
DATE: November 1, 2012

STUDY SESSION STAFF REPORT

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3.A.

TO: FOSTER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
PREPARED BY: MARLENE SUBHASHINI, ASSISTANT PLANNER
CASE NO.: UP-12-004; RZ-12-002; EA-12-003
OWNER: SOLOMON TSAI / FULLWEL INT'L GROUP, INC.
PROJECT LOCATION: 1299 CHESS DRIVE (NEIGHBORHOOD VP)

REQUESTED ACTION/PURPOSE

Review site and architectural plans for a proposed 69,008 sq. ft. 5-story extended stay hotel building with 115 guest rooms and a 3,043 sq. ft. bakery on the former Black Angus Restaurant site at 1299 Chess Drive in the Vintage Park area.

GENERAL INFORMATION

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Research/Office Park

ZONING DISTRICT: CM/PD (Commercial Mix/Planned Development)

ZONING HISTORY: On September 15, 1983, the Planning Commission approved a Use Permit for the construction of a 9,700 sq. ft. restaurant use at 1299 Chess Drive within Vintage Park General Development Plan (UP-83-001).

On May 17, 1984, the Planning Commission approved a Sign Permit for the construction of wall-mounted business identification signs (SR-84-006).

On September 1, 1988, the Planning Commission approved a Sign Use Permit for the reconfiguration and addition of wall-mounted business identification signs (SR-88-034).

On September 26, 1989, the Community Development Director approved an Architectural Review request to repaint the building trim (AR-89-059).

On March 20, 1998, the Planning Commission approved a Use Permit Modification request for building color change (UP-83-001A).

On April 15, 1999, the Planning Commission approved a Sign Use Permit modification for a free standing tenant identification sign (SR-88-034A).

On April 19, 2007, the Planning Commission approved a Sign Use Permit for one business identification wall sign (SR-07-002).

On January 4, 2010, the City Council denied a General Development Plan Amendment and Rezoning request to the Vintage Park Development Plan to allow a day care use at 1299 Chess Drive (RZ-09-007 & GP-09-003).

On April 20, 2011, an application was submitted by Allan and Beverly Sebanc for preliminary review of a 5-story limited service hotel building at 1299 Chess Drive (PR-11-002).

On October 11, 2011, an application was submitted by Nandy Kumar of Foster City Hotels, Inc. for a General Development Plan Amendment, Environmental Assessment and Use Permit to allow the construction of a 5-story suites hotel building (UP-11-009, EA-11-003 and RZ-11-002).

On June 21, 2012, an application was submitted by new property owner Solomon Tsai of Fullwel International Group, Inc. for a General Development Plan Amendment, Environmental Assessment and Use Permit to allow the construction of a 5-story extended stay hotel building (UP-12-004, EA-12-003 and RZ-12-002).

SURROUNDING LAND USE:

North: Harry's Hofbrau Restaurant / Chess Drive
South: State Route 92
East: Vintage Park Drive Overpass / Crowne Plaza Hotel
West: EMID easement / City of San Mateo's Bridgepointe Shopping Center

LOT SIZE:

1.70 acres

KEY PLANNING OR DESIGN ISSUES

- Allowing an additional hotel in the Vintage Park area
- Proposed building height and visual impacts to the Vintage Park Drive streetscape
- Amount of on-site parking
- Building design, colors and materials and consistency with buildings in Vintage Park
- Proposed building siting

ENTITLEMENTS REQUESTED

The proposed project is subject to environmental review under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Titles 2, Administration and Personnel, and 17, Zoning, of the Foster City Municipal Code. Entitlements requested include the following:

- An Environmental Assessment (filed as EA-12-003) will be prepared in accordance with CEQA to analyze any environmental impacts of the proposed project.
- A General Development Plan Amendment/Rezoning (filed as RZ-12-002) to change the Vintage Park Development Plan (the 57 acre portion of the Vintage Park) to allow up to two hotels with a total of 469 rooms of up to 352,539 sq. ft. and up to + 18,994 sq. ft. of restaurant space prepared in accordance with Section 17.36.100, Amendment of Development, of Chapter 17.36, PD Planned Development Combining District of Title 17, Zoning of the Foster City Municipal Code.
- A Specific Development Plan/Use Permit (filed as UP-12-004) prepared in accordance with Section 17.36.050, Specific Development Plan, of Chapter 17.36, PD Planned Development Combining District of Title 17, Zoning of the Foster City Municipal Code.

The Specific Development Plan/Use Permit can be acted on at the Planning Commission Public Hearing following the Planning Commission Study Session(s) and a completion of the Environmental Assessment. The Planning Commission's action regarding the Specific Development Plan/Use Permit is final unless appealed to the City Council. Following the Planning Commission Public Hearing, the General Development Plan/Rezoning will be scheduled for City Council Public Hearing for their review and approval.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY SESSION

The purpose of the Study Session is to evaluate the project's architectural and design elements including but not limited to the site plan, building architecture, building height, landscaping and parking. The traffic study, noise analysis, etc., is not yet complete (an environmental assessment is needed to evaluate environmental impacts as a result of a new 5-story hotel building), and final findings and recommendations will be presented to the Planning Commission at the Public Hearing.

