



Planning and Zoning Board

Case Information

CASE NUMBER: Z16-039 (PLN2015-00376)
LOCATION/ADDRESS: 7800 block of East Baseline Road (north side)
GENERAL VICINITY: Located east of Sossaman Road on the north side of Baseline Road
REQUEST: Rezone from RS-6 and OC to RM-3-PAD and Site Plan Review. Also, consider the Preliminary Plats of "Villa Rialto Phase II"
PURPOSE: This request will allow for the development of a multi-residential project.
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 6
OWNER: Light in the Desert Baptist Church and Baseline Road Southern Baptist Church
APPLICANT: Reese L. Anderson, Pew and Lake, PLC
STAFF PLANNERS: Andrew Spurgin and Lesley Davis

PARCEL NUMBERS: 218-57-978 and part of 218-57-987
PARCEL SIZE: 2.7± acres
EXISTING ZONING: OC and RS-6
GENERAL PLAN: Neighborhood - Suburban
CURRENT LAND USE: Vacant

HISTORY/RELATED CASES

May 5, 1986 Annexed to the City of Mesa and zoned the western portion 0.92 acres to O-S and R1-6 for the eastern portion of the property. (ORD. #2080)
February 10, 2009 Development Incentive Permit for the church at 7930 East Baseline Road (BA09-008)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Continue
P&Z BOARD RECOMMENDATION: ☐ Approval with conditions. ☐ Denial
WAIVER SIGNED: ☐ Yes ☒ No

SITE CONTEXT

NORTH: Zoned RS-6 – Detached single residences (existing) - Desert Sands Golf and

EAST: Country Club Unit 6
Zoned RS-6 – existing church
SOUTH: (across Baseline Road) Zoned RM-2 PAD – existing attached
condominiums(single-story) - Sunland Village East Garden Condo's 2
WEST: (across 78th Street) Zoned RM-3 PAD – Existing attached condominiums (two-
story)- Villa Rialto Phase I

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/REQUEST

The applicant requests approval to rezone 2.7± acres from OC and RS-6 to RM-3-PAD with site plan review, and a preliminary plat entitled "Villa Rialto Phase II". The applicant is proposing the development of a 30-unit townhouse/condominium subdivision as an extension of the previously developed Villa Rialto development to the west, across 78th Street from the subject property.

This project evolved through several iterations from pre-submittal and 4 revised submittals, including additional property to the east beyond the initial property in order to design efficient stormwater retention facilities shared with the neighboring church.

MODIFICATIONS/PAD REQUEST

As phase two of Villa Rialto, the proposed zoning district is RM-3-PAD for consistency with the existing Villa Rialto. The applicant has requested the PAD overlay to accommodate some minor deviations to Zoning Ordinance standards and to accommodate the private drive. The Zoning Ordinance authorizes the establishment of a PAD that is less than 5 acres in size when more than 20 dwelling units are planned.

The requested deviations to the Zoning Ordinance standards have been listed below:

- A 10' reduction to the street setback along the southern property line adjacent to Baseline Road from the typical 30' front and street-facing side setback and a 5' reduction from the typical 20' setback along local streets for the 78th Street frontage.
- A 15' reduction from the rear setback adjacent to the single residential area to the north and the OC zoned property to the east to allow a 10' setback.
- A 12'6" reduction from the minimum separation between two-story buildings to allow 17'6" separations between buildings instead of the typical 30' spacing.

The purpose of the PAD District is to allow for innovative design and flexibility in projects of sufficient size that are planned for development as a cohesive unit. Deviations from code are typically considered in the context of open space quality, superior site design, high quality building design or similar benefits provided by the development. The PAD is a useful zoning tool to incorporate the housing diversity, quality open spaces and walkable neighborhoods promoted in the General Plan. In this particular case the project narrative justifies the request with the provision an amenity area consisting of a pool, barbecues and grass play area as well as design to follow the existing Villa Rialto development to the west.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION

The applicant has completed a Citizen Participation Plan to inform neighboring property owners of the

request, obtain feedback and address comments or concerns that may arise. Notification was sent to:

1. All property owners within 1,000 feet of the subject property,
2. Registered neighborhood/homeowner associations within 1/2 mile of the subject property, and
3. Interested neighbors within 1 mile who have registered with the City of Mesa Neighborhood Outreach Division.

The Citizen Participation Report submitted to staff on August 4, 2016 indicates that a neighborhood meeting was held. The Report indicates six comment cards were provided as the result of the meeting, five were in favor of the project and one was in opposition with an indication that keeping the existing zoning was preferred. The outreach effort by the applicant meets the citizen participation process requirement. Staff has not received any inquiries regarding the project as of the time of writing this report.

