

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION



DATE: December 11, 2018

TITLE: Amendments to Development Permit No 17-05 & Design Review No 16-05; applications for the development of sixteen (16) new contemporary Mediterranean single-family residences within the Rolling Hills Estates Residential Tract.

Location: North of Mission Lakes Blvd and east of Little Morongo Road.

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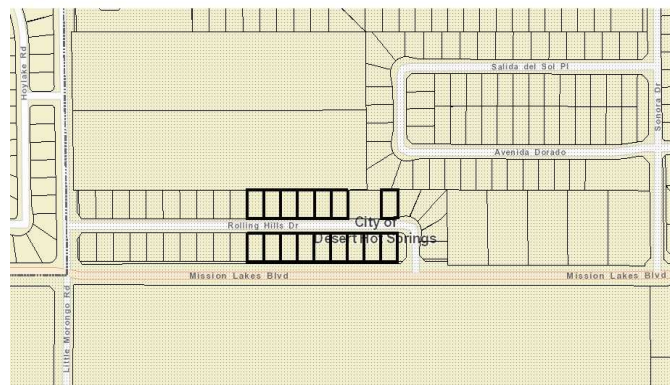
RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Staff Report;
- 2) Entertain Questions of Staff from Planning Commission;
- 3) Open the Public Hearing;
- 4) Take Testimony from Applicant;
- 5) Take Public Testimony;
- 6) Opportunity for Applicant Rebuttal;
- 7) Close the Public Hearing;
- 8) Planning Commission discussion and questions to Staff; and
- 9) A recommendation from staff for approval of the following amendments: (1) Development Permit No.17-05; and, (2) Design Review No. 16-05; applications for the development of a sixteen (16) contemporary Mediterranean single-family residences in Rolling Hills Estates residential subdivision north of Mission Lakes Blvd and east of Little Morongo Road in the R-L (Residential Low) District. APN's: 661-551-001, -002, -003, -004, -005, -006, -007; 661-550-011, -012, -013, -014, -015, -016, -017, -018, -019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 1, 2018, the applicant, Watermarke Homes, LLC., filed applications for an amendment to Design Review (DR 16-05) & Development Permit (DP 17-05) to construct sixteen (16) newly designed Contemporary Mediterranean single-family residences within a vacant portion of the Rolling Hills Estates Residential subdivision.

Watermarke Homes, LLC is proposing three (3) different model home plans (Plan 200, Plan 200 Alt., Plan 201) with each plan having two different (2) front elevations, and three (3) floor plan



options ranging from about 1,700 to 2,200 square feet. The proposed homes have optional amenities such as a guest vacation casita, optional in-law family suite, as well as other features. The project was originally approved in 2005 and in 2007, twenty (20) single-family residential homes were constructed, which have since been sold and occupied by residents/property owners. There are currently twenty-one (21) remaining vacant lots, and this Development Permit application is for the development of sixteen (16) of the twenty-one (21) remaining vacant lots.

Background

Prior Actions

- On September 7, 2005 the City Council approved the Rolling Hills Estates Tract Map (TTM No. 33653).
- On January 10, 2006 the Planning Commission approved applications for the Development Permit (DP No. 17-05) & Design Review (DR No. 16-05) for the architectural review of the homes and development of the site.
- Between 2006 to 2007 the developer began construction and completed twenty (20) of the single-family homes.
- On November 5, 2018 an application to amend the original entitlements (DP 17-05, DR 16-05) was submitted for the construction of sixteen (16) contemporary/Mediterranean style homes

Original Entitlements / Architectural Design

The entitlements that were approved for the Rolling Hills Estates Development in 2005 & 2006, consisted of the construction of 41 single-family homes and two (2) retention basins on a 14-acre site. The development was approved with five (5) different models. The approved architecture is generally Mediterranean style in design, with earth toned colors and finish materials of stucco, stone veneer, and pitched tile roofs. The building materials utilized four (4) color schemes for the exterior finish, roof tile, and fascia with combinations of tans, browns, grays, and red. In addition, there were three (3) design schemes for the stone veneer with color of caramel mountain, hillside, and carlsbad blend. Floor plans show the building footprints ranged in size from 2,839 to 3,527 square feet including covered patios and garages. The heights of the houses range from a low of seventeen feet six inches to a maximum height of eighteen feet eight inches.