BACKGROUND

The subject site, 1299 Chess Drive was formerly occupied by the Black Angus restaurant. The restaurant ceased operations in March of 2009 and has been since vacant. The Planning/Code Enforcement Division has been engaged in the process of reviewing plans for a new hotel building at the subject site since April of 2011. On April 20, 2011, an application for preliminary review (PR-11-002) was submitted by Allan A. & Beverly M. Sebanc for a 5-story 75,436 sq. ft. new limited service hotel building with 125 rooms. On May 13, 2011, staff sent a preliminary letter with comments regarding the proposal. Some of staff's initial concerns regarding the proposal included:

- The lack of market data to demonstrate the need/market to support another hotel.
- The subject site being small for a 5-story hotel building (staff feels that a 4-story hotel may be more appropriate for the site).

On October 11, 2011, an application was submitted by the new property owner, Nandy Kumar of Foster City Hotels, Inc. for a General Development Plan Amendment, Environmental Assessment and Use Permit to allow the construction of a 5-story Suites hotel building with 135-key suites (UP-11-009, EA-11-003 and RZ-11-002). The design scheme for the hotel evolved from staff's recommendation on the preliminary application referenced above. On October 18, 2011, an Interdepartmental Evaluation Committee (IDEC) meeting was held to review the proposal. On November 2, 2011, staff sent a letter of incompleteness along with IDEC comments and concerns regarding the proposal. Again, staff expressed concerns regarding the

5-story building height and the size of the hotel as being too large given the lot size. Staff also recommended that a larger sit-down restaurant be provided to cater to the needs of the surrounding office park and non-guests of the hotel. On January 11, 2012, the applicant submitted revised plans in response to the IDEC letter dated November 2, 2011. Although significant design changes were made to address staff's concerns, the applicant expressed that a 4-story hotel building or a larger restaurant will not be viable. On January 30, 2012, staff sent comments in response to the plans that were submitted for the proposed Chess Drive Suites Hotel. The property was then resold to the current owner, Solomon Tsai who continued to use the services of the previous architect.

On June 18, 2012, the Community Development Director, Curtis Banks and Assistant Planner, Marlene Subhashini met with Mr. Tsai of Fullwel International Group, Inc. and the architect to discuss a conceptual site plan for the subject site for an extended stay hotel building with a bakery. On June 21, 2012, a formal application was submitted for a General Development Plan Amendment, Environmental Assessment and Use Permit to allow the construction of a 69,008 sq. ft. 5-story extended stay hotel building with 115 guest rooms and a 3,043 sq. ft. bakery on the first story (UP-12-004, EA-12-003 and RZ-12-002). The new design for the hotel kept the same number of stories as the previous proposals staff had reviewed however, the building footprint was reduced, the building was set back further from the Vintage Park Drive overpass, the number of rooms were reduced, a bakery was proposed on the first story, the height of the building was stepped down at the ends to reduce the impact of the 5-story building and other architectural changes including modifications to the landscape and parking were proposed. Plans submitted were conceptual in nature and a formal submittal with complete plan sets was not made. In an email to the applicant dated June 25, 2012, staff indicated that the applicant needed to submit a complete package for Planning Commission's review at the Study Session. On September 5, 2012, complete set of plans were submitted to the Planning Division. On October 2, 2012, the item was scheduled for an IDEC meeting to review the plans and offer comments to the applicant. On October 11, 2012, staff mailed a letter to the applicant containing the IDEC comments (attached). On October 15, 2012, revised plans were submitted for Planning Commission's review at the Study Session.

ANALYSIS

GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING CONSISTENCY

The subject property's General Plan land use designation is Research/Office Park. The proposed project site is zoned CM/PD (Commercial Mix/Planned Development) and is part of the approved General Development Plan for the \pm 132 acre lands known as the Vintage Park. Vintage Park encompasses the area north and east of the Bridgepointe Shopping Center/Home Depot in San Mateo, north of State Route 92, south of East Third Avenue and west of Foster City Boulevard. On April 19, 1984, the City Council adopted an Ordinance to amend Title 17 of the Foster City Municipal Code to modify the previously approved General Development Plan for Vintage Park in the CM/PD (Commercial Mix/Planned Development) District. The Vintage Park Development Plan went through various amendments. On March 1, 2010, the Vintage Park General Development Plan pursuant to Exhibit A-1 of Ordinance No. 554 (attached) on the 57 acre portion of Vintage Park (i.e., not the 75 acre portion owned by Gilead Sciences and EFI) was amended to allow development of "..... a 354-room hotel of up to \pm 283,531 sq. ft.; up to \pm 28,194 sq. ft. of restaurant space..." The General Development Plan amendment/Rezoning requests allowing up to two hotels with a total of 469 rooms of up to \pm 352,539 sq. ft. and up to \pm 18,994 sq. ft. of restaurant space.

