

# PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT



September 14, 2022

## ITEM TITLE

Design Review Permit for Escaya II Apartments, 218 multi-family units on an 8.3-acre site.

**Location:** South of Heritage Road, east of Paseo Cultura, and north of Corte Nueva in Otay Ranch Village Three (Parcel A of Map 16160, R-19 of CVT 20-0004).

**Environmental Notice:** The Project was adequately covered in a previously certified Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR 13-01/SCH No. 2013071077) for the Otay Ranch University Villages Project and all addenda and amendments.

## Recommended Action

Conduct a public hearing and adopt a resolution approving a Design Review permit for the project, based on findings and subject to conditions contained herein.

## SUMMARY

Escaya Apartments II, LLC (Applicant/Property Owner) requests approval of plans for 218 market-rate rental apartment units and associated amenities, open space and parking (the “Project”). The Project, referred to as Escaya Apartments II, is located on an existing, previously graded, vacant 8.3-acre site consisting of one parcel within the Otay Ranch Village Three (3) and a Portion of Village Four (4) Sectional Planning Area (Village 3 SPA) (Project Site). The Project Site is zoned Residential (RM-2) with a General Plan land use designation of Residential High (RH).

## HOUSING IMPACT STATEMENT

The RM-2 Zone is designated for multi-family, attached residential density of 18-27 units per acre. The Tentative Map for Otay Ranch Village 3 (CVT 20-0004) allocated 224 residential units to the Project Site. The proposed Project will increase housing supply within Otay Ranch by adding 218 market-rate residential rental units.

Under the City’s Balanced Communities Policy, Village 3 shall be required to provide 10% of the total number of dwelling units as affordable to low- and moderate-income households. As set forth in Appendix F “Affordable Housing Program” of the Otay Ranch Village 3 SPA Plan as amended on June 15, 2021, by Resolution No. 2021-122, the Otay Ranch Village 3 Affordable Housing Obligation may be deferred to a future village or location within the Otay Ranch planning area owned by the Owner or its affiliate. An Amendment to the Village 3 Balanced Communities Affordable Housing Agreement, approved on December 6, 2016, and recorded December 21, 2016, as Document No. 2016-0700046, was approved by City Council on August 23,

2022. The Amendment satisfies the Village 3 Remaining Affordable Housing Obligation. No affordable housing units will be provided within this Project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Director of Development Services has reviewed the proposed project for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the Project was adequately covered in previously certified Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR 13-01/SCH No. 2013071077) for the Otay Ranch University Villages Project and all addenda and amendments. Thus, no further environmental review is required.

DISCUSSION

Project Site Characteristics

The 8.3-acre Project Site is located southeast of the intersection of Heritage Road and Paseo Cultura, within Otay Ranch Village 3’s Village Core (Attachment 1 – Location Map). The property has been rough-graded and is currently vacant. The site is fairly level, due to a slope and retaining wall along its northern boundary with Heritage Road. To the north of the site is Otay Ranch Village Two; to the south are Flora and Strata (multi-family residential dwellings) and Escaya I (a mixed-use residential and commercial development); Wolf Canyon/Open Space Preserve is located to the east, and to the northwest is the Otay Landfill.

Table 1 summarizes the surrounding land uses:

Table 1 – Project Site and Adjacent Zoning/Land Uses			
Location	General Plan	Zoning	Current Land Use
North	Light Industrial	BP2 (Village 2)	Vacant
South	Mixed Use Residential / Residential Medium	MU-1 / CPF RM-1	Multi-family and Retail / Multi-Family Dwellings
East	Open Space Preserve	OSP	Open Space Preserve
West	County of San Diego	N/A	Otay Landfill

Due to the Project’s proximity to the Otay Landfill, the Applicant is required to provide evidence satisfactory to the Director of Development Services (or their designee) prior to building permit issuance that each proposed residential unit to be constructed shall be located at least 1,000-feet away from the active solid waste disposal areas of the Otay Landfill.

Lot Consolidation

The Project Site was the subject of a recent consolidation of Lots 826 & 827 of Map 16160. A Quitclaim Deed for Lot Consolidation purposes was recorded with the County of San Diego as Document #2022-0202167, on May 10, 2022. The new Assessor Parcel Number is pending from the County of San Diego.

Project Description

The proposed project is a market-rate rental apartment community. The apartments are offered in one and two-bedroom models with floor plans ranging in size from 747 to 760 square-feet (one-bedroom) and 1,038

to 1,079 square-feet (two-bedroom). The Project includes 125 one-bedroom and 93 two-bedroom units distributed in 12 three-story residential buildings.