Each of the five models had two different front building elevations. Potentially, having provided 10 different front building elevations. At the time of entitlements, staff was concerned about having enough “functional and visual variety in a manner consistent with the scale and intensity of subdividing” as prescribed in Section 17.08.260(B) (Development Guidelines for Single Family Residential Design) of the Zoning Ordinance, which states:

“Varied Structure Design. Much of recent residential design has been dominated by large tract development with a limited number of models and regimented development standards. To avoid this “cookie cutter” look in single-family development, the design of structures should be varied in tract developments to create variety and interest. Differences in massing and design approaches of each adjacent house should be

accomplished. Generally, 1 residential design should not be repeated more frequently than each fourth house.”

Current Proposal – Proposed Development of 16 of the Remaining Lots

The applicant, Watermarke Homes, filed a Development Permit application (DP 17-05) to construct sixteen (16) single-family residential homes that are very similar in design to the existing homes (both with stucco exterior finishes, some models having stone veneer treatments, and pitched tile roofs on all models) with a contemporary Mediterranean design.

Watermarke Homes has requested:

1. 20’ front setback to garage.
2. A 5’ 6” engineered vinyl fence and gates on side yards, and block walls on all rear of lots.
3. Two roof colors – Previous roofs are all Low barrel with Terra Cotta Bird Stop roofs.
4. Grids in windows – Current homes have no grids in front windows.
5. Garage Window Lights – Current homes have no garage window lights (Garage window lights saves electricity and lights up garage during the day).
6. A slight reduction in the square footage of each unit.
7. A simplification of the architecture design and features.

Upon filling of application to complete the construction of a residential tract that was approved with certain architectural styles, sizes, building materials, etc. Staff has a responsibility to evaluate the proposed in-fill development against certain sections of the Zoning Ordinance. One such Section is 17.08.260, which states:

“No particular architectural “style” is required for residential structures. However, the City will judge all residential plans on their architectural merits. Residences designed with a southwestern, mission, or Mediterranean style will respond to the varying temperatures and outdoor living opportunities of the desert. The focus should be on the creation of a quality residential environment. In general, the architecture should consider compatibility with surroundings character, including harmonious building style, form, size, color, material, and roofline. Individual dwelling units should be distinguishable from one another.”

SETTING

The Zoning, General Plan Land-Use designations, and current land uses for surrounding properties are as follows:

Zoning & General Plan Designations

North: Residential Low District (R-L/SP)

West: Residential Low District (R-L/SP)

South: Residential Low District (R-L/SP)

East: Residential Low District (R-L/SP)

Current Land-Use

Vacant

Single-Family homes

Vacant

Vacant

Development Permit and Design Review Analysis

Conformance with the City's Zoning Code

The project proposes the construction of sixteen (16) contemporary/Mediterranean single-family residences in accordance with Section 17.08 of the DHSMC, which allows this land-use with approval of a Development Permit. The proposed development is consistent with the Desert Hot Springs Zoning Code (DHSZC) development standards in maximum lot coverage, maximum building height, and setbacks.

Site Planning Analysis**Site, Coverage, Setbacks and Height**

The proposed development of each project site is consistent with the development standards of the R-L (Residential Low) District in building height, setbacks, and lot coverage.

Development Standards		
Standard	R-L Zone	Proposed
Height	Max. 20 feet	Approx. 17 - 18 feet
Front Setback	20 feet	20 feet
Side Setbacks	10 feet	10 feet
Rear Setback	20 feet	20 feet
Building lot coverage	Max. 40%	18% - 24%

Architecture

The applicant proposes to construct sixteen (16) new contemporary/Mediterranean single-family residence with eagle cement tile roof. The architectural character of the homes will consist of earth toned colors, stucco, and optional Coronado veneer ledgerstone. The building materials include stucco (Practical Beige and Rowhouse Tan), fascia (Foothills and Warm Stone), and accent color entry doors & shutters (Swing Brown and Homberg Gray). The overall architectural character will be that of an attractive, well-maintained single-family home.

