



Staff Report

File #: 23-0330

PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: 4/24/2023

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Planning & Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

PP2022-0004: Precise Plan application to review the site plan, architecture, landscaping and walls/fencing associated with the development of a 52,423 square foot health club facility proposed at 2895 S. Main Street, within the Quasi-Public (QP) designation of the Mountain Gate Specific Plan. (Applicant: Joseph Balbas, Balbas Construction, Inc., 3189 Airway Avenue, Unit D, Costa Mesa, CA 92626).

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan and adopt Resolution No. 2608 GRANTING PP2022-0004 based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval.

PROJECT SITE SUMMARY:

Area of Property: 4.09 acres

Existing Zoning: QP (Quasi-Public) within the Mountain Gate Specific Plan (SP89-01)

Existing General Plan: OP (Office Professional)

Existing Land Use: Vacant

Proposed Land Use: Health club facility

Surrounding Zoning / Land Uses:

N: QP (Quasi-Public) / Medical Buildings

E: W (Water/Utility) / Water Basin

S: SFD (Single Family Detached) / Single Family Homes

W: R-1-7.2 & R-1-9.6 (Single Family Residential)/Single Family Homes

BACKGROUND

The applicant proposes to develop a 52,423-square-foot, two-story health club facility on 4.09 acres located at 2895 S. Main Street in the city of Corona. The site is located within the Quasi-Public (QP) designation of the Mountain Gate Specific Plan (SP89-01), and Office Professional (OP) designation

of the South Corona Community Facilities Plan (SCCFP) and General Plan. The QP designation permits the health club use by right, and requires approval of the site's physical development under the Precise Plan review process.

The property is surrounded by an office development consisting of two, two-story medical office buildings to the north; a flood control channel to the northeast, with single-family residences located on the other side of the channel; a water detention basin to the southeast; Chase Drive to the south, with single-family residences located on the other side of Chase Drive; and Main Street to the west, with single-family residences located on the other side of Main Street (Exhibit 2).

The project site has a "flag" configuration, with the majority of the lot located on the west, adjacent to the intersection of Main Street and Chase Drive, and a narrower portion extending eastward, behind an existing water detention basin. While the western portion of the site is relatively flat, the eastern portion slopes easterly towards the flood control channel to the east. Until recently, the subject property contained a 4,067 single-family home and attached two-car garage. Approximately three quarters of the site, to the east, recently contained an orange orchard.

A Variance application (V2022-0002) has been submitted in conjunction and concurrent with this proposed Precise Plan (PP2022-0004). The submitted Variance application requests a reduction in the front yard landscape setback along Chase Drive from 20 feet to 15 feet, and a reduction in the rear yard landscape setback from 20 feet to 5 (five) feet. However, after reviewing the Mountain Gate Specific Plan, it was determined that the 20-foot rear setback is for structures, and that parking and circulation is allowed to encroach into the rear and side setbacks, provided a minimum 5 (five) foot landscaped buffer is provided along the perimeter of the property. As a result, a variance for the rear setback is not required. However, the reduced front yard setback is still applicable for the project to comply with the parking and trash enclosure requirements for the proposed health club facility. Details associated with V2022-0002 are provided under a separate staff report for the Planning and Housing Commission's consideration.

The project was initially reviewed by the Development Plan Review (DPR) Committee on April 7, 2022. The Applicant formally submitted the precise plan application to the City on September 21, 2022, and submitted the Variance application on October 25, 2022. The Precise Plan application was reviewed by the Project and Environmental Review Committee (PRC) on October 13, 2022 and the Variance application was reviewed by the PRC on November 17, 2022. Missing and revised items were subsequently submitted, and the applications were deemed complete on March 8, 2023 and scheduled for the Planning and Housing Commission meeting of April 24, 2023.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following sections discuss the details of the project including the site development, operations, architectural design, landscaping, walls and fencing and public right-of-way improvements.

Site plan

The applicant proposes to develop a two-story health club facility totaling 52,423 square feet on a 4.09-acre site located at the northeast corner of Main Street and Chase Drive (Exhibit 4). The health club building sits at the center of the property, surrounded by the parking. The site will have

two vehicle access points, one on Main Street and one on Chase Drive, with both points comprised of a 28-foot-wide driveway.

