Case No. 20PD018

Legal Description:

Lot 16 thru 24 of Block 1 and the east 50 feet of vacated East Boulevard right-of-way adjacent to said Lot 16 of Morgans Subdivision, located in Section 1, T1N, R7E, BHM, Rapid City, Pennington County, South Dakota
April 20, 2020

Mr. Fletcher Lacock
Planner III
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

RE: Administrative Zoning Exceptions – Letter of Intent
Kansas City Street Plaza, Mixed Use Development – Downtown Rapid City, South Dakota

Dear Mr. Lacock

Sharaf 5 Properties, LLC is proposing an exciting new downtown mixed use building that will offer street level commercial units with three additional stories of work force apartments. The project is being designed by a SPT Architecture and managed by Dream Design International, Inc. The project is located in the east of fifth street area that was established to expand the downtown business district and bridge the gap to the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology Campus (SDSMT). The site itself is located along East Blvd and Kansas City Street on the site of recently demolished substandard housing and cabin units. This development qualifies as a true infill project that will occupy a currently vacant downtown property. The projects proposes to fulfil many of the goals identified in the City of Rapid City's Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Area Master Plan such as:

1. Encouraging live-work-play setting
2. Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle connections
3. Inviting downtown access by creating additional community entrances to the SDSMT campus
4. Provide commercial spaces that connect and provide ground level building spaces
5. Provide work force housing units to serve and enhance the downtown workforce force, especially with the direct access to the new Innovation center and central location between the downtown core and SDSMT campus

The site is zoned Urban Commercial District. This is a new zoning district that specifically encourages mixed use, higher density developments near the existing downtown core business district. The proposed building consists of street level commercial suites that take advantage of pedestrian friendly walking paths, especially Kansas City Street which has been identified as a primary bicycle route between downtown and the SDSMT campus. Above the commercial suites three floors of apartments will provide much needed and desired
downtown living spaces. Much time and planning went into creating this attractive, efficient, and safe building that enhances the feel and character of downtown that also provides new commercial spaces and enhanced apartment living. A strong focus was kept on controlling costs without sacrificing quality to provide affordable downtown living. The proximity of the building to the downtown core and SDSMT campus encourages multiple modes of transportation and increases activity into an ever more revitalizing downtown area. Several bicycle friendly amenities including additional bike racks and the preservation of the alley for a future mixed use pedestrian path that will allow for the continuation of a pedestrian corridor all the way from SDSMT to the downtown area. The apartments themselves will be one and two room units that will remain affordable to much of the downtown work force. The building also features a central elevator and accessible parking that will increase the quality of living and help serve our limited mobility population. The proposed building will feature economical and efficient design concepts to help keep construction costs down. This allows the apartments to serve a wider array of Rapid City’s residents and provide affordable workforce housing that will complement the downtown business district, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and the new Innovation Center.

The building site is intentionally laid out to encourage pedestrian traffic throughout the ¾ block long project. By providing ground floor windows, front street entrances, plentiful outdoor lighting and building face variation the entire building is aesthetically pleasing, easily accessible and most importantly pedestrian safe. Also, in line with the Urban Commercial District the applicants are proposing to maximize on-street parking by rebuilding the entire frontage of Kansas City Street to create on-street parking and extend the downtown street network further to the East. The remaining off-street parking will be located beside and behind the building. Where the parking lot enters the site from East Boulevard a mixture of vegetation and walls will be constructed to improve the visual street scape and reinforce pedestrian movements. This along with the inclusion of multiple bike racks to encourage bicycle traffic allows the site to meet the appropriate number of parking spaces to serve the buildings users and tenants and reduce the visual impact of the outdoor parking which further allows the buildings prominent aesthetics to shine.

The intent of this zoning exception is to officially present the proposed Kansas City St Plaza Mixed Use project to the Rapid City Planning director and to summarize our design intentions and show how the Downtown Masterplan and East of Fifth Goals were at the front of all our design decisions. The project is scheduled to start construction immediately with the financing already secured and the contracting team ready to start as soon as a building permit is approved. This is especially important to help support Rapid City’s economic future and to meet our timelines of having the project constructed and operational by August of 2020, this year!

The mixed-use project is being proposed by Dream Design International, Inc. – an established and experienced development company that has been actively developing Rapid City and the surrounding community for over 20 years, with a reputation built on actual work history and belief that all of our projects must benefit the community as a whole.

