

Shape Our Fremont

Now the Other Side of the Street...



The Century House and the Minerva's building on Fremont Boulevard in Centerville are proposed to be demolished in the latest development plans. In their place, SummerHill Apartment Communities wants to build 202 rental units and 8,420 sq. ft. of commercial space in a mixed-use project on two parcels that stretch between Fremont Boulevard and Maple Street.

Historic Buildings

The Century House at 37447 Fremont Boulevard was built in 1932 for Frank Botelho as the Chapel of the Palms Mortuary. The building at 37463 Fremont Boulevard, that has housed Minerva's restaurant since 1979, was built in 1954 replacing the 1930's home of Max Stevenson.

Both buildings, plus another behind the Century House, are currently being evaluated to determine if they are potential historic resources under either the California state criteria or the less-stringent City of Fremont criteria.

Any project that proposes to demolish or structurally change a building that is found to be potentially eligible for listing as an historic resource must be reviewed by the Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB).

Project Review

SummerHill has submitted a Preliminary Review Procedure (PRP) request to have their project plans reviewed by city staff. This will include people from Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Fire, Landscape, Solid Waste, and Urban Runoff. A PRP is not a formal application for entitlement. It is an opportunity for developers to get feedback from the city as to whether their initial plans would meet city standards.

As part of the PRP, the public is encouraged to submit their comments, concerns, and questions directly to the assigned city staff planner. This is the best time to raise issues because it allows the city staff to identify problems and to potentially work out solutions with the developer before work begins on a more detailed formal application.

Proposal Plans

The two mixed-use frontage buildings would be two stories, and the residential building behind would be five stories wrapping around a six-story parking garage. One mixed-use frontage building with retail spaces on the ground floor would be 81 feet wide. Next to it would be a similar frontage building holding a leasing office and fitness center, but no other retail space. The city will consider whether that is enough commercial space for a mixed-use project along 290 feet of Fremont Boulevard frontage.

The modern exterior architecture is similar to what SummerHill used for Locale@State Street in the Downtown Center. The style will be assessed as whether it reflects the community character of historic Centerville Town Center.

There would be no apartments designated as Affordable Housing units, and SummerHill plans to pay Affordable Housing in-lieu fees instead. However, several of the market-rate apartments are studios, and the units range from 476 sq. ft. to 976 sq. ft.

SummerHill's PRP cover letter states that the density would be 81.5 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). These parcels have a General Plan Land Use Designation of Commercial-Town Center and are within the Centerville Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay. Allowable residential density in mixed-use projects depends on space for parking. Will Fremont allow a density so far above the 70 du/ac maximum of a Residential-Urban designation in a TOD?

Access would be from Fremont Boulevard or Maple Street. Could this location in the heart of Centerville and opposite the new 165-unit SiliconSage development, handle the additional traffic from 202 more units?

Your Opinion Matters

Let the City of Fremont know what you think of this proposal and the historic buildings they plan to demolish. Email the city staff planner David Wage at dwage@fremont.gov regarding Summerhill Apartment Communities' Fremont Multifamily Residential PRP (PRP2019-00017).