The subject site is zoned CM/PD Commercial Mix/Planned Development District and is within Vintage Park area. The Vintage Park area has been established as a business and working community tightly integrating the various land uses within and surrounding the site. Table 1 below lists the goals and policies contained in the Land Use and Circulation Element of the City's General Plan that are relevant to the proposed project:

Table 1: General Plan Goals and Policies

Goal or Policy No.	Issue	Text
LUC-B (Goal)	Proper Site Planning, Architectural Design and Property Maintenance	Ensure high quality site planning and architectural design for all new development, renovation, or remodeling and require property maintenance to maintain the long-term health, safety, and welfare of the community.
LUC-C (Goal)	Provide for Economic Development	1) Maintain the City's ability to finance City services and construction and maintenance of public improvements; 2) offers local employment opportunities for Foster City residents so that inter-city commuting is reduced; and 3) assure the availability and diversity of resident-serving goods and services.
LUC-D (Goal)	Maintain a Variety of Land Uses	Maintain land designated for a variety of residential, commercial, light industrial and public institution purposes which: (1) provide a mix of housing, types, densities and tenure; (2) ensure that a variety of commercial and industrial goods, services and employment opportunities are available in Foster City; and (3) offer a range of recreational and public facilities to meet the needs of Foster City's residents.
LUC-K (Goal)	Provide Adequate Parking	Ensure that adequate off-street parking is incorporated into new projects and designed for safe and effective circulation.
LUC-19 (Policy)	Meeting Commercial and Industrial Land Use Needs	Provide enough land for commercial and industrial uses to allow for the development of commercial establishments that provide basic goods and services to Foster City residents.

Proposed: The applicant proposes to build 115 new guest rooms, and requests an amendment to the Vintage Park General Development Plan (Exhibit A-1 of Ordinance No. 554) to allow two hotels and increase the total number of approved guest rooms to 469 rooms of up to ± 352,539 sq. ft. and up to ± 18,994 sq. ft. of restaurant space.

Staff Comments/Recommendation: The proposed use is consistent with the goals and policies contained in the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the General Plan. Given that Foster City already has 500 hotel rooms, staff requested that the applicant submit a recent market study that demonstrates the need and viability for another hotel within the City.

This study shows that hotel market experienced strong increases in occupancy over the past two years that resulted in a year-end occupancy of 80%. Typically, when a lodging market achieves an 80% occupancy level, it means that the existing hotels have "fill" nights and are full and demand is met by neighboring communities. Foster City hotel occupancy rates have increased from 67.4% in 2004 to 79.5% in 2011. This shows that Foster City hotels are experiencing many fill nights and demand that could be absorbed by the proposed hotel would be turned away to other cities. Additionally, the Smith Travel Research Trends Report shows that although the average daily room rate has increased, the hotel market has seen a growth by 12.2% in 2011 indicating that guests are opting to stay at hotels in this market even with quickly rising room rates.

The proximity of the proposed hotel to many corporate offices in Foster City will allow visiting employees to stay for extended periods with the convenience of walking, biking or taking a shuttle to and from work and airports in the region. Additionally, staff feels that the bakery with sit-down dining area would meet the needs of the surrounding uses in Vintage Park. Based on the market study and the fact that occupancy rates in existing Foster City hotels are reaching 80%, staff finds that an additional hotel would help absorb the additional demand for rooms without impacting existing hotels in the City. Based on the market study, the recent expansion of the Gilead campuses and consistency with the Foster City General Plan Land Use and Circulation elements and the Vintage Park General Development Plan, staff believes that the proposed use is appropriate for the site and consistent with the CM/PD Commercial Mix/Planned Development zoning designation and supports the request for amending the General Development Plan to add an additional hotel and bakery.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The City will prepare an Initial Study in order to determine what type of environmental document will be required, either a Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Initial Study will require some specialized analyses by consultants, as explained below. Following the Study Session and any subsequent design changes, the City will solicit proposals from consultants, select the consultants, and require a deposit from the developer before the consultant work can begin. A similar process will be required to prepare the Negative Declaration or EIR. The studies listed below will be conducted by consultant experts in the field:

- Visual Impacts: Photo simulations from various points along SR 92, Vintage Park Drive overpass and Chess Drive/Vintage Park Drive intersection are needed to assess visual impacts.
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis: The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) has provided criteria for evaluating air quality impacts of projects in their "CEQA Air Quality Guidelines," updated in May 2011. The Guidelines provide "screening criteria" for projects to determine if the project might have a significant air quality impact. Pursuant to the City's Environmental Review Guidelines, the preparation of the analysis will be performed under the City's direction, but the applicant should provide information on measures that will be included in the project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as LEED certification and other measures for the proposed hotel and bakery.
- Hydrology and water quality: The applicant should provide information regarding how they intend to comply with the requirements in the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program.
- Noise: The Noise Element of the General Plan requires an acoustical study to include a detailed analysis of noise reduction requirements to meet the State Standard of the 45 db interior noise level will be required.

- Traffic: A traffic analysis will be necessary to determine if the project will have significant effects on intersections.

SITE PLAN

The 1.7-acre site for the proposed 5-story extended stay hotel building is proposed on the former Black Angus restaurant site located at 1299 Chess Drive. The approximately 9,385 sq. ft. Black Angus restaurant building will be demolished to allow the construction of the new 5-story hotel. The footprint of the new hotel would measure 14,810 sq. ft. (first floor only), while the combined area of all five stories measures 69,008 sq. ft. The site is bounded by the adjacent Harry’s Hofbrau restaurant site to the north, State Highway 92 to the south, the Vintage Park Drive overpass to the east, and EMID easement and the City of San Mateo’s Bridgepointe Shopping Center to the west. The site is accessed from Chess Drive by an ingress/egress driveway via the lands that belongs to the Harry’s Hofbrau restaurant. A mutual ingress/egress and parking agreement is currently recorded for the benefit of both properties.