Landscaping

Landscape is proposed along the street frontage area. The proposed landscape will be a combination of trees, small shrubs, small accent plants, large accent plants, and groundcover plants. The desert friendly plants consist of Cordia Boissieri, Natal Plum, Century Plant, Agave Geminiflora, Dalea Capitata, as well as other plant materials. The proposed perimeter landscaping throughout the project site will help enhance the visual character of the streetscape in a manner that is compatible with the local desert environment. Landscaping has been designed to balance aesthetic and water use.

Staff is recommending that the applicant add more variety (and color) to the proposed list of accent plants adjacent to the driveway/walkway entry (added as Condition No.1). Staff is also going to require that the applicant provide or specify the type of ground cover/decomposed granite that they will be utilizing (added as Condition No. 2)

Parking

The proposed project includes the option of two-car garages or three-car garages, as well as the option for RV parking, as required by the Desert Hot Springs Zoning Code (DHSZC).

Lighting

Outdoor landscape lighting (10-degree spot light, 35-degree floodlight, and 80-degree wide floodlight) are being proposed to illuminate plant materials. All lighting will be required to have adequate shielding to prevent spillage onto adjacent properties and/or into the night sky (added as Condition No. 3).

Site Improvements

All other necessary requirements will be conditioned / required such as curb, gutter, sidewalks, and other improvements, pursuant to the City Zoning Code.

Required Findings

Development Permit Findings

- 1. That the proposed use is permitted within the subject land use district and complies with all of the applicable provisions of this Zoning Ordinance, including prescribed development standards and design guidelines;***

The development permit is for the construction of sixteen (16) single-family homes which are identified in Section 17.08 of the City of Desert Hot Springs Zoning Ordinance as permitted within any Residential District which includes the R-L (Residential Low Density) zone, subject to approval of a Development Permit. Conditions of Approval have been prepared and are recommended to assure the proposed use will comply with applicable Zoning Ordinance provisions. Staff recommends this finding.

- 2. That the subject site is physically suitable for the type and intensity of the land use being proposed;***

City staff has evaluated the proposed development of sixteen (16) single-family homes and determined that the development is appropriate with the recommended conditions of approval. The site is physically suitable for the type and intensity of the proposed use and will be consistent with the City's Zoning Code and General Plan. Staff recommends this finding.

- 3. That the proposed development would be compatible with existing and future developments within the land use district and general area;***

Existing and future land uses within the general area of the proposed single-family homes are primarily residential low-density land uses. Lands to north, east, and south are primarily vacant and zoned for residential low-density land uses, while lands to the west have existing single-family homes. The height and general configurations of the proposed single-family homes are similar and compatible with existing and future single-family development in the surrounding area. Staff recommends this finding.

4. That there are adequate provisions for water, sanitation, and public utilities and services to ensure that the proposed use is not detrimental to public health and safety;

In 2007, the first twenty (20) homes in the tract were constructed and at that time water, sewer were completed, and other utilities have been out to the site to mark-up easements, dig-alerts, etc. and are preparing to service these new homes. Staff has determined that prior to occupancy there will be adequate provisions for water, sanitation, and public utilities and services to ensure that the proposed project will be maintained and not become a blighted property. Staff recommends this finding.

5. That there is adequate public access and roadway capacity to serve the subject proposal;

In 2007, the first twenty (20) homes in the tract were constructed and at that time the streets, curbs, gutter were completed, and the sidewalks for the first twenty (20) homes in the tract that was completed were also completed. The current project will be conditioned to compete the street improvements to serve the homes before an occupancy permit is issued by the City. Staff recommends this finding.

6. That there are no significant harmful effects upon environmental quality and natural resources;

The sixteen (16) contemporary/Mediterranean style homes do not introduce any hazardous materials or create any harmful effect to the environment or to the quality of natural resources. Therefore, staff has determined that the proposed project will not have or cause significant harmful effects upon environmental quality and natural resources. Staff recommends this finding.

7. That any negative impacts of the proposed use can and shall be mitigated;

Staff has not identified any notable impact on the adjacent homes from this project. The architectural design and home sizes are compatible with the completed single-family homes on the west of the project site. Staff recommends this finding.

