

M. SANDOVAL ARCHITECTS, INC.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 2/21/22

TO: Irene Borba, Director of Planning & Building, City of Belvedere

PROJECT NO: MSA-22-0203

FROM: Mark Sandoval, AIA

REGARDING: MALLARD POINTE – Design Review Memorandum (Revised Draft)

PROJECT DOCUMENTS



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- Architectural Drawings: Prepared by SUTTON SUZUKI ARCHITECTS, 39 Forrest Street, Suite 101, Mill Valley, CA 94941, dated 1/17/22 and consisting of 25 individual drawing sheets including photograph of Building's 1-11 material board and FRANCIS GOUGH ARCHITECTS, INC., 27 Mountain View Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941, dated 1/17/22 and consisting of 11 individual drawing sheets including photograph of multi-Family material board.
- Landscape Drawings: Prepared by THE GUZZARDO PARTNERSHIP, INC., 181 Greenwich Street, San Francisco, CA 94111, dated 1/17/22, and consisting of 10 individual drawings sheets and including Tree Map.
- Historic Architectural Evaluation: Prepared by PRESERVATION ARCHITECTURE, 446 17th Street #302, Oakland CA, dated 10/6/21, and consisting of 30 pages.
- Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation: Prepared by MILLER PACIFIC ENGINEERING GROUP, 504 Redwood Blvd., Suite 220, Novato, California 94947 dated 1/18/22, and consisting of 46 pages.
- Tentative Map: Prepared by BFK ENGINEERS, 1646 North California Boulevard, Suite 400, Walnut Creek, CA 94596, and consisting of 5 pages.
- Final Mallard Pointe Transportation Study: Prepared by PARISI TRANSPORTATION CONSULTING, 800 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94710, and consisting of 19 pages.
- Construction Noise Impacts Constraints Analysis for Millard Pointe Redevelopment Project: Prepared by FIRSTCARBON SOLUTIONS FCS INTERNATIONAL, 1350 Treat Boulevard, Suite 380, Walnut Creek, CA 94597, dated 1/20/22, and consisting of 14 pages.

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- Proposed Construction Management Plan for Mallard Point, Belvedere: Prepared by MIDSTATE CONSTRUCTION, 1180 Holm Road, Petaluma, CA 94954, dated 9/14/21, and consisting of 4 pages
- Archaeological Resources Technical Report: Prepared by KLEINFELDER, INC., 1 Saunders Ave., San Anselmo, CA 94960, dated 7/30/21 and consisting of 32 pages.
- Mallard Pointe Boundary Exhibit Thompson Dorfman: prepared by CSW/ST2 – STROEH ENGINEERING GROUP, INC., 45 Leveroni Court, Novato, CA 94949, dated 10/13/20 and consisting of 1 drawing sheet.

Additional Documents and Related Application Material: Letter from Robert J. Pendoley, Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative, to Mayor and City Council, dated 11/15/21, and consisting for two pages; Technical Memo from BFK to City of Belvedere, dated 1/17/22, and consisting of 4 pages; Letter from Joanna Julian Project Manager, Mallard Pointe 1951 to Irene Borba, Director of Planning and Building City of Belvedere, dated 1/25/22, and consisting of 8 pages; Mallard Pointe Tree Inventory, prepared by Urban Forestry Associates, dated 11/17/21, and consisting of 7 pages; The City's Process for Review of the Mallard Pointe Housing Development, no date and consisting of 2 pages; Housing Crisis Act 2019 SB 330 – Preliminary Application Form, Signed 1/17/22; Development Location Sign and Lighting Examples for Mallard Pointe Residences, prepared by Fenzi Media Group, 35 Miller Avenue #305, Mill Valley, CA 94941, dated 11/4/21, consisting of 4 pages; in addition to numerous documents and various correspondence and letters from the public all posted on the City of Belvedere's website link found at <https://www.cityofbelvedere.org/443/Mallard-Pointe-Project>. All material for this memorandum were accessed on January 31, 2022.



