

Revised 5/17/2023

1540 Superior Project Description

Berk Properties LLC (the “Applicant”) proposes nine for-sale live/work townhomes (the “Project”) on a 0.439 acre (19,147 square foot) site located at 1540 Superior Avenue in the City of Costa Mesa (the “City”) with a proposed density of 20.5 dwelling units per acre. The units comprise an innovative housing model that combines the advantages of a townhome and a live/work unit in a compact plan that takes advantage of common areas on the ground level and optimizes private outdoor space with expansive individual roof decks. Workspaces at the ground floor will feature high 10’ ceilings, large floor to ceiling storefront windows and doors that open to shared landscape common areas. With workspace areas located at the ground floor, private residential space is located on the upper floors with roof decks providing ample space for entertaining. The exterior elevations are proposed to have modern materials and clean lines. The project design aesthetics pay homage to the commercial nature and feel of the neighborhood.

The Project will be brand new, ground-up infill construction so it will have to meet the City’s building code, as well as State code for Title 24, and Cal Green energy requirements. The Project will be constructed to help reduce on-going operational and building maintenance costs with energy efficient wall and roof assembly details, double pane windows and doors, energy star approved appliances, MERV-13 air filters, LED lighting, high quality insulation, and solar panels, etc.

The Project is located at the northeast corner of 16th Street and Superior Avenue in the westside area of the Mesa West Bluffs neighborhood, west of SR-55. Currently, the property on 1540 Superior is a single-tenant, one-story flex industrial building which comprises approximately 4,360 square feet. The Project site is located in an area revitalizing from predominately commercial and industrial uses to one containing live-work units and mixed uses.

The Project proposes nine three-story dwelling units with 2-unit types; each unit containing 3-bedrooms plus live/workspace at the ground level. Plans shall have a square footage between 1,612 and 2,072. The floor area ratio is proposed at approximately 0.98, under the maximum floor area ratio of 1:1. The Project’s lot coverage is approximately 8,136 square feet or approximately 42 percent of lot area. The Project proposes a copious amount of open space, at both the ground level and in roof decks, exceeding the City’s 30 percent requirement.

With respect to parking, the Project would provide 14 enclosed spaces, four tuck-under and additional nine open spaces with at least one bicycle space provided on the site for a total of 28 spaces.

With respect to the three plans that the Project proposes, Plan A1 has a reduced square footage to allow a lower price point. Plan A2 includes larger living areas with additional roof deck area for entertainment. Plan A3 includes a larger workspace, roof deck, and elevation step back on the 3rd floor to activate the corner of Superior and Industrial Way. Exterior elevations reflect the larger workspace and the smaller entry point townhome. The 4th level staircase element provides a lower scale building on the long sides of the buildings.

The master plan exhibits excellence in design, site planning, integration of uses and structures and protection of the integrity of neighboring development. (City Municipal Code Section 13-29(g)(5).)

The Project furthers the Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan by including a mixed-se development composed of commercially or industrially oriented joint work and living quarters in the same building, where typically the primary use is a place of work and where there are separately designated residential and work areas.¹ The Project includes the type of development referenced through visual imagery in the Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan. To this end, as noted in the Project drawings, the Project includes: large storefront ground floor windows; landscaped ground floor with copious amounts of open space and trees; synthetic cement and exterior board; dual glazed windows; metal guard rails, balconies; metal canopies; screed lines; metal doors; garages; and varied roof lines. These design features provide an exciting engagement with the streetscape, while providing attractive and functional live-work units, thereby providing excellence in design, site planning and integration of uses.

With respect to off-site improvements, because the Project consists of only nine dwelling units, it is not expected to result in the need for off-site improvements. Nevertheless, to the extent that any utility upgrades would be necessary, the Project would provide any water, sewer, electric, and gas upgrades.

As shown in Sheet 3.1 of the Project drawings, the Project would enhance the corner of Industrial Way and Superior Avenue with large storefront windows, metal canopies, and landscaped open space. These design elements would assist in activating the streetscape and also provide an attractive and enticing backdrop for pedestrians and motorists.

Through the use of large ground floor windows and ground floor open space that would be open to Superior Avenue and Industrial Way, the Project's nonresidential spaces are intended to activate the streetscape and not operate as auxiliary work from home. While the Project did consider an active retail component at the corner tenant space, given that this location is not an active retail area, the market demand is not there to support an isolated retail space cut off from other retail uses.

The Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan states that "reversion of live/work units to residential lofts is expressly discouraged."² The Project achieves the live/work design standards contained in the Urban Plan. These standards include viable work space within the Project; livability through social interaction with common open space; commercial visibility with large storefront windows; and functional work spaces. These Project features that help ensure the live/work units would not likely revert to residential use in the future, in fully compliance with the development standard contained within the Urban Plan.

¹ Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan, p. 7.

² *Id.* at 8.