The building's main entrance is located on the east elevation, which is oriented away from the nearest residences, which are located across Main and Chase to the west and south, respectively. In addition, the site will be graded so that most of the building pad and parking lot will be lower than the adjacent streets. The exception is the northwest corner of the site, where the building pad and parking will be approximately 3 to 5 feet higher than Main Street. In other areas, the building pad and parking lot will be approximately 11 feet below the Chase Drive grade, and an average of approximately 5 feet below the Main Street grade. Additionally, the building will be set back approximately 143 feet from the Main Street centerline, and 135 feet from Chase Drive centerline.

The site's front yard setback is measured from the front lot line, which is defined by the Corona Municipal Code as the narrowest portion of the property that abuts the rights-of-way, which in this case is Chase Drive. The rear yard setback is measured from the rear lot line, which is defined by the Corona Municipal Code as the lot line opposite and most distant from the front lot line. Therefore, the rear setback is applied along the north perimeter, and the side yards are measured from the Main Street property line to the west, and the flood control channel and water detention basin to the east. The QP designation requires the development to provide the following minimum yard setbacks for structures:

- Front Yard Setback (Chase Drive) - 20 feet minimum
- Rear Yard Setback (North Perimeter) - 20 feet minimum
- Side Yard Setback (Main Street and Eastern Perimeter) - 10 feet minimum

The project proposes a reduced 15-foot front yard setback along Chase Drive. The reduced setback is requested under a Variance application, which is being processed separately from, and concurrently with, this Precise Plan application.

Although the required setback along Main Street is 10 feet, per the Code, the Applicant is increasing the landscaped Main Street setback to 20 feet. This is to enhance the streetscape along Main Street, which is a city designated scenic corridor per the General Plan. The 20-foot setback along Main Street also maintains consistency with the 20-foot yard setback that is currently provided by the abutting medical office development to the north.

Operations

The health club will offer a 24-hour operation with an anticipated 20 to 30 employees. The first floor of the club features the lobby area, free weights open area, wellness and tanning rooms, a cafeteria, retail and clothing area and a kids club, all for the convenience of the gym members. The second floor features the cardio area equipped with treadmills, stationary bicycles and other cardio equipment, a cycle room for spin classes, a multi-purpose room, restrooms, a boxing and martial arts area and a business office. The floor plans are attached as Exhibit 6.

Parking

Corona Municipal Code (CMC) § 17.76.030 requires that a health club or fitness studio with a floor

area greater than 3,500 square feet shall provide one (1) parking space per 150 square feet of floor area (1:150). However, CMC § 17.76.030 states that when there is a mixture of uses in a building, the parking requirement shall be the sum of the requirements for each individual use. Since the Applicant’s health club facility will be providing patrons with other types of services, beyond just a health club, staff has calculated the other uses based on the parking requirement applicable to the non-health club uses. The parking requirements for the proposed uses are shown in Table A below. As a note, parking is not required for the “children” portion of the daycare use, because the daycare will only be open to the club patrons whose parking is captured through the other uses in the facility. Therefore, the daycare is not expected to generate additional parking needs beyond what is already being required for the other uses in the facility.

The proposed project requires 263 parking spaces, and the site is designed to provide 278 parking spaces, which exceeds the minimum.

**Table A
Parking Requirement for Fitness Mania**

Land Use	Square Feet	Parking Requirement	Required No. of Spaces
Health Club	29,764	1:150	198
Office	1,567	1:250	6
Tanning	1,962	1:250	8
Wellness	1,867	1:250	7
Laundry Facility	90	1:250	1
Cafeteria	3,282	1:100	33
Retail	1,632	1:250	7
Daycare	2,967	1 space per employee, plus 1 space per 10 children	3 @ 1/employee (See discussion under the <i>Parking</i> section.)
Exterior walls, mechanical equipment room, elevator, stairways, and restrooms.	9,292	No parking required per CMC § 17.04.258.	
Total Required:			263 spaces
Total Provided:			278 spaces
Surplus:			15 spaces

Staff has noted that the parking table on the applicant’s site plan incorrectly shows a parking requirement of 260 spaces, as it does not take into consideration three (3) required parking spaces for the daycare’s employees. Staff has included a condition of approval requiring the applicant’s building permit plans to reflect a parking requirement of 263 spaces, with a surplus of 15.

