REPORT DATE: January 9, 2017

TO: Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board

FROM: Kelly Murphy, Assistant Planner, (879-6535, kelly.murphy@chicoca.gov) Community Development Department

RE: Architectural Review 16-17 (Neely Apartments) – 1289 East Avenue; Assessor Parcel Number 015-430-005

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board adopt the required findings contained in the agenda report and approve the proposed project, subject to the recommended conditions.

Proposed Motion

I move that the Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board adopt the required findings contained in the agenda report and approve Architectural Review 16-17 (Neely Apartments), subject to the recommended conditions therein.

BACKGROUND

The applicant proposes to construct one 3-unit, two-story apartment building and one 5-unit, two-story apartment building, for a total of 8 new multi-family housing units, at 1289 East Avenue (see Attachment A, Location Map, and Attachment B, Project Description). The subject parcel is designated Office Mixed Use in the General Plan and located in the OR-AOC, Office Residential - Airport Compatibility Zone C overlay zoning district. Allowable residential densities within the City’s OR zoning district and OMU General Plan designation range from 6 to 20 dwelling units per acre. The project proposes a residential density of 16.14 units per gross acre.

Currently undeveloped, the 0.43-acre project site is located on the south side of East Avenue, between Mariposa and Floral Avenues. Existing site features include one valley oak tree located on the southeast corner of the site and a six-foot wood fence along the south and west property lines, both of which are proposed to remain. The majority of surrounding uses are residential dwellings, medical and professional offices, and commercial businesses. Specifically, single-family houses are located north, south and east of the project site. Multi-tenant office buildings are located immediately west of the site.

The proposed development includes the construction of one 3-unit townhouse building and one 5-unit townhouse building (see Attachment C, Site Plan). Both buildings would be two-story structures and have a height of 28-feet, 8 inches (See Attachment D, Floor Plans). Each unit would have two bedrooms, an individual fenced backyard area and a covered front porch. HVAC units would be located in the backyards of each dwelling unit and screened from public view.
The proposed site plan illustrates the layout and orientation of the two townhouse structures, as well as the location of the trash enclosure, parking and play areas, parking lot lighting and landscaping. The 3-unit building would be oriented to face East Avenue and setback 15-feet from the street. The 5-unit building, located behind the 3-unit building, would be setback 15-feet from the rear property line and face the proposed parking lot and play area. A new 24-foot wide entrance drive and 4-foot pedestrian path would provide access to the site from East Avenue. The project would include a 16-space parking area and a hoop style bicycle rack, with landscaping around the buildings and between parking fields. The project also features a play area with a gazebo, and a centralized mailbox location.

The landscape plan calls for a variety of species, predominately with moderate water demands (see Attachment E, Landscape Plan). Parking lot shading is estimated to reach approximately 56-percent at maturity, with four large Chinese pistache trees providing most of the pavement shade. Two medium-sized gingko trees and two crepe myrtles would add ornamentation. A variety of shrubs would be planted around the perimeter of the site and at the entrance to each unit. Dwarf creeping fig vines would be trained to the trash enclosure to create a green-wall screening effect in the future and dissuade graffiti vandalism.

The proposal includes 6-foot, capped cedar fencing along the eastern property line and between each unit, separating the backyard areas. New 3-foot, black vinyl coated chain-link fencing with evergreen vines is proposed to enclose the play area. Exterior lighting would include four, 12-foot pole lights with glare cut-off shrouds in the parking lot and recessed can lighting at the front entries and back patios of each unit.

The proposed architecture is a traditional townhouse style, with each unit having a ground floor recessed entry (see Attachment F, Elevations). The massing of the buildings is broken up through varying the exterior with different roof lines, colors and siding materials. Front elevations provide covered porches and large, well-defined windows on the ground level and second floor. Rear elevations show sliding glass doors leading to the backyard areas, with bedroom windows present on the second story. The exterior building materials would be stucco and cement board siding, with a composition shingle, open gable roof line.

The color palette proposed for the townhouses consists of neutral earth-tones (see Attachment G, Color/Material Sample Sheet). A light beige (‘La Habra’ – Oatmeal) stucco would be applied to the first floor, with a similar tan color (‘La Habra’ – Pacific Sand) stucco applied to the second story. A taupe colored (‘La Habra’ – Trabuco) stucco band would help to further define the first and second floors. The cement board siding proposed around the windows present on the front and right elevations would be light-brown (‘Kelly Moore’ – Cortez Chocolate), with cream-colored trim. Front entry doors would be accented with a copper color (‘Kelly Moore’ – Copper Creek).

**DISCUSSION**

Pursuant to Chico Municipal Code Section (CMC) 19.44.020, Commercial zone land uses and permit requirements – Table 4-6, use permit authorization is required to establish a multi-family residential use in the OR zoning district. A use permit application (UP 16-09 – Neely) was submitted August 15th, and approved by the Zoning Administrator on December 27th, 2016.

