

**19320 Sonoma Highway**  
**APNs: 127-202-006 and -007**  
**Project Narrative for Sonoma SB 330 Preliminary Application,**  
**for Conditional Use Permit and Design Review Applications,**  
**and for Demolition Permit of the Existing Home**

DeNova Homes, Inc. (DHI) is proposing to construct a new 50-unit apartment community under this SB330 Preliminary Application and the formal Use Permit and Design Review applications. Because the original SB330 Preliminary Application was submitted over 180 days ago, a new SB330 Preliminary Application is required to be submitted (SB 330, Govt Code Sec 65941.1).

DHI has made site plan and other design refinements based upon comments received from staff and from the Planning Commission at the September 9, 2021 study session. These include: limiting to 2-stories the buildings closest to Sonoma Highway (to the west) and adjacent to the existing single-family residences to the east; increasing the building setback from Sonoma Highway to 50 feet; incorporating a central common area; and maintaining the building setbacks to strategically preserve significant trees. The new buildings will reflect a contemporary version of Spanish architecture, per the direction of the Planning Commission at the previous study session, for a different and more modern/contemporary Spanish feel, in homage to the existing home of Spanish style which will need to be removed to allow for roadway into the property and preservation of the large oak tree along the project frontage.

**Property information:**

- Address: 19320 Sonoma Highway 12
- APNs: 127-202-006 and -007
- Acreage: +/- 2.15 gross acres; 2.14 net acres
- General Plan Land Use: Designated as “Housing Opportunity” in the Housing Element of the General Plan, 15 – 25 du / acre
  - the maximum allowed density per the General Plan would be 54.5 units
- Zoning: The City’s Zoning Map labels the property as “Housing Opportunity” but within the specific planning area of the West Napa/Sonoma Highway Corridor the site is designated C – Commercial. Residential uses are permitted in the Commercial zoning district with approval of a Use Permit.
  - [Chapter 19.36 WEST NAPA STREET/SONOMA HIGHWAY CORRIDOR \(codepublishing.com\)](#)
- Surrounding land uses:
  - North – commercial uses
  - South – attached and single-family homes
  - East – single family homes
  - West – commercial uses
- Existing Conditions: One home located at the front of the property; a large valley oak to be retained at the front of the property (see arborist’s report); with the remaining portions of the property undeveloped.

In conformance with the General Plan designated density, the new community would provide 50 apartment units, resulting in a density of 22.3 du / net acre, which is within the General Plan range of 15 – 25 du/acre.

With the recently-adopted updates to the City’s Inclusionary Housing requirements, a total of 25% of the new apartments – 13 units - will be reserved to rent to lower income households:

- 5% extremely low income (3 units)
- 10% very low income (5 units)

10 % low income (5 units)

Additionally, the State density bonus law provides applicants the ability to receive several incentives, waivers, or concessions when providing affordable rental housing for lower income households (Govt Code Sec 65915), which DHI reserves the right to utilize and implement, if necessary, pending feedback from the City of Sonoma during the application review process.

### **Use Permit: Multi-Family Residential (5 or more units) within a Commercial zoning district**

The City of Sonoma Municipal Code (SMC) Chapt 19.10.050 Table 2-2 indicates that multi-family uses are allowed within a Commercial zoning district with approval of a Use Permit. Therefore, an application for a Use Permit is included.

### **Design Review: Project Narrative**

The apartment home community has been designed to preserve the large valley oak at the front of the smaller parcel and incorporate a very large (50 feet) setback from Sonoma Highway. Building 1, facing Sonoma Highway, is a two-story building with front doors accented by archways facing the street. This design is intentional to re-create a similar contextual relationship as the current home and oak tree to Sonoma Highway and surrounding properties.

A twenty-two foot wide drive aisle located a minimum of four feet from the northern property line provides access to the larger rear parcel. Buildings 2 and 3 are located on the north side of this drive aisle, which widens to 26 feet within the site, while Buildings 4 -7 are accessed via additional drive aisles perpendicular to the main drive. Garage access to the new apartment homes occur along these drive aisles. Access and building orientation are designed to ensure that emergency vehicles may access the three-story living areas and exit via a hammer-head type turnaround.

An approximately 10,500 square foot central common area is located between Buildings 5 and 6. These two buildings have front doors facing this common area. Building 4 is set back 25 feet from the western property line in order to ensure that larger oak trees on the adjacent property are preserved and minimally affected by new construction. The primary bio-retention area is located at the northeast corner of the property, which reflects the natural slope of the property to the east, and due to the location of the existing storm drain line located just offsite in the parking area of the commercial property to the north.

Two common trash enclosures are provided rather than individual waste bins, which frees up space in the garages for bicycle storage. Additional bicycle parking spaces are provided within the community. Pedestrian walkways connect homes to parking areas, the common open spaces and to the public sidewalk along Sonoma Highway.