#### *Site Plan*

The primary gateway into the community is from Corte Nueva, an adjacent public street. The entry is defined by low walls, decorative pavers, and a landscaped median. Two residential buildings flank the main entry, which terminates at the 10,740 square-foot, two-story clubhouse and leasing building. The Clubhouse features a fitness center, bicycle storage, pet wash, co-working space, indoor lounge areas, a yoga room, and a game room. Outdoor amenities include a series of walkways and trails linking the residential buildings to the pool, dog park, barbecue areas, benches, and gathering spaces. Amenities proposed within the 100' Preserve Edge/Fuel Modification Zone include walkways, overlooks and a fenced dog park. The Project Site is separated from Heritage Road by an open space lot (Lot H) and an onsite slope which creates a buffer from the public right of way.

The parking requirements for the Project are satisfied on-site with garage parking, carport parking, and standard/open surface parking for vehicles. Four motorcycle spaces are provided on-site, as well as indoor secured bicycle parking. A minimum of 38 parking spaces will be electric vehicle (EV)-ready, in accordance with code requirements, and some of the garages will be equipped with EV charging (not required).

Private Usable Open Space is provided with private balconies for each unit, and Common Usable Open Space is provided with a variety of active and passive recreation areas, as well as the clubhouse and pool facility.

#### *Building Design*

The historical agrarian use of the land within Otay Ranch is the inspiration for the architectural theme and character of Village 3. Escaya II Apartments extends the architectural tradition, complimenting the Farmhouse and Ranch styles created within the adjacent village core mixed-use area. The Project offers three color schemes to create building diversity and interest both internal to the community and via views from the adjacent streets and neighborhoods. Varied building setbacks, articulation and undulation of the wall planes and roof lines all contribute to reducing building massing and to create a "more intimate residential vibe."

#### *Circulation and Site Access*

The site design provides adequate circulation on internal private roads for vehicle access, fire access and trash truck maneuvering throughout the parking lots, as reflected on the site plan. Internal pedestrian circulation is provided by meandering sidewalks connecting the buildings to the various open space and site amenities, as well as to the surrounding streets.

The closest transit stop (planned on Heritage Road at Avenida Escaya) and the Village Core commercial uses are within a 10-minute walk of the Project Site.

#### *Landscaping/Screening*

The site amenities and landscape concept work in concert with the architecture style to create a unique resort' theme for the Project. Curvilinear walks and palm grottoes unify the amenity spaces.

Magnolias, Tipus, and Ficus trees add color and shade. Landscaping creates a focus at the site entrance and at building entrances.

The parking is screened from the surrounding properties by the buildings and screened internally by the garages, carports and trees, in compliance with the Village 3 SPA Plan and Village Design Plan (Design Plan) guidelines.

The landscape design and plant palette conform to the City of Chula Vista's Landscape Water Conservation Ordinance, promoting water conservation through the use of moderate and low-water plant species, grouping of plant materials with similar water requirements and implementing a low-volume and efficient automatic irrigation system.

#### *Lighting*

Exterior lighting, as detailed on the Lighting Concept Plan, will be provided on the buildings and throughout the site to illuminate the parking areas, building entrances, amenities, and other pedestrian areas. All site lighting will use LED technology for energy efficiency and be directed downward to minimize the spread of the beam and be consistent with the City's lighting policies.

#### Analysis

The Project has been analyzed for compliance with the Village 3 SPA Plan and Planned Community District Regulations (PCDR), the Design Plan, the Village 3 Master Precise Plan (MPP), and the Village 3 Landscape Master Plan (the "Landscape Master Plan").

The Project's compliance with Parking and Open Space requirements is summarized in the Project Data Table:

<b>Table 2: Project Data Table</b>	
Assessor's Parcel Numbers:	644-061-1000, 644-061-1100* <i>*A new APN is pending per the lot consolidation noted above</i>
Current Zoning:	RM-2
General Plan Designation:	Residential High (RH)
Lot Area:	8.3 acres
Residential Development:	218 multi-family, attached units
<b><u>VEHICLE PARKING REQUIRED:</u></b>  1 Bedroom: 125 x 1.5 = 188 2 Bedroom: 93 x 2.0 = 186  <b>TOTAL REQUIRED: 374 Spaces*</b>  <i>*Includes 72 guest spaces, calculated at 0.33 per unit.</i>	<b><u>PROPOSED VEHICLE PARKING:</u></b>  Garage Spaces: Standard Garage      119 Accessible Garage      3 Carport and Surface Spaces: Standard Residents      143 Standard Guests      72 Accessible      5 EV-Ready      38  <b>TOTAL PROVIDED: 380</b>

