Agency Meeting
November 14, 2006
Agency Agenda Item 5A
Public Hearing

Honorable Chair and Members
of the Torrance Redevelopment Agency
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Agency:

SUBJECT: Redevelopment Agency- appeal of approval of a mixed-use development at 1620 Gramercy Avenue.

CUP06-00009, TTM61985R MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT (MICHAEL BIHN)

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission and Deputy Executive Director recommend that the Redevelopment Agency deny the appeal and adopt Resolutions approving a Conditional Use Permit (CUP06-00009) to allow the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven condominium units and a Vesting Tentative Tract Map (TTM61985R) for condominium purposes on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue.

Funding

Not Applicable

BACKGROUND

Prior Hearings and Public Noticing

On August 17, 2005, the Planning Commission denied a request to construct a seven-unit condominium development at this location. The project required a Variation of the Downtown Development Standards to allow a residential use on the ground level. In response to the Planning Commission's concerns, the applicant worked with staff to design a mixed-use development.

On July 19, 2006, the Planning Commission considered CUP06-00009 and TTM61985R to allow the construction of a mixed-use project consisting of seven live-work shopkeeper units. The units were designed with commercial space on the ground level and living space on the upper levels whereby the tenants could reside and operate their business. As live-work units, the owner would be prohibited from leasing the commercial space to another tenant. The Planning Commission was concerned that the commercial space would remain vacant or be converted into living space if the business ceased operation and the owner was prohibited from leasing the space. Public testimony was received that the design of the building was not compatible with the surrounding development. The item was continued to allow the applicant to revise

the plans to address the concerns raised by the Planning Commission and public. On September 20, 2006, the Planning Commission approved the revised project. The Planning Commission's decision to approve the project was appealed on September 25, 2006.

On November 3, 2006, public hearing notices for this item were mailed to property owners in the vicinity and a legal advertisement was published in the newspaper.

Environmental Findings

A project characterized as in-fill development on a project site of no more than five acres is Categorically Exempted pursuant to Section 15332 of the 2003 Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The subdivision of one lot for condominium purposes is Categorically Exempted pursuant to Sections 15315 of California Environmental Quality Act.

ANALYSIS

The project involves the construction of a mixed-use residential-commercial development consisting of three commercial spaces, approximately 450 to 750 square feet in area, on the ground level and seven condominium units, 1,127 to 1,394 square feet in area, located above on the second and third level. The existing one-story commercial buildings on this site will be removed as part of this project.

In response to the concerns raised by the Planning Commission, the project was redesigned as a mixed-use development with separate commercial and living spaces rather than live-work shopkeeper units. Three of the condominium units will include both residential and commercial space. The commercial space will not have direct internal access to the residential space or garages. The tenants of the residential-commercial condominiums will have the option to operate their own business or lease out the commercial space to another tenant. It is envisioned that the commercial space will be occupied by small businesses that cater to pedestrians and do not have a high demand for parking.

A two-car garage for each unit and two open guest parking spaces will be provided and accessed from the alley. Due to the size of the commercial spaces, no on-site parking will be provided for the commercial uses. The two existing curb-cuts for this property will be abandoned and no new curb-cuts are proposed for this project, thereby increasing the availability of on-street parking. Approval of a Special Development Permit by the Community Development is required for new businesses in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area to help ensure that the proposed use will not negatively impact the surrounding uses and parking in the area.

In response to concerns raised at the Planning Commission meetings, the architecture of the building was redesigned to resemble an Irving Gill building, incorporating streamlined and unadorned facades, archways and smooth stucco finish. The design

will be compatible with the existing commercial development and mixed-use projects in area. In order to facilitate pedestrian activity, the commercial spaces were placed at property line. The living space on the upper levels were set back from the street between six and 18 feet to buffer the residences from street activity and to provide a private patio space for each unit.

This project achieves many of the redevelopment goals and will enhance the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area by eliminating physical and economic blight and replacing it with an aesthetically pleasing designed residential-commercial mixed-use development. The project will promote commercial and pedestrian activity and is compatible with mixed-use character of the Downtown area.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:
The Planning Commission considered CUP06-00009 and TTM61985R on July 19, 2006 and September 20, 2006. This item was approved as conditioned by vote of five to one, with Commissioner Gibson dissenting. An appeal of the Planning Commission decision to approve the project was filed on September 25, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,

JEFFERY W. GIBSON
Deputy Executive Director

By _____
Ted Semaan, Manager
Redevelopment & General Plan Divisions

CONCUR:

_____
Jeffery W. Gibson
Deputy Executive Director

NOTED:

_____
LeRoy J. Jackson
Executive Director

Attachments:
A. Resolutions
B. Notice of Appeal
C. Previous Staff Report and Excerpt of Minutes
D. Proof of Service and Publication
E. Correspondence
F. Project Plans **(Limited Distribution)**
G. Chairman's Script **(Limited Distribution**

ATTACHMENT A

RESOLUTION NO. 2006-

A RESOLUTION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT AS PROVIDED FOR IN DIVISION 9, CHAPTER 5, ARTICLE 1 OF THE TORRANCE MUNICIPAL CODE TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF SEVEN CONDOMINIUM UNITS AND APPROXIMATELY 2,000 SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL SPACE ON PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA, COMMERCIAL SECTOR AT 1620 GRAMERCY AVENUE.

CUP06-00009: MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT (MICHAEL BIHN)

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance conducted a public hearing on July 19, 2006 to consider an application for a Conditional Use Permit filed by Michael Mulligan Development (Michael Bihn) to allow the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven condominium units and approximately 2,000 square feet of commercial space on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance continued the item, and a public hearing was conducted on September 20, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission on September 20, 2006 approved CUP06-00009 by a vote of five to one, Commissioner Gibson dissenting; and

WHEREAS, due and legal publication of notice was given to owners of property in the vicinity thereof and due and legal hearings have been held, all in accordance with the provisions of Division 9, Chapter 5, Article 1 of the Torrance Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the project characterized as in-fill development on a project site of no more than five acres is Categorically Exempted pursuant to Section 15332 of the 2005 Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Torrance conducted a public hearing at the meeting of November 7, 2006 to consider a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven condominium units and approximately 2,000 square feet of commercial space on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Torrance does hereby find and determine as follows:

A) That the property address is 1620 Gramercy Avenue;

B) That the property is located on Lots 11 and 12, Block 5 of the Torrance Tract;

C) That the proposed mixed-use development is conditionally permitted in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector;

D) That the mixed-use development will not impair the integrity and character of the zoning district in which it is to be located because this project is consistent with the development pattern of the area which includes commercial and residential mixed use projects;

E) That the subject site is physically suitable for the type of land use being proposed because the project satisfies the residential density standard of the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area;

F) That the proposed mixed-use development will be compatible with existing and proposed future land uses within the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector and the general area in which the proposed use is to be located because the project is consistent with the Zoning and General Plan land use designations. There are other mixed use developments similar to the project located in Downtown;

G) That the proposed mixed-use development will encourage and be consistent with the orderly development of the City as provided for in the General Plan because the project complies with floor area ratio and open space requirements;

H) That the project will not discourage the appropriate existing or planned future use of surrounding properties or tenancies because the project will enhance a physically and economically blighted area;

I) That there will be adequate provisions for water, sanitation, and public utilities and services to ensure that the proposed development is not detrimental to public health and safety;

J) That there is adequate provision for public access to serve the proposed development because the site has both street and alley access. Existing curb-cuts for this property will be eliminated and no new curb-cuts proposed for this project, hence, increasing the availability of on-street parking;

K) That the proposed location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed use would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety,

convenience or welfare, or to the property of persons located in the area because the project will comply with the condominium development standards;

L) That the project will not produce any or all of the following results:

1. Damage or nuisance from noise, smoke, odor, dust, or vibration,
2. Hazard from explosion, contamination or fire,
3. Hazard occasioned by unusual volume or character of traffic or the congregating of large numbers of people or vehicles; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CUP06-00009, filed by Michael Mulligan Development (Michael Bihn) to allow the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven condominium units and approximately 2,000 square feet of commercial space on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue is hereby APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

1. That the use of the subject property for a mixed-use development shall be subject to all conditions imposed in Conditional Use Permit 06-00009 and any amendments thereto or modifications thereof as may be approved from time to time pursuant to Section 92.28.1 et seq. of the Torrance Municipal Code on file in the office of the Community Development Director of the City of Torrance; and further, that the said use shall be established or constructed and shall be maintained in conformance with such maps, plans, specifications, drawings, applications or other documents presented by the applicant to the Community Development Department and upon which the Planning Commission relied in granting approval;

2. That if this Conditional Use Permit 06-00009 is not used within one year after granting of the permit, it shall expire and become null and void unless extended by the Community Development Director for an additional period as provided for in Section 92.27.1;

3. That the final architectural elevation drawings for the project shall be submitted to the Community Development Department for review and approval; (Redevelopment)

4. That the project floor area ratio (FAR) shall not exceed 1.0 using the net lot area after all street and alley dedications. The floor area ratio shall be calculated using the methods described in the Torrance Municipal Code, include gross square footage of living and commercial space, and exclude the square footage of garage areas ; (Redevelopment)

5. That a copy of the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions shall be submitted to the Community Development Director for approval by the City Attorney for prior to the issuance of building permits to ensure that all conditions required by the Planning Commission to be included in the CC&R's are in fact properly included in the

document and a copy of the document shall be submitted to the Community Development Department for placement in the permanent file; (Redevelopment)

6. That the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions shall make a provision for a tie breaker vote; (Redevelopment)

7. That the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions shall disclose to prospective residents and tenants that the subject property is located within the Downtown Commercial Sector and is surrounded by a variety of commercial uses and activities; (Redevelopment)

8. That the Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions shall contain a provision that prohibits the conversion of ground floor commercial space to living space. Business activity including storage shall not be conducted within the living space, garages, balconies, private and common open spaces, or exterior of building; (Redevelopment)

9. That food and beverage establishments within the commercial spaces shall be subject to the approval of the Community Development Director; (Redevelopment)

10. That a Special Development Permit shall be approved by the Community Development Director and a City business license shall be obtained prior to commencement of the business operation; (Redevelopment)

11. That a landscape and irrigation plan shall be submitted to the Community Development Department for approval prior to the issuance of any building permits and shall be implemented prior to occupancy. The plan shall utilize drought resistant/xeriscape plant materials and shall provide state-of-the-art water saving irrigation system and/or drip irrigation for larger shrubs and trees; (Redevelopment)