The primary common open space area between Buildings 5 and 6 includes a multi-purpose turf area, seating, a child-sized seating and activity area, picnic tables and a shade structure. Other well-landscaped passive open space areas with connecting walkways occur throughout the rest of the site. A total of 22,242 square feet of common open space is provided, which exceeds the 15,000 square foot minimum required. Including private open space areas, the total open space calculates to nearly 465 square feet per unit. Twenty-seven percent of the site is dedicated to landscaped area.

The property will be separated from adjoining uses by a typical six feet tall wood good neighbor fence, although at the front a low accent fence is proposed to separate the public sidewalk along Sonoma Highway from the private space.

Two building types are proposed (please also refer to the attached spreadsheet of building and unit types, and the Architectural Design plans):

- Buildings 1 and 7 are two-story, 29.5 feet tall buildings with five units (“5-plex”) and four single-car garage spaces each. Plan types 3 and 4 provide one-level living areas, with Plan 4 at ground-level and Plan 3 on the second-level, while the Plan 5 and 5x provide two-level living in a townhome style. Two of these five units have direct access to a single-car garage: the Plan 4 (an ADA unit), and the Plan 5X. All units have some form of private open space (deck, porch, patio), although the dimensions of the Plan 3 do not meet the minimum 7 feet, and are therefore not counted towards the overall required open space.
- Buildings 2 – 6 are eight-unit (8-plex) three-story, 36-foot-tall “stacked flat” type apartment homes, each with access to a single-car or 2-car garage. Two units share a common entry/garage foyer and stairway to their respective units. The living areas of each unit are on one floor. Some units have a one-car garage, while others a 2-car garage. All units have private open space (deck, porch, patio).
- All new apartment homes are a minimum of 2 bedrooms and 2 baths.

A total of 75 parking spaces are required for the residents, a ratio of 1.5 spaces/unit. Some of the new homes will have a one-car garage, others will have a 2-car garage and one unit within each of the two, 5-plex buildings (Buildings 1 and 7) will not have a garage. A total of 68 garage spaces are provided. An additional 21 open parking spaces and 3 covered (carport) spaces are also incorporated, for a total of 94 parking spaces. Seven of these non-garage spaces will be allocated to residents, with the remaining 19 open spaces (25% of the primary spaces) allocated to guests, as required.

Rough grading has been designed so that cut and fill is nearly balanced (see Sheet C 4.0). The site does slope to the east: There is an approximately 6 – 7 foot drop in elevation from Sonoma Highway to the eastern property line, thereby creating the need for low retaining walls along the eastern and portions of the northern and southern property lines. Utilities have been designed to connect to existing public utility lines which are located both in Sonoma Highway (water and sewer) and in existing public utility easements to the east and north (sanitary sewer and storm drain, respectively). Please refer to Sheet C 4.0 for the preliminary grading, drainage, and utilities plan. The storm drain will be connected to an existing 36” storm drain line to the north (which then flows east). The sanitary sewer is proposed to connect to an existing 8” sewer line in the existing easement to the east. However, Sheet C 6.0 also provides two

alternative sewer connections: Alternative #2 would connect with the existing (deep) sewer line in Sonoma Highway, while the *preferred* Alternative #3 would connect the sewer through a new easement proposed within the parking area of the commercial property to the north. Negotiations with that property-owner for this new easement are ongoing. Alternative #3 would create less disruption to the residential neighbor to the east and is a more efficient and natural solution.

### **Design Review: Basic Findings**

a. *The project complies with applicable policies and regulations as set forth in the development Code, other City ordinances and the General Plan.*

The property is designated on the City's General Plan map and within the City's General Plan Housing Element as "Housing Opportunity", allowing for a density of 15 – 25 du /acre, or up to 54.5 units total.

This residential development of 50 units conforms to the City's General Plan by proposing housing on this identified "Housing Opportunity" site at a density within the specified General Plan range.

The site is located within the West Napa / Sonoma Corridor Planning Area (Sonoma MUC Chapt 19.36), and has a zoning of Commercial, which allows for residential development with approval of a use permit.