With an approved use permit, the project complies with all land use regulations and development standards for the OR zoning district. The project proposes a residential density of 16.14 units per acre, within the allowable density range for the OR zone. Vehicle and bicycle
parking requirements contained in CMC Section 19.70.040 have been met (1.75 space per unit x 8 units + 2 guest spaces = 16 spaces required; 16 proposed). The project complies with the minimum setback distances for the OR zoning district, established in Table 4-7 under CMC Section 19.44.030. The proposed apartments would be compatible with the adjacent office building on the west side, and the variety of commercial, office and residential uses present along this stretch of East Avenue. Harrier Lane provides a separation between the project site and the single-family houses located to the south, reducing the potential for these residences to be significantly impacted.

The project is consistent with several General Plan goals and policies, including those that encourage compatible infill development (LU-1, LU-4, and CD-5) and providing adequate supply of rental housing to meet a wide range of renters and future needs throughout the city (H.3, H.3.2, and H.3.4). The design is also consistent with policies that call for a strong pedestrian orientation by promoting interactions among tenants with entryways in close proximity to one another, and including color schemes and architectural elements that will lend way-finding amongst the buildings (CD-3.2 and CIRC-4).

The project includes a shared recreational area and provides each unit with a backyard, consistent with Design Guidelines (DGs) that call for incorporating common space into the project design (DGs 1.1.42, 4.1.42, 4.1.43, and 4.1.45). The front entryways of the 3-unit building face the street, and the front entryways of the 5-unit building are connected to the public sidewalk via a pedestrian path, consistent with DGs 4.1.11, 4.1.35, and 4.1.41, which encourage a pedestrian-oriented design. Ground floor recessed entries and second story windows help to define the individual dwelling units (DG 4.2.11, 4.2.13, and 4.2.41). The parking area is located to the side of the buildings, providing vehicle visibility to residents while reducing views of automobiles from the public street (DGs 1.1.14, 4.1.52, and 4.1.53).

REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL

Environmental Review

The project has been determined to be categorically exempt under CMC Section 1.40.220 and pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15332 (In-Fill Development Projects). Consistent with this exemption, the project is: consistent with the applicable general plan designation, zoning regulations, and general plan policies; is less than five acres in size, substantially surrounded by urban uses; has no habitat value for special status species; will not result in any significant impacts regarding traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

Architectural Review

According to the Chico Municipal Code Section 19.18.060, the Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board shall determine whether or not a project adequately meets adopted City standards and design guidelines based on the required findings itemized below.

1. The proposed development is consistent with the General Plan, any applicable specific plan, and any applicable neighborhood or area plans.

The proposal is consistent with several General Plan goals and policies, including those that encourage compatible infill development (LU-1, LU-4, and CD-5) and providing adequate supply of rental housing to meet a wide range of renters and future needs throughout the city (H.3, H.3.2, H.3.4). The project also includes landscaping that is
fundamental to the design, softens the structure appearance all while meeting parking lot shade requirements (CD 1.1.2). The site is not located within the bounds of a Neighborhood Plan or area plan.

2. *The proposed development, including the character, scale, and quality of design are consistent with the purpose/intent of this chapter and any adopted design guidelines.*

The proposal is consistent with Design Guidelines that encourage a pedestrian-oriented design (DGs 4.1.11, 4.1.35, and 4.1.41) and call for incorporating common open space into the project design (DGs 1.1.42, 4.1.42, 4.1.43, and 4.1.45). Ground floor recessed entries and second story windows help to define the individual dwelling units (DGs 4.2.11, 4.2.13, and 4.2.41). The parking area is located to the side of the buildings, providing vehicle visibility to residents while reducing views of automobiles from the public street (DGs 4.1.52 and 4.1.53). The parking area is situated to promote easy wayfinding and vehicle visibility to residents, and reduce views of automobiles from the public street, consistent with DGs 1.1.14, 4.1.52, and 4.1.53.

3. *The architectural design of structures, including all elevations, materials and colors are visually compatible with surrounding development. Design elements, including screening of equipment, exterior lighting, signs, and awnings, have been incorporated into the project to further ensure its compatibility with the character and uses of adjacent development.*

The design, materials and neutral color palette of the proposed townhouse structures are visually compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Exterior equipment will be properly screened in the rear yards of each unit by fences or painted to match the structures. Parking lot lighting is attractive and at pedestrian scale thereby not creating any unnecessary source of glare or contribute to the night sky pollution.

