

Commission OKs complex

By Edward Gately

The Republic | azcentral.com

The Scottsdale Planning Commission has endorsed a proposed apartment complex on the site that formerly housed Pitre Buick on McDowell Road west of 68th Street.

Chason Development wants to build Las Aguas, a 154-unit apartment complex on the northern side of McDowell Road adjacent to single-family residences. The commission Dec. 12 voted unanimously to recommend City Council approval of a rezoning with amended development standards and a development plan for the \$25 million complex. The vacant dealership would be demolished, with the exception of the two-story parking garage, to make way for the complex, which would include stoops on the units along McDowell.

John Berry, a zoning attorney representing Chason, outlined numerous concessions his client has made to gain the support of nearby residents, such as no north-facing balconies, a higher buffer wall along the northern side, higher-pitched roofs on the one-story garages along the northern side and a construction sequence to buffer the neighbors. He said the proposal is a "down-zoning" from the current commercial zoning that allows such uses as gun shop, pawn shop, restaurant, hotel and liquor store.

However, nearby homeowners lodged protests against the proposal.

Roy Sosa, whose home is just north of the proposed complex on Almeria Road, said he and other homeowners are concerned about lower property values caused by crime, noise and increased traffic.

Kelly Vaughn, who lives north of the site on Granada Road, said she and other residents fear that a rental complex will have a negative effect on the overall neighborhood. She said the complex was pitched as luxury, but the average monthly rent would be \$1,000.

Commission Chairman Michael D'Andrea said the developer has gone to great lengths to meet neighbors' demands and that "I can't imagine a car lot, empty or not, would be better than this."