Subject to utilizing any allowed density bonus incentives, waivers or concessions (as permitted by Govt Code Section 65915 for housing developments which provide inclusionary housing), the project follows the applicable codes/ordinances in effect at the time of submittal of this SB330 application.

b. *On balance, the project is consistent with the intent of the applicable design guidelines, set forth in the Development Code.*

The proposed residential development conforms with SMC Chapt 19.36 Table 3-30 for New Development within the "C" zoning district:

- Front Setback (to Sonoma Highway) for the two-story Building 1 is 50'; required is 25' for a two-story building. *The greater setback was incorporated upon suggestion from the Planning Commission.*
- No side setbacks are required by the zoning since abutting properties are zoned Mixed Use to the south and Commercial to the north. However, side setbacks are incorporated of: 16 feet (to the south) for the three-story buildings 4 – 6; and a minimum of 12' – 12.5' (to the north) for three-story buildings Bldgs 2 and 3.
- Although no rear setback is required, even when adjacent to a residential use (which is the case), the rear setback (to the east) for two-story Building 7 is 12 feet. *Separation from the existing residential neighborhood and limitation of the new building to 2-stories was incorporated upon suggestion from the Planning Commission.*

**Napa/Sonoma Corridor: New Development**

Development Feature	Requirements by Zoning District			
	Setbacks, Site Coverage, Open Space and Height			
	R-M	MX	C	C-G
<b>Setbacks</b>	Minimum setbacks required for primary structures. See SMC 19.40.110 for setback measurement, allowed projections into setbacks, exceptions, and design guidelines for setbacks.			
Front/Street-side <sup>1</sup>	One-story: 15 ft. Two-story: 25 ft.			
Side: One-Story	5 ft. minimum, 12 ft. combined		None required, except when abutting a residential zone, in which case the corresponding setback in the residential zone shall apply.	
Side: Two-Story	2 ft. for every 5 ft. (or fraction thereof) of height above 15 ft., <sup>2</sup> in addition to the normal requirement for one-story structures.		None required	
Rear	15 ft., except when abutting the R-L zone, in which case a minimum 20 ft. setback is required.		None required	

The proposed new community also conforms to the FAR, site coverage, open space and height requirements:

- Floor Area Ratio: The total floor area of all 7 buildings (see SMC 19.92) is 66,874 square feet, which represents a 70.4% floor area ratio.
- Site Coverage (see SMC 19.92.020 S): The total footprint of all buildings, outdoor parking and vehicular circulation is 54,686 square feet, representing 58.5% of the net site area.
- Building Coverage: The total footprint of all seven buildings is 29,086 square feet, representing 30.6% of the net site area.
- Height: SMC 19.40.040 B.1. allows third floor residential units within the Commercial zoning districts, to a height of 36 feet. The proposed two – and three-story building heights conform to this section of the SMC:
  - \* 2-story buildings: approximately 29.5 feet
  - \* 3-story buildings: 36 feet

Development Feature	Requirements by Zoning District			
	<i>Setbacks, Site Coverage, Open Space and Height</i>			
	R-M	MX	C	C-G
	For the expansion or renovation of existing parking areas subject to planning approval, the review authority may require additional landscaping and/or the consolidation of driveway cuts.			
<b>F.A.R./Site Coverage</b>				
<i>F.A.R.</i>	0.45	0.70	0.80	0.80
<i>Site Coverage</i>	50%	60%	70%	40%
<b>Open Space</b>	<i>See SMC 19.40.070 and 19.40.080 for design requirements.</i>			
<i>Commercial</i>	N.A.	7% – 11% of site	7% – 11% of site	7% – 11% of site
<i>Residential: Common</i>	25%	300 sq. ft. per unit, any combination of shared or private	300 sq. ft. per unit, any combination of shared or private	300 sq. ft. per unit, any combination of shared or private
<i>Residential: Private</i>	400 sq. ft. per unit			
<b>Height</b>	<i>Ridge height measured from finished grade. See SMC 19.40.040 for applicability and exceptions.</i>			
<i>Primary Structure</i>	30 ft.			

Open Space: The project provides 23,218 of total private and common open space, thereby exceeding the combined open space requirement of 15,000 square feet. In accordance with SMC 19.40.070.5.b, only landscaped areas with connecting walkways and a minimum dimension of 15 feet have been counted towards common open space. Although each unit has private open space in the form of a deck or porch / patio or a combination thereof, only the private open spaces which meet the minimum dimensions (976 square feet) have been counted towards the total of open space. (Please refer to Sheet C3.0 and the Landscape Plan, Sheet L-1.) The total area would be increased by another 3500 square feet including the northeast bio-retention area with its walkway yielding 534 sq ft per unit. Please refer also to the attached "Open Space Calculations" table.

Total Private Open Space: 976 sq ft  
Total Common Open Space: 22,242 sq ft  
Total open space: 23,218 sq ft (464 sq ft / unit)

c. *The project responds appropriately to the context of the adjacent development, as well as existing site conditions and environmental features.*

A home constructed in 1939 is located on the front parcel adjacent to and facing Sonoma Highway. An Historical Resource Evaluation (HRE) was conducted: Although the home does qualify as an historical resource, its position on the front parcel precludes access to the larger parcel behind it. Therefore, it will need to be removed to provide access to the larger parcel behind and surrounding it and to preserve the large oak tree also along the frontage. To address the loss of this Spanish style architecture, DHI has proposed the new residential buildings in a contemporary version of the classic Spanish style. These

features include arches to highlight entries and balconies, light or white stucco complemented by darker roof tile, lower-pitched roofs (2.5:12 and 4:12), and metal railings for accents at stair and balconies.

