



Planning Commission Report

Meeting Date: June 23, 2011

Subject: **125 South Camden Drive
Residences at Saks Fifth Avenue**
Public hearing regarding project revisions to the proposed Residences at Saks Fifth Avenue condominium project located at 125 South Camden Drive.
PROJECT APPLICANT: Casden Properties

Recommendation: That the Planning Commission:

1. Conduct a public hearing and receive testimony on the proposed project revisions;
2. Continue the Public Hearing to a date uncertain; and
3. Provide direction to staff as appropriate.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report transmits project revisions to the Residences at Saks Fifth Avenue condominium project. The project and its associated EIR were most recently reviewed by the Planning Commission on May 12, 2011. At that meeting the Commission identified several significant design issues associated with the project and requested that the design of the project be revised. The applicant has prepared revised plans in response to the Commission's comments, and this report outlines the project revisions for consideration by the Commission.

Attachment(s):

A. Project Changes Summary Table

Report Author and Contact Information:

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BACKGROUND

File Date	May 26, 2009
Application Complete	September 11, 2009
Subdivision Deadline	N/A
Permit Streamlining	Not Applicable to projects requiring legislative actions
Applicant(s)	Casden Properties - Howard Katz
Owner(s)	Casden Properties, LLC
Representative(s)	Howard Katz and Jennifer Anderson
Prior Project Previews	Planning Commission review of DEIR on January 13, 2011. The Commission provided comments, which are incorporated in the recirculated DEIR.
Prior PC Action	Denied a requested zone text amendment, general plan amendment and alley vacation related to allowing construction of a 40-unit mixed-use condominium project with 327 residential and commercial parking spaces on March 13, 2008 (PC Resolution No.1509).
Prior Council Action	Denied an appeal of Planning Commission Resolution No. 1509

PROPERTY AND NEIGHBORHOOD SETTING

Property Information

Address	125 South Camden Drive
Legal Description	Lots 58, 59, 60, 65, 66, and 67 of Tract No. 6649
Zoning District	R-4-P and R-4X2
General Plan	High Density Multi-Family Residential
Existing Land Use(s)	Surface parking lot that serves commercial uses
Lot Dimensions & Area	Approx. 180' x 127.5' (Camden fronting); 180' x 127.5' (Peck fronting); and 15' x 180' (Portion of Alley). Total site area: 47,700 square feet.
Year Built	1946
Historic Resource	Property is not developed with any structures, and is not listed on any local, state or federal inventory
Protected Trees/Grove	None

Adjacent Zoning and Land Uses

North	C-R-PD, Commercial Uses
South	R-4X2, Multiple Family Residential Uses
East	R-4, Multiple Family Residential Uses
West	R-4 and R-4X2, Multiple Family Residential Uses and Commercial Parking Lot

Circulation and Parking

Adjacent Street(s)	South Camden and Peck Drives
Adjacent Alleys	North/South alley bisects project site, 15-feet in width
Parkways & Sidewalks	South Camden Drive: 12½-foot sidewalk/parkway. South Peck Drive: 12½-foot sidewalk/parkway.
Parking Restrictions	No parking anytime without a permit, and 1-hour meters adjacent to project
Nearest Intersection	Wilshire Boulevard/South Camden Drive and Wilshire Boulevard/South Peck Drive
Circulation Element	Wilshire Boulevard is an arterial/Camden and Peck Drives are local streets

Estimated Daily Trips The portion of South Camden Drive adjacent to the site: 2,361 Daily Trips. Peck Drive was not studied because the project provides no access to Peck; however, City records indicate that Peck Drive carries approximately 1,080 Daily Trips.

PURPOSE OF HEARING

The purpose of this hearing is to review project revisions made by the applicant in response to the Planning Commission's comments. Staff has previously prepared and presented a Draft EIR to the Planning Commission; however, an accurate assessment of the environmental impacts associated with the project cannot be presented until a more accurate project description can be established. As a result, the project revisions are being presented (separate from the EIR) to the Commission for general feedback so that the project description can be refined. Once the project description is refined, the Draft EIR will be updated to accurately reflect the environmental impacts associated with the project. This hearing is not intended to result in a final action on the project, its design, or associated environmental review, and is instead intended to provide the applicant and staff with continued feedback on the project so that the entitlement process can continue moving forward.

PROJECT REVISIONS

Based on the comments received from the Planning Commission and public the applicant has made revisions to the project. The revisions are listed below, and a summary table of the revisions is provided as Attachment 1.

Building Height

The project height was reduced from 65' to 60' on the two northern parcels. The change in height also results in the building having five stories rather than six stories.

Density/Units

The project was reduced from 44 units to 42 units.

Pedestrian Entrances

A pedestrian entrance has been added to the Peck Drive side of the building, and is incorporated into the design of the building's courtyard.

Floor Area

The total floor area of the project was reduced from 134,841 square feet (2.77 to 1 FAR) to 121,207 square feet (2.49 to 1 FAR).

Parking

The total number of parking spaces was increased from 127 spaces to 132 spaces. This a net increase of 5 spaces, but actually results in a 100% increase in guest parking spaces due to the elimination of two units in the building. Guest parking is now proposed at a rate of one space per every two units, rather than the minimum code requirement of one space per every four units.

Building Footprint

The footprint of the corridor at the center of the project that connects the four “clover leaves” was reduced from 1,440 square feet to 450 square feet, which is the minimum footprint needed to provide elevator shafts. This change results in increased courtyard size and building articulation.

Outdoor Living Space

The total outdoor living space was increased from 9,106 square feet to 21,496 square feet. The increase results from building footprint changes and added rooftop recreational areas.

DISCUSSION

The proposed project revisions are a preliminary effort by the applicant to respond to the Commission’s concerns regarding the design of the project. As is discussed above, the purpose of this hearing is to provide preliminary review of the project only, as the environmental review will be updated at a later date. At this time, staff seeks direction from the Commission to determine whether the applicant has made positive changes to the project, and whether additional significant revisions will be required prior to updating the content of the EIR.

NEXT STEPS

It is recommended that the Planning Commission receive public testimony, provide direction to the applicant and staff regarding the project revisions, and continue the hearing to a date uncertain.

Report Reviewed By:



David Reyes, Principal Planner

ATTACHMENT A

Project Changes Summary Table

Summary of Changes to Revised Plans

	Original	Revised	Change
Density/Units	44 units	22 units	-2 units (-4.5%)
Floor Area	134,841 SF	121,207 SF	-13,634 SF (-10%)
FAR	2.77	2.49	-.28 (-10%)
Parking			
Resident	116 spaces	111 spaces	Net change per unit: none +10 spaces (+91%)
Guest	11 spaces	21 spaces	
Recreational Space	No Roof Recreational Space	Rooftop Pool 3,392 SF	
Open Space	19%	19.5%	+0.5 (+3%)
Building Footprint Connecting Building Segments	1,440 SF	450 SF	-990 SF (-69%)
Outdoor Living Space	9,106 SF	21,496 SF	+12,390 SF (+191%)
Maximum Height	66'-0"	60'-0"	-6'-0" (-9%)
Pedestrian Entries	1 (Camden)	2 – Camden Peck	Added pedestrian entry on Peck