12. That the landscape plan shall provide screening for mechanical equipment, air conditioning units, transformers, or backflow devices subject to the approval of the Community Development Director; (Redevelopment)

13. That the exterior color and material samples shall be submitted to the Community Development Department for approval prior to the issuance of any building permits. Exterior materials and finishes shall be compatible with the surrounding development; (Redevelopment)

14. That a detail of all walls and fences shall be provided to the Community Development Department for approval prior to the issuance of any building permits; (Redevelopment)

15. That the driveway shall include sections of decorative/stamped concrete and that a detail of the driveway shall be submitted to the Community Development Department for approval prior to the issuance of building permits; (Redevelopment)

16. That electric roll-up garage doors shall be installed for each unit; (Redevelopment)

17. That air conditioning units and other equipment to be placed on the ground or on the roof shall be screened to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director. All proposed equipment shall be located away from street if possible. The method of screening shall be subject to the approval of the Community Development Department; (Redevelopment & Environmental)

18. That exterior lighting shall be decorative in nature and shall be directed away from neighboring properties; (Redevelopment)

19. That a noise study to attenuate noise inside of the living units to 45 dba shall be provided. The developer shall implement any feasible measures, such as the installation of sound rated windows, solid exterior doors, and insulation, to mitigate potential noise impacts generated from surrounding commercial; (Environmental)

20. That minimum four-inch contrasting address numerals shall be provided for each residential unit; (Environmental)

21. That a trash enclosure with solid gates shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director. An area for the storage of bins for storage and retrieval of recyclable materials shall be provided within the trash enclosure; (Environmental)

22. That guest parking spaces shall be clearly identified for guests only and shall not encroach into the alley; (Environmental)

23. That half of the alley shall be designed and reconstructed with eight-foot (8') wide A.C. and four-foot (4') P.C.C. center gutter along the width of the property including half alley aprons and appropriate transition work. The alley plan by private engineer shall be approved prior to grading permit; (Engineering)

24. That the garage floor elevation shall be a minimum three inches higher than the designed edge of alley. Grading plans shall reflect this; (Engineering)

25. That the Final Tract Map shall specify which units will contain both commercial and residential space prior to recordation; (Redevelopment/Engineering)

26. That for the condominium units containing commercial and residential space, the commercial space and residential space shall not be sold separately from each other; (Redevelopment)

27. That all conditions of other City departments received prior to or during the meeting shall be met.

Introduced, approved and adopted this 7th day of November 2006.

_____
Chairman of the Redevelopment Agency
City of Torrance

ATTEST:

_____
Agency Secretary

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

JOHN FELLOWS III, Agency Attorney

By _____

RESOLUTION NO. 2006-

A RESOLUTION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP TO ALLOW THE SUBDIVISION FOR CONDOMINIUM PURPOSES ON PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA, COMMERCIAL SECTOR AT 1620 GRAMERCY AVENUE.

TTM61985R: MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT (MICHAEL BIHN)

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Torrance conducted a public hearing on July 19, 2006 to consider an application for a Vesting Tentative Tract Map filed by Michael Mulligan Development (Michael Bihn) to allow the subdivision for condominium purposes on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission continued of the City of Torrance continued the item, and a public hearing was conducted on September 20, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission on September 20, 2006 approved TTM61985R by a vote of five to one, Commissioner Gibson dissenting; and

WHEREAS, due and legal publication of notice was given to owners of property in the vicinity thereof and due and legal hearings have been held, all in accordance with the provisions of Division 9, Chapter 2, Article 29 of the Torrance Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the project is determined to be Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15315 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Torrance conducted a public hearing at the meeting of November 7, 2006 to consider a Vesting Tentative Tract Map to allow subdivision for condominium purposes on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Torrance does hereby find and determine as follows:

A) That the property address is 1620 Gramercy Avenue;

B) That the property is located on Lots 11 and 12, Block 5 of the Torrance Tract;

C) The project is in compliance with both the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector zoning designation and the Commercial Center General Plan land use designation for this site;

D) The subdivision will not interfere with the orderly development of the City and be compatible with the existing area; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that TTM61985R, filed by Michael Mulligan Development (Michael Bihn) to allow the subdivision for condominium purposes on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue is hereby APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

1. That the subdivision of the subject property for condominium purposes for a mixed-use development consisting of seven condominium units and approximately 2,000 square feet of commercial space shall be subject to all conditions imposed in Vesting Tentative Tract Map 61985R and any amendments thereto or modifications thereof as may be approved from time to time pursuant to Section 92.28.1 et seq. of the Torrance Municipal Code on file in the office of the Community Development Director of the City of Torrance; and further, that the said subdivision shall be established and shall be maintained in conformance with such maps, plans, specifications, drawings, applications or other documents presented by the applicant to the Community Development Department and upon which the Planning Commission relied in granting approval;

2. That if this Vesting Tentative Tract Map 61985R is not used within two (2) years after granting of the permit, it shall expire and become null and void unless extended by the Community Development Director for an additional period as provided for in Section 92.27.1;

3. That all conditions of other City departments received prior to or during the meeting shall be met.

Introduced, approved and adopted this 7th day of November 2006.

_____
Chairman of the Redevelopment Agency
City of Torrance

ATTEST:

_____
Agency Secretary

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

JOHN FELLOWS III, Agency Attorney

By _____

ATTACHMENT B

CITY OF TORRANCE

APPEAL FORM

2006 SEP 25 AM 10:47

AN APPEAL TO:
- ☐ City Council
- ☒ Planning Commission
- ☐ _____

RETURN TO:
Office of the City Clerk
3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance CA 90509-2970
310/618-2870

RE: CUP06-00009 TTM61985R
(Case Number and Name)

Address/Location of Subject Property 1620 Gramercy Ave. Torr. 90501
(If applicable)

Decision of:
- ☐ Administrative Hearing Board
- ☐ Airport Commission
- ☐ Civil Service Commission
- ☐ Environmental Quality & Energy Conservation Commission
- ☐ License Review Board
- ☒ Planning Commission
- ☐ Community Development Director
- ☐ Special Development Permit
- ☐ Other _____

Date of decision: Sept 20, 06 **Appealing:** ☐ APPROVAL ☐ DENIAL

Reason for Appeal: *Be as detailed as necessary. Additional information can be presented at the hearing. Attach pages as required with additional information and/or signatures.)*

CEQA Guidelines, & Design of Product.

Name of Appellant Save Historic Old Torrance

Address of Appellant 2028 Gramercy Ave. Torr. Ca 90501

Telephone Number (310) 320-0269

Signature Don Barnard

For office use only:
Appeal Fee paid $ 160.00 Date 9/25/06 Received by MA

Notice to: Community Development Department: ☒ Planning ☐ Building & Safety
☒ City Council ☐ City Manager ☐ City Attorney ☐ Other Department(s) _____

CITY OF TORRANCE

INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: September 25, 2006

RECEIVED
SEP 25 2006
CITY OF TORRANCE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPT.

TO: **Jeffery Gibson, Community Development**

FROM: City Clerk's Office

SUBJECT: **Appeal 2006-12**

Attached is Appeal 2006-12 received in this office on September 25, 2006 from Don Barnard, Save Historic Old Torrance, 2028 Gramercy Avenue, Torrance, CA 90501. This appeal is of the Planning Commission's approval on September 20, 2006 regarding CUP06-00009, TTM61985R: MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT (MICHAEL BIHN) located at 1620 Gramercy Avenue, Torrance, CA 90501 citing GEQA Guidelines and design of product.

The appeal fee of $160.00, paid by check, was accepted by the City Clerk.

TMC SECTION 11.5.3. PROCEDURE AFTER FILING.

a) Upon receipt of the notice of appeal, and the appeal fee, the City Clerk shall notify the concerned City officials, bodies or departments that an appeal has been filed and shall transmit a copy of the appeal documents to such officials, bodies or departments.

b) The concerned City officials, bodies or departments shall prepare the necessary reports for the City Council, provide public notices, posting, mailing or advertising in the same manner as provided for the original hearing or decision making process, request the appeal be placed on the agenda for hearing before the City Council within thirty (30) days of receipt of the said notice of appeal, and notify the applicant in writing of the time, date and place of the hearing not less than five (5) days before the Council hearing.

Sue Herbers

Sue Herbers, CMC
City Clerk

cc: City Council

ATTACHMENT C

September 20, 2006

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION

8. CONTINUED HEARINGS

8B. CUP06-00009, TTM61985R: MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT (MICHAEL BIHN)

Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven condominium units and approximately 2,000 square feet of commercial space and a Vesting Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Santana introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting consisting of amended Code requirements and correspondence received subsequent to the completion of the agenda item.

Michael Bihn, representing Michael Mulligan Development, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval. He briefly reviewed changes made to the project in response to concerns discussed at the July 19, 2006 meeting, including eliminating the connection between the residential and commercial space, decreasing the number and enlarging the commercial spaces, and modifying the façade to resemble Irving Gill buildings in the area.

Commissioner Browning noted an error in the plans concerning an archway that was not centered over a doorway, and Mr. Bihn confirmed that this error would be corrected.

Debbie Hays read a letter on behalf of Janet Payne, 1318 Engracia Avenue, in which she stated that while it was not a perfect design, she believes the project is workable; that it addresses her concerns about maintaining commercial space on the first level and including Irving Gill-type elements in the architectural design; and that she felt the revised plans reflect a willingness to cooperate and compromise.

Don Barnard, President of Save Historic Old Torrance (SHOT), stated that he was disappointed in the revised plans because the first level commercial space does not resemble storefronts in the area and the project's overall appearance is that of a condominium complex. He expressed concerns that the commercial component of the

downtown area will be destroyed if residential developments are allowed to become dominant. He noted that the developer did not share the plans with SHOT even though he was directed by the Commission to do so. He urged the Commission to send the plans back to the drawing board.

Bonnie Mae Barnard, Save Historic Old Torrance, expressed concerns about the erosion of the business district in the downtown area, noting that that the proposed project replaces 3,653 square feet of commercial space with 1,962 square feet. She noted that the owner of The Crest (1625 Cabrillo Avenue) submitted a letter indicating that he was very concerned about having residences immediately adjacent to his business. She suggested as an alternative, that the existing chalet-style storefront could be remodeled and expanded. She contended that the California Environmental Quality Act requires that an Environmental Impact Report be prepared before the project is considered because it is located in a historic area as evidenced by a letter previously submitted by a recognized expert in historical preservation.

In response to Commissioner Browning's inquiry, Planning Manager Lodan confirmed that this was the third time this project has been considered by the Commission.