As noted during the Planning Commission work session in September, there are 2 primary constraints to developing these two parcels: The 1939 home which is located about 12 feet from the northern property line and the large oak tree located more towards the southern property line. Although the distance of the current home from the southern property line could accommodate access, the tree would need to be removed. DHI considered the preservation and re-use of the current home, perhaps through some integration into the apartment community, but determined that it was infeasible. The Planning Commission also weighed the alternatives and concurred that preserving the tree was the more appropriate solution. Retaining this large oak tree provided a better continuation of the environmental context which also is reflected in the large setback of Building 1, its Spanish design, and with the front doors facing Sonoma Highway.

Building 7 also is a 2-story building, thereby providing a transition in height from the residential neighborhood to the east to the 3-story buildings located within the development. Buildings 2 – 6 are proposed as three-story, and they are located adjacent to what are currently parking areas of commercial uses to the north and south. These properties, which have the same zoning, also could be re-developed with similar three-story multi-family uses.

Although a rear yard setback is not required by the SMC, even when new development in a Commercial zone abuts residentially-zoned property, a 12 feet setback is maintained for Building 7, which also is a 2-story building with a maximum height of 29.5 feet. DHI felt – as did City-reviewers – that maintaining a lower building height and some setback was appropriate for the context of the adjacent residential properties.

**Demolition Permit Project Narrative Considerations:**

DHI commissioned a Historic Resource Evaluation from the firm Evans & De Shazo (dated July 31, 2021) to determine if the 0.34-acre property (APN 127-202-007) containing the 1939 house and associated landscape is eligible for listing on the CRHR. The HRE determined that the home appears individually eligible for listing on the CRHR under Criterion 3 for its association with Ranch architecture with Spanish Colonial Revival design elements.

*1. The Structure is not historically significant, based upon the criteria established by the State Office of Historic Preservation.*

A home constructed in 1939 is located on the front parcel adjacent to and facing Sonoma Highway. A Historical Resource Evaluation (HRE) was conducted (Evans & De Shazo, Inc., July 31, 2021). Although the home does qualify as an historical resource, its position on the front parcel precludes access to the larger parcel behind it. Therefore, the home will need to be removed to provide access to and allow for development of the property with the 50 new apartment homes. To address the loss of this Spanish style architecture, DHI has proposed the new residential buildings in a contemporary version of the classic Spanish style. These features include arches to highlight entries and balconies, light or white stucco complemented by darker roof tile, lower-pitched roofs (2.5:12 and 4:12), and metal railings for accents at stair and balconies.

2. *The structure does not represent a unique and irreplaceable historical or architectural resource.*

The HRE does indicate that the structure can qualify as an historical resource, the HRE also notes that prior to demolition, additional 3D scans can be performed to add to the digital historical record. As noted previously, there are two primary constraints to accessing the large parcel behind the home: The home itself and a very large valley oak tree, one of which must be removed. A digital representation of the approximately 80-year old home can be made for the historic record, but removal of the large oak tree which may be considerably older than the home is less easy to replicate.

3. *The community benefit of preserving the structure is outweighed by the cost of preservation and rehabilitation.*

The existing home can provide shelter for just one household; the proposed 50-home apartment complex can provide housing for 50 household. The location of the existing house on the front parcel precludes adequate access to the larger parcel behind, which can accept more multi-family homes for development. The provision of more much-needed housing outweighs the cost of preserving and rehabilitating a small single-family detached home that has no historical significance other than its age.

4. *The adaptive re-use of the structure is feasible or inappropriate due to economic considerations, structural conditions or land use incompatibility; and*

The re-use of the home for multiple-family residential use – which is the type of residential use allowed in a commercially-zone property - is not feasible. The home is relatively small and does not lend itself to division into separate units, nor is it structurally feasible to add units or increase its height to add units. And, as noted previously, its location on the parcel prevents adequate access to the larger parcel to the rear. Safe ingress and egress for apartment residents and fire access requires a wider driveway than can be accommodated on either side of the home in between the existing large oak tree desired to be preserved.

5. *The relocation of the structure is infeasible due to cost, structural conditions or lack of an interested taker.*

The relocation of the home is not feasible. A new property would need to be identified and acquired to accept the home. The cost of removing and relocating the structure would be prohibitive and the structure likely would need significant modification to bring it up to current building code standards to relocate it to another property. Relocating the structure is not financially or practically feasible for DHI.