Review and analysis of the Site Plan are separated into the following sub-areas:

- Site Plan Data – Building Orientation and Setbacks
- Parking
- On-site Circulation – Vehicular and Pedestrian
- Loading and Service Areas

Table 2 – Site Plan Data

Characteristic	Proposed Hotel		
Building setback from State Route 92	Approximately 85 feet from the farthest point and 45 feet from the nearest point		
Building setback from Vintage Park Drive Overpass	Approximately 85 feet on average		
Building setback from the property line contiguous to Harry’s Hofbrau	Approximately 25 feet on average		
Building setback from EMID easement/Bridgepointe Shopping Center in San Mateo	Approximately 75 feet on average		
Total Lot Area	74,273 s.f.	1.70 acres	%
Lot Coverage	14,810	-	20%
Landscape Coverage	21,656	-	29%
Hardscape Coverage	37,807	-	51%

CONSISTENCY WITH VINTAGE PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Vintage Park Design Guidelines was recently updated in July of 2012. The Vintage Park Design Guidelines establishes general design guidelines for buildings proposed within the Vintage Park development. The Vintage Park Design Guidelines establishes the following goals for restaurants/hotels:

- Restaurants and Hotels may be designed to create identity and individuality for commercial recognition, however, must be designed in such a way to be recognized as an integral part of Vintage Park.

Other applicable sections of the Vintage Park Guidelines are site planning, pedestrian activity areas, site furniture, lighting, paving, at-grade parking, architectural design, building massing, building height, façade treatment, roof treatment, building color and materials, service areas, and landscaping. Staff has reviewed the proposal for consistency with the Vintage Park Design Guidelines and has provided comments/recommendations accordingly.

Building Orientation and Setbacks

Proposed: The proposed hotel building is aligned in the north-south axis and is stepped to conform to the angled boundary on the south fronting State Route 92. The most prominent elevation of the proposed hotel will be along the Vintage Park Drive overpass. The entire building width of approximately 242 feet (along the north-south axis) is visible on this side. The shorter side of the building is approximately 62-82 feet wide on the east/west elevations. To address some of staff concerns with regards to the visual impact on the streetscape along the Vintage Park Drive overpass, the building was set back further (by approximately 80-85 feet) from the Vintage Park Drive overpass. Additionally, there is some building articulation along this side to break the appearance of a long blank façade and the fifth floor of the building is stepped down to four stories on the east and west elevations to reduce the perception of building mass and height.

Staff Comments/Recommendations: Given the lot shape and size, staff feels that the siting of the building and orientation is appropriate for the subject site. Also, stepping down the building height from 5-stories to 4-stories on ends of the building help alleviate some of the height concerns. However, given that no photosimulations were provided, staff is unable to determine if the proposed setbacks and height would cause any significant visual impact to the streetscape along Vintage Park Drive overpass. Staff recommends that the applicant provide colored photo simulations from various view points along the Vintage Park Drive overpass.

Parking

Proposed: The proposed plan provides 103 parking stalls, 3 motorcycle stalls and 16 bicycle stalls. The table below shows the required and proposed parking spaces as per the City’s Parking Ordinance. The applicant proposes to use the existing parking on the Harry’s Hofbrau site through an existing mutual parking agreement and ± 48 parking spaces under the overpass parking (leading to Crowne Plaza) also owned by the same owner. Parking areas are placed along the perimeter of the parcel and around the hotel. An analysis of current parking utilization of the Crowne Plaza hotel is attached. The Crowne Plaza Parking study (attached) shows the total number of parking spaces available at the hotel and under the overpass during peak periods identified as Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. for three consecutive weeks (from September 24, 2012 to October 10, 2012). The applicant has indicated that shuttle service is provided to guests however, details of the service are not provided.

Table 3 – Existing and Proposed Parking Stalls

Building Use/Area	Municipal Code Requirements	Required	Proposed
Hotel Rooms – 115 (no resident manager or owner)	One parking stall for each guest unit and two parking stalls for resident manager or owner.	115	103

Building Use/Area	Municipal Code Requirements	Required	Proposed
Bakery 1,230 sq. ft. of public accommodation area 1,584 sq. ft. of remaining area 6 employees	Restaurants, Taverns, Lounges and Other Establishments for the Sale and Consumption on the Premises of Food and Beverages. One parking stall for every forty square feet of public accommodation area, plus one stall per two hundred fifty square feet of remaining area, or one stall per employee, whichever is greater.	31 + 7 = 38 spaces or 6 whichever is greater = 38	0
Parking under the Vintage Park Drive overpass		-	48
Required car parking		153	151
Motorcycle ³	For developments with over 100 parking stalls, motorcycle stalls shall be provided at a rate of 1% of total stalls.	2	2
Bicycle ³			16
Credit ³		-3	
TOTAL		150⁴	151

³ Credit given: 1 stall/2 motorcycle stalls; 1 stall/8 bicycle stalls per Section 17.62.060.D.4.a &b.

⁴ Combined maximum parking credit does not exceed 5% of total required parking stalls per Section 17.62.060.D.4.c

Staff Comments/Recommendation: The applicant has provided universal stall sizes (8.5' x 18') consistent with Section 17.62.060.C.4 that requires all new parking facilities to provide universal stall size or larger. Without taking into consideration the mutual parking agreement between the subject site and the adjacent Harry's Hofbrau restaurant, there are a total of 151 on-site parking spaces provided including the ± 48 parking spaces under the overpass. The required number of parking is 150 spaces. The required parking for the Harry's Hofbrau site is 106 stalls (3,323 sq. ft. of public accommodation area requiring 83 stalls at 1/40 sq.ft and 5,757 sq. ft. of non-public area requiring 23 stalls at 1/250 sq. ft.) and the site currently provides 106 spaces. While the parking is currently underutilized, this may not always be the case; and additional overflow parking for the hotel and the bakery may not be available on the adjacent site especially during peak hours. However, staff finds that parking provided by the utilization of the spaces under the overpass and the on-site spaces provided is adequate for the proposed use.