Commissioner Horwich questioned whether it was typical of the area to have mixed-use developments with commercial space on the ground floor and residences above.

Sr. Planning Associate Chun advised that the area started out with commercial uses on the ground level and residences above, however, some of the buildings have been converted to all commercial use.

Commissioner Horwich stated that he believed the applicant had addressed concerns about the previous project, including the potential that the commercial space would be used for storage, and that he agreed with Ms. Payne that it's not a perfect plan, but it's workable.

Commissioner Busch asked about the possibility of changing the façade so it would look more like storefronts in the area.

Sr. Planning Associate Chun explained that different standards were in effect at the time these buildings were constructed, which included no parking or setback requirements, and this type of building would not be allowed under current standards.

Commissioner Busch asked about the vacancy factor, and Sr. Planning Associate Chun reported that there is a lot of turnover of businesses in this particular area.

Commissioner Busch noted that William Fitzgerald, the owner of The Crest, had requested in his letter that a condition be included requiring all condominium owners and occupants to sign a waiver acknowledging the rights of The Crest to have live music and entertainment.

Deputy City Attorney Whitham advised that she would not recommend imposing a condition requiring residents to waive their future rights, but noted that it is a common

practice to include language in the purchase agreement and/or CC&Rs disclosing that there is a business with live music in close proximity.

Commissioner Busch asked about Mr. Fitzgerald's request that a sound wall be constructed along the property line between the condominium complex and The Crest.

Sr. Planning Associate Chun advised that building a sound wall would probably not be feasible, however, the applicant will be required to mitigate noise from surrounding businesses.

Planning Associate Kevin Joe noted that a condition was included (No. 19) requiring that an acoustical study be provided and mitigation measures implemented, including double-paned windows, solid doors, and insulation, to address potential noise impacts.

Commissioner Browning stated that he believed the applicant had done his best to address concerns about the project and while it may not be perfect, he was willing to support it.

MOTION: Commissioner Busch, seconded by Commissioner Horwich, moved to close the public hearing; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwich moved for the approval of CUP06-00009 and TTM61985R, as conditioned, including all findings set forth by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Browning and passed by a 5-1 roll call vote, with Commissioner Gibson dissenting.

Planning Associate Santana read aloud the number and title of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-084 and 06-085.

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved for the adoption of Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 06-084 and 06-085. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Uchima and passed by a 5-1 roll call vote, with Commissioner Gibson dissenting.

Supplemental #1 to Agenda Item No. 8B

To: Members of the Planning Commission

From: Community Development Department

Date: September 20, 2006

Subject: Conditional Use Permit-CUP06-00009, Vesting Tentative Tract Map-TTM61985R Michael Mulligan (Michael Bihn)

Location: 1620 Gramercy Avenue

The following Engineering Division amended code requirements shall apply to this project:

1. Close abandoned driveway on Cravens Avenue and Gramercy Avenue with full height curb and gutter to match existing.
2. A separate water service with radio read meter system is required for each individual residential and commercial unit.
3. A fire hydrant flow test shall be performed to determine the capability of the public water system to supply the project.

Correspondence was received after Agenda Item 8B was prepared and is attached herewith for your consideration.

The Community Development Department continues to recommend approval of the request as conditioned.

Prepared by,

Kevin Joe
Planning Associate, AICP

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Semaan
Division Manager

Attachments:
1. Correspondence

TED

The Crest

AUG 22 2006

Certified Mail
Return Receipt Requested

August 20, 2006

Mr. Jeffery W. Gibson
Community Development Director
City of Torrance
Community Development Department
3031 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90503

Re: CUP05-00019, TTM61985, VAR05-0001:
Petition of Michael Mulligan Development (Michael Bihn)

Dear Mr. Gibson:

Reference is made to the above notice that I recently received and for which I thank you. I am writing you to put on record my objections to this particular development because it directly concerns The Crest and its future. I have owned The Crest for over 25 years and have spent most of my time building up the business by promoting themes such as live music. We have carefully retained all necessary permits and licenses and paid all necessary taxes.

One of the reasons I bought The Crest is because it was in a commercial area. Thus, I have been able to operate since the inception of my ownership without complaint from any of the local property owners or occupants. I now feel very threatened by the proposed condominium development. Specifically, the development will be right next to our back door and, according to my calculations, only 13 feet from The Crest. In order to

minimize problems under the current development concept, I can only recommend that if the City grants the request of the developer, that the developer be required to:

a) Build a "sound wall" along the property line between the condominium complex and The Crest; and

b) That the Developer be required to include a clause in its CC&R's requiring that all condominium owners and occupants sign a waiver acknowledging the rights of The Crest to have live music and entertainment.

The only other viable alternative I can see would be to have the developer expand his program such as to purchase and develop the surrounding commercial properties including, but not limited, to the Brighton, The Crest, and the Pawn shop. (Please refer to my letter dated August 9, 2005).

I appreciate your taking my concerns into account and I encourage you and the developers to contact me if you have any questions or suggestions in regard to resolving this potential conflict.

Very truly yours,

William J. Fitzgerald

WJF: kdm

September 15, 2006

Chairperson Jim Fauk
City of Torrance Planning Commission
3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, California 90503

RE: CUP06-00009, TTM61985R: MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT (MICHAEL BIHN) - 1620 GRAMERCY AVENUE.

Honorable Chairperson and Commissioners:

As a citizen active in the community, I'm writing in support of the redesign for the above-referenced mixed-use development primarily because it complements the historic buildings designed by famed modernist architect Irving John Gill on either side of the development. The project also represents a reduced mass from the original proposal, with stepped back second stories. However, I have some reservations as well.

History
Gill was hired as resident architect to design structures in the Model Industrial City known as the 1912 Town of Torrance. His designs reaffirm his belief in the fundamental truths of social architecture: the lasting beauty of the straight line, the arch, the cube and the circle, and the need to create functional housing for the "common workingman."

Housing above commercial establishments was an integral part of the original Model City design. It is now in vogue today because it gives the sense of an "Urban Village" as in days gone by; everything oriented toward the pedestrian, the family and the common person. One can imagine residents calling to one another from open windows in second-story units of the Brighton and what is known today as the "Lucio's building."

Reservations
- First, density: do we really need *seven* more condos downtown?
- Secondly, the overall design is not as pedestrian-friendly and family-oriented as it could be. At street level, we could use a pedestrian-attracting business like a Starbuck's and low walls, water features and pleasant landscaping where people could sit and visit a while. The only other nighttime pedestrian attractions in Old Torrance now are Foster's Freeze, the cigar store and pubs. It would be worth a waiver on the parking space requirement to attract a people-oriented gourmet coffee business like that.

- Finally, why is there no roof garden where families can dine, recline and watch the Fourth of July fireworks from Wilson Park? The design has only a maintenance roof access. This wastes roof space and an enhanced family feel to the neighborhood.

The city needs to rethink its plans for Old Torrance now that a new City Council is in place and perhaps take a cue from Del Amo mall in making this a more pedestrian- and family-friendly space where people can walk, congregate, recreate and relax.

I'm sorry that a scheduling conflict prevents my attendance to testify in person and hear your debate. Thanks for your consideration of these remarks.

Sincerely,

Liz Fobes, Citizen Activist
1731½ Andreo Avenue
(Old) Torrance, California 90501
1.310.212.6186

Joe, Kevin

From: Chun, Carolyn
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2006 8:48 AM
To: Joe, Kevin
Subject: FW: CUP06-00009 TTMG1985R MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT 1620 GRAMMERCY AVE

-----Original Message-----
From: Herbers, Sue
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2006 8:13 AM
To: Chun, Carolyn; Lodan, Gregg
Cc: Palanca, Genie
Subject: FW: CUP06-00009 TTMG1985R MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT 1620 GRAMMERCY AVE

For the record.

-----Original Message-----
From: Mary Bray [mailto:mbray2@socal.rr.com]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2006 11:34 PM
To: sherbers@torrnet.com
Subject: CUP06-00009 TTMG1985R MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT 1620 GRAMMERCY AVE

Chairperson Jim Faulk

City of Torrance Planning Commission

In regards to the proposed condo development on Grammercy and Cravens. I feel the downtown area is in need of more places with
pedestrian friendly atmospheres. Areas to sit down eat ,drink
coffee with pleasant surroundings. There are some places that have this ,but they are afterthoughts. They were not designed with the intention of outside seating dining.(Example Eat at Rudys) .
Please consider this in the plans for this new condo/storefront project. Small , shady ,perhaps low retaining walls to sit,or put small cafe tables in a small flat area. It doesn't have to be a big area .

Thank you,
Mary Bray
1731 Andreo Ave
Torrance 310 212 3082

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No virus found in this outgoing message.
Checked by AVG Free Edition.
Version: 7.1.405 / Virus Database: 268.12.4/449 - Release Date: 9/15/2006

SAVE HISTORIC OLD TORRANCE

2028 Gramercy Ave, Torrance, CA 90501 310 320-0269

501 C3 Tax ID # 450527270

email: save_historic_old_torrance@msn.com

website:

www.savehistoricoldtorrance.com

Planning Commission, 3031 Torrance Blvd., Torrance, CA 90501

September 18, 2006

Dear Chairperson Fauk and Commissioners:

Save Historic Old Torrance appreciates that the applicant made some attempt to discover the style of Irving Gill. Even though what we seem to have before us looks nothing like the two Gill buildings that are viewed from the proposed site of 1620 Gramercy Ave, but a conglomerate of Gill aspects. Nevertheless, the attempt is appreciated. However we must ask that you not grant the conditional use permit required in order for this project to proceed as it is before you tonight. The idea that Janet Payne suggested via her letter at our last meeting, and that Save Historic Old Torrance endorsed, was if a new building is going to be a mixed use building, why not make it look like the other two Gills buildings, which can be seen from this site, to complete the triangle of land there. The triangular land faces the corner of Carson St. & Cabrillo, Cabrillo & Gramercy, and Gramercy & Cravens Ave.

However, we must ask that you deny this project. We would have appreciated an opportunity to meet with Mr. Bihn, the representative for Mulligan Development, to assist in creation of a project that Save Historic Old Torrance could support, but no such contact was made, even though recommended by Commissioner Bush.

1. The project is not physically suitable for the type of land use being proposed because the basic premise of this project is *still* wrong for this corner of the business sector in the Historic Business District. This proposed project is an upside down project of condominiums with three store fronts, almost as an afterthought.

