DATE: October 16, 2018

TO: Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board

FROM: Shannon Costa, Assistant Planner, (879-6807, shannon.costa@chicoca.gov)
Community Development Department

RE: Architectural Review 18-17 (Pabbi Nord Apartments)
824 Nord Avenue, 043-220-019

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 18-17 (Pabbi Nord Apartments), subject to the recommended conditions therein.

BACKGROUND

The applicant proposes to construct two three-story apartment buildings with a total of 15 residential units located on the east side of Nord Avenue, approximately 345 feet south of the intersection at Nord Avenue and W. Sacramento Avenue (see Attachment A, Location Map). The site is designated Commercial Mixed Use on the City’s General Plan Land Use Diagram and is zoned CC (Community Commercial). The resultant density for the project would be 18 dwelling units per acre, which is consistent with the allowable range of 6 to 22 du/ac for the CC zoning district. At its 8/14/2018 meeting, the Zoning Administrator approved a use permit (UP 18-12) authorizing ground-floor residential use in the CC zoning district.

The site plan illustrates the layout and orientation of the buildings, as well as the location of the trash enclosure, site amenities and parking (see Attachment B, Site Plan). Building One would be located toward the front of the site and Building Two would be located toward the rear of the site, with parking area in between.

Architecture for the two buildings is a contemporary design. Each building would feature two masses connected centrally by an external stairwell and butterfly roof. The buildings would be identical, except that Building One would include a single-story office building on its westerly elevation (see Attachment C, Exterior Elevations and Perspectives). Exterior walls for the first floor and portions of the second floor would be smooth cement fiber panels in dark grey (“Web Grey”) with horizontal and vertical reveals. Second and third floor exterior walls would be cement fiber with board-and-batten finish in cream and orange (“Cherish Cream” and “Amber Wave”) (see Attachment D, Colors and Materials). Window frames would be almond color vinyl, and roof material would be white standing seam metal. Ground-floor units would feature a private rear patio secured with a metal railing.
The project includes a total of 32 off-street parking spaces and the code typically requires 33 off-street spaces for the proposed mix of units and bedrooms, including guest parking. A reduction in the number of off-street parking spaces is proposed pursuant to Chico Municipal Code (CMC) section 19.70.050.A, which specifies that a reduction in off-street parking may be approved by the Board subject to making certain additional findings. In this case, staff supports the minor reduction of off-street parking based on the site’s proximity to CSUC, nearby shopping and restaurants, a Class II bike lane, and a bus transit route. Further, the project applicant has indicated that parking spaces would be rented separately from the units by residents, resulting in heightened control over the number of vehicles expected to utilize on-site parking.

A total of seven bicycle racks would be located at the rear of the site, near the common space and outdoor amenities and an additional five bike racks would be located beneath each building’s stairwell. Parking lot lights would be located along the northerly property line and within the parking area, mounted at 14-feet in height. Roof-mounted HVAC units would be hidden from view within roof wells. A CMU block trash enclosure is proposed within the parking area, central to the site.

The landscape plans call for a variety of species with moderate to low water demands (see Attachment F, Landscape Plan). A mixture of trees, shrubs, and perennials is proposed around the two buildings and the site perimeter. Parking lot shade is provided by a mix of tree species, including Japanese zelkova and Autumn Blaze red maple, and is estimated to reach 57-percent at full tree maturity. A total of two trees would be removed as part of the project, including one orange tree and one oak tree. Such tree removal is subject to the City’s Tree Preservation Measures (CMC 16.66) requiring on-site tree replacement or payment of in-lieu fees.

DISCUSSION

The project is consistent with General Plan goals and policies that encourage compatible infill development (LU-1, LU-4, and CD-5), 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) and directing growth into complete neighborhoods with a land use mix and distribution intended to reduce vehicle trips and support walking, biking and transit use (LU-3.1). The project is located within walking distance of Chico State campus, nearby shopping and restaurants, the site is located adjacent to the Nord Avenue Class II bike lane and transit route.

The proposal is consistent with Design Guidelines (DGs) that call for minimizing views of automobiles from the public right-of-way by locating parking to the rear of the site (DG 1.1.14) and placing buildings close to the street to reinforce a pedestrian-friendly environment (DG 1.1.15). The proposal is marginally consistent with DGs that call for creating a sense of community through incorporating common open space into the project design and designing buildings with a variety of masses to avoid a monotonous appearance (DG 4.1.11, 4.1.23 and 4.1.45). The scale and design of the project is consistent with surrounding residential developments, which includes Nord Station Apartments to the south, Oakwood Apartments to the north and other new multi-family developments along Nord Avenue, such as The Urban and Campus Walk Apartments.
REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL

Environmental Review

The project has been determined to be categorically exempt under Section 1.40.220 of the Chico Municipal Code, and pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15332 (In-Fill Development Projects). This exemption applies to infill projects which: are consistent with the general plan and zoning; are on sites less than five acres in size within the City limits; substantially surrounded by urban uses; have no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species; would not create any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

Architectural Review

According to 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 upon the following findings:

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

   The project is consistent with General Plan goals and policies that encourage compatible infill development (LU-1, LU-4, and CD-5), 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) and directing growth into complete neighborhoods with a land use mix and distribution intended to reduce vehicle trips and support walking, biking and transit use (LU -3.1). The project includes new landscaping with low to moderate water needs, consistent with sustainability policies that promote water conservation and energy efficiency (SUS-4.2). There are no specific plans or neighborhood plans applicable to the site.

