uses. The proposed project is for development of 32 live/work units on the property that is currently used as a boat storage yard.

The site layout arranges units around a driveway loop with two access points on Placentia Avenue. Two different plan types are proposed. Plan 2 units are located along the north and south property lines taking main access from the driveway. Along the center of the site, Plan 1 units alternate facing north and south to provide a variety of elevations from the interior views. Plan 1 units have the option of a carport adjacent to the work spaces that are separated by bi-fold doors with the potential to have this area open and showcase business activities. The six alternate Plan 2 units also include this design feature. A paseo including a small common open space is provided at the middle of the site and two barbeque areas are provided at the rear portion of the site. The proposed site plan also includes a turfcrete area at the rear loop of the main drive that is intended to reduce the paved areas throughout the site. Since the site has two points of access to Placentia Avenue, it is anticipated that the rear loop will not be regularly used by the residents and provide a common gathering area.

The development would have 14 Plan 1 units and 18 Plan 2 units. Plan 1 provides a two-car garage and one open parking space and have an option to be either a two or three bedroom unit. The floor plans are just below the 2,000 square foot threshold for three-parking space requirements at 1,995 square feet and 1,999 square feet. Plan 2 provides either a two car garage or as an alternate a one-car garage and a carport. Open parking spaces are located adjacent to the units. Six of the Plan 2 buildings use the alternate design.

Traffic Evaluation

The Transportation Division completed a preliminary trip generation analysis to compare the proposed 32-unit project to existing conditions and General Plan conditions (full build out – low traffic industrial use). The preliminary projections indicate that the proposed development would generate 258 more trips compared to the potential build out of the site under the General Plan Light Industrial land use designation. Based on the net number of trips generated, the project will require a traffic study and will be subject to traffic mitigation fees.

Preliminary Trip Generation Analysis

Land use	Density/Intensity	AM	PM	Daily
Proposed Live/Work Units – blended office/retail	18 D.U. per acre .97 FAR	38	48	454
Existing Uses (The Boatyard)	4,000 sq.ft.	4	4	28
General Plan Build Out (MG Zoning – industrial use)	28,075 sq.ft.	26	27	196

Parking

The Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan requires three parking spaces for live/work units of up to 2,000 square feet. Plan 1 is 1,999 square feet and Plan 2 is 1,995 square feet. A minimum of 96 parking spaces will be required for this development. A total of 96 spaces are proposed.

DEVIATION FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan allows development flexibility in exchange for quality projects that meet the Urban Plan vision. The applicant is requesting “development flexibility” from the Urban Plan standards. Council feedback is needed regarding the following:

- Deviation from minimum building to building setback (10 feet required, 6 feet proposed): The proposed interior units (14 units) are six feet, three inches and eight feet, two inches apart.
- Deviation from standard carport size. The proposed carports are slightly under sized in terms of the required width and would require a slight redesign to comply with the parking design standards. Otherwise, approval of a deviation would be necessary.

If the project is approved to proceed, the deviations would be subject to approval of the Planning Commission.

MERITS OF THE URBAN PLAN SCREENING REQUEST

The following is a summary of the merits of the proposed live/work project at this location:

1. Project meets objectives of the Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan. The project promotes live/work units as a new type of urban housing in Costa Mesa. All units include a ground floor work space that can be attractive for home occupations. Live/work units may be attractive to small business owners with minimal customer traffic, artist and designers, etc. The project is non-traditional housing with flexible floor plans that provides an alternative living style with a live/work option. The development complements the urban character of the Westside is similar to other live/work developments approved along the Placentia Avenue and 17th Street corridor.
2. Proposed development is consistent with the objectives of the Zoning Code and Urban Plan. The proposed live/work development is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan, Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan. With the exception of size of the carports and building separation, the proposed development generally meets the development standards for live/work units.

ISSUES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED

Although the proposed live/work project will be desirable at this location, the following issues should be noted:

1. Reversion of live/work units to residential use. The floor plans for the live/work units (Plan 2) along the north and south take direct pedestrian access from the main drive but have the work space oriented away from the driveway. The work spaces have limited storefront and glazing to show the work activity. One important aspect of live/work units is to maximize visibility of the workspaces.
2. Limited on-site amenities and open space. The proposed site layout includes a passive open space with barbeque areas at the rear portion of the property and a small central courtyard that meet the minimum requirements of open space per Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan. However, the spaces are relatively small in area and have limited functionality as community meeting areas. In addition, the units include limited private yard area, which is only 5'-3" in depth. At this time, the applicant has indicated that enhancement of the open space may be possible, subject to a modified site plan.
3. Interface with adjacent uses. There is a concern that the units are in close proximity to the abutting industrial uses. Eight foot tall sound walls and noise baffling construction assemblies to achieve the allowable interior noise standards will be necessary to improve the livability of the units. The roof decks and balconies of mixed use and live/work projects are exempt from the exterior noise standards for private open space.
4. Request to allow overhead power lines on Placentia to remain. The applicant is requesting relief from undergrounding the utility poles in the public right of way due to both cost and disruption to surrounding businesses. The property has a 174-foot frontage on Placentia Avenue that is served by three utility poles. The Urban Plan encourages undergrounding utilities in the public right of way. Council feedback is needed on this issue regarding whether or not undergrounding should be required. As part of the public realm improvements, applicant proposes enhanced landscaping and a meandering sidewalk along the Placentia Avenue frontage.