8. That the proposed use is consistent with the General Plan; and

Staff has evaluated the consistency of the proposed project with the City's General Plan Goals & Policies and identified no negative impacts to the surrounding neighborhood, subject to the implementation of the Conditions of Approval. Staff recommends this finding.

9. That the proposed location, size, design, and operational characteristics of the planned use are not detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City.

The proposed project is consistent with the City's Zoning Code & General Plan and will be conditioned by the Fire Department and City Engineer, and will be required to comply with the 2016 California Building Code requirements for structural, electrical, fire,

plumbing, earthquake, etc. The project will also be required to pull all permits and to comply with all local, regional, and state laws. Staff recommends this finding.

Director Findings (for Design Review)

The Director shall determine that the project adequately meets adopted City performance standards and design guidelines, based upon the following findings:

- A. The design of the proposed project would provide a desirable environment or its occupants and visiting public as well as its neighbors through good aesthetic use of materials, textures, and colors that will remain appealing and will retain a reasonably adequate level of maintenance.***

The design of the proposed project will provide a desirable environment for its occupants and visiting public, as well as its neighbors, through good aesthetics, use of desert/earth tones/colors, and regular maintenance of the properties. Staff has reviewed the proposed project and finds that the contemporary Mediterranean single-family homes are compatible in size, scale, and appearance with the twenty (20) single-family residential homes that were constructed in 2007.

- B. The design and layout of the proposed project will not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future development, and will not result in vehicular and/or pedestrian hazards; and***

The design and layout of the proposed project will accommodate the surrounding land-uses within the Rolling Hills Residential Tract (single-family homes) and will not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future development and will not result in vehicular and/or pedestrian hazards.

- C. The architectural design of the proposed project is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and will maintain the harmonious, orderly and attractive development contemplated by this Zoning Ordinance and the General Plan. (Prior code § 159.38.040)***

The architectural design of the proposed project is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and the proposed project is in compliance with applicable design standards and will maintain the harmonious, orderly and attractive development as stated in Chapter 17.08 and Chapter 17.80 of the Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code.

General Plan Goals & Policies

Residential Goals, Policies & Programs

City Staff has identified the following applicable goals, policies, and programs in relation to the proposed project:

GOAL 1 *Preservation and enhancement of the predominantly low density, resort residential character of the City.*

The City has adopted a Zoning Ordinance to implement the General Plan and provide review and approval of individual development projects. The proposed project will be subject to all requirements of the Development Permit, as prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance and the adopted Conditions of Approval.

GOAL 2 *A variety of all housing types and densities that will accommodate existing and future residents of the community.*

The Zoning Ordinance is to be implemented for the General Plan and determined that the project (Contemporary/Mediterranean single-family residences) is physically compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and the intensity of the use being proposed.

Policy 1 *Areas of existing residential development and surrounding vacant lands shall be planned in a manner which preserves neighborhood character and assures a consistent and compatible residential land use pattern.*

The project site is presently vacant but will be developed for residential use. The proposed building exterior, architecture, and landscaping are compatible with the design elements and features of the neighborhood, which helps provide neighborhood cohesion and overall enhances the image of the City.

NOTICING REQUIREMENT

The project was noticed to neighboring owners within a 300-foot radius of the project site (on Thursday, November 29, 2018) and was advertised in the Desert Star on Friday, November 30, 2018 per state noticing requirements. No public comments have been received as of this writing.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

On September 7, 2005 the City Council approved the Rolling Hills Residential Tract and in doing so certified the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project. Pursuant to Section 15162(a) of the CEQA regulations, once an MND has been certified for a project, no subsequent environmental review needs to be completed unless there are substantial changes in the project that warrant additional review. The Planning Commission only needs to make a finding that the request for an amendment (for a change in architectural design and a reduction in home sizes) is consistent with the original MND, and no further analysis is required. **No significant changes are proposed as a part of the proposed amendment and no new impacts are being introduced.**

EXHIBITS:

- 1) Draft Conditions of Approval
- 2) Original Staff Report (January 10, 2006)
- 3) Original Architecture Plans (January 10, 2006)
- 4) Proposed Site Plan
- 5) Proposed Floor Plans
- 6) Landscape Plan
- 7) Proposed Elevations
- 8) Examples of Homes Built with Similar Architecture