> Save Historic Old Torrance and the city of Torrance are interested in the revitalization of this Business District. We would hope that the project would, first and foremost, provide *business* to the Business District. This site could be the site that would attract much needed business such as a pizza parlor or a business like Kelly's Coffee and Fudge, to name a few, or even an arcade for the young people. Each of these would not only provide the city with additional revenue, it would first and foremost be promoting our Business District.
>
> The retention of seven condominiums from the last plans and the reduction of commercial square footage from 3,000 to 1962 square feet, demonstrates that this is NOT a project consistent with the development of business in the Historic Business District. In

fact, the commercial aspect of this project is soo reduced that it doesn't even require parking spaces!

Truly this project is upside down. This area needs viable businesses. Currently in the buildings that are on the property at 1620 Gramercy there are seven business locations. This project suggests reducing that to three: one 450 sq. ft, one a little over 600 sq. ft, and one 750 sq. ft.

2. The project will impair the integrity and character of the zoning district (if approved) because its primary characteristic is that of condominiums, not business, the proposed mixed-use development will not be compatible with existing land uses in the Downtown Redevelopment Project area/Historic Business District. In fact, this project is out of character with those buildings visible and near this site.

On Cravens there are no mixed use buildings. Instead, there are viable businesses and professional offices. On this block of Gramercy (on the same side of the street) there are only two other buildings, one is the Gill building, which is on the corner of Cabrillo and Gramercy, and which has the lower floor completely as businesses leased out by one owner, who has a viable interest in assuring them leased. It also has residents on the upper floor—all owned by the same owner of the entire building. In between the Gill building and this site is another building that is strictly a commercial enterprise. The other Gill building is on the corner of Cabrillo and Cravens Avenue (formerly the Brighton Hotel) and it is the same style : all businesses on the bottom and residents on top—all owned by the same owner. It is the dominance of condominiums which makes this project incompatible with the surrounding area. The primary focus of a structure on the street facing Cravens must be business if it is to be compatible with the street, and to be consistent with the other mixed used buildings in the Historic Business District, it needs to have business on the bottom and living above.

3. This proposed model of ownership of the store fronts poses a detrimental threat to the public interest, health (especially business health), and to the character of the Business District.

The ownership of the storefronts as proposed in this project is to be the owners of the condominiums, who <u>may</u> lease them out. Again, this is not compatible with the character of this Business District as it places the emphasis on the condominiums and NOT on having businesses that support the Business District, and may lead to vacant store fronts or worse yet, papered over windows on store fronts.
The Dominant Business District model of ownership in the Historic Business District is that storefronts below owned by a single owner, with living quarters above, also owned by the same owner. Condominiums, above a business, owned by the resident, are a different concept for this area. However, we believe that it may be workable if the lower portion, the business portion, is not owned by the condominium owner, but by a single owner. The proposed ownership as stated in this project is a threat and danger to the Business District.

Save Historic Old Torrance regrets that we are unable to support this project in its current state and that you consider what that a better use of this site can benefit the city, the Business District, the applicant, and the people of Torrance. Therefore, we ask that you deny this project on the basis that it has an ownership plan that is unhealthy for the area; it impairs the integrity and character of the zoning district, and that you find it not suitable for this site as it is a residential project in the commercial sector.

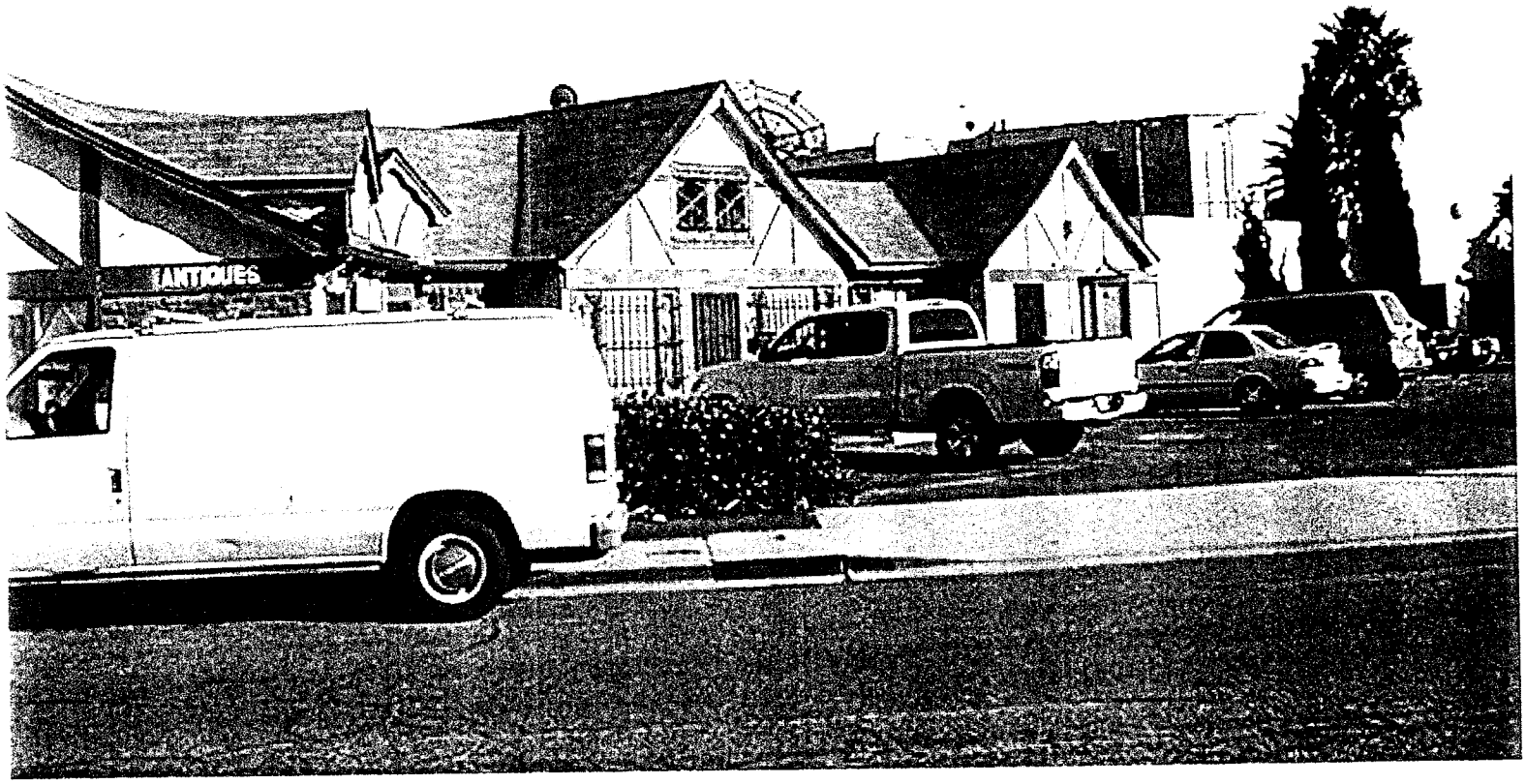
Thank you for your consideration.

Best Wishes,

Don Barnard

Don Barnard, President

LEKA VIEIRA
ACADEMY


ANTIQUES

CRAVENS DENTAL

Save Historic Old Torrance
The Zamperini House
2028 Gramercy Ave
Torrance, CA 90501

City of Torrance
Planning Commission
3031 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90503
September 20, 2006

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of Save Historic Old Torrance and its over 250 members, we ask you to deny this project at 1620 Gramercy. A conditional use permit is not something you must grant, and in this case, in haste to make a profit on condominiums, it ignores the essence of the area and the needs of the area in which it is proposed.

This proposed project has a few commercial storefronts because that's the only way they can get you to approve condominiums on this site. The current building, built in 1949 offers a unique architectural Chalet style, and **has 3,653 square feet of commercial business** site in the commercial sector of the Historic Business District in the area overseen by the Redevelopment Agency.

The Redevelopment Plan adopted July 10, 1979 Section II, (S 300)A states: The Agency proposes a comprehensive, coordinated and sequential process aimed at eliminating and preventing the conditions of physical, economic and social blight, and at reestablishing social, **economic** and physical **stability** of the downtown area. There is no instance of blight on Gramercy Avenue or on Cravens Avenue (the corner of which is the proposed site of this project), and every commercial site on both streets is occupied and operating. So, the only thing needed at this site is the reestablish of *its* economic stability. It appears that commercial businesses have not been operating out of the site for some time, and that the owner has neglected the maintenance. Renovating, expanding, or even creating more business space, would support the reestablishment of its economic stability, as would be soliciting the type of businesses that don't exist in the Historic Business District..

We do not have a shortage of condominiums in the city of Torrance, in fact a plethora of them are being built. In fact, if you've read some of the articles in the Daily Breeze as of late, you have read that builders are offering incentives in order to get purchaser. We're still building condominiums throughout Torrance, but especially in the 90501 zip code and we don't know yet if many of them will become rentals as the real estate market continues to slow.

So, the conditional use permit required to allow the addition of condominiums on a street that has none, barring the anomaly where the theatre was, does not warrant the *loss* of business possibilities in the Historic Business District. The city of Torrance's Historic

Business District does not *need* housing on this street in the commercial sector, but we do *need* businesses and professional buildings that will bring services to the people of Torrance. A business square footage reduction from 3,653 feet to 1,962 square feet doesn't support the economic development of the business sector.

Although the building on this site is not from the part of the original city business buildings, it is of a unique architectural style, and over 50 years in age. Both, the unique style and over 50 years in age, are part of the requirements for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. You are already aware that an Architect of over 25 years has given his expert opinion that the area may qualify for the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, although at first appears, because this project is being classified as "in-fill development," that it is categorically exempted of the 2005 CEQA guidelines, the exemption does not apply because it does not consider the environmental impact to the historic area. Although the area has not be designated by the city as historic, the expert opinion has been substantiated in appellate court to be sufficient grounds for a fair argument to require a CEQA Review and Report that considers alternatives such as renovation and rehabilitation. Therefore, we ask that you deny this project until an Environmental Impact Review and Report be done, and only after those findings have been made public, and the public had opportunity to respond, that the project be considered.

Thank you for listening and for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Bonnie Mae Barnard
Bonnie Mae Barnard
Vice President

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8B

TO: Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: General Plan and Redevelopment Division

DATE: September 20, 2006

SUBJECT: Conditional Use Permit – CUP06-00009, TTM61985R
Michael Mulligan Development (Michael Bihn)

LOCATION: 1620 Gramercy Avenue

The Planning Commission previously considered CUP06-00009 and TTM61985R, a request to allow the construction of a mixed use development consisting of seven live-work condominium units and a Vesting Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes, on July 19, 2006. Due to concerns raised during the public hearing, the project was continued to allow the applicant to revise the project plans.

