

# Getting the Point



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

## UCSC harbors development plans for oceanfront site

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UCSC Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood, left, tours the university's soon-to-be-purchased Terrace Point property Thursday with school spokeswoman Liz Irwin.

**SANTA CRUZ** — UC Santa Cruz's plan for marine-research facilities at Terrace Point includes some housing for researchers, Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood said Thursday after announcing the university is buying the oceanfront property.

The 55-acre purchase is in escrow and is expected to close by May 31. Terms of the sale were not released by UCSC or the property owner, Wells Fargo Bank.

Greenwood said there were no specific plans for the site,

but she said housing to support ocean- and coastal-research facilities seems certain. She added that development plans will be presented to city officials and the public.

The site, adjacent to the university's Long Marine Lab and Discovery Center, likely would include several structures that would be used by UCSC and other organizations.

The housing element is expected to draw protest from environmentalists and some city officials, who have fought to preserve the city's last coastal meadow from development.



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Housing is opposed because it does not need to built on the ocean and would result in more traffic in an environmentally sensitive area.

But Greenwood was not focusing on obstacles Thursday.

"This is a very positive decision for everyone," she said. "I am very hopeful we can work with everyone. I think there are opportunities here that are good and positive uses for all."

Wells Fargo had been proposing a research center at Terrace Point, but had met resistance from city officials and residents.

At the city's request, bank officials had been expected to return to City Hall within two months with additional environmental-impact reports.

The city-approval process apparently ends now that the university is buying the property. Property owned by the state-run university is exempt from city regulation, so city planners no longer will have legal power over the Terrace Point project.

The project, however, still must win approval from the California Coastal Commission, which will at least enable city officials a forum to air their concerns.

Greenwood and city officials said they have agreed to work toward reaching agreement on project details

before a plan is presented to the Coastal Commission.

"I want to congratulate UCSC on its purchase of the Terrace Point property," Mayor Katherine Beiers said. "Chancellor Greenwood has assured me the university will work closely with the city of Santa Cruz in the course of developing a new plan for the property."

Eileen Fogarty, city planning director, called the sale a positive development.

"We are hoping and expect to work with the university," she said.

The old Wells Fargo plan before the City Council called for 169 homes, coastal-research facilities, a park, restaurant and small inn. Everything in the plan, except parks and research facilities, had been opposed by the city Planning Commission and Terrace Point Action Network, an activist group.

City planners had recommended eliminating the restaurant and inn and reducing the number of homes to somewhere between 90 and 125, and moving them away from the coast. City planners said the Coastal Commission staff agreed with that plan. Wells Fargo balked, however, and demanded the city consider the 169-home proposal.

The bank's position was fortified somewhat because the city general plan envisions as many as 200 homes at the site. Before the sale to the university, Wells Fargo officials seemed to approach the city approval process as if they were preparing for trial.

Greenwood said the university will seek to build fewer than 169 housing units. She said the number likely would be closer to the 90 to 125 suggested by the city.

Sales talks between the university and Wells Fargo

began about two months ago, Greenwood said.

It's not the first time the university has been interested in developing Terrace Point. In the early 1990s, UCSC administrators were pushing plans that included as many as 300 homes.

But the opposition to housing was so great that plans were scrapped. And in the past few years, UCSC backed away from supporting Wells Fargo's home-building plans even while supporting the marine-research development.

So, with so much history behind them, why is the university moving ahead now?

"It seemed like the right time," Greenwood said. "We were interested in the property and had some opening discussions with (Wells Fargo), and it looked like it was possible we could find a price we could afford."

With the university willing to develop marine-research facilities there, Greenwood said having the entire property in its power made sense and cut out the middle man.

The deal also made sense for Wells Fargo. The bank knew its 169-unit proposal was not going to be approved by a slow-growth City Council.

Terrace Point is next to the Long Marine Lab, a marine wildlife recovery center operated by the state Department of Fish and Game and a National Marine Fisheries Service building now under construction. A Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group building also is planned for the area.

Greenwood said her goal is to make Terrace Point a world-renowned marine-research center.