Staff recommends that the applicant provides a written agreement between landowner(s) and the city, satisfactory in form and content to the city attorney and approved by the city. This agreement concerning use and access to parking stalls shall be in the form capable of and subject to being recorded to constitute a covenant running with the land pursuant to Section 17.62.020.D.1 as outlined in the Parking Ordinance. Staff also recommends that the applicant submit section drawings through the site to illustrate how the parking areas are visually

screened from surroundings either by the use of grade changes, mounds, planting and/or screen structures and provide additional details on the shuttle service.

On-site Circulation – Vehicular and Pedestrian

Proposed: Sheet AS-1 shows the site plan and overall vehicular circulation pattern for the site. The site allows for the main vehicular entrance and exit at the north end of the property that is contiguous to the Harry's Hofbrau restaurant site and accessed by Chess Drive. Vehicular access to the hotel's main entrance and porte-cochere is provided by a two-way drive that continues from the northerly property and is aligned with the original parking and fire access easement on the western portion of the lot. A second access point is provided to the overflow parking under the overpass leading to Crowne Plaza.

Pedestrian access to the site is from existing sidewalk on Chess Drive located in front of Harry's Hofbrau restaurant. Pedestrians have to access the new building via the parking lot from Harry's Hofbrau. The proposed hotel has concrete walkways on all four sides of the building for pedestrian access from the parking lot into the hotel.

Staff Comments/Recommendation: In general, staff believes that the overall on-site circulation works well for the subject site. Due to the lack of visibility of the hotel's main entrance from Chess Drive, the two-way traffic flow and vehicular circulation from the site's main entrance provides for easy and efficient ingress and egress for vehicular traffic. Staff is concerned about pedestrian safety with vehicular traffic and circulation in the west parking lot and west driveway entrance between the proposed hotel and the existing adjacent Harry's Hofbrau restaurant. Staff recommends that this area be well lit during evening hours and that decorative paving material be proposed between two buildings that would allow both ease of use by pedestrians and function to decrease the speed of vehicles passing through the area. Staff feels that the concrete walkways provided around the building are purely functional and that the pedestrian environment could be enhanced by integrating the walkways with landscape areas that buffer the walkways from the adjacent parking areas and use attractive paving material and shade structures/arcades. Although vehicles may travel in both directions on this drive, it is not currently striped to indicate this. Therefore, staff recommends that the drive lanes should be appropriately striped to define and to improve on-site circulation. Given that there is no direct and easy pedestrian access from the sidewalk directly to the site, staff recommends that consideration be given to developing directional signage that would improve vehicle circulation and pedestrian orientation.

Loading and Service areas

Proposed: The applicant has indicated that the hotel and bakery use will have only van deliveries and that separate loading/unloading areas as required by the Zoning Ordinance is not required. Hotel deliveries occur from the main entrance. In addition, the applicant has indicated that there is a loading/unloading area on the south side of the Harry's Hofbrau restaurant which is located in close proximity to the bakery service entrance. By virtue of the terms of the mutual access and parking easement for all vehicular traffic, this unloading area is available for the subject property use.

Staff Comments/Recommendation: The City requires a commercial/office building to provide a minimum of one loading/unloading zone with one loading/unloading zone required for every 50,000 square feet of gross leasable area. Based on the proposed hotel's 69,008 square feet of gross leasable area, 1-2 loading/unloading zones are required. Although the applicant has indicated that the adjacent loading/unloading space on the south side of Harry's Hofbrau

restaurant is available for the subject property use, staff feels that there could be overlap and conflict of usage based on the operational needs and timings of the hotel and the restaurant. Staff recommends that at least one loading space consistent with Section 17.62.070 and 17.62.090.A. of the Foster City Municipal Code be provided to service the hotel use.

Additionally, service facilities shall be screened with landscaping from public view and adjacent parcels. Truck, loading areas, services delivery areas, where provided, must be located at the rear portion or sides of the buildings. Service facilities where provided on the sides of the buildings must be screened from view from public areas or street. Gas meters, fire sprinkler risers, transformers, backflow devices and other above ground utilities shall be hidden from view from any street and screened with landscaped materials. When service areas are used by both vehicles and pedestrians, areas designated exclusively for pedestrian use shall be protected with bollards, landscaping or other physical barriers.

LANDSCAPING

The existing site has some tall trees along the perimeter of the lot. The site is surrounded on three sides with existing mature plant material. To the south along State Route 92, there are some Eucalyptus trees, Acacia trees and shrubs. The western boundary is landscaped with Blackwood Acacias and Bishop Pines. The eastern boundary is landscaped with Poplars and Acacia. To the north is a parking lot with Flowering Plums, Acacia's trees with shrub plantings of Indian Hawthorn.