Additional supporting documents are attached for consideration of the proposed development including:

1. Building Elevations
2. Site Plan
3. Building Floorplans
4. Vicinity Map
5. Completed Application

The development is planned for the property legally described as Lots 16-24 of Block 1 and the East 50’ of vacated East Blvd. Right of Way Adjacent to Said Lot 16, of Morgans Subdivision, located in Section 1, T1N, R7E, BHM, Rapid City, Pennington County, South Dakota.

Proposed Use and Zoning:

See attached site plan and elevation views. The proposed building features the following:

First Floor – 10,672 SF of Commercial Suites that are located at Kansas City Street Level and 2,105 SF of and apartment entry, amenities and mechanical space that access the rear of the building and is set at a lower finished floor elevation to create accessible access to the apartments.
Second Floor – 12,777 Sf of Apartments consisting of 1 One Bedroom Unit & 14 Two Bedroom Units
Third Floor – 12,777 Sf of Apartments consisting of 1 One Bedroom Unit & 14 Two Bedroom Units
Fourth Floor – 12,777 Sf of Apartments consisting of 1 One Bedroom Unit & 14 Two Bedroom Units

Setbacks:

See attached site plan. No setback reductions or variances are being requested with this plan. The building is located within 10’ of the front property line per Urban Commercial District (UCD) Zoning Code. The setback encourages pedestrian friendly access into and by the proposed building.

Lot Coverage:

See attached site plan. No lot coverage reductions or variances are being requested with this plan. Lot coverage is 33.3% for the proposed site which is lower than the minimum required lot coverage of 90% for the Urban Commercial District. The additional lot space allows for outdoor parking in the rear and along the East side of the building and outdoor pedestrian use area with enlarged pedestrian walkways.

Lot Area:

See attached site plan. The development area is 0.88 Acres, no minimum lot area is defined for the UCD.

Sanitary Sewer, Water, and Storm Water:

Adequate Sanitary Sewer and Water infrastructure is located in the street right-of-way’s adjacent to the property. The property was previously the site a various residential uses and is served by an oversized watermain and alleyway sewermain.
Color and Outside Finish:

See attached building elevation view. The building will consist of a variety of finished materials, large store front glass windows and doors, residential windows, canopies, street level lighting and varied building face variation and coloration. The proposed building finishes follow the intent of the UCD design guidelines for Ground Floor Windows, Building Face Variation, Main Entrance and Lighting elements as defined in the UCD zoning code.

The applicant is requesting that an exception to 17.66.060 (A)2 be allowed to allow a maximum of 57.5' of elevation change along the north elevation and 53' of elevation change along the west elevation.

In order to further justify the exception request please note that the proposed building façade carries all the way around the building. This is especially important because one of the main viewsheds into this property is from St. Joseph St and East Blvd – in which the back, or rear, of the building will be featured. The building also sits at a higher elevation than the intersection mentioned creating a need to continue the proposed building variation around to the back of the building. By adding additional building façade variation around and to the back of the building it will provide aesthetically pleasing views from all the major view sheds into the site that would not be required by zoning code but is in the spirit of the zoning code to enhance the downtown corridor.

The applicant is requesting that an exception to 17.66.060 (A)1 be allowed to allow the applicant to waive the requirement to provide 45% frontage windows along East Blvd and instead consider Kansas City Street as the Main Entrance and front facade.

The entire site is located on somewhat steeply sloping ground, from south (higher elevation) to north (lower elevation). The site is also geometrically speaking, longer east to west and shorter north to south. In order to meet the moderate downtown density goals and Pedestrian access set forth in the Downtown Masterplan and OCD zoning code the building is sited to feature longer, more pedestrian friendly, exposure along Kansas City Street. Along Kansas City street there is 72% frontage widow provided as well as enhanced pedestrian features such as pedestrian level lighting and street vegetation. The site slope dips away along East Blvd and the frontage façade wraps around to provide street level widows where possible. However, as the site continues to slope along the East Blvd. frontage it becomes impossible to provide the frontage widows as the building main floor is no longer at the same elevation and the stairwell begins. Enhanced landscaping and a pedestrian use area is proposed along the East Blvd frontage to mitigate the reduction in street level windows.

