

**CITY OF PALM DESERT
PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

MEETING DATE: May 21, 2024

PREPARED BY: Carlos Flores, AICP, Principal Planner

REQUEST: APPROVE A PRECISE PLAN FOR THE ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPING FOR A 332 SINGLE FAMILY HOME RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF GERALD FORD AND WEST OF PORTOLA ROAD WITHIN THE REFUGE SPECIFIC PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 2869 entitled, "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AND APPROVING A PRECISE PLAN TO APPROVE ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPING FOR A 332 SINGLE FAMILY HOME RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF GERALD FORD DRIVE AND WEST OF PORTOLA ROAD WITHIN THE EXISTING REFUGE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA (ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER 694-310-011 AND 694-310-003)

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

On November 17, 2022, the City of Palm Desert City Council (Council) approved the Refuge Specific Plan (Plan), which included the following approvals under City Council Resolution No. 2022-93 and 2022-94:

- Approval of the development of 969 dwelling units on a 106.4-acre site area located at the southwest corner of Gerald Ford Drive and Rembrandt Parkway.
- Refuge Specific Plan (SP22-0001) to set forth site-specific development and design standards, land use regulations, infrastructure, and circulation for the 106.4-acre site. This included establishing five (5) planning areas within the Plan.
- Tentative Tract Map (TTM) 38434, which subdivided a 93.56-acre portion of the project to establish the following:
 - Three hundred thirty-nine (339) single-family residential lots on 43.64 acres within Planning Area 3 of the Plan.
 - One (1) condominium project lot totaling 14.29 acres within Planning Area 2 of the Plan.
 - Twenty (20) lots for retention and open spaces areas on 14.15 acres.
 - Thirteen (13) lots for public streets and eight (8) lots for private alleyways on 21.49 acres.

On September 5, 2023, the City of Palm Desert Planning Commission (Commission) adopted Resolution No. 2841 to approve a request by Pulte Home Company (Applicant) for a revision to

TTM 38434, which revised the 93.56-acre portion of the Refuge project and established the following:

- Three hundred thirty-two (332) single-family residential lots on 40.93 acres within Planning Area 3 of the Plan, including common areas for a clubhouse and active and passive open space areas.
- One (1) condominium project lot totaling 14.29 acres within Planning Area 2 of the Plan.
- Twenty (20) lots for retention and open space areas on 16.65 acres.
- Twenty-three (23) lots for public streets on 21.70 acres.
- Revised circulation, including establishing cul-de-sacs and additional traffic calming circles throughout the project site.

The Plan approved five (5) planning areas, including Planning Area 3 for a single-family residential development. The current proposal is for consideration to approve the architecture and landscape plans for the 332-units within Planning Area 3, including a clubhouse and common area, which is referred to as “Pulte Explore”.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION

The Architectural Review Commission of the City of Palm Desert considered the request for Design Review approval for the project and took the following action at its meeting of April 23, 2024:

Following discussion, MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MCAULIFFE, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER LATKOVIC, CARRIED 5-0 (COMMISSIONERS COLVARD and MCINTOSH ABSENT); to approve Case No. DR23-0022 (PP23-0022) with the following conditions:

1. The Contemporary Mid Century roof elements shall be extended to meet the main body of the roof in all applications where practical.
2. Increase the size of the crushed rock on the dry stream beds, throughout the site, to be 2 inches or larger.