<b><u>OPEN SPACE REQUIRED:</u></b>	<b><u>OPEN SPACE PROVIDED:</u></b>
Private Usable Open Space  1 Bedroom: 125 x 60 = 7,500 2 Bedroom: 38 x 80 = 7,440  <b>TOTAL: 14,940 Square Feet</b>  Common Usable Open Space: *  218 x 200 = 43,600 Square Feet  <b>TOTAL: 43,600 Square Feet</b>	Private Usable Open Space  1 Bedroom – A1: 38 x 79 = 3,002 1 Bedroom – A2: 87 x 71 = 6,177 2 Bedroom – B1: 42 x 80 = 3,360 2 Bedroom – B2: 51 x 82 = 4,182  <b>TOTAL: 16,721 Square Feet</b>  Common Usable Open Space  Active Open Space: OS-A: 2,065 OS-B: 3,140 OS-C: 1,700 OS-D: 2,085 <i>SUBTOTAL ACTIVE SPACE:</i> 8,990  Passive Open Space: 38,620  Club/Leasing/Pool House: 21,365  <b>TOTAL: 68,975 Square Feet</b>

#### Design Review Permit

The Design Review shall comply with the procedures and requirements set forth in Chula Vista Municipal Code (CVMC) Section 19.14.582 through 19.14.600, except that the findings and actions of the Planning Commission shall be based upon the provisions of the Village 3 SPA Plan and its associated documents. The Design Review process requires a determination that a project is in compliance with the defined standards and guidelines of the Village 3 SPA Plan, the PCDR, the Design Plan, the MPP, and the Landscape Master Plan.

Per the PCDR, Chapter XI, Major Design Review is required for all proposed projects within the RM-2 Residential Zone.

Any uses proposed within the 100' Preserve Edge shall be reviewed in conjunction with the Major Design Review Process and are subject to review and approval of the Development Services Director. The Project proposes a dog park, a walking path, seat walls, and a small overlook node with seating within the Preserve Edge. Those elements are in compliance with MSCP adjacency guidelines, the Preserve Edge Plan, and the Fire Protection Plan.

#### Village 3 SPA Plan & PCDR

The Village 3 SPA Plan promotes pedestrian-oriented development, reducing reliance on the automobile. The overall concept provides for essential facilities and services: schools, shops, civic facilities, child care centers, and local parks in the Village Core. The highest density residential uses are located within a 10-minute walking distance of the mixed-use commercial core.

The PCDR are the zoning regulations for the Village 3 SPA Plan. These regulations implement the goals and policies of the Chula Vista General Plan, Otay Ranch General Development Plan, and the Village 3 SPA Plan by establishing land use districts and standards to classify, regulate, restrict and separate the uses of land, buildings and structures, and regulate and limit the type, height and bulk of buildings and structures in each land use district.

The Project Site is zoned RM-2, permitting attached housing at densities of 18-27 units per acre. Multi-family neighborhoods are to be designed to enhance the Village Core and create a walkable environment with residences' entrances facing the streets and the appearance of parking and garage doors minimized. The majority of the property development standards for the RM-2 zone are established through the Design Review Process, with the exception of building height, which is a maximum allowable height of 60 feet.

The Project site plan and elevations show the 3-story buildings (45' maximum) having pedestrian entrances and sidewalks fronting on Paseo Cultura and Corte Nueva. The buildings along Heritage Road face the street, but they are separated from the roadway by a downward slope and an open space lot. The parking is located internal to the site and screened from view by the perimeter buildings.

Private Usable Open Space is provided for each apartment unit with balconies (with a minimum dimension of 6 feet), and Common Usable Open Space is provided with several small open areas with barbecues and seating; a perimeter landscaped area with a trail and a fenced dog park, and a children's play area with a tricycle track, game courts, and a play structure. Additionally, the pool/clubhouse area features an outdoor kitchen, pool-side bar, fire table lounge, entertainment courtyard for dining, and a terraced sundeck.

### Design Plan

The Design Plan guides planning and development by defining intended character and design elements of the village, including streetscape and landscape design, signage programs, and architectural and lighting guidelines, as well as design concepts that will implement pedestrian orientation.

The pedestrian-oriented village concept is enhanced by the intensity of multi-family development in the Village Core located in proximity to public transit, shopping, and community facilities. It is anticipated that the future residents of the Project will take advantage of the available opportunities to walk to schools, parks and shopping areas. The architectural theme, building plotting and site plan, parking layout, and landscape of three-story multi-family developments complement the pedestrian orientation of the village.