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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The developer of this project, is proposing 39 new residential units on 12 newly configured lots. Of these units, 23 would be apartments contained in a single building, 10 would be contained in a series of 5 duplexes, and the remaining 6 would be freestanding single-family homes. Of the single-family homes, 3 are proposed to have Accessory Dwelling Units ("ADUs") on their respective lots. ADUs are not counted towards density calculations pursuant to state law and Belvedere Municipal Code ("BMC") 19.79.050(G). Of the 39 units, 2 are currently proposed to be restricted to very low-income occupants, and 2 are currently proposed to be restricted to moderate income residents.

WATER'S EDGE APARTMENTS

Originally built in 1951, the existing 22 units are spread through nine (9) duplex buildings and one (1) fourplex building; eight (8) of the duplex buildings found on

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the project site are adjacent to the Belvedere Lagoon, and one (1) duplex building and the fourplex building are adjacent to Community Road. The existing unit mix includes eighteen (18) two-bedroom, one-bath units and four (4) two-bedroom, two-bath units all located on a 2.8-acre site within the city's R-2 zoning district.

From the public way, including from Community Road and the Civic Center, the existing Mallard Road building complex is very low lying, fenced, and punctuated by a few mature trees. Several garages or carports and roofs are the only visible portions of buildings. Mallard Road is a private road that loops through the complex. It has two ingress and egress points—one on Community Road and one with a short leg that ends at the northern point of the complex, where there is a small communal beach and dock at the lagoon.

The views of the existing complex from the roadway are largely limited to garages, rooflines, and roofs. From the lagoon side, the buildings are largely gable-roofed. They stand on the northern and western sides of Mallard Road. In plan view, each is skewed, which creates a curvilinear array of buildings. The flat-roofed landside buildings are orthogonally sited within their street-constrained island of land. Consequently, their yards are far more constrained than those at found on their neighbors that front the lagoon to the east.

Units facing Mallard Road have small frontages, all with short, dedicated drives at individual, single-car garages/carports. All have gated entryways. There are three sidewalks in the complex, one on the north side of Mallard, another on the west side of its western leg, and a small sidewalk along the north side of Community Road. All paving is concrete. Most the existing units have narrow landscaping at their frontages, and fenced yards with fences and gates constructed of wood in an assortment of unrelated styles. All structures are wood framed. According to the historic resource evaluation of the properties located at 1-22 Mallard Road, Belvedere prepared by Mark Hulbert, Preservation Architect & Historic Resources Consultant, and dated October 6, 2021, they do not meet any state or city historic resource criteria or have historical importance.

MALLARD POINTE DEVELOPMENT

The project is a residential infill project that involves the demolition of the existing residential units and construction of forty-two (42) new residential units, which include single-family dwellings, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), duplexes and apartments. As submitted, the project would contain sixteen (16) single-family and duplex units, three (3) ADUs and twenty-three (23) apartments. The site is approximately half a mile from shopping, neighborhood services, and transit, including the Tiburon ferry terminal.

The Mallard Pointe site fronts Community Road, which is accessed from San Rafael Drive. San Rafael Drive itself connects to Tiburon Boulevard to the northeast and Beach and Leeward Roads to the south. Community Road includes



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two lanes of vehicular traffic and provides on-street parking on both sides of the roadway, which serves Belvedere Park, the City Hall and the Belvedere Community Center along with some single-family housing on the north side of the road. Although public transportation is available within one quarter mile, no bicycle lanes or paths are adjacent to the proposed development site.

The project's site plan follows the general development pattern of the surrounding area, with the single-family and duplex homes situated along Belvedere Lagoon and the apartment building situated adjacent to Community Road. The proposed apartment building includes two residential stories above a semi-subterranean parking podium structure. The apartments are a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. The lagoon-fronting single-family homes and duplexes, on the other hand, are a mix of one- and two-story homes containing two, three, or four bedrooms.