During the meeting, concerns were raised about how the live-work units would function and the architectural design of the project. The project was initially designed as live-work shopkeeper units, whereby the resident would be allowed to operate a business from the respective commercial space that was connected to the unit via the garage. The owner would be prohibited from leasing the commercial space to another tenant. The conversion and use of the commercial space as living space, storage area or non-commercial use and the commercial space remaining vacant should the business cease operation were issues raised at the meeting. The Planning Commission indicated that they would support relieving the parking standards for a mixed-use project where the residential and commercial space were not connected and the commercial space could be leased out separately. In addition, there was testimony that the design of the project was not compatible with the surrounding commercial development and the project should be designed to complement the commercial buildings in the Downtown area, in particular the Irving Gill designed buildings.

In response to the comments received during the Planning Commission meeting, the applicant removed the physical connection between the commercial space and residential unit. The number of commercial spaces was reduced from seven to three units and the commercial spaces enlarged. The commercial space will range in size from approximately 450 to 750 square feet. Three of the condominium units will include both residential and commercial space. The tenants of these units will have the option to operate their own business or lease out the commercial space if they were unable to use the space for their own business, however the commercial and residential spaces may not be sold separately from each other. The size of the building was reduced in order to comply with the 1.0 floor area ratio requirement.

The design of the building has been modified to resemble an Irving Gill building. The building features a streamlined design that is typical of Gill buildings by incorporating, large archways, shallow pitch Spanish tile roof, window awnings on the ground level, and stucco finish.

Please see the revised project summary below:

Statistical Information	
Lot Area Gross/Net after dedications	11,613 sq. ft./11,067 sq. ft.
Commercial Space	1,962 sq. ft. (approx. 450 to 750 sq. ft.)
Floor Area Ratio (excluding garage)	1.00 (1,962+9,152)/11,067 sq. ft.
Building Height	30 feet (residential) 14 feet (commercial)

Unit	Bedrooms	Living Space	Open Space (adjusted)
1	2	1,127 sq. ft.	675 sq. ft.
2	3	1,370 sq. ft.	775 sq. ft.
3	3	1,394 sq. ft.	713 sq. ft.
4	3	1,370 sq. ft.	710 sq. ft.
5	3	1,394 sq. ft.	713 sq. ft.
6	3	1,370 sq. ft.	775 sq. ft.
7	2	1,127 sq. ft.	675 sq. ft.
Total	**19**	**9,152 sq. ft.**	**5,036 sq. ft.**

Project complies with the residential parking requirements with two-car garage provided for each unit and two open guest parking spaces off of the alley. Due to the size of the commercial spaces, no parking will be provided for the commercial space. The commercial space will be intended for businesses that have a low demand for parking or cater to pedestrian activity. The project satisfies open space requirements by providing private patio and balcony areas for each unit.

Based on the proposed revisions and the findings stated in the resolutions, staff continues to recommend approval of the project as conditioned.

Prepared by,

Kevin Joe, AICP
Planning Associate

Respectfully submitted,

for Ted Semaan
Division Manager

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Resolutions
2. Correspondence
3. Minutes and Previous Staff Report from July 19, 2006
4. Revised Site Plan, Floor Plans, Elevations, & Tentative Tract Map

August 21, 2006

Mrs. Carolyn Chun
Redevelopment Planner
Community Development Department
City of Torrance
3031 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90503

Dear Mrs. Chun,

In response to Planning Commissions direction at it's July 19th meeting to remove the interior physical connection between the commercial space and the residential units, increase the square footage of the commercial units, and give the building an Irving Gill look, we have done the following:

1. removed the interior stairways connecting the commercial space and the residential units (see plans);
2. reduce the number of commercial units from 7 to 3 to increase there size (see plans);
3. changed the elevations based on an Irving Gill building in San Diego and two of Gills best works in Torrance, the Depot and the Bridge over Torrance Blvd. (see attached pictures) including arches on all the ground floor windows and doors (used in the model building and on the Gill Bridge over Torrance Blvd., increasing the ground floor wall height in place of the decorative metal railing, used a wall in place of the decorative metal railing on the balconies, replacing the decorative lighting fixtures with simpler, functionally designed fixtures (Gill building were always functional , simple, and unadorned), reduced the number of stairs and relocated them to further simplify the elevations, used large operable windows in the residential units to provide natural light and air ventilation (a typical Gill design feature), and decreased the pitch of the roof to that of the tile roof of the Depot to tie the building in with Gill's best work in Torrance.

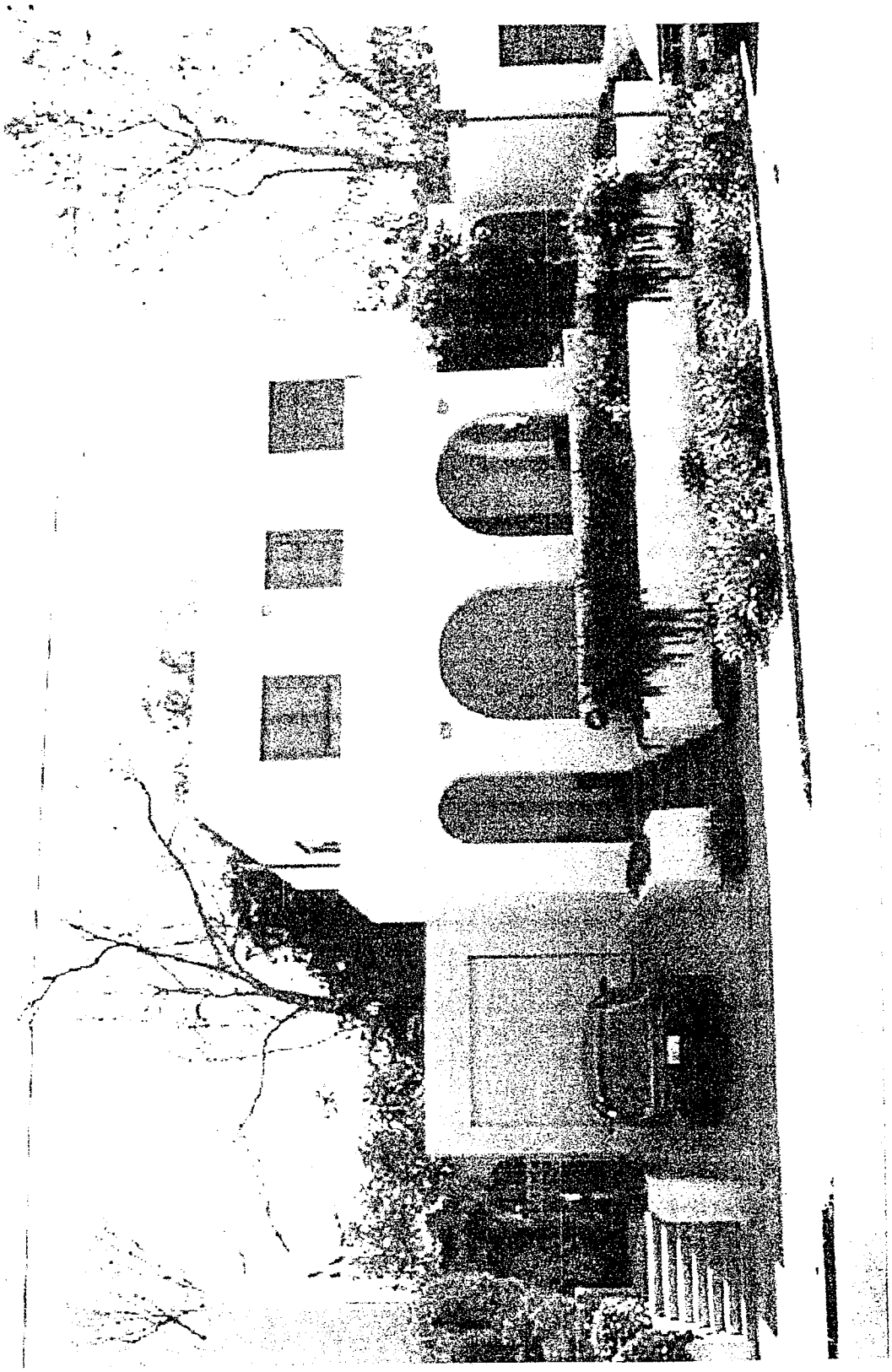
We believe this fulfills all the changes to the previous, second submission, that the Planning Commission indicate would make the project acceptable. In addition the floor area ratio has been reduced to below the General Plan level of 1 to 1 even though the older building in the area that define the Downtown commercial core are frequently well above that limit. No additional parking should be required since the same concept as before applies; three purchasers will own both a unit and a commercial space. The residential and commercial space, although physically separate, will be legally tied

together as a single entity, which defines a live-work space or shopkeeper type unit. To preclude long term vacancies, the Commission wanted owners to be able to lease the commercial space to a permitted use if they were unable to use the space for their own commercial purposes. This can be achieved by eliminating the condition that the commercial spaces can not be leased.

If you have any questions or need further information please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Michael Bihn
Owner Representative



DEPOT

35

10E. CUP06-00009, TTM61985R: MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT (MICHAEL BIHN)

Planning Commission consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven live-work condominium units and a Vesting Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue.

Recommendation

Approval.

Planning Associate Kevin Joe introduced the request and noted supplemental material available at the meeting.

Michael Bihn, representing the applicant, voiced his agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Mary Ann Reis, 1333 Engracia Avenue, stated that this site is located on one of the quaintest streets in old Torrance and suggested that existing buildings should be renovated rather than demolished.

Gene Higginbotham, 2114 Arlington Avenue, voiced support for the proposed project, commending the applicant and City staff for thinking "outside the box." He indicated, however, that he did not favor the project's Mediterranean-style exterior and believed an understated, simple design would better complement historic structures in the area. He expressed concerns about the potential for vacancies in the first-floor commercial space and recommended that parking requirements be relaxed in the downtown area in order to attract businesses that are more viable.

Debbie Hays, 1538 Post Avenue, commended Mulligan Development for listening to residents and incorporating commercial uses into the project, but expressed concerns about Condition No. 9, which prohibits the leasing or subleasing of commercial space on the first floor. She suggested that a condominium owner could purchase a business license each year, but never actually open a storefront and use the space for storage, and voiced her opinion that traditional commercial space which could be sublet would be a better solution. She reported that someone from Los Angeles Conservancy, who is very familiar with the downtown area, reviewed the project and recommended that the building be less assertive and free of ornamentation to better complement the area.