Architectural Style

The SCCFP provides policies and standards relating to community character in South Corona. One

policy establishes a Spanish Colonial architectural theme for commercial buildings. The Mountain Gate Specific Plan also includes architectural design guidelines to ensure quality architecture for commercial developments, and requires that commercial buildings comply with the SCCFP's architectural standards. Therefore, the project features design elements that are consistent with the Spanish Colonial architectural theme described within the SCCFP and the Specific Plan.

The building features various building materials typically associated with Spanish colonial architecture such as pitched red tile roofing, arches, columns, porticos, recessed windows, decorative siding accents, white smooth plaster walls and overall wall reveals and trim. The elevation plans and material board are attached as Exhibit 5.

The development also includes a trash enclosure with metal gates and opaque screening. The project is conditioned to construct the enclosure using decorative block that matches or complements the building's design and colors, and the trash enclosure is required to have a cover on top to secure the enclosure from unwanted access.

The proposed building height of the health club facility is 36 feet, as measured from finish grade to the roof structure, excluding the parapet walls. Although section 9.4 of the Mountain Gate Specific Plan establishes development standards for the QP District, it is silent with regards to building height. As a result, the City has deferred to section 9.3 of the specific plan, "Commercial Development Standards", which establishes a maximum height of 40 feet. This height limit is consistent with the property's "OP" general plan designation, all commercial zones in the citywide zoning code, and the height restrictions that were applied to the existing medical office buildings to the north, which are also in the QP District.

The project includes parking lot lighting fixtures that will be conditioned to have hooded light fixtures to prevent glare impacts on the nearby residential properties. This complies with CMC § 17.84.070, which states that "all areas of exterior lighting shall be designed to direct light downward with minimal spillover onto adjacent residences, sensitive land uses, and open space." Additionally, the surrounding area contains ambient lighting from existing street light poles along Main Street and Chase Drive; and lighting from the adjacent medical office development to the north, church to the southwest, and nearby residential developments. The project's lighting is not expected to be a nuisance to the area.

Landscaping, Perimeter Fencing and Walls

The Conceptual Landscape Plan features a variety of 24-inch and 36-inch box shade trees, large screen shrubs, a variety of groundcovers and colorful plant materials to accent the site with an overall coverage area of approximately 23%. Additionally, the interior parking lot area will be shaded by tree canopies. Formal landscape and irrigation plans will be subject to final review and approval by the city staff. The Conceptual Landscape Plan is provided as Exhibit 7.

Split face walls, seven (7) feet in height, with decorative caps and pilasters are proposed along the eastern property lines adjacent to the water detention basin. A 3.5-foot-high wrought iron fence with decorative split face pilasters is proposed above split face retaining walls along the southern portion of the west perimeter, northern perimeter and the portion of the eastern perimeter that

abuts the flood control channel. A fence and wall plan is attached as Exhibit 8. The Conditions of Approval in Exhibit 3 require all walls including retaining walls to be split face or have a decorative finish as approved by the Planning Division, and have an anti-graffiti coating.

Signage

The Mountain Gate Specific Plan permits commercial development in the QP designation to have a monument sign not to exceed 3.5 feet in height with a maximum allowable sign area of 18 square feet. Wall signs are also allowed on up to three sides of a building. The size of each wall sign is based on a calculation of 2 square feet of sign area per lineal foot of building frontage, up to 200 square feet for tenants having a floor area of 6,000 square feet or greater.

