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September 22, 1992 .

NOTICE OF NEGATIVE DECLARATION

S92-023, Log No. 90-18-9

Michael Jones, Architect

FINDING:

The Environmental Planning Staff has examined the Initial Study below and finds that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment, and that an Environmental Impact Report need not be prepared pursuant to the San Diego County Procedures for Environmental Impact Review revised November, 1988.

INITIAL STUDY SUMMARY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION:

The proposed project is a request to construct a 108-unit apartment complex with recreational facilities on 7.87 acres of land. The project will gain access from Grand Avenue via a 28-foot wide driveway located along the southeast property line. The units will be one, two, and three bedroom apartments with a maximum height of 25 feet. The project is located north of Jamacha Road and south of Eucalyptus Street at 1400 Grande Avenue in the Spring Valley Community Plan Area of San Diego County.

THOMAS BROS. COORDINATES: 67/E1 FIELD CHECKED: YES ANALYST: J. Herskowitz

Spring Valley Community Plan	(6) Residential, 7.3 du/1 acre
RV7 Use Regulation	(9) Residential, 43 du/1 acre
RV29 Use Regulation	7.26 du/1 acre
	29 du/1 acre

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:

The project site is located on the slopes of Dictionary Hill. This hill is characterized by steep slopes. The site has slopes in excess of 25% gradient on approximately 49% of the site. In addition a large unnamed drainage course

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bisects the property from the northeast to southwest. The drainage is blocked off-site at both ends of the project, however, water apparently still flows intermittently along this course as a few non-native wetland species of plants are associated with it. The project site has been highly disturbed by grazing and human encroachment but still maintains a disturbed Diegan sage scrub habitat (approximately 2.8 acres) which supports a single-family group (individuals) of California gnatcatcher. Other sensitive plants located on-site include San Diego barrel cactus, ashy spike moss and San Diego sunflower. Sensitive animals also included rufous crowned sparrow, loggerhead shrike, roadrunner and a kestrel. Non-native grasses and herbs occur over approximately 1.7 acres. The project site has development occurring or planned on all four sides. However, additional vacant (potential open space) areas exist to the north of the project.

POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS:

The proposed project would incrementally impact several species of plants and animals, most notably the California gnatcatcher. Approximately 0.8 acres (28%) of the Diegan sage scrub habitat would be impacted by the project. However, the remainder of the Diegan sage scrub (approximately 2 acres) will be preserved in a biological open space easement. Grading of steep slopes may also result in significant impacts to the visual resources of the area.

MITIGATING MEASURES PROPOSED BY APPLICANT:

Prior to approval of a grading permit, improvement plans in lieu of a grading permit, or approval of the Final Map, the applicant, to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Land Use, shall:

1. Dedicate an open space easement over the approximately 2.9 acres of land as shown on the open space easement map dated September 16, 1992, which is on file in the Department of Planning and Land Use.

This easement is for the protection of biologically sensitive plant and animal species and Diegan sage scrub habitat located within the easement. This easement shall preclude the construction or placement of any structure or any other thing, or the addition or removal of any vegetation within the easement except for the implementation of an approved revegetation plan or transplantation plan in the area occupied by ruderal grasses. This easement may allow thinning to distances of up to 100 feet from any existing future structure. The thinning of plants is for the express purpose of reducing an identified fire hazard. Any thinning requires the written authority of the appropriate fire district. The area to be thinned shall not exceed 100 feet from the edge of the easement. This easement may allow with the approval of the Director of Planning and Land Use, the revegetation of an existing disturbed grassy/ruderal area with Diegan sage scrub and native grasses.

2. Install a six-foot high fence along the entire perimeter of the proposed open space. The fencing along the northern property boundary may be removed in order to provide direct connection with adjoining open space being proposed by the adjacent land developer to the north. In the event that the northern property is not developed, the fencing along this boundary shall remain. All fencing shall be designed to allow wildlife access to the area but inhibit human trespass.
3. Prepare a revegetation plan for the ruderal/grassland areas within the open space. The revegetation shall include only species of plants associated with Diegan sage scrub and grass species which are native to Dictionary Hill area. In addition, these plants will require a maintenance and monitoring program to assure that this revegetation effort "takes". These plans shall require the approval of the Director of Planning and Land Use.
4. Submit a transplantation plan, to the satisfaction of the Department of Planning and Land Use, for the sensitive coast barrel cactus that is located on-site. This plan shall be prepared under the direction of a County Certified Biologist with a background in transplantation and/or revegetation. This shall include a discussion of the methods and criteria used to establish the transplantation sites.
5. Submit and receive approval of grading plans which demonstrate that:
 - a. No grading shall be allowed during the breeding season of the California gnatcatcher, which occurs between March 1, and August 31 of each year. A noise study may be submitted in lieu of this condition. This study must show that the grading noise will not impact the gnatcatcher on-site.
 - b. Grading and/or improvement plans shall include the requirement that temporary fences be placed between the developed area and the open space easement. Said fencing shall be installed prior to grading, brushing or clearing and shall remain until grading and/or clearing or brushing activities are completed, and shall be removed upon completion of such activity.

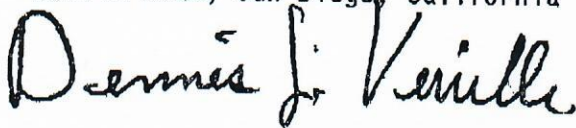
REASONS TO SUPPORT FINDINGS (MITIGATED) OF NEGATIVE DECLARATION:

The applicant has proposed to place approximately 4 acres of the 7.9 acre site into a dedicated open space easement. There is a signed and dated Application Amendment Form from the applicant indicating that this area will be preserved in perpetuity.

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NOTE: This action becomes final upon approval by the appropriate decision-making body.

Additional copies of this Negative Declaration may be obtained at the Community Planning Section, Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU), 5201 Ruffin Road, San Diego, California 92123.



DENNIS VERRILLI, Chief
Southern Planning Area

DV:JH:jcr

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