On-site parking is planned for 102 cars, in the form of 29 garage spaces in single-family homes and duplexes, 46 garage spaces in the semi-subterranean apartment parking structure, and 27 unassigned apron parking spaces. The project also includes 114 bicycle parking stalls. The site plan follows the current development pattern, with the single-family and duplex homes situated along the lagoon side with the two-story apartment building placed on the inland portion of the site. The site plan improves on the existing conditions found on this property by providing a consistent 5'-0" separation between each end unit that shares a contiguous property line with an existing residential home (Building 1 to the north west and Building 11 to the south) and a 10'-0" separation between the interior buildings within the new complex (5'-0" separation of each structure and their respective property lines). This configuration between each new building improves upon the current building layout by opening up new view corridors to Belvedere Lagoon to the west and at the same time fostering greater privacy between the residents.

The intentional placement of two-story apartment building across the roadway from Belvedere City Hall and the adjacent community park helps to separate the more public realm from the private residential properties located on the lagoon side of Mallard Road. The developer has provided pedestrian enhancements that include widening existing sidewalks, adding new sidewalks, traffic-calming features on Community Road, and crosswalks to further improve the Mallard Pointe residents' access to the community park and the civic center located across the street from the project site.

The proposed architecture for all of the waterfront properties can best be characterized as "contemporary minimalist style." It incorporates with open floor plans, large expanses of unencumbered glass with an emphasis on clean, simple lines, and building forms and embracing the building's connection to the outdoors. The apartment building is fashioned in a more traditional architectural style in an effort to complement the Tudor style of the city hall designed by Albert Farr.



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The apartment building materials include shingle and textured siding with a composition shingled roof. The proposed materials for the single-family and duplex homes include a mix of vertical board, smooth panel, and shingle siding, with weathered teal decks, concrete walls, and shingled roofs, all in an earth-toned color palette, with slight variations in color between buildings.

DESIGN ANALYSIS

20.04.110 Preservation of Existing Site Conditions.

The project maintains the current private road configuration and the general development pattern currently found at this 2.8-acre site. The developer, however, is proposing to remove all the existing landscaping, including trees that will be impacted by the new development project, and replace it with new landscaping that better fits and enhances the new Project's architecture and building placement on the site. The proposed drawings reference some replacement and new upgrades to the existing bulkheads and boat docks along the edge of Belvedere Lagoon, but the actual extent of these improvements was not included as part of the submission drawings available at the time of this review.



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20.04.120 Relationship Between Structures and the Site.

The architect responsible for the design of the single-family homes, duplexes, and ADUs has created buildings that maintained a nice balance and a harmonious relationship between their respective waterfront sites. The architect for the apartment building with the semi-subterranean parking garage has also made a commendable effort to do the same given the constraints imposed by the buildings very restricted site, which is surrounded by existing roadways. Unfortunately, there is a very noticeable awkwardness in the current design as to the placement of the primary entrance to the building being placed so close to the edge of Mallard Road. Although the intended pedestrian approach to the main entrance is from the north corner of this inland site, this three-story entrance is completely cutoff from pedestrian access from the south. This, coupled with the proposed two-story apartments being placed approximately 5'-0" from the curb of the roadway, could create a rather imposing view when viewed from the new residential homes placed on the opposite side of the roadway—even with the quiver of design tools used by the architect to help break up the mass and verticality of the building as proposed.

20.04.130 Minimizing Bulk and Mass.

The new single-family homes, duplex, and ADUs proposed are all thoughtfully designed to avoid monotony and do not appear to be excessive in scale, bulk, or mass. This should allow the new structures to blend with their waterfront setting. It should also be noted that the placement of the two-story apartment building, with its semi-subterranean parking garage, in the inland portion of the Project's site (across the street from the Belvedere City Hall and the adjacent community park) was the proper design decision. Furthermore, designing the structure's façade in a

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more traditional architectural style helps to create a good visual transition between the existing Tudor-style City Hall Building and the very contemporary-minimalistic-styled single-family and duplexes located on the lagoon side of Mallard Road; which might not have been so successful if it had matched the selected architectural style of the other Project buildings.