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 ownership type adjacent to the existing RS-6 neighborhoods and RM-2 community south of Baseline Road and extends the existing Villa Rialto development to the west. The proposed development creates a restricted neighborhood character that some people want and may be needed to provide a variety of housing options, but is not consistent with the goals and objectives of the Plan for integration and connectivity.

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. Strengthening neighborhoods and the commercial centers that serve them is also important. There is an emphasis on retrofitting auto-centered form of suburban development with infill developments that provide pedestrian connections.

Section II of the General Plan establishes the primary elements of the document:

- A. Creating and maintaining a variety of great neighborhoods,
- B. Growing and maintaining stable and diverse jobs,
- C. Providing Rich, High Quality Public Spaces and Cultural Resources, and
- D. Community Character.

Chapter 4 of the General Plan promotes several principles relative to new residential development. These principles include:

- *Building safe, clean and healthy neighborhoods,*
- *Building community and fostering social interaction,*
- *Connectivity and walkability, and*

- *Providing for diversity of housing types and serving a diverse types of residents with different housing needs.*

The proposal creates an enclave of 30 units on 2.7 acres in a compact format. While this form of development is appropriate in locations with a mix of land uses, rich amenities and that are walkable and transit accessible it does not appear appropriate at this location based on existing development patterns. This property is not integrated with surrounding development and, as designed, does not lend itself to the mix of activities expected along an arterial roadway. A Valley Metro bus route is adjacent to the site but the route only operates twice per day and primarily is a service to reach the Sunland Village East community facilities south of Baseline Road.

The density being proposed is higher than would be anticipated based on Figure 7-4 "General Intensity 2040" in the Mesa 2040 General Plan. There is already higher density in this area and densities in the range proposed are recommended to be in areas where there is a higher degree of transit services available or planned.

While the property has been zoned for the office use for many years and has not yet developed with an office use, this type of development in this area would do more to provide for the variety of neighborhood needs and services than rezoning to a multi-residence zone.

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 location.

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. The focus of this 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 design, development and maintenance of neighborhoods focuses on ensuring clean, safe and healthy areas where people want to live and maintain their investments. Neighborhoods are also designed to provide opportunities for people to gain a sense of place and feel connected to the larger community.

The proposed subdivision supports the above references to "a wide range of housing options", by providing a different housing type adjacent to conventional single residences. The proposed project provides a smaller housing type with less maintenance for owners in an area where new housing options are not as available without age restrictions.

Due to the minimal open space, lack of unique site features and isolation of this development from related activities, staff believes that the requested PAD falls short in the creation of a sense place that will promote a unique development that will support pride in ownership and stability over time and would like additional time to work with the applicant on the site plan for this proposal.

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

- **Providing appropriate infill development;**

The property is infill in nature since it is a leftover site that is being assembled with some of the

property owned by the church to the east, however the appropriateness of this level of density on such a small parcel without a greater urban context is not in keeping with the key elements for creating neighborhoods established in the Mesa General Plan.

- **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;**

This proposal will provide additional housing options in an established neighborhood however the existing OC zoning would provide a better blend of land uses contemplated by the Neighborhoods character type. This disconnected location at the entrance to a subdivision along a 6-lane arterial lends itself to a non-residential use.

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

The proposal has the potential to improve the streetscape along East Baseline Road by filling in a void in the built environment between the church and the first phase of Villa Rialto with new development on vacant land, however the Baseline presence will be a 6' solid masonry wall and not engage the street. The subdivision is gated from both Baseline and 78th Street with pedestrian gates to access the site, limiting opportunities for residents of this development to interact with adjacent properties along Baseline Road. Even more important is the opportunity to provide connection to 78th Street. The proposed design has a solid wall along this street with secondary gate access to the primary gate on the south side of the entry. The Plan recommends a greater degree of connectivity along these residential streets.

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

The existing neighborhood to the north is an aging neighborhood with primarily mix of single story conventional homes and mobile homes. The neighborhood to the west across 78th Street is the first phase of Villa Rialto and provides a nearly identical housing type as proposed in this development. Across Baseline, there is a retirement neighborhood with single-story attached residential units. The applicant is providing a two-story product that differs from surrounding development due to the lack of open space and compact arrangement of buildings in the context of its site boundaries. In terms of architecture and use of materials, the quality of the proposed development meets or exceeds that of the surrounding development.