The project proposes a six-foot-high monument sign at the southeast corner of the property, wall mounted signage and directional signage. The applicant's conceptual sign plan is attached as Exhibit 9. The proposed monument sign exceeds the maximum allowable sign height and sign face area allowed under the code. Therefore, the applicant will need to redesign the monument to comply with the code requirements. As for wall signs, signage is proposed on the west, south and east elevations of the building. Since there are existing single-family homes located across Main Street and Chase Drive to the west and south, respectively, and these homes have second-floor windows facing the project site, a condition of approval is recommended to require the applicant to utilize external or diffused lighting for the signs proposed on the west and south elevations of the building, as well as for the monument sign. Examples include goose neck lights, back lighting, or halo lit channel letters.

Any proposed directional signage shall comply with the directional signage regulations under Section 17.74.040 of the Corona Municipal Code.

The applicant is required to submit the final signage plan to the Planning and Development Department for review and permitting before installation. All plans will be required to comply with all codes in place at the time of permitting, including the City's Sign Ordinance.

On-Site Utility and Drainage Improvements

Water and sewer service to the project site will be provided by the City of Corona. The project will connect to an existing 10-inch diameter water line in Main Street. Sewer service is available for the project from an existing 10-inch diameter sewer line in Main Street. Development of the project will increase impervious surface coverage on the site and increase surface runoff. Surface run off, however, will be directed to the water quality infiltration basin proposed to be located along the northern and northeast end of the site before discharging into the City's storm drain system.

Public Right-of-Way Improvements

The project requires public right-of-way (ROW) improvements to include the widening of the east half of Main Street up to 45 feet from the street centerline to street curb line, for an overall right-of-way width of 100 feet. The applicant is required to construct a 14-foot-wide raised center median, two northbound lanes, curb and gutter, and a 10-foot-wide parkway, which includes a 5-foot-wide sidewalk. The raised landscaped center median is required to have a southbound left-turn pocket, which will allow vehicles to make a left turn from Main Street into the project driveway. However, the required raised median will prohibit vehicles from making left-out turns from the project driveway

onto Main Street. Only right-out turns will be allowed. Additionally, the northbound lanes on Main Street south of Chase Drive will be restriped to allow for a left-turn lane, a through lane, and a shared through/right-turn lane.

The north half of Chase Drive will also be widened up to 20 feet from the street centerline to street curb line, for an overall right-of-way width of 84 feet. The widening will allow for the construction of one westbound lane, curb and gutter, and a 24-foot-wide parkway, which includes a 4-foot-wide sidewalk. As there is no raised median required on Chase Drive, vehicles will be able to make full turn movements in and out of the project driveway on Chase Drive.

The Applicant is required to annex the landscaped center median and sidewalk on Main Street, and the sidewalk on Chase Drive into a Community Facilities District (CFD), to be maintained by the city.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Per Section 15070(b) of the State Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 6.02 of the City's Local Guidelines, a Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the project since the Initial Study identified that the project's potentially significant effects to the environment are capable of being mitigated to less than significant. Therefore, based on the project mitigation measures identified in the Mitigated Negative Declaration, there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the City, that the project may have a significant or potentially significant effect on the environment. The Mitigated Negative Declaration is recommended for adoption (Exhibit 12).

FISCAL IMPACT:

The applicant has paid the applicable application processing fees for the project.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A 20-day public notice was mailed to all property owners within a 500-foot radius of the project site, as well as advertised in the Sentinel Weekly News and posted at the project site. As of the preparation of this report, the Planning and Development Department received two letters regarding the project in response to the public notice. One letter is from the Jay and Sue McNeilly, who reside at 2841 Plumwood Lane. The McNeilly's do not support the project. In general, the McNeillys oppose commercial use on the project site and prefer the site to be developed for single family homes consistent with the residential uses in the area. A second letter was received from Nicole Leyva, a Corona resident living at 1855 Stanwich Place. Ms. Leyva supports the project. In general Ms. Leyva would like to see more attractions, restaurants and locally owned businesses, and supports an active lifestyle and healthy living. The letters are attached as Exhibit 11.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The project site formerly contained a single-family home built in 1985 and former orange grove. The project proposes to develop a currently vacant, underutilized parcel into a use that is permitted within the Quasi-Public designation, and is also consistent with the development standards of both the Mountain Gate Specific Plan, with approval of V2022-0002, and the South Corona Community Facilities Plan. Additionally, the project adheres to the applicable goals and policies within the General Plan.