4. *The location and configuration of structures are compatible with their sites and with surrounding sites and structures, and do not unnecessarily block views from other structures or dominate their surroundings.*

The proposed townhomes will not unnecessarily block views or dominate their surroundings as the height of the structures (28-feet, 8-inches) is below the 35-foot maximum permitted in the OR zoning district. The site is bounded on its north side by a commercial corridor (East Avenue), a multi-tenant office building on its west side, and is separated from the single-family houses to the south by Harrier Lane. Given the variety of uses in the vicinity, implementation of the multi-family residential project would be compatible with the surrounding sites and structures.

5. *The general landscape design, including the color, location, size, texture, type, and coverage of plant materials, and provisions for irrigation and maintenance, and protection of landscape elements, have been considered to ensure visual relief, to complement structures, and to provide an attractive environment.*

The proposed landscaping will provide visual relief around the building and parking areas, as well as provide adequate screening of the trash enclosure and wall/ground mounted utilities. A partially-shaded, shared recreational area will also contribute towards providing an attractive residential environment. The landscaping will have a range of colors and textures that will provide visual interest throughout the year.
RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. The front page of all approved building plans shall note in bold type face that the project shall comply with AR 16-17 (Neely Apartments). No building permits related to this approval shall be finaled without prior authorization of Community Development Department planning staff.

2. All development shall comply with all other State and local Code provisions, including those of the City of Chico Community Development and Public Works Departments. The permittee is responsible for contacting these offices to verify the need for compliance.

3. All approved building plans and permits shall note that wall-mounted utilities and roof or wall penetrations, including vent stacks, utility boxes, exhaust vents, gas meters and similar equipment, shall be screened by appropriate materials and colors. All parapet caps and other metal flashing shall be painted, consistent with the approved building colors. Adequate screening shall be verified by Planning staff prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

4. Use Permit 16-09 authorizes a new multi-family residential use in the Office Residential zoning district, in substantial accord with the “Plat to Accompany Use Permit 16-09 (Neely Apartments)” and in compliance with all other conditions of approval.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public notice requirements were fulfilled by placing a notice on the project site and by posting of the agenda at least 10 days prior to this ARHPB meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Location Map
B. Project Description
C. Site Plan
D. Floor Plans
E. Landscape Plan
F. Elevations
G. Color/Material Sample Sheet

DISTRIBUTION

Internal (3)
Mike Sawley, Senior Planner
Kelly Murphy, Assistant Planner
File: AR 16-17

External (2)
Greg Peitz, Architect, 383 Rio Lindo Ave., Chico, CA 95926
Randy Neely, 9668 Teal Lane, Durham, CA 95938

X:\Current Planning\AR\2016\17 Neely Apartments\process\AR 16-17 ARHPB Report & Attachments
SUBJECT: NEELY APARTMENTS  
ARHPB PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Neely Apartments is an eight unit family oriented apartment complex of two story townhouses on the East Avenue corridor.

Due to the deep, narrow proportions of the lot, the parking has been arranged along the length of the lot parallel with the side property lines to provide easy access to the units which the spaces serve and minimize the exposure of the parking to the traffic traveling down East Ave. (DG 4.1.35) The on-site sidewalks are all connected to the public sidewalk to provide a pedestrian friendly orientation. (DG 4.1.35) (DG 4.1.12)

The front three apartments have been turned to face East Avenue to give the street view a more residential, building oriented appearance. (DG 4.1.35) (DG 4.1.13)

A fenced rear yard is provided for each unit to accommodate pets, small children and private gatherings. Mechanical units will be located in these yards which will keep them from public view. (DG 4.1.43)

An outdoor recreation area has been provided at the rear of the parcel to provide a larger area for outdoor living activities that has a fence for the security of small children and pets. It is located at the rear of the parcel to provide better security from East Ave. traffic and isolation from road noise. (DG 4.1.45, DG 4.1.41, DG 4.1.42)

The massing of the buildings has been broken up by varying the exterior with different roof lines, colors and siding materials to give the buildings a more interesting texture, color and geometry. Each unit has a ground floor recessed entry to emphasize their identity. (DG 4.1.15, DG 4.1.23, DG 4.2.11, DG 4.2.31)
EAST AVENUE APARTMENTS
NEELLY
APARTMENTS

STUCCO (FIRST FLOOR) - 'LA HABRA' - OATMEAL

STUCCO (SECOND FLOOR) - 'LA HABRA' - PACIFIC SAND

CEMENT BD. SIDING - 'KELLY MOORE'
CORTEZ CHOCOLATE - KM4285-3

STUCCO (BAND) - 'LA HABRA' - TRABUCO

TRIM - 'KELLY MOORE'
ALHAMBRA CREAM - KM4286-1

ACCENT (DOORS) - 'KELLY MOORE'
COPPER CREEK - KMA53-5

ROOFING - COMPOSITION SHINGLES - 'OWENS CORNING'
APPALACHIAN SKY

ATTACHMENT