Buildings 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10 all share common features that can be summarized as having large horizontal floor-to-ceiling windows and doors, cantilevered and recessed walkways and decks, roof trellises, and projecting rectangular flat-roof forms. Buildings 2, 8, 9, and 11 all share many of these same features and design characteristics, but they are capped with simple 7:12-inch pitched gable roofs that run predominately in a longitudinal direction without any detectible eave lines. Flat roofs are used only as a means for roof drainage and to emphasize the simplistic geometric roof forms of the building's architecture.

The apartment building, on the other hand, is designed in a much more traditional manner. Clad in shingle siding, the building is capped with a flat built-up roof system skirted with a mansard composition shingle roof, with a continuous narrow projecting closed soffit eave and gutter. A wood-crown fascia molding runs beneath and under the gable roof areas. A vertical tower capped with an octagonal composition roof with a metal weathervane dominates the northwest corner of the building at the intersection of Community and Mallard Roads. With the exception of stepped-back decks and manipulated wall planes and roof forms that are used by the architect in an attempt to break up the mass of the structure, the building otherwise follows the footprint of the semi-subterranean parking garage that runs parallel to Community Road to the west. With the exception of the north exterior of the building, which is set back to allow the minimum space needed to access both the entrance to the parking garage below, the 4 parking spaces provided along this section of Mallard Road, the five 5 parking stalls along the south side of the building, and the portion of the building that faces Community Road that accommodates the vertical stairs, elevator, and the roof deck above, because of the garage below, the building generally hugs the roadway, particularly along the east side of the building. Placing the building in such close proximity to both the roadway and the public sidewalk just adds to the perception of vertical mass and bulk, because there is not enough distance for the viewer from these vantage points to focus their attention on the rest of the building above the top of the parking structure's podium.

COMMENTS:

As pointed out earlier, the proposed two-story apartments being placed approximately 5'-0" from the curb of the roadway could create a rather imposing view from the new residential homes placed on the opposite side of the roadway. There also could be a significant privacy concern that is clearly illustrated on Sheet L-1.1, Section B in the Project's Landscape Plans. It should be noted that the architect has placed openings and has used wood-constructed louvers



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screens along with horizontal V-groove siding to add visual interest and to shield the view of the semi-subterranean parking below the apartment from the street. However, these design measures alone are not enough to break up the building's mass at this level. The garage podium walls add no less than 8'-0" of additional height to this building, particularly when viewed from Community Road at the west and Mallard Road to the east. Staff may wish to have the architect look at other design options that could accommodate the Project's parking requirements and at the same time better address the position of the building's footprint in its relationship to the street, and the parking garage unarticulated walls to deemphasize the mass and verticality of the building.

The drawings do not indicate clearly where the required electric vehicle charging stations are to be located as required under CBC Table 11B-228.3.2.1. This may affect the current apartment garage parking stall configuration and internal dimensions to accommodate the required clearance access around the charging station for a handicap person to properly use the device.

On Sheet MF 1, the architect has located a tandem parking stall near the entrance of the ramp entering the parking garage. To access these parking stalls the vehicle would need to enter at a 90-degree angle, which in turn, would block the lanes entering the garage from the street and those vehicles trying to exit. Staff may wish to direct the architect to provide a better design solution in order to correct this unsafe and awkward condition.

20.04.140 Materials and Colors Used.

The proposed materials and colors found on the Project's material board photographs and in the proposed drawings work well, are appropriate with the proposed architecture styles selected for the buildings, and should blend easily in its setting and the existing residential homes in the neighborhood. All materials appear to be durable, and the paint colors selected for the Project are mostly soft and fall into the more muted natural earth tones.

20.04.150 Fences and Screening.

The fences proposed to separate the individual residential single-family homes and duplexes, as found on Sheet L-1.1 in the Project's Landscape Plans, are designed tastefully and should work well with the architecture and design of each proposed waterfront residential building and preserve privacy between adjacent dwellings without significantly blocking views.

