



Planning and Zoning Board

Case Information

P&Z CASE NUMBER: Z15-038 (PLN2015-00392)
LOCATION/ADDRESS: 1126 West Medina Avenue and 2345 and 2355 South Alma School Road
GENERAL VICINITY: Located south of Baseline Road on the east side of Alma School Road
REQUEST: Rezoning from OC to RSL-4.0 PAD and OC-PAD with Site Plan Modification. Also, a Preliminary Plat for "Medina Court"
PURPOSE: The development of a small lot single-residence subdivision.
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 3
OWNER: Munter GST EX Fam TR/Munter Non-ex Mar TR II, Desert Schools Federal Credit Union, Terradyne, LLC
APPLICANT: Mike Hare, Ashland Properties
STAFF PLANNER: Lesley Davis, Planner II

SITE DATA

PARCEL NO.: 302-04-854, 302-04-001Z, 302-04-001P
PARCEL SIZE: 5.4± acres
EXISTING ZONING: OC
GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Neighborhood – Suburban
CURRENT LAND USE: Existing office, bank and vacant land
PROPOSED DENSITY: 5.9 DU/AC

SITE CONTEXT

NORTH: Existing single-residence subdivision– zoned RS-6
EAST: Existing single-residence subdivision– zoned RS-6
SOUTH: (Across Medina Avenue) Existing church and single residence subdivision – zoned RS-6
WEST: (Across Alma School Road) Existing single-residence subdivision– zoned RS-6 PAD

ZONING HISTORY

June 17, 1973: Annexed to City of Mesa and subsequently zoned AG (Ord. # 812)
August 18, 1975: Rezone from AG to RS-6 (Z75-053)
November, 1982: Rezoned from RS-6 to OC to accommodate the development of an office development. (Z82-029)
September 19, 1983: Site Plan Modification to accommodate the development of an 84,662 square foot office building. (SPM83-014)
December 17, 1984: Site Plan Modification to accommodate the development of a 70,400 square foot office complex. (SPM84-027)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval with Conditions
P&Z BOARD RECOMMENDATION: ☐ Approval with conditions. ☐ Denial
PROP 207 WAIVER: ☒ Signed. ☐ Not Signed

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/REQUEST

This request is to rezone and subdivide a 5.4± acre parcel from OC to RSL-4.0 PAD and OC-PAD with Site Plan Modification and a Preliminary Plat titled “Medina Court”. The site is located on the northeast corner of South Alma School and West Medina Avenue, which is the half mile street between Baseline and Guadalupe Roads.

The previously approved site plan from 1984 (SPM84-027) included two additional office buildings that would be similar to the existing office building at the northwest corner of the site. The applicant is proposing to develop the land originally intended for two additional similar office buildings, as a small residential subdivision with RSL-4.0 lots.

The property to be developed is the vacant land between the existing bank and office projects along Alma School Road and the existing single residence homes to the east. The proposal is for a 14-lot, single-residence, small-lot subdivision on a private, non-gated cul-de-sac street with a driveway entrance off of East Medina Avenue. The proposed width of the private drive is wide enough to accommodate parking on both sides of that street.

The rezoning request also includes a PAD overlay for the existing bank and office building along Alma School Road to accommodate a deviation to the setback between the properties that is created by the development of the subdivision. No significant changes are proposed for the bank property. There will be some improvements made to the east side of the office project to complete the circulation loop around the building to provide fire and solid waste access; the loop has been incomplete since the development of the office building in the 1980's.

STAFF ANALYSIS

RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION DESIGN:

	Min. Lot Size Min. Dimensions	Min. Front Setback	Min. Side Setbacks	Min. Rear Setback	Rear Yard Patio setback
RSL-4.0 Standards	3,500 SF 4,000 SF (avg) 35' x 85' (corner lot width 40')	15' - Building Wall 10' - Porch 20' - Garage	10' - Street Side 4' - Minimum 10' - Total	20'	15'
Proposed	4,000 SF 4,704 SF (avg) 46' x 87' (corner lot width 46')	12' - Building Wall 7' - Porch 20' - Garage	10' - Street Side 5' - Minimum 10' total for lots 8-14 15' total for lots 1-7	20'	15'

SUBDIVISION DETAILS:

Street System	Fences/Walls	Open Space	Other
Private streets with decorative surface at entrance	6' CMU perimeter wall (sound wall on west and south property lines adjacent to the freeway could exceed 6-feet. Height will be determined by ADOT)	2 common open space areas providing - ramada, shade and seating Each lot is providing a minimum of 920 SF of open private open space (code minimum is 400 SF)	-HOA -CC&Rs

RSL DESIGN ELEMENTS

Per Table 11-5-4 of the Zoning Ordinance, there are four design elements which must be implemented in this subdivision to achieve the RSL4.0 designation. The developer has chosen the following:

Streetscape Elements:

Parkland and Open Space: The development includes two privately maintained park/common open space areas that provide a space that is at least 30 percent greater in area than the minimum open space required, which requires 100 square-feet of open space per lot.

