



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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TO: Urban Design Commission

FROM: Planning Staff

DATE: 9/1/2015

SUBJECT: 1313 Regent Staff Comments

There are three proposals submitted for the property now known as 1313 Regent Street. The first proposal is to convert the existing auto repair business, "Foreign Car Specialists" into a restaurant-tavern and banquet facility. The second request is to convert the rear parking area which fronts onto Bowen Court into a 26-unit apartment building. The third request is a Certified Survey Map to formally divide the properties into two separate lots.

The Planning Division generally has concerns about the size of the proposed building and its relationship to the proposed outdoor "game day" beer garden that is being proposed for the new restaurant tavern.

In regards to design issues, staff has several concerns regarding the proposed apartment building. Staff advised the applicant to present their plans to the Urban Design Commission. The UDC's feedback will be utilized by the Plan Commission in determining whether conditional use standard 9 is met. That condition reads:

When applying the above standards to any new construction of a building or an addition to an existing building the Plan Commission shall find that the project creates an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose for the zoning district. In order to find that this standard is met, the Plan Commission may require the applicant to submit plans to the Urban Design Commission for comment and recommendation.

STAFF DESIGN CONCERNS

- **Plan Consistency and Massing.** Elements of the proposed building mass are not consistent with the adopted massing recommendations of The Regent Street- South Campus Neighborhood Plan. Along Bowen Court, the maximum recommended building height is three-stories or 46 feet. Though the top story is stepped back, the proposed building is four stories and 48 feet. The Plan also recommends a front yard setback of 10 feet. While the ground floor of the building is setback 10 feet from the property line, elements of the building project into this recommended setback. While staff does not object to stairs and porches that are setback less than 10 feet, staff is concerned that this, in combination with the upper level cantilevered projections and balconies, are inconsistent with the intent of

the plan. Large portions of the building will appear to have a setback of about five-feet, adjacent to Bowen Court, a narrow street with a right-of-way of approximately 40 feet.

- **Materials.** Staff believes the palette of materials, especially the extensive use of split face CMU are more of an industrial character and not consistent with the surrounding context. The Zoning Code allows split face block provided it does not comprise more than 33% of any building wall adjacent to a public street. The percentages are not specified, but it appears this standard may not be met. The industrial appearance of the building is heightened with the use of the corrugated metal panels that project towards the street. On the building sides, the Planning Division has concerns about the number of materials and vertical transitions that appear to be occurring in the same plane.
- **Open Space and Balconies.** There is no useable open space at grade. The rear of the property is utilized as a rain garden in a 20-foot rear yard. Open space is provided through balconies, though not all units have them. The rear balconies are not recessed into the building and are attached to the outer wall. The street-facing balconies project into the recommended setback, as described above.
- **Articulations and Detailing.** The Planning Division has the following additional comments:
 - Staff is concerned with the **three-story trellis/green wall** feature at the front corner of the building, particularly the year-round appearance. Staff believes that additional windows should be considered along this area to improve the articulation of this corner of the façade rather than an applied feature that may not correlate with the overall composition of the building.
 - First floor **doors facing the street** should address the streets as front doors, not rear patio doors.
 - Detailing of exterior **door/access to the trash room** on the front of the building (next to the garage) should appear more as a door. Clarification on this detail is needed.
 - There are multiple locations where there are “**brick infill**” areas, appearing as if old windows have been filled in. Windows should be added where possible and if not possible, alternative treatments should be utilized.