

Planning Commission
City Hall
City of Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, Calif. 93101

Sept. 18, 2007

Dear Members of the Commission:

Re: Condo Conversion of 2519 Orella St.

When the conversion ordinance was written to enable existing apartments to convert to condos there was extensive discussion regarding the standards that would enable conversion to be accomplished.

There was a strong consensus that ownership resulted in longer term occupancy and as such required certain amenities. The size of the units was required to be larger than apartment units. It was recognized that the city cannot restrict the number of people living in a unit and that families with children with could occupy the converted units.

The requirement of adequate parking was also considered and standards were established which reflected the fact that families or multiple persons would occupy these units, therefore requiring adequate supply of parking. Without this the parking would expand to the street and into adjacent neighborhoods.

Since these units were owner occupied, storage was recognized as a necessity as the longer the unit was occupied the higher the probability of the accumulation of material things.

The summation of these points are that the requirements for condo conversion were set at the minimum requirements for the prospective owners to have a reasonable quality of life. The reduction of these requirements is not in the best interest of future occupants.

Approval of this project will set a precedent as to what new standards are acceptable resulting in the loss of more rental units.

The city wide concern about a balance of housing opportunities should also be considered. Are we currently constructing apartments now or primarily condos? The answer is that the units currently in the pipeline they are almost totally condos.

The conversion of apartments to condos tends to worsen the Job/Housing imbalance because the current rents (or even higher rents if the rental units are renovated) are more affordable to the workforce population than the down payments and mortgage payments of the resulting ownership units.

The planning commission should ask the important question that with this conversion how many inclusionary units will have to be approved to make up for the loss?

The consensus of the Allied Neighborhoods Association Board of Directors is that this project should be denied. Thank you for your attention in this important matter.

Sincerely

Judy Orias, President Allied Neighborhood Association