Paving Material: Decorative paving materials that may include pavers, stamped, colored or textured concrete are provided at the entry to the development.

Site Design Elements:

Variable Front Yards: No more than 50% of the homes will be setback the same distance from the front lot line, and at least 50 percent of the homes will be set back at least 2 feet farther than the minimum.

Building Design Elements:

Architectural Diversity: Projects with 20 or few lots require a minimum of 3 unique elevations. Four (4) unique elevations are provided as well as 4 color schemes.

Entries and Porches: This requirement states that at least 50 percent of the homes include entries and covered porches extending along a minimum of 50 percent of the width of the homes front facades (excluding the width of garages) and be a minimum of 8-feet wide by 4-feet deep. Although the applicant did not site this element as one of the required, staff felt it was important to note that 100% of their homes have front porches that exceed the minimum size requirements.

Other RSL Standards:

Where a lot in the RSL District is adjacent to a lot in the RS District, the minimum interior side yard (for a single side) that is required on the RS-zoned lot shall also be provided on the lot in the RSL District. The applicant has exceeded this requirement and has provided increased minimum setbacks for lots 1-7, which are the lots that are directly adjacent to the RS-6 district, that are identical to the minimum setbacks on all four sides in that district.

The applicant has provided a minimum of 920 square-feet of private open space on each lot, which exceeds the minimum requirement of 400 square-feet. The Zoning Ordinance also specifies that all lots must be located within 330-feet of an active open space area. All lots within this development comply with this requirement.

MODIFICATIONS

The applicant, in cooperation with the office building owner and the Desert Schools Federal Credit Union, have requested a Planned Area Development (PAD) overlay. In a PAD, variations from conventional development requirements may be authorized by the City Council when projects offer amenities, features or conditions that compensate for such variations. A PAD is also required when a private drive is proposed for a neighborhood.

The proposed residential subdivision portion of this request, meets all of the development standards for the RSL-4.0 zoning district, as indicated by the preceding table. The applicant is seeking the PAD overlay for two purposes. The first is to accommodate the proposed private drive for "Medina Court". The additional need for the PAD relates to the remaining OC parcels to the west of the proposed subdivision where the existing bank and office are located. The applicant has requested a deviation for the setbacks

along the east property line of the office and bank parcels to help to create a more viable land use transition between the existing OC and proposed RSL-4.0 developments.

The requested landscape setback deviation for the bank parcel is to accommodate a 13-foot, 5-inch cumulative setback between the bank and lots 9-14 of the subdivision, which improves upon the existing condition, where the bank has a 4-foot landscape strip. The bank building itself is more than 80-feet from the western boundary of the proposed subdivision. This deviation also allows the bank's existing parking and driveway to remain in the same location.

The applicant will also be completing the circulation loop for the existing office building at the northwest corner of the development. This is being handled through some land exchanges and will involve the applicant installing a 20-foot service drive for the office building to improve fire and solid-waste access around that building. The addition of these improvements to the office site, will also include landscaping, but the driveway will encroach into the landscape setback up to 2-feet in one location. It is important to note, however that the point where it narrows to 2-feet is adjacent to the open space within the residential subdivision, so the impact on any homes will be minimized. The landscape setback increases as it approaches lot 8, which is located at the northwest corner of the residential subdivision.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION

The applicant has completed a Citizen Participation Process which included a mailed letter to property owners within 1,000' of the site, as well as HOAs and registered neighborhoods within a mile. The applicant held a neighborhood meeting on October 20, 2015 at Crismon Elementary School, which is down the street from the proposed project. Approximately 24 neighbors were in attendance. The applicant provided comment cards and received 15 of them back, which showed 1 in opposition, 5 in support, 8 neutral and 1 undecided neighbor. The applicant has provided a detailed description of all of all of their interactions with the neighbors in their Citizen Participation Plan and Report, which accompany this report.

Staff has been contacted by two neighbors via e-mail. The first was an e-mail from Megan Neal, who attended the neighborhood meeting and stated that she feels the development should lose at least one lot and had concerns about a continuous row of two-story homes. A copy of her e-mail has been included in the documentation that accompanies this report. The second e-mail staff received was from Patricia Demary, who owns a home directly to the north of the proposed subdivision adjacent to the proposed lots 6 and 7. Her primary concern was with how the development and construction of the subdivision will impact her wall. She also expressed concerns with two story homes backing up to her lot. The applicant indicated to staff that they had set up a meeting to meet with Ms. Demary to evaluate her wall and discuss options. The applicant stated they would let staff know how that meeting went and an update can be provided by staff to the Board at the Study Session.