Proposed: Sheet L-1 shows the landscape plan for the proposed hotel use. The applicant proposes to remove many of the existing trees onsite as part of the site development for the hotel and preserve some of these trees where possible. The western boundary is exposed to the service areas of the Bridgepointe shopping center and is unsightly. The applicant is proposing to screen the unsightly areas with taller planting. A new landscape edge along the eastern property line is proposed to screen the Vintage Park Drive overpass, as well as a new landscape edge is proposed along the southern property line to screen the hotel from traffic along State Route 92. Trees or tall shrubs that provide a vertical screen such as Brisbane Box and shrubs such as Hopseed Bush and Escallonia are suggested along these edges. The existing landscape along the western property line and the off-site parking lot to the north will also remain as is. The landscape design uses mostly drought tolerant landscaping that grows well in Foster City and meets State AB 1881 guidelines. In addition, the plant palette for the project incorporates plants from the City's Planting and Irrigation Guidelines as well as the Vintage Park Design Guidelines.

Staff Comments/Recommendation: Overall, the proposed plant materials are compatible with the existing plant materials and consistent with the plant palette provided in the landscape section of the Vintage Park Design Guidelines. To address staff's comments, the applicant has provided more landscaping along the property line adjacent to State Route 92 that serves as additional screening. The new species will provide color and visual interest to the site and will be well integrated into the existing plant materials. The proposed landscaping in front of the new building will promote visual interest as pedestrians and motorists enter the site as well as pedestrians.

Trash Enclosure

Proposed: The trash enclosure for the site is located at northeast corner of the property. The structure is 17'-8" wide x 10'-0" deep, and it is 6'-8" in height. Three walls of the structure will be constructed of CMU split-faced wall. The entry gates for the structure will be comprised of two

heavy duty corrugated metal doors, and the structure will be painted in Bracing Blue for the metal decking and fascia and Classic French Gray for the CMU wall. A detailed trash enclosure plan is attached in the project plans as Sheet AS-2.

Staff Comments/Recommendation: Staff feels that the location of the trash enclosure is appropriate given the proximity to the service area and kitchen area of the bakery. The location of the facilities will need to be approved by Recology. Staff recommends that the applicant provide a letter from Recology indicating their comments. Additionally, staff recommends that the trash areas be adequately screened with landscaping.

ARCHITECTURE

The proposed hotel is a contemporary themed 5-story wood framed structure designed to fit into the backdrop of office towers existing and planned along Chess Drive and across the freeway. At the arrival point, the main entrance is flanked by a glazed metal canopy and metal trellis and a porte-cochere. Separate and clearly recognizable entrances are provided for the hotel as well as the bakery. The first floor has a breakfast area, meeting room, fitness and back-of-house areas on the ground level. The main entrance to the hotel is on the west side. The upper floors house mainly the guest suites. A bakery with kitchen is provided on the first floor that will operate independent of the hotel operations. The bakery is accessed by a separate entrance on the west side of the building. The placement of the bakery service areas facing the service areas of the Harry's Hofbrau restaurant helps to utilize the ground floor where placement of guest rooms would be undesirable.

Building Design and Colors and Materials

Proposed: The design attempts to use both vertical and horizontal articulation of building façade to minimize the visual impact of the rectilinear building. The first level is organized as a "base" element by the use of stucco, tile facing and punctuated by storefronts and columns. Given that the building will house guests that could potentially stay for an extended time, an attempt was made to achieve a residential feel to the exterior design. At the same time, the design responds to the requirement of its setting in the research/office park. Other portions of the building continue the theme of the main façade, in the stepped forms at the transition of north and south sections and signature tower elements such as the stair tower and features on the west and east facades.

The exterior finish consists of a two-color stucco system with a light dash texture in some areas and scored stucco in other areas. Large format porcelain tile facing is used to add texture and increase the visual appeal of the exterior. Colors have been arranged such that the darker colors form the base element and the lighter colors used on the upper levels help lighten the overall massing. Metal trellises at the roof parapet and recesses help to articulate the façade with the play of light and shade. Aluminum windows openings are proposed on all four sides.

Staff Comments/Recommendations: Staff feels that the proposed colors are somewhat muted but is unable to provide further comments and/or recommendations until a colors and materials board is submitted. The applicant has indicated that a colors and materials board will be available for review at the Planning Commission Study Session.

Building Elevations

South Elevation (facing SR 92)

Proposed: The south elevation is oriented towards State Route 92, and is approximately 82 feet in width at the 4th story level and reduces to 62 feet in width at the 5th story level. The overall height of the building including the top most roof element is 64 feet. This side of the building is in a stepped form to conform to the angular property line along State Route 92. The portion of the wall plane on the right side is set back far from the remainder of the building wall as seen on this elevation. On the first story, columns flank the building. The coping, fascia and soffits are made of aluminum composite material. Three different tones of cement plaster with reveals are used on this elevation along with two different porcelain tile types as accent materials. A portion of the main entrance in glass metal canopy is visible on this side. Flat metal trellis canopies are proposed on the 5th floor and roof levels. The applicant proposes to install a building identification sign along this elevation facing State Route 92.