20.04.160 Privacy.

The proposed waterfront residential buildings 1 through 11 all have been thoughtfully placed on their sites, each with their footprint, orientation, and window placement in relationship to each of their neighbors in a manner that is respectful of each other's privacy. The apartment building alone, because of its close



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proximity to the roadway, orientation, and overall height, does little to protect the privacy of either its occupants or those who happen to reside on the lagoon side of Mallard Road.

20.04.170 Drives, Parking, and Circulation.

The developer, as mentioned earlier, is proposing on-site parking for a total of 102 vehicles in the form of 29 garage spaces in single-family homes and duplexes, 46 garage spaces in the semi-subterranean apartment parking structure, and 27 unassigned apron parking spaces. The project also includes 114 bicycle parking stalls in addition to incorporating many of the important mitigation measures outlined in the Final Mallard Point Traffic Study prepared by Parisi Transportation Consulting dated, which include some of the following:

- Install high-visibility crosswalks and ADA-compliant curb ramps at all intersections along Community Road and at the northeast corner of the intersection with the western Mallard Road intersection;
- Fill the sidewalk gap on the east side of the Mallard Road (east) intersection;
- Prohibit parking within 20 feet of crosswalks along Mallard Road and Community Road to improve sight lines;
- Increased street lighting and add bicycle parking;
- Encourage the separation of pedestrian from vehicular traffic in an effort to create a more safe and convenient traffic flow;
- Install traffic-calming measures to restrict increased vehicle speeds; and
- Provide shared street signage at both entrances to Mallard Road.

Although the Project does increase the density within this localized area of the city, measures, if properly implemented, should help reduce its overall impact to the current parking and vehicular circulation within this neighborhood.

20.04.180 Exterior Lighting, Skylights, and Reflectivity.

From the lighting specifications found on Sheets A21 and MF 10 in the Architectural Drawings and L-1.1 in the Landscape Plans, all appear to be LED lighting fixtures that are shielded and should not create any excessive glare, hazard, or annoyance to any of the immediate neighbors or any passerby.

COMMENTS:



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Staff may wish to have the applicant's architect provide clarity as to the construction of the Project's proposed skylights to determine if they are consistent with the objectives of this section of the Municipal Code and don't reflect or project substantial amounts of light at night that can be seen from other neighboring structures.

20.04.200 Landscape Plans—Purpose.

The proposed landscape plans appear to incorporate a rich combination of trees, flowering shrubs, perennials, and ground-covering plants, which should fully complement each of the new single-family homes and duplex units, in addition to the proposed apartment building, as viewed from the roadway. From the water's edge and viewed from the homes located to the east across the Lagoon from the subject property, once the proposed landscape has been allowed to grow and become fully mature, it is certain to complement the existing neighboring residential properties by adding additional natural color and texture to this unique waterfront setting.

20.04.210 Landscape Plans—Materials.

In examining both the landscape drawings and the plant list imagery found on Sheets L3.0 through L3.2, the majority of the plants are drought-tolerant and appear to be native to northern California. There also seems to be just the right number and mix of both fast- and slow-growing species of shrubs, trees, and ground-covering plants, which, when fully established, should make for a rich and attractive outdoor landscape, protecting privacy without obstructing the important view corridors of both the newly constructed homes and the existing nearby neighboring properties.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is my opinion that the current application is incomplete and does not meet the required threshold needed to fully comply with the development standards under the R-2 zoning district as adopted, and as a consequence, with the design objectives found under this section of the City of Belvedere Municipal Code. This is not to say this project is without merit and could not be of great value to both the residents and the City of Belvedere, if some additional efforts were made by the applicant' architect to resolve some of the troubling components of this project as outlined above—in addition to providing the additional information requested by in the July 18, 2021, Mallard Pointe 1951, LLC – Preliminary Housing Application's incompleteness response letter, it is difficult to make these findings at this time.



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