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;**

A denser residential zoning district is an appropriate tool to buffer existing neighborhoods from busy arterial corridors. The key to this form of development is to provide connections between dense residential development and a mix of land uses to serve everyday needs or alternatively to provide an amenity laden self-contained community. The minimal 15-foot setback from the property to the north and the walling off of frontage along Baseline and 78th Street cause this property to have no relationship with the surrounding context, nor the unique site design or benefits expected for a PAD.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Rezoning:

The applicant proposes RM-3 PAD as a continuation of the Villa Rialto condominium development. While the Neighborhood Suburban character type supports RM-3 zoning when developed in desired form and locations, the PAD district warrants additional scrutiny for benefits obtained by reducing typically required development standards. The purpose of the PAD District is to allow for innovative design and flexibility in projects of sufficient size that are planned for development as a cohesive unit. Deviations from code are typically considered in the context of open space quality, superior site design, high quality building design or similar benefits provided by the development. In this particular case the project narrative justifies the request with the provision an amenity area consisting of a pool, barbecues and grass play area as well as design to follow the existing Villa Rialto development to the west.

The reduced yard area setbacks and narrow building spacing within the proposed PAD are not supported by site plan or elevation concepts to justify deviations from code. The proposed site plan is difficult to support due to the compact layout of 30 units on 2.7 acres. The portions of the site not used for the buildings are primarily occupied by the stormwater retention facility, the driveway and large gated entry area with full vehicle turnaround and future right of way for Baseline Road. Staff believes that the net density of 15.38 units per acre is very high for the site and that the 17'6" building separations will feel cramped compared to typical multiple residential development in East Mesa.

Staff supported the previous Villa Rialto development to the west of the subject property that was developed under the previous Mesa General Plan and earlier zoning codes. The existing Villa Rialto is zoned RM-3 PAD. Staff's support of this earlier project was based on the unusual triangular lot configuration and the provision of 47% open space. The phase two development with the current proposal uses a rectangular property with existing OC office zoning. The open space in phase two is primarily the building setback areas, where the applicant has requested reductions from typical code requirements as well as an approximately 1,650 square-foot common area featuring a pool, gazebo and barbecue grills located within a fenced area that is 30' wide and 55' deep. The building setback areas also serve a retention area purpose and thus provide little use as recreational space. In the absence of any unique site features, staff does not believe that this proposal provides the type of built environment promoted by General Plan policies.

The applicant has discussed the potential to create a shared use agreement for the amenities at the existing Villa Rialto development to the west. While access to these amenities is recommended, the orientation of both developments does not encourage connectivity nor the walkable neighborhood form that the General Plan promotes nor as contemplated for a PAD. While dense multi-residential development exists south of Baseline Road, it is incorporated in to the larger Sunland Village East PAD and provides a sense of community through the master plan for that development. This proposal also does not relate to the church to the east nor the single residential area to the north, and instead will sit as a walled two-story product with minimal setbacks that is out of context to existing development. If the proposal is supported, staff recommends include a condition of approval to require a shared amenities agreement with existing Villa Rialto (condition #8).

To promote the General Plan description of the neighborhoods character type relative to creating a

sense of place through a PAD, this development should incorporate unique site features. This could take the form of mixed land use, robust amenity areas that are unique to this development, or through treatment of functional elements such as colored and textured pavement areas, distinctive architectural features on the buildings or pedestrian connections to surrounding activities in the area. In the absence of these unique elements, this PAD establishes higher density without a recognizable sense of place. If the proposal is supported with the applicant's desired number of units on the small property, staff recommends the addition of textured pavement surfaces beyond the area shown on the site plan to the width of the driveway inside the gate up to the entry walk to the recessed building 3 access point. (condition #9). Building 3 will be the focal point of drivers using the main entry from Baseline Road – with that in mind staff recommends embellishment of the elevation on the portion of the building between the eastern edge and the recessed entry area. This could be accomplished with additional stonework, color changes, a tower element or other unique architectural feature (condition #10).

Staff does not believe the layout provides the superior site design concept of a PAD. The site plan includes 5 buildings with identical floor plans and two exterior finishes with minor variations. Buildings 1, 2 and 3 along the north side of the driveway all have the same orientation. It is possible to flip one of the buildings to provide different orientation and visual interest but this request was not honored by the applicant. Similarly, buildings 4 and 5 along the south side of the driveway have the same orientation. In addition, only one paint scheme is proposed on all of the buildings. Staff would encourage flipping the orientation of one or more of the buildings and enhancing the appearance with additional paint schemes to break up the monotony of the buildings (conditions #11 and 12).