CONFORMANCE WITH THE MESA 2040 GENERAL PLAN

Summary: The Mesa 2040 General Plan Character area designation for this site is Neighborhood with the sub-type suburban. This project provides a smaller lot type between conventional RS-6 neighborhoods and an existing office and bank development that are zoned OC. The proposed development creates a neighborhood character that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Plan.

The Mesa 2040 General Plan Character area designation is Neighborhoods with the sub-type suburban. The primary focus of the neighborhoods character type is to provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community.

Criteria for review of proposal: The following criteria (Ch. 15 of the General Plan) have been developed for use during the review process to determine whether the proposed development is achieving the vision and goals established in the General Plan and thus meeting the statute requirements.

1. Is the proposed development consistent with furthering the intent and direction contained in the General Plan?

The General Plan focuses on creating land development patterns that emphasize the character of place and focusing on those principles that build neighborhoods, stabilize the job base, and improve the sense of place.

The existing development is establishing a sense of place through their intent to create a small pocket subdivision with "Craftsman" architecture. It is also providing an appropriate transition between residential and office uses with a smaller lot type.

2. Is the proposed development consistent with adopted sub-area or neighborhood plans?

Mesa has not established a neighborhood or sub-area plan for this area.

3. Is the proposed development consistent with the standards and guidelines established for the applicable character type(s)?

The Character Area map of the Mesa 2040 General Plan defines this location as Neighborhood with a sub-type of Suburban, which are defined as follows:

Character Area: Neighborhood

Focus: "The primary focus of the neighborhoods character type is to provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community.

Neighborhoods can contain a wide range of housing options and often have associated nonresidential uses such as schools, parks, places of worship, and local serving businesses. The total area devoted to local serving businesses (commercial and office activities) in one location is generally less than 15 acres and these businesses would typically serve people within a mile radius of the area."

The proposed subdivision does comply with the above references to "a wide range of housing options", by providing a smaller lot type and slightly higher density to transition between the conventional subdivisions to the north and east with the existing office development on the corner and along the arterial street.

Sub-type: Suburban

"The suburban Sub-type is the predominant neighborhood pattern in Mesa. These neighborhoods are primarily single-residence in nature with most lots ranging in size from 6,000 sq. ft. to 18,000 sq. ft. As part of a total neighborhood area, this character type may also contain areas of duplexes and other multi-residence properties and commercial uses along arterial frontages and at major street intersections. Schools, parks, and religious institutions are frequently found in these neighborhoods. Streets are generally wide and contain sidewalks on both sides.

The proposed project provides a slightly smaller lot size, but the Suburban sub-type does accommodate higher density projects and smaller lot subdivisions. This type of a subdivision

provides an appropriate transition from the conventional RS-6 neighborhood to the office development on the corner. This site is also located very close to an elementary school, neighborhood parks and a church site.

4. Will the proposed development serve to strengthen the character of the area by:

- **Providing appropriate infill development;**

This proposal infills the unbuilt portion of an existing office development, which was developed in the late 1980's.

- **Removing development that is deteriorated and/or does not contribute to the quality of the surrounding area;**

N/A

- **Adding to the mix of uses to further enhance the intended character of the area;**

The intent is to provide for new housing options in an established neighborhood with close access to parks and schools.

- **Improving the streetscape and connectivity within the area;**

The proposal improves the streetscape along Medina Avenue. Although this neighborhood is not able to directly connect with the subdivision to the east, due to existing constraints of the built environment, the applicant has proposed a subdivision street that is not gated with parking available on both sides of their private drive.

- **Meeting or exceeding the development quality of the surrounding area;**

The existing neighborhood is a traditional neighborhood with a variety of architectural styles and a combination of single and two-story homes on public streets. The applicant is proposing a themed development that will provide all "Craftsman" style homes that are all two-story with a variety of elevations and colors in that architectural style. The quality of the proposed homes meets or exceeds that of the surrounding area.

5. Does the proposed development provide appropriate transitions between uses? In more urban areas these transitions should generally be accomplished by design elements that allow adjacent buildings to be close to one another. In more suburban locations these transitions should be addressed through separation of uses and/or screening;

In a standard approach to zoning it can be very defensible to transition from a commercial zone, through a multi-residential zone into a single-residential zone. The current proposal adds a smaller residential lot subdivision, and the burden of "transitioning" falls fully on this new subdivision. The plan proposes all two story homes adjacent to a subdivision with a mix of both single and two-story homes, however, the applicant has matched the setbacks for the adjacent neighborhood with the homes directly adjacent to that neighborhood and provided the reduced setbacks for the homes closer to the office development, increasing the intensity slightly as it transitions to the office development. It is also important to note that the office project approved on this site was for two large, two-story office buildings.

