

Village Lofts approved for Carlsbad's I-5 gateway



An architectural drawing of the Carlsbad Village Lofts project on Carlsbad Village Drive just west of Interstate 5. (Rendering courtesy AVRP Studies)

By **Phil Diehl**

A mixed-use project with 106 apartments got the all-clear this week from the [Carlsbad](#) City Council for construction on Carlsbad Village Drive just west of Interstate 5, a key entrance to the city.

Part of the 2.23-acre site is vacant, where a [Chevron](#) service station was razed years ago, and the rest is an aging Denny's Restaurant that will be demolished to make way for the Carlsbad Village Lofts development.

“This will make a very nice gateway project for the city,” Councilman Michael Schumacher said just before the council unanimously approved the project Tuesday. “We are seeing a nice blend in the Village of some old and some new, and I think this project contributes nicely to the new.”

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/communities/north-county/sd-no-village-lofts-20170301-story.html>

Construction is expected to begin in about a year and take roughly 18 months to complete, said the project's applicant, Evan Gerber of the San Diego-based Gerber Group.

Several people at Tuesday's meeting praised the building's design and its adherence to "smart growth" principles. The location is near public transportation, with easy pedestrian access, and nearby jobs, retail shops, parks and other services needed by residents.

Though the project is close to Interstate 5, it's designed to shield residents from traffic noise, with an access hallway to serve as a sound barrier between the apartments and the freeway, Gerber said.

One downtown resident objected to the increased traffic the project would bring, but a traffic expert said there will be only a slight increase over the daily trips now generated by the Denny's.

Plans call for three retail shops, a small office and one live-work apartment on the ground floor. All the parking for the project is included on the site, with most of it, 173 spaces, in an underground structure.

The upper three stories will have one-, two- and three-bedroom rental apartments, with a rooftop deck, all served by an elevator. The residential lobby will be at the northwest corner of the building.

Also included will be 16 apartments designated for qualified low-income residents.

The architectural style of the building is described as an incorporation of two different styles of California Craftsman, with the southern portion topped by a "butterfly" roof that's lowest in the center and pitched up on the sides.

It also incorporates solar panels and solar hot water heaters in efforts to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gases.

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/communities/north-county/sd-no-village-lofts-20170301-story.html>

The building's height reaches 45 feet, which is the city's limit for the village, and two features — the butterfly roof and the top of the elevator shaft — extend above the limit.

In January the city Planning Commission, concerned about the height of the 59-foot elevator shaft, asked Gerber and his staff to look for ways to lower it. The team's architect, Doug Austin, said Tuesday they could only lower it a little more than one foot, but any more than that would be unsafe.

Councilman Keith Blackburn said the "height creep" is a concern, but it's outweighed by the project's many benefits.

"That entrance of our city has looked very poorly for so long," Blackburn said, and the building "is going to be a great addition."

The site is historically significant to Carlsbad. Before the gas station was built there, that lot was home to one of Carlsbad's early mayors, Jane Sonneman, in a house built about 1919.