Staff Comments/Recommendation: Staff feels that the south elevation is an important elevation due to its visibility as seen from State Route 92. The site on which the hotel is proposed lies at the border of San Mateo and Foster City. This elevation has the potential to distinguish Foster City from the adjacent City of San Mateo from State Route 92. Staff believes that a strong building identity could be achieved through the use of attractive signage and an interesting façade and/or roof element. Overall, staff feels that the architectural treatment on this side is functional in character but a stronger base element could be used in terms of material texture and colors. Staff feels that the building base can be articulated with material changes and make the bakery component of the hotel more prominent and inviting to the general public. The Vintage Park Design Guidelines talks about articulating the building base with material and color changes, fenestration changes, landscaping, lighting, provision of an arcade, or expression of building entrance. It encourages building designs with strong contemporary identity and human scale at the building base. Given that the building identification sign on this elevation will be reviewed through a Sign Permit process, staff will review signage separately for design and consistency with the Vintage Park master sign program. Additionally, staff would like to see details of the 12'-0" sound wall with green screen proposed along this side. Staff believes that the proposed architecture along the south elevation is acceptable but could use some additional treatment in terms of material texture and colors and articulation and a strong base element. Staff would like the applicant to provide details on the sound wall along this side as well as revise the elevation drawing to demonstrate the building articulation and the play of light and shade on this side more clearly.

North Elevation (facing Harry Hofbrau's)

Proposed: The north elevation facing Harry's Hofbrau restaurant and Chess Drive is treated somewhat similar to the south elevation except for the first story which is occupied by the bakery. This side is not as visible from the Vintage Park Drive overpass and is partially visible from Chess Drive as the building is set back far behind the existing Harry's Hofbrau restaurant. This side is approximately 82 feet in width at the 4th story level and reduces to 62 feet in width at the 5th story level. The overall height of the building including the top most roof element is 64 feet. This wall plane on this side has some movement and is stepped. Similar to the south elevation, columns flank the building on the first story. The coping, fascia and soffits are made of aluminum composite material. Three different tones of cement plaster with reveals are used on this elevation along with two different porcelain tile types as accent materials. The applicant is proposing to install greenscreen on the first story of the service portion of the bakery that

does not have any window openings. A portion of the main entrance in glass metal canopy is visible on this side. Flat metal trellis canopies are proposed on 5th floor and roof levels. The applicant proposes to install a building identification sign on top of the canopy for the proposed bakery.

Staff Comments/Recommendation: In response to staff's comments regarding building height, the applicant has stepped down the building by one level at the 5th story level to alleviate some of the concerns with respect to height and massing. Additionally, the applicant changed the sloped roof on the tower elements to flat trellis roof in response to staff's design comments. Staff feels that this change is more consistent with the contemporary themed style of the building and provides a deviation from some standard extended stay hotel designs. Staff believes that the bakery could have another entrance on the north side directly leading into the dining area in addition to the entrance on the west side. This would make the entrance to the bakery more prominent and inviting to non-hotel users without necessarily having to go around the building. As noted earlier, staff feels that the architectural treatment on this side is functional in character but a stronger base element could be used in terms of material texture and colors that would somehow make the bakery portion of the hotel more prominent. Staff will review signage for the bakery separately under a sign permit for design and consistency with the Vintage Park master sign program. Staff believes that the proposed architecture along the north elevation is acceptable but could use some additional treatment in terms of material texture and colors and make the bakery portion of the building more prominent and inviting by providing an entrance to the bakery on this side. Staff is unable to provide any comments on the use of greenscreen until additional details are submitted for staff's review.

East Elevation (facing Vintage Park Drive Overpass)

Proposed: This side of the building is the rectilinear side of the hotel and is directly facing the Vintage Park Drive overpass. It is approximately 246 feet in width. Starting from the left, portions of the building are set back in a stepped form including the stairs until the wall plane becomes almost flat except at the center where it again begins to take a stepped form. The right most portion of the building (bakery and the guest rooms on the upper stories) pop out by approximately 14 feet from the immediate building wall plane to the left. The overall height of the building including the top most roof element is 64 feet and drops down to 56 feet at the top of the fifth floor roof level and further drops down to 44 feet at the fourth floor level on the right most portion of the building only. Architectural elements similar to those on the south and north elevations are repeated on this elevation including columns that flank the building at the first story, treating the coping, fascia and soffits in an aluminum composite material, using three different tones of cement plaster with reveals along with two different porcelain tile types as accent materials and flat metal trellis canopies are proposed on 5th floor and roof levels. The applicant proposes to install a building identification sign along this elevation facing the Vintage Park Drive overpass.

Staff Comments/Recommendation: The East elevation is probably one of the most important elevations due to its high visibility from the Vintage Park Drive overpass. Currently, low profile buildings flank either side of the overpass leading up to the Visa office buildings and the Metro Towers. In discussions with the applicant and the property owner, staff expressed their concerns regarding the 5-story building height that could cause a visual impact along the Vintage Park Drive streetscape. Although, the Vintage Park overpass rises to almost 30 feet about the level of the third story of the proposed hotel building, the remaining \pm 34 feet of building height will be clearly visible on this side. To alleviate some of staff's concerns the building was setback further (by approximately 80 feet) from the westerly property line and the

building height was reduced from 5 stories to 4 stories on the right most side of the building. Staff has requested that the applicant provide photo simulations that show the building height as seen from various view points on the Vintage Park overpass in order to completely evaluate the visual impacts that the building height may have. Additionally, staff believes that although some building articulation is achieved on this side, there is a strong horizontal emphasis by the use of horizontal lines that make this side appear less interesting and more rectilinear. Staff recommends that the applicant explore the use of vertical architectural elements to break the horizontal emphasis including the use of different material textures and colors and make this elevation more interesting as seen from the Vintage Park Drive overpass.