Ms. Hays read a letter from Janet Payne, 1318 Engracia, urging the developer to come up with an architectural design that echoes the simplistic lines of the Gill buildings on the other two corners of the triangle. She suggested that the Clinker bricks be saved when the existing structure is demolished.

Don Barnard, 2028 Gramercy Avenue, stated that he supports the idea of residences above commercial uses but believes the project's architectural design needs to be modified so that it fits with the character of the neighborhood. He noted that the

live-work condominium is a new concept and expressed concerns that the City could end up with a bunch of vacant storefronts with people living above them.

Bonnie Mae Barnard, representing Save Historic Old Torrance, stated she believed the proposed project was "in the ball park," however, the commercial portion was too small and she was concerned that it would be used for storage. She contended that the building's pseudo-Spanish design was completely out of character with the area and recommended an Irving Gill-type design. She noted that Torrance has the second largest collection of Irving J. Gill buildings in the world and that Mr. Gill favored simple cement buildings enhanced with foliage.

Charles Reis, 1333 Engracia Avenue, voiced his opinion that too many condominiums, in too many different styles, were being built in the downtown area.

Mr. Bihn stated that the applicant believes the proposed design is a good design, which fits well within the neighborhood, however, he is willing to modify the design but needs to know what the City wants. He noted that there is no predominant architectural style in the downtown area and staff had indicated that they did not want rectangular structures built lot line to lot line with no articulation. He reported that the applicant initially had reservations about the live-work condominium concept but became convinced of its viability after looking at successful projects in other cities. He suggested that owners were unlikely to use the commercial space for storage because they will be paying a premium for this space.

Commissioner Horwich indicated that he did not favor the live-work condominiums because while it's not uncommon to have residences over commercial space, he felt it would be awkward to require someone to own both.

In response to Commissioner Uchima's inquiry, Mr. Bihn explained that he envisioned that professionals, such as attorneys, architects and accountants, would purchase the condominiums.

Commissioner Uchima asked about the enforcement mechanism should a business fail.

Planning Associate Joe advised that Code Enforcement would be in charge of handling compliance issues; that the unit owner would be given an opportunity to restore the space back to commercial use; and that he did not believe the City would have the ability to force someone to sell the property.

Responding to questions from the Commission, staff provided information regarding the modifications that would be necessary should the commercial and residential components of the project be separated, including the elimination of connecting stairways, the addition of handicapped-accessible restroom facilities in each commercial unit, and approval of a parking variance.

Commissioner Uchima indicated that he favored relaxing parking requirements to enable the commercial and residential components to be separated because he feared the live-work condominiums could be an enforcement nightmare.

Mr. Bihn expressed the applicant's willingness to make the necessary modifications to separate the residential and commercial uses.

Commissioner Busch questioned whether there would be restrictions on the type of businesses that could occupy the space due to concerns about noise.

Mr. Bihn advised that there is a mechanism in place that limits the types of businesses that may go into commercial spaces in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area.

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to allow the applicant to redesign the project with separate commercial and residential components.

Chairperson Fauk suggested that the design be more compatible with other buildings in the immediate area, and Commissioner Busch recommended that the applicant work with Save Historic Old Torrance to arrive at an acceptable design.

MOTION: Commissioner Uchima moved to continue this item indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Busch and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Drevno).

Planning Manager Lodan announced that the hearing on the revised project would be re-advertised.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10E

CASE TYPE & NUMBER: CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT - CUP06-00009, VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP – TTM61985R

NAME: Michael Mulligan Development (Michael Bihn)

PURPOSE OF APPLICATION: Request for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven live-work condominium units and a Vesting Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area in the Commercial Sector.

LOCATION: 1620 Gramercy Avenue

ZONING: Downtown Redevelopment Project Area (DRP), Commercial Sector

ADJACENT ZONING AND LAND USES:
NORTH: DRP, Commercial Sector, Commercial buildings
SOUTH: DRP, Commercial Sector, Restaurant, multiple-family residences
EAST: DRP, Commercial Sector, Commercial buildings
WEST: DRP, Commercial Sector, Commercial/office buildings

COMPLIANCE WITH GENERAL PLAN: This site has a General Plan Land Use Designation of Commercial Center and is characterized by concentrated areas of intensive development. The Commercial Center designation allows a maximum floor area ratio of 1.0. A mixed-use development is appropriate for this location. Design is a critical aspect of any project located within one of the Commercial Centers. Individual projects should be designed to enhance the overall identity and character of the Center. Buildings should be designed in relation to one another in order to ensure a compatible architectural style with existing development. Because of the intensive nature of development in the area, attention should be given to promoting the pedestrian circulation system.

The City is also required to provide its share of the regional housing needs through the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) program. The RHNA numbers are developed by the State Department of Community Development (HCD), working with the Department of Finance and based on projected population growth by Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The RHNA number is an assessment of the future housing need of all local jurisdictions that comprise the SCAG region. The seven live-work units would count toward the RHNA number.

EXISTING IMPROVEMENTS AND /OR NATURAL FEATURES: The property is an 11,613 square foot triangular shaped lot situated at the easterly corner of Gramercy Avenue and Cravens Avenue. The property abuts a public alley on the easterly side. The site is currently developed with two one-story commercial buildings that will be demolished as part of this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS: A project characterized as in-fill development on a project site of no more than five acres is Categorically Exempted pursuant to Section 15332 of the 2003 Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The subdivision of one lot for condominium purposes is Categorically Exempted pursuant to Sections 15315 of California Environmental Quality Act.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:
On August 17, 2005, the Planning Commission denied a request to construct a seven-unit condominium development at this location. The project also included a Variation of the Downtown Development Standards to allow a residential use on the ground level. The Planning Commission decision to deny the project was appealed to the Redevelopment Agency. The request was withdrawn by the applicant prior to being considered by the Redevelopment Agency to allow the developer to work with staff to redesign as a live-work project.

The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven live-work unit condominium and a Vesting Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes. The project will involve the demolition of the existing commercial structures on the property and the construction of seven attached live-work units. The units will each contain commercial space and two-car garage on the ground level and living space on the second and third levels. The units will range is size from 1,127 to 1,500 square feet and the commercial space will range in size from 346 to 710 square feet.

Please see the project summary below:

Statistical Information

Lot Area (Gross/Net after Dedication)	11,613 sq. ft./11,067 sq. ft.
Floor Area Ratio (excluding garage)	1.1* 9,711+3,088 = 12,799/11,613
Building Height	32 feet (residential) 14 feet (commercial)

Unit	Bedrooms	Living Space (sq. ft.)	Commercial Space (sq. ft.)	Open Space (sq. ft.)
1	2	1,127	400	601
2	3	1,500	443	730
3	3	1,485	346	695
4	3	1,487	710	778
5	3	1,485	346	695
6	3	1,500	443	730
7	2	1,127	400	601
Total	**19**	**9,711**	**3,088**	**4,831**

*maximum allowable floor area ratio will be conditioned to not exceed 1.0 using the net lot area after right-of-way dedications

The building will have a varied setback along Cravens Avenue and Gramercy Avenue with the ground level shop space located at property line, which is typical in Downtown to encourage pedestrian activity, and upper level residential space set back 10 to 15 feet from the sidewalk. The project complies with open space requirements with each unit will have access to a minimum of 400 square feet of private patio or balcony space. The residential

and commercial portions of the building will be approximately 32 feet and 14 feet tall respectively, which is character with the surrounding development.

Access to all of the garages and two required open guest spaces will be provided off of the alley that runs along the rear of the property. The project will remove two existing curb cuts and, thereby, increasing on-street parking. Since the project is being designed a live-work shopkeeper units, whereby the owner's business is located on the ground level and the owner's residence is located directly above, no additional parking will be required for the commercial space. It is envisioned that the commercial space will be used for small businesses that do not generate heavy customer traffic due to its limited size.

As a live-work shopkeeper units, residents will be permitted to operate a business on the ground floor of their respective unit; the commercial space will be prohibited from being leased or subleased out to a separate business or tenant. All business activities and operation shall be conducted within the ground level commercial space only and will be prohibited within the living space, garage, private balconies, common areas, or outside the building. The conversion of the commercial space to living space will also be prohibited. All conditions restricting the use of property will be incorporated into the convenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&R's).

As part of the business license application, the Community Development Director's approval Special Development Permit will be required to ensure that all proposed businesses will be compatible with surrounding uses and residences and will not detrimentally impact parking in the Downtown area. Food and beverage establishments along with the prohibited uses identified in the Development Standards for the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area will not be permitted within the commercial space. Staff envisions the commercial spaces to be used as for professional offices, boutiques, artist studios, retail services, and other small incubator businesses that serve the Downtown neighborhood.

As part of this project, the Community Development Department Engineering Division will be requiring a 2.5-foot wide, 498-square foot alley dedication and 48-square foot street dedication for street and alley improvements. The resulting lot area after the dedications will be 11,067 square feet. The total square footage of the project excluding the garages will be 12,799 square feet, resulting in a floor area ratio of 1.1 prior to the alley and street dedication. The project will be conditioned to comply with the floor area ratio standard of 1.0 allowed under the Commercial Center designation. The seven proposed residential units complies with the Downtown development standards density standards which permit a maximum of 27 dwelling units per acre.

As properties are redeveloped in the Downtown area, staff has taken into consideration the existing mixed-uses, which characterize Downtown, and promoted the harmonization of residential and commercial uses by supporting development that is aesthetic and balanced in design. The character of the Downtown reflects the architecture of the past era, when buildings were constructed to the property line, as a need for on-site parking was not substantial because automobiles were not prevalent at the time when the Downtown area was initially developed. As a great majority of these buildings continue to reflect this design, incorporating modern standards would deviate from the character of the Downtown. The placement of the building close to the sidewalk reflects the predominant development of the area. Creative design and measures will be put in place to mitigate any potential adverse

effects of locating residential within a commercial area. The unusual shape and size of the lot were also a consideration in balancing the building size and location within the lot.

The proposed architectural design will be a contemporary Spanish style featuring stucco finish, windows accented by wood shutters, wrought iron balcony railings, and decorative wall sconces and Spanish tile roof. The design and orientation of units and entries towards the street will also encourage pedestrian activity. The project is compatible in design with other commercial and residential projects in the Downtown area.

