

Substantive Site Characteristics:

This 4,358 square foot subject site (total lot area upon finalized LBA Project # 3004409) fronts on 26th Avenue E to the west and an alley to the east. Its general location is south of E Thomas Street and north of E John Street. The project site is within an area zoned Residential Multifamily Lowrise 2 (L-2) which continues to the northeast and south. The area adjacent to the west is zoned higher density, Residential Multifamily Lowrise 3 (L-3), and the area adjacent to the east is zoned lower density, Residential Multifamily Lowrise 1 (L-1). The uses in the area include a combination of single-family and multiple-family residences.

The site is characterized by a sloped topography, and it slopes from the west down to the east. The environmental checklist states that the slope is 12-25%. There is an elevation change of approximately 20 feet from the western boundary down to the eastern boundary. The site is located in a mapped environmental critical area for potential landslide.

There is an existing townhouse structure with an interior accessory dwelling unit on the subject site. There are two mature trees on the western portion of the lot in front of the townhome. Vegetation on the eastern portion of the site is primarily blackberry brambles and shrubs.

Proposal Description:

The applicant proposes to construct a 1,400 square foot two-story single-family residence to the east of the current townhouse structure, adjacent to the alley. There will be two surface parking stalls provided in the northeastern corner of the lot with alley access. The existing townhouse structure will be retained.

Public Comment:

The comment period for this proposal ended on October 11, 2006. During this period, no written comment letters related to this project were received.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), WAC 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.05). The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated August 12, 2006. In addition, a geotechnical report dated June 14, 2006 was also provided. The information in the checklist, geotechnical report, project plans, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665 D) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans, and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The Overview Policy states, in part: “*Where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation,*” subject to some limitations. Under certain limitations or circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7), mitigation can be considered. A more detailed discussion of some of the potential impacts from this short plat follows.

Short-Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Several construction-related impacts are mitigated by existing City codes and ordinances applicable to the project, such as: the Noise Ordinance, the Critical Areas Ordinance, the Storm water Grading and Drainage Control Code, the Street Use Ordinance, and the Building Code.

Long-Term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts include increased surface water runoff from greater site coverage by impervious surfaces; increased bulk and scale on the site; increased demand on public services and utilities; increased light and glare; loss of vegetation; and increased energy consumption. These long-term impacts are not considered significant because the impacts are minor in scope. Some of these impacts will also be mitigated by the provision of a vegetated or “green roof” on the proposed new structure.

The long-term impacts are typical of single family residences and will be mitigated by the City’s adopted codes and/or ordinances. Specifically these include: the Storm water, Grading, and Drainage Control Code (storm water runoff from additional site coverage by impervious surface); the Land Use Code (minimum lot area, vehicle access to parking); and the Seattle Energy Code (long-term energy consumption). Earth-related impacts may result in the long-term and are mitigated by the Critical Areas Ordinance. An analysis of impacts associated with specific SEPA policies follows.

Earth

A geotechnical report for the subject property dated June 14, 2006 was submitted with the subdivision application. The report states that the site “is geotechnically suitable for the proposed lot subdivision and proposed single-family residence.” In regards to the foundation for the existing townhouse structure, the report states: “...it is our opinion that the temporary excavation slopes for the new building can be excavated without undermining ground support for the existing triplex building.”

Plants and Animals

The site currently contains deciduous trees, shrubs, and other types of vegetation. The vegetation on the eastern portion of the lot is to be removed for the proposed construction of the single-family residence and two surface parking stalls. The applicant indicated that there are no known endangered plant species, birds, or animals on the site. During the staff site visit, no birds or animals were observed; however, it is assumed that songbirds occasionally visit the site or nearby sites.

Traffic and Parking

The Land Use Code requires each house to have at least one off-street parking space. The proposed project includes two surface parking stalls, one for the existing townhouse and one for the new single-family residence. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Manual estimates that a single family residence generates approximately ten vehicle trips per day. The ten additional trips per day for the proposed single-family house will not be a significant increase to the total number of vehicle trips along 26th Avenue E. For these reasons, no mitigation of parking or traffic impacts is warranted.

Summary

In conclusion, several adverse effects on the environment are anticipated as a direct impact of the proposed construction. However, specific impacts identified in the foregoing analysis have been mitigated by existing codes and ordinances, per adopted City policies. In addition, a SEPA condition has been added to the decision to provide appropriate mitigation.

DECISION – SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency, of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

[X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 2C.

[] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 2C.