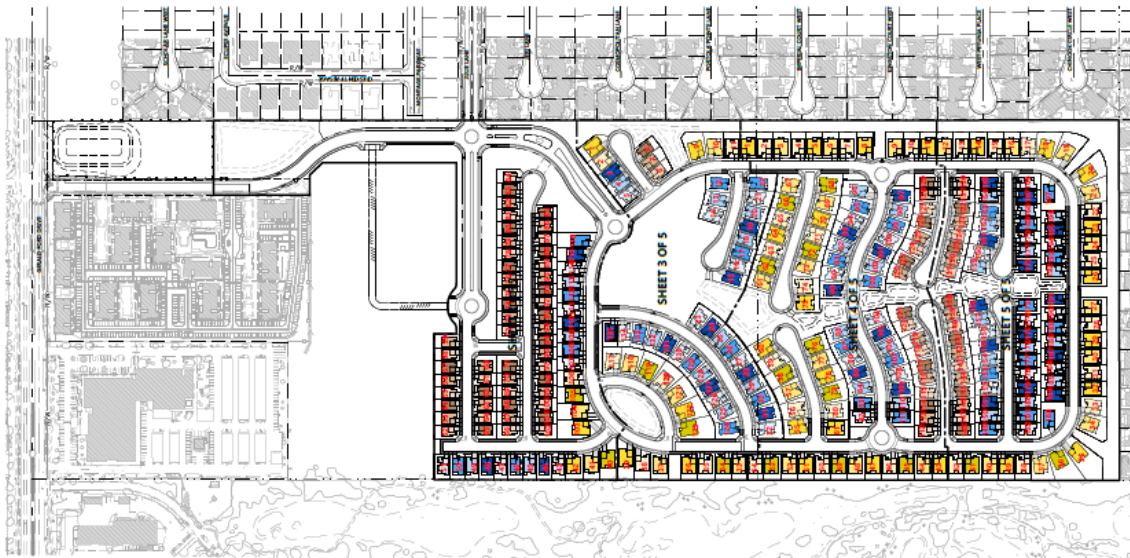
The Applicant revised the plans to address these two comments.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Property Description:

The project site is 40.93 acres within Planning Area 3 of the Refuge Specific Plan, as shown in Exhibit 1 below, and includes 332 single family, detached units.

Exhibit 1 – Pulte Refuge Site Plan



B. Zoning, General Plan, and Adjacent Uses

Table 1 – Adjacent Land Use and Designations

	Existing Uses	General Plan	Zoning
Project Site	Vacant	Town Center Neighborhood/ Refuge Specific Plan	Planned Residential – 20 (PR-20)
North	Vacant	Town Center Neighborhood/ Refuge Specific Plan	Planned Residential – 20 (PR-20)
South	Vacant	Town Center Neighborhood	Planned Residential – 20 (PR-20)
East	Existing Residential	Town Center Neighborhood	Planned Residential – 20 (PR-20)
West	Vacant	Town Center Neighborhood	Planned Residential – 20 (PR-20)

C. Project Description

The Applicant is requesting approval for the following:

- Architecture plans for the 332-units, which includes a total of 33 variations spread out throughout the project site as shown in Attachment 8. The plan types are broken down as follows:
 - o 91-units of the Plan 3700 Series: Three (3) plan types, each with three (3) elevations
 - o 134-units of the Plan 4000 series: Four (4) plan types, each with three (3) elevations
 - o 107-units of the Plan 5000 series: Four (4) plan types each with three (3) elevations
- Front yard typical landscape plans for the Plan 3700, 4000, and 5000 series
- Architecture of the proposed private clubhouse
- Landscaping for the clubhouse and open space areas

Architecture

PP23-0022 Pulte Homes

The proposal includes eleven (11) single family home designs each with three (3) elevations, broken down by three (3) Plan Series. Attachment 2 provides detailed information on all of the proposed home designs, including information on height, wrap details, window recess depths, wall plane depths, exterior lighting, material information, and color schemes. A summary can be found below:

- There are a total of 11 plan types, each of which comes three elevations: Progressive Spanish, Mid Century, and Contemporary architectural styles.
- Each proposed elevation has four (4) different available color schemes.
- Plan 4000 series and Plan 5000 series include two-story plans. The original approval provides conditions to ensure the two-story homes are interior lots. A line-of-sight drawing has been submitted from surrounding properties (Attachment 3)
- The project includes a wide variety of colors and materials including, but not limited to:
 - o Stucco: “White duck”, “Mist Gray”, Accessible Beige”, “Relaxed Khaki”
 - o Garage Doors/Stucco Trim/Stucco Accent: “Iced Mocha”, “Useful Gray”, “Illusive Green”, “Mega Greige”
 - o Roof Materials: Low S Profile Apple Bark, Flat Shake Profile Charcoal Blend, Flat Slate Profile Ebony

Exhibit 2 shows a sample of the front elevations of the proposed designs.

Exhibit 2 – Pulte Home Designs



The Applicant is also proposing architecture approval of a clubhouse and pool building for the residential development. Both buildings are designed with contemporary architecture, incorporating flat and sloped roofs.

The Pulte home designs are subject to Chapter 4 Design Guidelines of the Refuge Specific Plan. The new designs are to be reviewed for their compatibility with the Plan.