The proposed development is similar in form to other mixed-use developments, where commercial uses occupy the ground floor and residential uses occupy the upper floors, that exist in Downtown Torrance on Post Avenue, El Prado Avenue, Cabrillo Avenue, and Cravens Avenue. This project along with the other mixed-use developments will assist in the revitalization of Downtown by creating housing opportunities and increasing commerce. In addition, mixed-use projects reduce automobile trips and promote pedestrian activity.

Public notices were mailed to property owners within 500 feet of the site, posted on the property, and legal advertisement published in the newspaper. At the time of the writing of this report, staff has not received correspondence in opposition to the project.

The applicant is advised that Code requirements have been included as an attachment to the staff report, and are not subject to modification.

PROJECT RECOMMENDATION: Based on the findings stated above, staff recommends approval of the Conditional Use Permit and Tentative Tract Map as conditioned.

FINDINGS OF FACT IN SUPPORT OF APPROVAL OF THE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT AND TENTATIVE TRACT MAP:
Findings of fact in support of approval are set forth in the attached resolutions.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS, IF PROJECT IS APPROVED:
Recommended conditions for the project are set forth in the attached resolutions.

Prepared by,

Kevin Joe

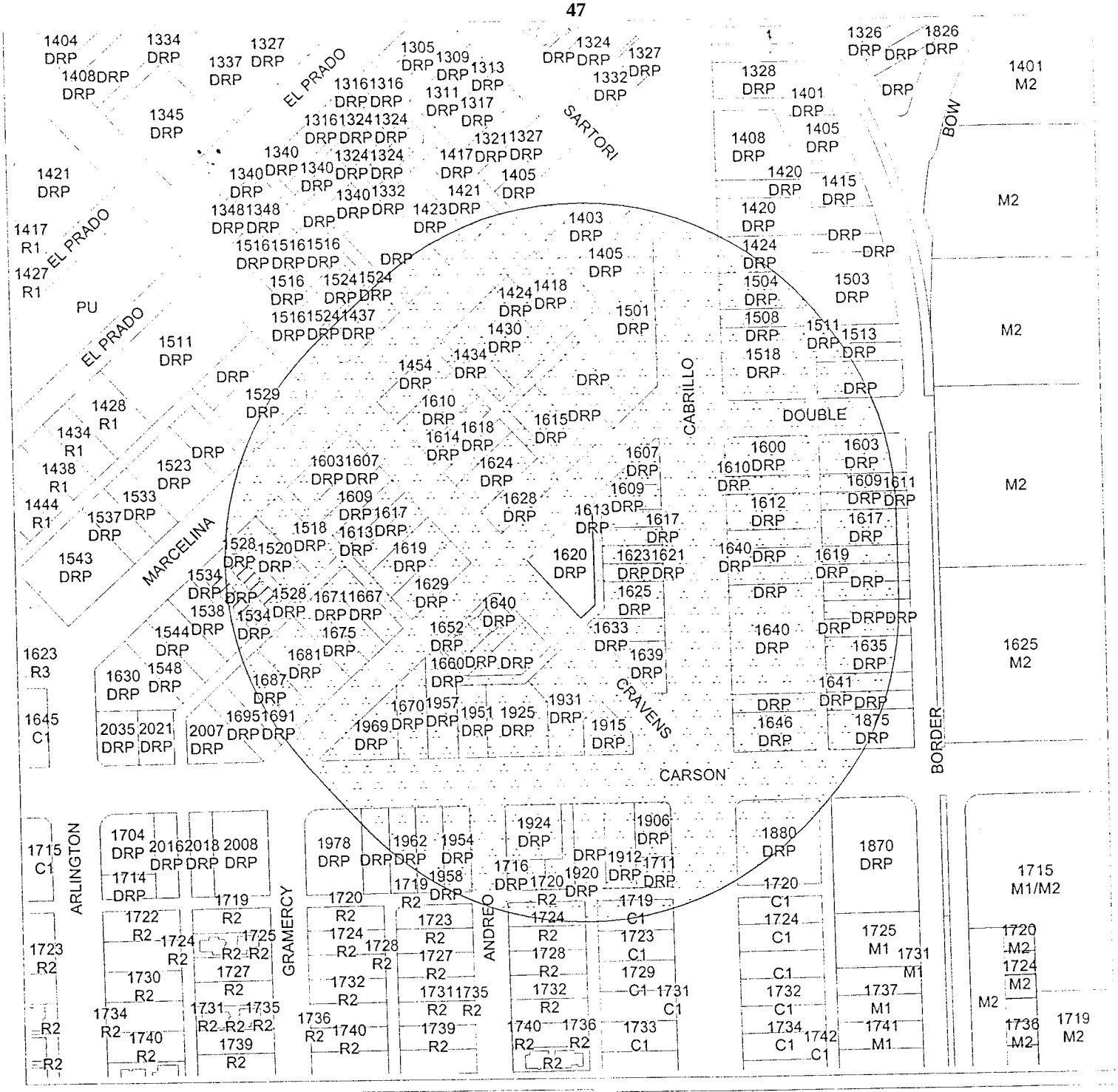
Kevin Joe, AICP
Planning Associate

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Semaan

Ted Semaan
Division Manager

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Resolutions
2. Location and Zoning Map
3. Code Requirements
4. Correspondence
5. Site Plan, Floor Plans, Elevations, & Tentative Tract Map



LOCATION AND ZONING MAP

1620 Gramercy Avenue
CUP06-00009, TTM61985R

TORRANCE
GIS

Legend

1620 Gramercy Avenue

500-Foot Notification Area

N
W E
S

0 125 250 500 Feet

Prepared using City of Torrance Community Development Geographic Information System
Jeffery W. Gibson, Community Development Director

Attachment 2

CODE REQUIREMENTS

The following is a partial list of code requirements applicable to the proposed project. All possible code requirements are not provided here and the applicant is strongly advised to contact each individual department for further clarification. The Planning Commission may not waive or alter the code requirements. They are provided for information purposes only.

Building and Safety

- Comply with State energy requirements.
- Provide a one-hour fire rated separation between units/tenants.
- Provide underground utilities.
- Pre-wire the residence for cable TV.
- Provide separate utilities for each unit.
- Comply with State handicap requirements.
- Justify the garage level as a basement per the definition of the Uniform Building Code. Provide two legal exits from each unit from the level above the first floor per the Uniform Building Code.
- Provide handicap accessible dwelling units with compliance with the California Building Code

Engineering

Conditional Use Permit

- A construction and excavation permit is required from the Community Development Department Engineering Division for any work in the public right-of-way.
- A dedication of a 15-foot radius at the east corner of Gramercy Avenue and Craven Avenue and 2.5 feet of additional alley width along the entire frontage of property is required for purpose of street and highway improvements.
- Close abandoned driveway on Arlington with full height curb and gutter to match existing.
- Repair broken and cracked curb, gutter, and sidewalk along property frontage on Cravens Avenue and Gramercy Avenue
- Install a street tree in the City parkway every 50 feet for the width of this lot on Gramercy Avenue and Cravens Avenue. (City Code Sec. 74.3.2) Contact the Torrance Public Works Department Streetscape Division at 310-781-6900 for information on the type and size of tree for your area. Note-guest parking spaces and west corner ot eh building need to be revised to fit within property lines.
- The location of electrical and other type of above ground meters and appurtenances shall be shown on the final working drawings. These meters and any protective bollards shall not protrude into the public alley right-of-way.
- Install a wheelchair ramp per City of Torrance standards, including truncated domes, at the east corner of Cravens Avenue and Gramercy Avenue.
- Abandon any unused water services at the main.
- A separate water service with radio read meter system is required for each individual dwelling unit.

Tentative Tract Map

- All physical improvements that are conditions of this planning case shall be completed prior to occupancy.
- For condominium units, Final Maps must be recorded prior to obtaining Occupancy Permits.
- Remove all structures prior to Final Map recordation.
- All fees shall be paid and a Subdivision Agreement shall be signed with bonds furnished to cover all public improvements prior to recordation of Final Map or issuance of Development Permits, whichever occurs first.
- Show dedication on the Final Map.

Environmental

- The property shall be landscaped prior to final inspection (92.21.9).
- Storage cabinets in the garage shall be at least four feet six inches above the floor and shall not project three feet into the parking area.

Fire

- Provide fire sprinklers for project.
- Installation of or modification to the fire sprinkler system require a permit from the Fire Department.
- Fire hydrants may be required due to fire flow and/or hydrant spacing.
- Fire sprinkler systems shall be electronically monitored by an approved monitoring company.

Grading

- Obtain Grading Permit prior to issuance of building permit.
- Submit two copies of grading/drainage plan with soil investigation report. Show all existing and proposed grades, structures, required public improvements and any proposed drainage structures.

Redevelopment

- Private storage shall be provided for each dwelling unit in the amount of one cubic foot for each ten square feet of living area, with a minimum of one hundred cubic feet per dwelling unit.
- Guest parking spaces adjacent to the building walls shall be minimum 10 feet wide by 19 feet long and shall not encroach into the public right-of-way after the 2.5-foot alley dedication.
- A minimum 25-foot wide back area shall be provided behind each garage space.

RECEIVED
MAY 30 2006
CITY OF TORRANCE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPT

Michael Bihn
R. E. Broker #012903908
Real Estate Development Consultant
1456 18th St.
San Pedro, CA 90732

Business (310) 427-7548
Mobile (310) 308-6856

Fax (310) 833-2708
Email: mbihn@hotmail.com

May 25, 2006

Mr. Kevin Joe
Planning Associate
Community Development Department
City of Torrance
3031 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90503

Dear Kevin,

I represent Michael Mulligan Development Company the owner of property located at 1620 Gramercy in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area. We filed an application last year to construct seven residential condominiums on the property similar in design to other projects constructed in the Area. After taking public testimony, the application was denied primarily because the ground floor was residential and not commercial as called for in the Development Standards and Review Procedures for the Downtown Redevelopment Plan. The application included a variation request for the ground floor residential use.

To develop a plan that would satisfy all Development Standards, not need a variation, and meet the needs of my client, we got together with Staff to see how to create a project that would satisfy all these requirements. After reviewing the Commission's action Staff suggested a Shopkeeper project. My client was initially reluctant to attempt a project type that he had not done before and that was also untried in the Downtown, but eventual was convinced after learning of successful Shopkeeper projects in the other downtowns.

A shopkeeper project is composed of mixed use units that include both a residential and a commercial component. Each unit is individually owned with

the owner's business located on the ground floor level and their residence above on the second and third floor levels. The commercial area and the residential area of each unit are internally connected. The commercial space is only to be used by the residence in the unit above for their business and may not be rented or subleased to a separate business operator.