Preliminary Plat:

This request includes a Preliminary Plat for “Villa Rialto Phase II”. 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 units.

Concerns:

Staff has conducted site visits to the existing Villa Rialto development and noted design characteristics that we believe do not support the PAD concepts of superior site design and high quality buildings. While certain elements of the design at existing Villa Rialto support quality design (see photo below), the overall layout is garage dominated with narrow pedestrian access and does not establish the shared community spaces promoted in the Mesa 2040 General Plan. Existing Villa Rialto nets less than 14 units per acre due to provision of open spaces and amenity areas. The proposed Villa Rialto phase two is denser with over 15 units per acre and with lesser setbacks than the existing development and, therefore, the appearance of the buildings and functional elements of the site are of greater concern with this request to rezone the site.



One example within the existing Villa Rialto identified by staff during a site visit is the placement of stone wainscoting that does not wrap building corners. Staff prefers that the stonework extend at least 2 feet to either a natural stopping point or some other appropriate treatment to terminate at a logical point. This standard would be applied to new single residential units in Mesa. Similarly, the paint changes that occur at corners and downspouts should be painted the same color of the base element of the building rather than an accent color. The Design Review process can address some of these details, however the Planning & Zoning Board should give careful consideration to authorizing the density as designed without the high quality building design expected for a PAD. As a condition of approval staff recommends at least stucco finishes to vary with the color changes shown on the proposed elevations (condition #13).



An additional concern of staff is the amount of parking provided. While the development meets the requirement for 2.1 spaces per unit, this is contingent on honoring tandem parking whereby 30 private garage spaces are fronted by 30 parking spaces. In the event that a garage unit is fully occupied for storage then these spaces will not be available. Also the tandem arrangement can potentially fail if a driver is unwilling or unable to move their vehicle to allow the garage vehicle to exit. Only 8 parking spaces for the 30 units exist outside of the tandem arrangement proposed. Existing Villa Rialto provides numerous additional parking spaces and, therefore, is not comparable to what is proposed for Phase 2. If parking deficiencies exist once built, the site would lend any overflow parking to the adjacent residential area along 78th Street thus creating potential nuisance issues and circulation concerns.

Conclusion:

The requested multiple residence zoning with PAD, site plan and associated preliminary plat will result in the development of multi-residential condominium development that does not provide the quality open space, superior site design, high quality buildings or similar expectations of PAD. Staff believes that these shortcomings are at odds with General Plan principles for creating and maintaining great neighborhoods. While the proposal adds to the housing diversity of the area, in staff's opinion it does not address the place-making and interconnected feeling that are essential elements of a PAD and building blocks of recognizable neighborhoods. Staff's preference is to continue the case to allow additional time to work with the applicant on enhancing the proposal with more features that would create a unique sense of place and do more to enhance the overall neighborhood. If, through the discussion at the public hearing, the Board believes that the proposed rezoning with PAD and site plan is appropriate as proposed by the applicant, then staff would recommend using the RM-2 zoning designation to reduce unit yield with 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, building elevations and preliminary plat provided without guarantee of lot yield).
2. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations (Engineering, Transportation, Solid Waste and Facilities, etc.).
3. Compliance with all Design Review requirements.
4. Compliance with all requirements of the Subdivision Regulations and Subdivision Technical Review Committee.
5. Dedicate Baseline Road 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.
6. All street improvements along Baseline Road and 78th Street are to be installed with the first phase of development.
7. Compliance with all requirements of the Airfield Overlay District including the following:
 - a. Written notice be provided to future residents, and acknowledgement received that the project is within 4 miles of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.
 - b. Owner shall grant an Avigation Easement and Release to the City, pertaining to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport which will be prepared and recorded by the City (concurrently with the recordation of the final subdivision map or prior to the issuance of a building permit).
 - c. Noise attenuation measures are to be incorporated into the design and construction of the buildings to achieve a noise level reduction of 25 db.
8. **Recordation of a shared amenities agreement with Villa Rialto Phase 1 prior to final plat.**

9. **Incorporate expanded decorative pavement surfaces behind the front entry gate.**
10. **Provide an enhanced elevation element on the east end of Building 3 to serve as a focal point from the entry gate.**
11. **Change orientation of at least one of the buildings to provide visual interest.**
12. **Provide more than one paint scheme for the buildings.**
13. **Provide exterior stucco finishes to vary with color changes to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Director.**
14. **Provide a parking exhibit to indicate minimum parking requirements are met for the adjacent church located at 7930 East Baseline Road with the Subdivision Technical Review Committee submittal.**