Landscaping

The proposal includes front yard typical planting plans for all three Plan Series (Series 3700, 4000, and 5000). The project includes a plant list of trees and shrubs to be used for all of the home designs, including designs for end lots. Each home unit has a mixture of two (2) trees in the front yard, shrubs, and ground material. The plant palette includes shoestring acacias, desert ironwoods, century plants, red yucca, and coral fountains.

The Applicant also provided landscaping information for landscaping throughout the project site, as shown in Exhibit 3 below and in Attachment 6. This includes landscaping details on the recreation center, a desert landscape trail with stabilized decomposed granite, shaded picnic areas, and pocket parks. The palette includes a variety of trees, palm trees, shrubs, and ground covers including mulgas, mesquites, date palms, agave species, ocotillo, and red yuccas. The landscaping plan also provides details on the entry structures, wall and fence plan, and irrigation.

The Plan provides guidelines for front yard landscaping throughout Refuge.

Exhibit 3 – Common Area Landscaping Site Plan



Analysis

The project is subject to the development standards found in Table 3.4 of the Refuge Specific Plan, shown below as Exhibit 4 on the next page. Every unit in the development meets the development standards and will be confirmed to meet all standards throughout construction review.

Exhibit 4 – Table 3.4 of Refuge Specific Plan
 Table 3.4 Development Standards PA-3¹

Standard		
Product Type	SFD ²	SFD – Alley ³
Density	4.7-6 du/ac ⁴	
Lot Dimensions		
Min Lot size	3,000 sf	3,000 sf
Min Lot width	40 ft	40 ft
Min Lot depth	-	-
Yard Setbacks (Min)		
Front - Street to building or garage ⁵	10 ft/18ft	N/A
Side – Interior ⁹	5 ft	5 ft
Side – Interior ⁶	7 ft	5 ft
Side – Street ⁷	-	5 ft
Side – Alley ^{5,8}	15 ft	N/A
Rear - Traditional	N/A	3 ft/3 ft
Rear - Alley to building ⁵ or garage ⁷	-	-
Patio Covers (Side & Rear)	Per PDMC Section 25.40.030 (Projections into Required Setbacks)	Per PDMC Section 25.40.030 (Projections into Required Setbacks)
Accessory Structures	Per PDMC Section 25.40.050 (Accessory Buildings and Structures)	
Lot Coverage ⁹		
Max Coverage	60%	65%
Parking		
Spaces Required	One Bedroom: 1.25 spaces per unit	
	Two Bedroom+: 2 spaces per unit	
Building Measurements		
Min separation between buildings	10 ft	8 ft
Max height	30 ft	30 ft
Max stories	2 ¹⁰	2 ¹⁰

1. Up to 70 units (10% of combined PA maximum) may be transferred between PA 2 & 3.
2. Measured from back of curb or sidewalk, if present
3. Including lots that adjoin common area landscape lots.
4. The average density of PA-3 will fall within the range provided. Density range is just an average and may include some lot configurations that will have densities outside the stated range.
5. Measured from back of curb or sidewalk, if present and whichever creates a greater setback.
6. Including lots that adjoin common area landscape lots.
7. Measured from back of curb.
8. 0 ft side yard in paired or zero lot line condition.
9. The percentage of a lot covered by the total square footage of the main building, garage, and/or any accessory buildings that are larger than 150 square feet.
10. Limited to 1-story, and 18 feet in height, when adjacent to, or within 50 feet of, Planning Area 5.

Environment Assessment/Environmental Review:

The City of Palm Desert Development Services Department has determined that the Project is consistent with a previously adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration, adopted for the Refuge Specific Plan (SP/EA22-0001) via City Council Resolution No. 2022-93; therefore no further environmental review is necessary.

Public Input:

Public Notification

Public noticing was conducted for this Planning Commission meeting per the requirements of PDMC. A public hearing notice was published a minimum of 10 days before the hearing date on Friday, May 10, 2024, in The Desert Sun newspaper. Notices were mailed to all property owners within 1,000 feet of the project site.

The Applicant held a Community Engagement meeting on May 13, 2024 to receive public input. No input from that meeting resulted in changes to the project.

Findings of Approval:

Findings for Approval can be found in Attachment 1, the draft Planning Commission resolution 2869.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft PC Resolution 2869
2. Home Plans
3. Line of Sight drawings
4. Clubhouse Plans
5. Front Yard Typical Landscape Plans
6. Common Area Landscaping Plans
7. Hearing Notice
8. Unit Mix
9. Specific Plan Design Guidelines