Signage:

Signage will be in accordance with the Rapid City Zoning Code.
Lighting:

Site lighting is provided in the rear and side parking lots as shown in the attached site plan. Building lighting is provided to meet the UCD code. Sconce light packs are provided every 22' along Kansas City Street Frontage. Along East Blvd. Light packs are provided at the side entrance door and at the stairway entrance door, or every 35'. Additionally, a light pack is located just around the corner of the South West corner of the Building on the Kansas City Street Frontage for additional light output on the East Blvd. Side.

Building Height:

The proposed mixed-use building is Four (4) stories. Current zoning code requires Graduated Height Setbacks. The applicant is requesting that the requirement to provide graduated height setbacks be waived for this site. The requirement for graduated setbacks significantly impairs the ability of the applicant to utilize efficient design and construction techniques that are being applied to help lower costs and provide more affordable rents to the future building residents. This will allow the development to serve a large array of Rapid City’s population including the downtown workforce and SDSMT students.

The applicant is requesting an exception to 17.66.050 (B)1 to waive the requirement for graduated height setbacks with this application.

Parking:

The applicant is proposing to provide 80 vehicle parking spaces and 25 bicycle spaces for this development, in conformance with the UCD zoning code.

Parking Calculations were calculated as such:
Commercial Suite A – 3,290 SF
Commercial Suite B – 2,970 SF
Commercial Suite C – 4,412 SF
Total Commercial Space = 10,672 SF @ 2 spaces per 1,000 SF = 21.3 Spaces

3 Floors with 14, 2 bedroom units = 1.5 spaces per 2 bedroom unit = 63 spaces
3 floors with 1, 1 bedroom units = 1 space per 1 bedroom unit = 3 spaces
Note that apartment entry lobby, apartment amenities and mechanical room are assumed included with apartment spacing calculations.
Total parking required = 88 spaces
Parking Reduction credit of 5 spaces by providing 25 bicycle spaces, meant to encourage and enhance pedestrian travel reduces overall vehicles spaces to 83 spaces required.

Total Parking provided = 80 vehicle spaces with 25 bicycle spaces. Additional parking spaces were also removed from previous plans to preserve the alley way by removing alley access. This allows for the future continuation of the alley way bike path from the SDSMT campus to the Downtown Core. This is especially important when promoting the pedestrian and bicycle travel.
Additional spaces was provided to allow for Handicap Access Ramps and striping as required by ADA. It was a project goal to make sure that all access points, residential, commercial and public right-of-way all provided accessible routes into the building.

The off-street parking lot is located behind the building and along the east side of the lot. In order to create an economical and accessible parking lot the applicant is requesting that up to 45% of the East Blvd Street Right of Way be fronted by parking lot.

The applicant is requesting an exception to 17.66.060 (A)2 to allow 45% parking lot frontage along East Blvd with this application.

The applicant is requesting an exception to 17.66.060 (B)1 to allow 80 parking spaces instead of the 83 vehicle spaces required.

The additional parking lot frontage will be mitigated by vegetative screens and wall sections that will separate and block the view of the parking lot from the East Blvd. Right of way. The wall façade will match the architectural features found on the building. It will also help create and enhance the pedestrian walkway proposed along the East Street Blvd.

Summary of Administrative Zoning Exceptions:

The applicant is requesting that an exception to 17.66.060 (A)2 be allowed to allow a maximum of 57.5’ of elevation change along the north elevation and 53’ of elevation change along the west elevation. The requested exception is less than a 20% reduction from zoning code.

The applicant is requesting that an exception to 17.66.060 (A)1 be allowed to allow the applicant to waive the requirement to provide 45% frontage windows along East Blvd and instead consider Kansas City Street as the Main Entrance and front facade.

The applicant is requesting an exception to 17.66.050 (B)1 to waive the requirement for graduated height setbacks with this application.

The applicant is requesting an exception to 17.66.060 (A)2 to allow 45% parking lot frontage along East Blvd with this application.

The applicant is requesting an exception to 17.66.060 (B)1 to allow 80 parking spaces instead of the 83 vehicle spaces required.

We hope that this information is satisfactory to address any questions or comments and provide a better understanding of our design intent and our conformance to the UCD zoning code. We look forward to
working with you and City staff on this great community project. Please note that the project timelines and contract we have entered into are very tight and if there are any additional questions please do not hesitate to contact the office.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,
Dream Design International, Inc.

Kyle Treloar
Enclosures

cc: Ken Young, City of Rapid City
Hani Shafai, Dream Design International, Inc.
ELEVATION: PARKING LOT SCREENING