West Elevation (facing EMID easement/San Mateo's Bridgepointe Shopping Center)

Proposed: This side of the building directly faces the 20 foot EMID easement and the service areas of the Bridgepointe Shopping Center. The main entrance to the hotel is from this side. The entrance has a porte-cochere with a metal glass canopy that is contemporary in style. The circular colored attractive paving and trellis structure enhance the main entrance. The applicant has proposed taller vegetation along this side to screen the hotel rooms from the unsightly service areas of the shopping center. This side is approximately 246 feet in width and has some movement with some walls set back and some that pop out. The overall height of the building including the top most roof element is 64 feet and drops down to 56 feet at the top of the fifth floor roof level and further drops down to 44 feet at the fourth floor level on the right and left most tower portions of the building. Architectural elements similar to those on the other three elevations are repeated on this side.

Staff Comments/Recommendation: Staff feels that this side has somewhat more movement when compared to the east elevation as the height of the building steps down on both ends of the building on this elevation giving it a more balanced appearance. However, similar to the east elevation, staff feels that there is a strong horizontal emphasis that needs to be broken by introducing some vertical elements and use of different material textures and colors. Additionally, staff recommends that details of the entrance glass canopy and metal trellises be provided.

GENERAL COMMENTS

- The applicant should provide details of any rooftop equipment screening. A sectional drawing must be provided that indicates that the proposed parapet and/or screening will be adequate to screen HVAC and other necessary roof mounted equipment. Use screens and/or walls to block ground level views of all major roof equipment from a height of 5.5' at a distance of 500 feet from the building.
- Revised drawings should provide details of the outdoor equipment type including height and noise in order to determine the appropriate level of equipment screening and/or enclosure.
- When submitting revised plans, the applicant shall clearly indicate the sustainable features and/or LEED certification level that will be incorporated into the final building design. Note that these standards are to be in place at the time of the applicable Specific Development Plan/Use Permit approval.
- On the proposed site plan, it shows the existing transformer to be relocated. At the time of revised submittal, the final location of the transformer shall be shown clearly. Details of transformer screening including elevations and material details shall also be provided.
- Details of the entry pylons shall be provided.
- Lighting details including a lighting plan shall be provided indicating the proposed exterior building lighting (type; size; location; intensity). In addition to standard lighting requirements for commercial buildings, staff recommends that the applicant consider exterior lighting as a

method of defining entry areas and to guide guests from parking areas to the buildings and sidewalks. All exterior lighting should be non-glare lighting that would maximize the illumination of the exterior areas of the site and avoid off-site impacts.

- Signs for the proposed hotel have to be consistent with the Vintage Park Master Sign Program and will require a separate Sign Use Permit.
- The applicant shall submit the C.3 and C.6 Development Review Checklist (attached) and reference related storm water control measures on the plans.

Comments from other departments

Fire

- Fire and emergency access that complies with the Fire Code shall be provided. The fire lane(s) inside turn arc(s) in Foster City is 34 feet.
- The fire department connection for the combination fire sprinkler and standpipe system shall be within 50 feet of a fire hydrant.
- The fire emergency evacuation system shall be the speaker strobe style with a microphone control for fire department use.
- The address sign shall be clearly visible from the street.

Building

- No exterior piping, conduit or ducts are allowed. Plans do not indicate provisions from mechanical shafts from kitchen and bakery areas through to roof. Residential units are located immediately above the kitchen and bakery areas.

Finance

- The operator should be aware that they will be responsible to adhere to all of the conditions of Chapter 3.20 "Transient Occupancy Tax", of Title 3 "Revenue and Finance" of the City of Foster City's Municipal Code, should be granted the rights to occupy the property as a hotel as defined in Chapter 3.20.020.

Police

- If there is a connection between the two parking lots, the Police Department would prefer if they would remain open and not be locked off.

Staff has prepared the following questions to assist the Planning Commission's discussion:

1. Is the hotel use appropriate for the site?
2. Are the topics identified for Environmental Assessment of the project appropriate?
3. Is the proposed hotel appropriately located on the site?
4. Are the proposed setbacks from the Vintage Park drive overpass acceptable?

5. Does the overall proposed architectural style of the hotel relate well to the existing structure and adjacent buildings with respect to:
 - a. Architecture design/style
 - b. Building scale and massing
 - c. Building Height
 - d. Proposed colors and materials

6. Is the proposed amount of on-site parking adequate?

7. Are there any issues, concerns, or general matters that members of the Commission would like to discuss or ask staff to review?

NEXT STEPS

If the Planning Commission comments regarding the proposed hotel design are favorable and few major changes are required, the application will be scheduled for a Planning Commission Public Hearing for adoption. However, if the Planning Commission has substantial comments requiring significant changes to the proposal, the project will be scheduled for another Planning Commission Study Session when revised guidelines responding to the Commission's comments are submitted.

INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS AND DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Sharad Lal, Architect
Solomon Tsai, Property Owner
Foster City Municipal Code
Foster City General Plan
Project Plans
Project File

ATTACHMENTS

Project Description and addendum dated October 23, 2012
Market Study prepared by Blalock Consulting dated February 23, 2012
Crowne Plaza Parking Study
IDEC Comments dated October 11, 2012
Vintage Park Design Guidelines
Ordinance No. 554
Vicinity Map
Project Plans*