

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 27, 2016



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 418 Division Street

Application Type: Rezoning and Conditional Use

Legistar File ID # [43648](#) and [43416](#)

Prepared By: Chris Wells, Planning Division
Report includes comments from other City agencies, as noted.

Reviewed By: Jay Wendt, Principal Planner

The following summary report has been prepared to note design-related issues that the Planning Division has highlighted for the consideration of the Urban Design Commission (UDC) for their meeting on July 27, 2016. This proposal was referred to the UDC for review by Alder Rummel, allowed under MGO 33.24(3)(1) which states: *"The Commission may provide advice and make recommendations concerning urban design problems at the request of any City department, agency, commission or division."* A full report will be prepared prior to the Plan Commission consideration of this item.

There are two requests included with this proposal. The applicant first requests approval to rezone the subject property from TE (Traditional Employment) District to TSS (Traditional Shopping Street) District. The second request is for a conditional use to allow the demolition of an industrial building and construction of a residential apartment building containing 31 Units and 34 bedrooms. The site includes 29 underground covered parking stalls and 70 surface parking stalls.

Background Information

The 0.4-acre subject property is located to the west of Division Street, in between the Capital City Bicycle Trail (which runs along Eastwood Drive) and Helena Street. It currently contains the 11,100-square-foot Capital Water Softener Facility. A neighborhood meeting was held back on June 29, 2016. Stemming from that meeting, Alder Rummel established a steering committee of neighborhood representatives. Due to neighbor concerns, Alder Rummel referred the project to the Urban Design Commission for an advisory recommendation.

Approval Standards and Design Considerations

This request is subject to the approval standards for Zoning Map Amendments [MGO 28.182], Conditional Uses [MGO 28.183], Demolition Standards [MGO 28.185] and TSS District Standards [MGO 28.065].

The Planning Division notes the following design-related issues:

- **Overall Design Simplification.** The Planning Division remains concerned regarding the clarity of the design – due the number of materials and material colors used. In addition, Staff's concerns include:
 - The uniform size and layout of the windows (especially on the corner element)
 - Improving the rhythm of the brick columnar bays on the Helena and Division Street façades. (Could the stairwell along the Division Street façade be incorporated into a central bay, thus removing the need for the lone modulation along the brick façade?)

- **Articulation and Design of Main Corner Element.** The Planning Division also recommends consideration be given to the articulation and design of the corner element at the northeast corner of the site. The Planning Division remains concerned about the variation of window sizes and spacing, and recommends that opportunities for additional/larger windows to better showcase this corner element and its additional height be considered.
- **The Northeast Patio.** While the building's roof top plaza space will be used as an outdoor seating and gathering space for the building's residents and guests, the applicant is proposing the northeast patio serve a purely passive use. It would be hardscaped and potentially contain a sculpture but will not be intended for gathering. The Planning Division would like the applicant to clarify the how this space will be used and would like the Urban Design Commission to weigh in on this space serving purely a passive rather than active use and accordingly, if a second means of access (i.e. stairs) from the south should be added.
- **The Landscaping and the Exposed Base.** While acknowledging the fact that the base will be clad with a manufactured cut stone (Cordova Prairie), the Planning Division would like clarification of how the proposed landscaping will help address the visual impact of the building's first floor being, at parts, 4½-feet above grade.