Chapter 3 of The Plan also identifies 5 fundamentals to be considered to help move the City toward the goal of becoming a more complete, recognizable City. The five elements include:

1. **High Quality Development**

- *As previously stated, the applicant is proposing a "Craftsman" themed housing type for all 14 lots within the proposed subdivision. The quality level that staff has been presented with thus far is higher than what has been submitted by other builders previously within our community. However, staff has stipulated that the applicant*

continue to work with staff to make some minor enhancements to the detailing to assist in fully executing the "Craftsman" theme and creating a community that will age well over time and continue to be an asset to the overall neighborhood.

2. Changing Demographics

- *By providing more choices in the housing types on the market we can meet the needs of a wider demographic. This is an established neighborhood where new housing is not often introduced. This project creates an opportunity for new people to move into an area that may not want a larger lot to maintain.*

3. Public Health

- *Increased opportunities for walking: Making it possible to walk from home to a park, school, or shopping can improve health.*

4. Urban Design and Place-Making

- *This area is a very traditional suburban part of our city. There are more opportunities for projects that have more urban designs further to the north as you approach the Fiesta District, which is just over a mile from this location. This project does provide open space opportunities for the residents of the subdivision and the "Craftsman" theme will give it its own identity within the existing neighborhood.*

5. Desert Environment

- *This plan proposes large front porches on the homes, which provide shade and cover from the elements. Trees have been provided*

SUMMARY:

This request is to rezone and subdivide a 5.4± acre parcel from OC to RSL-4.0 PAD and OC-PAD with a Site Plan Modification to facilitate the development of a 14-lot, single-residence, and small-lot subdivision on a non-gated private drive that terminates in a cul-de-sac. The request also includes the review and consideration of the Preliminary Plat for a subdivision titled "Medina Court." The applicant is proposing a density of 5.9 du/acre.

The applicant has proposed a fairly standard subdivision design with standard conventional house plans. The only difference is the size of the lots, which fall under the Residential Small Lot (RSL) category in the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant has exceeded the requirement for four required design elements established in the code for the RSL 4.0 category and has mirrored the setbacks for lots 1-7 along their eastern boundary to match up with the adjacent conventional RS-6 lots.

The site plan indicates two common open space areas. Tract D is a landscaped retention area that is more centrally located and is 8,000 square-feet. Tract E is the second open space area, which is located on the west side of the cul-de-sac and includes a ramada. This open space area is 3,526 square-feet. The amenities for this neighborhood are minimal, but with a 14-lot subdivision, there has to be a balance between what is provided for amenities and what can be sustained by the HOA long term. Staff has had a general concern about an HOA for a 14-lot subdivision being able to take on the responsibility of the maintenance of a private drive and the open space areas. The applicant has experience with small subdivision development with private drives and has stated that this is not an issue. Staff feels that the more minimal amenities and small open space areas within the development will be lower cost and therefore, perhaps the maintenance of that private drive, will not drive the HOA fees up too high and it may be able to remain as a sustainable HOA long term.

The applicant has stated that the vision for this project is to provide a small subdivision with Craftsman style homes. The applicant has been very responsive to staff comments regarding the elevations of the

homes to provide additional Craftsman detailing and staff feels with some minor modifications, such as to the proportions on the columns, the housing product will be able to be approved. Staff has added a condition of approval requiring the applicant to continue to work with staff to finalize the elevations for Planning Director approval.

All approved preliminary plats are subject to potential modification through the Subdivision Technical Review process to meet all City codes and requirements, including but not limited to, all ADA requirements. This sometimes results in changing lot sizes and configuration, and could result in a reduction of lots.

CONCLUSIONS:

The subdivision design exceeds the development standards for the RSL-4.0 zoning district. The request is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, providing a transition between the existing office/bank development and the conventional RS-6 subdivisions to the north and east.

Staff recommends approval of Z15-038 subject to the following conditions:

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

1. Compliance with the basic development as described in the project narrative and as shown on the site plan and preliminary plat submitted (without guarantee of lot yield, building count, lot coverage).
2. Compliance with the Building Form Standards established in the Zoning Ordinance as well as compliance with the Residential Development Guidelines.
3. Compliance with all requirements of the Subdivision Technical Review Committee.
4. Dedicate the right-of-way required under the Mesa City Code at the time of application for a building permit, at the time of recordation of the subdivision plat, or at the time of the City's request for dedication, whichever comes first.
5. Compliance with all City of Mesa Code requirements and regulations.
6. **The residential building product must be approved by the Planning Director prior to submitting for building permits for the homes.**
7. **All site improvements for the OC PAD properties must be installed with the first phase of construction for the subdivision. This includes the circulation loop for the existing office building at the northwest corner of the site.**