The Project plans show how this is physically accomplished. The ground floor level is proposed at the property line with arched store front windows addressing the street like existing commercial spaces Downtown. However, unlike the flat fronts of most Downtown buildings, the façade of this project is indented between store fronts giving more visual interest to the building. The second and third or living floors front to the streets, away from the alley to provide separation between the units open space and major openings and the commercial uses on Cabrillo to the rear of the project. The exterior of the building is stucco as are most building Downtown. The roofing material is Spanish tiles like the Depot and a few other buildings Downtown. Landscaping will be provided were possible along the street frontages to soften the building edge but avoid obscuring the store fronts.

The living areas are set back ten or more feet from the first floor elevation on the street frontages and the street elevations are articulated with indentations like the first floor and with balconies on the third floor. The setback areas provide large patios as part of the projects open space which is amplified by the third floor balconies with decorative metal railings. Open space far excides the Standard's required 300 square feet per unit even without using the bonus provisions.

Of the seven units, two have two bedrooms and five have three bedrooms. Commercial space averages 440 square feet per unit with a range of 346 to 710 square feet. All the units have 1500 square foot of living area or less and include an attached two car garage. Two guest parking spaces are also provided off the alley at the rear of the building. The Standards only call for two parking spaces per unit with only one needing to be covered. Mechanical and trash areas are located off the alley at either end of the project. Each unit also includes lockable storage as required by the standards and a laundry area.

The owner and I feel that this collaborative effort with Staff has produced a project that will not only remove the existing blight on the property and replace it with a valuable addition the Downtown but will continue the slow, steady progress that has been made since the Plan was adopted in 1979. In addition the property taxes generated by the Project will add to the Agency's income

stream and aid in the completion of needed public improvements identified in the Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Michael Bihn

ATTACHMENT D

PROOF OF SERVICE BY MAIL

I, the undersigned, am a resident of the County of Los Angeles, State of California, over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to the within action. I am employed by the City of Torrance, 3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance California 90503.

On **November 3, 2006**, I caused to be mailed **97** copies of the within notification for City Council **CUP06-00009, TTM61985R: MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEVELOPMENT (MICHAEL BIHN)** to the interested parties in said action by causing true copies thereof to be placed in the United States mail at Torrance California.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.
Executed **November 3, 2006**, at Torrance California.

Denise Solli

(signature)

CITY OF TORRANCE
Community Development Department
3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held before the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Torrance on **November 14, 2006**, at **7:00 PM** in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance, California, on the following matter:

CUP06-00009, TTM61985R, Michael Mulligan Development (Michael Bihn): An appeal of the Planning Commission's decision to approve a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a mixed-use development consisting of seven condominium units and approximately 2,000 square feet of commercial space and a Vesting Tentative Tract Map for condominium purposes on property located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, Commercial Sector at 1620 Gramercy Avenue.

Material can be reviewed in the Community Development Department. All persons interested in the above matter are requested to be present at the hearing or to submit their comments to the Community Development Department, 3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503.

If you challenge the above matter in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Community Development Department or the office of the City Clerk prior to the public hearing, and further, by the terms of Resolution No. 88-19, you may be limited to ninety (90) days in which to commence such legal action pursuant to Section 1094.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Community Development Department at 618-5990. If you need a special hearing device to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk's office at 618-2870. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. [28CFR35.102-35.104 ADA Title II]

For further information, contact the REDEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PLAN DIVISION of the Community Development Department at (310) 618-5990.

Publish: November 3, 2006

SUE HERBERS
City Clerk

Ninety seven (97) notices mailed 11/03/06. da

Daily Breeze

5215 TORRANCE BLVD * TORRANCE CALIFORNIA 90503-4077
(310) 543-6635 * (310) 540-5511 Ext. 398

PROOF OF PUBLICATION
(201 5 5 C.C.P.)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

County of Los Angeles,

I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the County aforesaid; I am over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to or interested in the above-entitled matter. I am the principal clerk of the printer of the THE DAILY BREEZE

a newspaper of general circulation, printed and published

in the City of Torrance
County of Los Angeles, and which newspaper has been adjudged a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of County of Los Angeles, State of California, under the date of

June 10, 1974
Case Number SWC7146
that the notice, of which the annexed is a printed copy (set in type not smaller than nonpareil), has been published in each regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not in any supplement there of on the following dates, to-wit

Nov. 3,

all in the year 2006
I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.
Dated at Torrance

California, this 3 Day of Nov. 2006

Signature

This space is for the County Clerk's Filing Stamp

Proof of Pub

DB

[redacted]

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held before the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Torrance on **November 14, 2006 at 7:00 PM** in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance, California, on the following matter:

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For further information, contact the REDEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PLAN DIVISION of the Community Development Department at (310) 618-5990.

SUE HERBERS
City Clerk

Pub.: November 3, 2006.

ATTACHMENT E

October 18, 2006

The Redevelopment Agency
of the City of Torrance
City Hall
3031 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90503

SUBJECT: Appeal of Planning Commission Approval of CUP 06-00009 & TTM61985R Michael Mulligan Development (Michael Bihn)

Honorable Chairman and Members
Of the Redevelopment Agency:

Save Historic Old Torrance (Don Bernard) has appealed Planning Commission approval of CUP 06-00009 & TTM61985R on the basis of two issues: CEQA Guidelines and Design of Project. The first issue is best addressed by Agency Staff but I would like to address the second issue, design of project.

The current project has been designed to comply with plans and development standards for the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, with Agency Staff input, and with public and Commissioner input as articulated by the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission, on September 7, 2005 denied a residential only project for this property with no commercial space on the ground floor. On July 19, 2006 after hearing public testimony on a revised mix use project for the site, the Commission continued consideration of the item for a redesign to allow several changes to be made to the plan including;

1) Removal of the physical connection between the individual commercial and residential spaces,
2) Enlargement of the individual commercial spaces,
3) Removal of the condition prohibiting the commercial spaces from being sublet, and
4) revision of the façade to include Irving Gill elements while retaining the same structural configuration.

In response to the Planning Commission's direction the following changes were made to the plans:

1) the internal connection of the units was removed,
2) commercial spaces were enlarged by reducing their number from seven to three,
3) the condition requiring the commercial space to only be occupied by the owner was removed, and
4) the Project architect reviewed Irving Gills work and incorporated elements from Gill's style into the facade including:

    A) using a Gill designed San Diego building with similar second story setbacks as the basic model for the redesign (see picture 1) instead of the Lucio's or the Ness building on Cabrillo because it could not meet current development standards (see picture 2),
    B) incorporating arches from the Bridge in commercial windows and entries(see attached picture 3),
    C) changing to a low sloping tile roof like the Depot's (see attached picture 4),
    D) Replacing ornamental fixtures with simple ones and removing or replacing metal railings where possible,
    E) Retaining large operable windows in the residential units an Irving Gill trademark,
    F) Accessing six of the seven residential units through arched openings in the street frontage walls like the commercial entries, with the stairs to the units hidden behind the wall to create a simpler uncluttered Irving Gill style façade, and
    G) incorporating the required barrier at the second floor level edge into the wall increasing the street frontage walls to 14 feet high.

The revised plans were shared with the Torrance Historical Society prior to the Planning Commission hearing. The Planning Commission on September 20, 2006 reviewed the staff report recommending approval, took public testimony, including more input from Save Historic Old Torrance, and approved the Project.

We believe that the Agency should deny the appeal and approve the Project since the Project;

1) is in compliance with the General Plan and the Redevelopment Plan for the Downtown Redevelopment Project
2) is a permissible use in the Commercial District of the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area,
3) is in compliance with the Development Standards for the Downtown,
4) is compatible with surrounding land uses,
5) provides housing opportunities while maintaining the mixed use character of the Project Area,
6) provides for improvement to vehicular and pedestrian access and circulation adjacent to the property necessary to make the Downtown a viable living and shopping area at no expense to the Agency or City,
7) will reduce physical blight in the Redevelopment Project Area by replacing poorly maintained building with new attractive construction that will enhance the aesthetic value of the Downtown with new, well designed buildings.,
8) will reduce economic blight in the Project Area by replacing property of low economic value with property that is of much greater value and will enhance the tax base and therefore the Agency's Tax Increment for the Downtown Redevelopment Project.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Bihn
Owner's Representative
1456 18th St.
San Pedro, CA 90732
Office: (310) 427-7548
FAX: (310) 833-2708
E-mail: mbihn@hotmail.com

Picture 1

Picture 2

Picture 3

Picture 4

CUP06-0009TTM61985R MICHAEL MULLIGAN DEV.(Mike Bihn) 1620 Gramercy – Torrance 90501 September 20, 2005 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

TO: Planning Commissioners FROM: Janet Payne, 1318 Engracia Avenue

Thank you for permitting Debbie Hays to read my comments to tonight in my absence.

I am unable to attend tonight's hearing because I am at a neighborhood meeting supporting our guest speaker, Mayor Frank Scotto.

This is the third time this project has come before you. I was present at the first meeting and submitted comments the second meeting.

My concerns remain the same - business on the ground level and residential on second and third levels with a sensitivity to the surrounding architectural design.

I had originally challenged Mr. Mulligan to complete the third point of the triangle with an Irving Gill style structure…something in sync with the other two Gill buildings matching in roof -line and simplicity. This would keep the historic "feeling" of this entire triangular parcel.

I have reviewed the plans before you tonight with Mr. Bihn and while I had hoped for a building much like the existing two, I feel that this design is satisfactory given the fact that Staff asked for plans to include a set back on the second and third levels.

I also understand that issues of live/own/operate the commercial/business element have been addressed.

The current plan addresses the commercial element on the ground level and residential on upper levels and is consistent with the original commercial/residential plan for Old Torrance – founded 1912.

Do I think it is a 'perfect' design? No. Do I think it is a workable design? Yes.
Does it echo Irving Gill? Elements of Gill have been incorporated.

If Irving Gill were alive what would he do? I believe he would consider the times and a growing, changing city and do a design adhering to his original concept - meeting the commercial/residential requirements with a simple design of his unique style. What Mr. Torrance originally wanted for his new model industrial city was a place where people could live work and play. Improving the residential element in Old Torrance can add a new level to the urban village atmosphere, much like the old live/work neighborhoods across the country in older, original city neighborhoods. Old Torrance needs vitality to continue to be successful and desirable as a destination and a place to live.

I believe that Mr. Bihn, representing Mr. Mulligan has submitted plans in the spirit of cooperation and comprise.