### *Architecture*

The architectural style for the Project is Farmhouse and Ranch, complimenting the agrarian theme for Village 3. Elements seen in the adjacent commercial core are repeated here, such as veneer stone, board and batten siding, and standing seam metal roof details. Building elevations offer a variety of trims, such as cornice trims, decorative trellises, and roof canopies with wood kickers, in keeping with the architectural theme. The twelve buildings are all unique and the plotting maximizes the pedestrian experience in and around the site.

### *Site Design*

Multiple pedestrian entries, windows and balconies are oriented toward the surrounding public streets. On Paseo Cultura, sidewalks provide direct connections to the Promenade Trail. The Project's primary entry on Corte Nueva is identified with two buildings that flank the entrance, and a landscaped median and decorative pavers. The two-story clubhouse, located in the center of the site, is easily identified with its architectural tower feature, large windows, and enhanced landscape.

An architectural tower element has been added to Building Three, at the corner of Heritage Road and Paseo Cultura, offering an identifying icon at the entry to Village 3. Varied building elements, roof pitches, and setbacks offer visual interest from the street view.

Buildings are sited to create connected courtyards with landscaped walkways in the agrarian architecture-inspired village design theme. The internal pedestrian network connects residents to on-site amenities and to public walkways and trails.

### *Parking*

Garages and parking areas are screened from outside the site by the buildings and minimized from inside the site by carports and landscaping.

### *Landscape*

All landscaped areas are irrigated with low-volume and efficient automatic irrigation systems. The plant palette is in keeping with the agrarian-themed and drought tolerant landscape throughout the village and conforms to the City's Landscape Water Conservation Ordinance.

### Master Precise Plan

The MPP was prepared for the Village Core and approved by the City Council in 2016 (amended in 2021). The MPP serves as the framework for evaluating individual projects based on site planning, access, architecture, landscape architecture, signage and lighting within the Village Core. The Village Core is the commercial and social activity center of the village, with residential, retail, park and public uses all within a 10-minute walk from each other.

The MPP requires certain mandatory elements for each parcel in the Village Core. Accordingly, the development provides a well-articulated, identifiable pedestrian entry on Corte Nueva, landscape accents (such as pedestrian corridors lined with trees and paving enhancements) to compliment the agrarian-themed building architecture, enhanced elevations and a landscape buffer (slope) along Heritage Road, pedestrian links to the adjacent Promenade Trail and Village Pathway, and front door access with enhanced architectural details on Paseo Cultura and Corte Nueva. These architectural and landscape elements link the site with the surrounding Village Core.

### Landscape Master Plan

Consistent with the Landscape Master Plan, an agrarian-inspired landscape theme is established in the features of the Project Site with elements such as planting, trellises, light standards, benches, and paving that are consistent with the architecture. Landscaping creates a focus on site entrances and building entrances. Canopy trees and lighting line the ten-foot-wide Promenade Trail along Paseo Cultura. Trees are also

incorporated in open space areas, pathways, and parking lots, to create canopies and shade where needed. Tree planting complies with the City's Shade Tree Policy (576-19). Parking areas are located internal to the site and will not be readily visible from the surrounding properties. Any parking areas that are visible will be screened with landscaping and wood fencing.

The sloped portion of the Preserve Edge improvements will be permanently irrigated.

#### Public Facilities

Public facilities are required to be consistent with the General Plan and Growth Management Program and Ordinance – the facilities must be constructed concurrent with demand so the development of the Project will not adversely impact the City's Quality of Life standards. The Public Facilities Financing Plan for Village 3 analyzed infrastructure such as drainage, traffic, water, sewer, fire protection, emergency services, law enforcement, libraries, schools, and parks. The availability and capacity of these components were reviewed for this Project and determined to be compliant.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Staff has reviewed the Project and determined that it is consistent with the Otay Ranch Village 3 SPA Plan, the PCDR, the Design Plan, the MPP, and the Landscape Master Plan. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the proposed project subject to the conditions contained in the resolution.

#### **DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT**

Staff has reviewed the property holdings of the Planning Commission members and has found no property holdings within 1,000 feet of the boundaries of the property which is the subject of this action. Consequently, this item does not present a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under California Code of Regulations Title 2, section 18702.2(a)(7) or (8), for purposes of the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov't Code §87100, *et seq.*).

Staff is not independently aware and has not been informed by any Planning Commission member, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision-maker conflict of interest in this matter.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund or Development Services Fund as a result of this action. The costs are paid for by the Applicant.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1 – Location Map
- 2 – Project Plans
- 3 - Resolution

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