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 (DGs) that call for minimizing views of automobiles from the public right-of-way by locating parking to the rear of the site (DG 1.1.14) and placing buildings close to the street to reinforce a pedestrian-friendly environment (DG 1.1.15). The proposal is marginally consistent with DGs that call for creating a sense of community through incorporating common open space into the project design and designing buildings with a variety of masses to avoid a monotonous appearance (DG 4.1.11, 4.1.23 and 4.1.45). The scale and design of the project is consistent with surrounding residential developments, which includes Nord Station Apartments to the south, Oakwood Apartments to the north and other new multi-family developments along Nord Avenue, such as The Urban and Campus Walk Apartments.

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 colors of the proposed new building reflect a contemporary design with a variety of material types and colors that will be visually compatible with the site and surrounding residential development. Exterior equipment will be properly screened from view within roof wells and parking lot lighting has been appropriately incorporated into the project.

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.*

Three-story construction is generally appropriate for the Nord Avenue corridor, and the proposed buildings are consistent with surrounding two and three story residential buildings. The proposed structures are compatible with the site and do not unnecessarily block views from other structures or unacceptably dominate their surroundings and are consistent with General Plan policies that encourage infill development.

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. Parking lot shading is adequate and 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.

**Parking Reduction**

According to Chico Municipal Code Section 19.70.050, the Board may approve a reduction in the minimum number of off-street parking spaces for a project based upon making the following findings:

1. *The project meets one of the following:*
   a. *The site is zoned RMU or has a --COS overlay zone;*
   b. *The site is located within an area of mixed-use development;*
   c. *The project will implement sufficient vehicle trip reduction measures (such as vehicles loan programs and transit passes) to offset the reduction; or*
   d. *The area is served by public transit, bicycle facilities, or has other features which encourage pedestrian access.*

The proposed site layout provides 32 of the 33 off-street vehicle parking spaces required by the City’s parking regulations. The project site is located within an area of mixed-use development consisting of a wide variety of commercial and service uses within the Safeway/Walgreens shopping center on Nord Avenue, and is near the CSUC campus. Staff supports the minor reduction of off-street parking based on the site’s proximity to CSUC, a Class II bike lane, and bus transit route. Additionally, the project applicant has
indicated that parking spaces would be rented separately to residents, resulting in heightened control over the number of vehicles expected to utilize on-site parking.

2. The proposed parking reduction is not likely to overburden public parking supplies in the project vicinity.

The proposed project is in an area where street parking is not available (Nord Avenue), and the nearest public parking is located on Columbus Avenue, approximately 0.15 miles from the site. Therefore, it’s not likely that the proposed parking reduction would overburden public parking supplies in the project vicinity.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. All approved building plans and permits shall note on the cover sheet that the project shall comply with AR 18-17 (Pabbi Nord Avenue Apartments).

2. All 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. Adequate screening shall be verified by Planning staff prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

3. A parking reduction of one vehicle parking space is authorized in compliance with CMC 19.70.050.

4. All new electric, telephone, and other wiring conduits for utilities shall be placed underground in compliance with CMC 19.60.120.

5. As required by CMC 16.66, trees removed shall be replaced as follows:
   a. On-site. For every six inches in DBH removed, a new 15-gallon tree shall be planted on-site. Replacement trees shall be of similar species, unless otherwise approved by the urban forest manager, and shall be placed in areas dedicated for tree plantings. New plantings’ survival shall be ensured for three years after the date of planting and shall be verified by the applicant upon request by the director. If any replacement trees die or fail within the first three years of their planting, then the applicant shall pay an in-lieu fee as established by a fee schedule adopted by the City Council.
   b. Off-site. If it is not feasible or desirable to plant replacement trees on-site, payment of an in-lieu fee as established by a fee schedule adopted by the City Council shall be required.
   c. Replacement trees shall not receive credit as satisfying shade or street tree requirements otherwise mandated by the municipal code.
   d. Tree removal shall be subject to the in-lieu fee payment requirements set forth by Chico Municipal Code (CMC) 16.66 and fee schedule adopted by the City Council.
e. All trees not approved for removal shall be preserved on and adjacent to the project site. A tree preservation plan, including fencing around drip lines and methods for excavation within the drip lines of protected trees to be preserved shall be prepared by the project developer pursuant to CMC 16.66.110 and 19.68.060 for review and approval by planning staff prior to any ground-disturbing activities.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Ten days prior to the 10/3/2018 meeting date, a notice was published in the Chico Enterprise Record, notices were mailed out to all property owners and tenants within 500 feet of the project site, and a notice was placed on the project site. The meeting agenda was posted at least 10 days prior to the Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board meeting. On 10/3/2018, the Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board voted to continue the item to the 11/7/2018 meeting. Pursuant to Chico Municipal Code 19.10.030 (Hearing Procedures), any hearing may be continued, without further notification, provided that prior to the adjournment or recess of the hearing, a clear public announcement is made specifying the date, time, and place to which the hearing will be continued. Nonetheless, a notice was placed on the project site on 10/26/2018, 10-days prior to the Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Location Map
B. Site Plan
C. Color Elevations
D. Perspectives
E. Colors and Materials
F. Landscape Plan

DISTRIBUTION

Northstar, Attn.: Larry E. Coffman, 111 Mission Ranch Blvd, Suite 100, Chico, CA 95926
Kishav Pabbi, 824 Nord Avenue, Chico, CA 95926
Files: AR 18-17 (Pabbi Nord Avenue Apartments)

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BLDG. TWO VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST

824 NORD AVE APARTMENTS
for KISHAV PABBI