The project features site upgrades which include new public improvements, attractive architectural building design, decorative perimeter walls and fencing, landscape screening and overall site improvements. The project takes into consideration the surrounding residential land uses and Main Street's designation as a scenic corridor by lowering the majority of the building pad from the adjacent street grades, and by having the building entrance oriented away from the nearest residential uses. In addition, to prevent glare on the surrounding residences, the project is conditioned to install downward shields on all parking lot lights, and to use diffused lighting methods or external light fixtures for on-site signage.

Furthermore, all potential environmental impacts have been analyzed pursuant to CEQA, and mitigation measures have been incorporated to reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

Based upon the findings set forth below, the Planning and Development Department recommends approval of PP2022-0004 subject to the Conditions of Approval (Exhibit 3).

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL FOR PP2022-0004

1. An initial study (environmental assessment) has been conducted by the City of Corona so as to evaluate the potential for adverse environmental impacts. The initial study identifies potentially significant effects on the environment, but:
 - a. *The project applicant has agreed to revise the project to avoid these significant effects or to mitigate the effects to a point where it is clear that no significant effects would occur, as reflected in the Conditions of Approval attached as Exhibit 3.*
2. All the conditions necessary to granting a Precise Plan as set forth in Section 17.91 of the Corona Municipal Code do exist in reference to PP2022-0004 for the following reasons:
 - a. *The proposal is consistent with the Office Professional land use designation of the General Plan because this land use is intended to accommodate general business offices, banks, finance, insurance and real estate offices, medical offices professional offices, and compatible uses. Additionally, the project is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan identified for the Commercial and Office districts.*
 - b. *The proposal complies with the Quasi-Public designation of the Mountain Gate Specific Plan, with approval of V2022-0002, since health clubs are a permitted use within the QP designation with an approved Precise Plan. The proposal is also consistent with the applicable provisions of the Corona Municipal Code.*
 - c. *The proposal has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and all applicable requirements and procedures of the act have been followed. A Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for this project which recommends mitigation measures to be implemented with the project to reduce any potential environmental impacts to less than significant.*
 - d. *The site is of a sufficient size and configuration to accommodate the design and scale of proposed development, including buildings and elevations, landscaping, parking and*

other physical features of the proposal, as demonstrated in the exhibits attached to this report.

- e. The design, scale and layout of the proposed development will not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments, will not create traffic or pedestrian hazards, and will not otherwise have a negative impact on the aesthetics, health, safety or welfare of neighboring uses because the proposal complies with the City's development standards established in the Mountain Gate Specific Plan and the Corona Municipal Code. Furthermore, the project provides adequate access from Main Street and Chase Drive and all missing public improvements including road pavement, curb and gutter, sidewalks and parkways will be constructed with this project to enhance the aesthetics of the site and area as well as the safety and general welfare of the public.*
- f. The architectural design of the proposed development which consists of Spanish architectural elements is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and South Corona in general, will enhance the visual character of the neighborhood by improving vacant undeveloped property and will provide for harmonious, orderly and attractive development of the site.*
- g. The design of the proposed development will provide a desirable environment for its proposed employees and visiting public as well as its neighbors through good aesthetic use of materials, texture, and color that is aesthetically appealing and will retain a reasonably adequate level of maintenance because the proposal has been designed to comply with the development standards and design guidelines of the Mountain Gate Specific Plan (with approval of V2022-0002), the South Corona Community Facilities Plan and the Corona Municipal Code.*

PREPARED BY: ROCIO LOPEZ, CONSULTING PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: JAY EASTMAN, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS

- 1. Resolution No. 2608
- 2. Locational and Zoning Map
- 3. Conditions of Approval
- 4. Site Plan
- 5. Elevations and Materials Sheet
- 6. Floor Plans
- 7. Landscape Plan and Perimeter Landscape Sections
- 8. Wall and Fence Plan
- 9. Conceptual Signage Plan
- 10. Applicant's Letter
- 11. Public Correspondence

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12. Environmental Documentation

Case Planner: Rocio Lopez (951) 736-2293