

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
STAFF REPORT FOR JOINT MEETING OF THE  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD & CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD  
**FEBRUARY 21, 2017**

**PROJECT TITLE**

AC Hotel by Marriott

**APPLICANT**

Jeff Blackman, Bedford Lodging

**ADDRESS/LOCATION**

210 5<sup>th</sup> Street

**PROPERTY OWNER**

Fourth & Davis Street, LLC

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER**

010-071-012

**FILE NUMBER**

DR16-062

**APPLICATION DATE**

October 13, 2016

**APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE**

October 13, 2016

**REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS**

Preliminary and Final Design Review

**FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED**

Conditional Use Permit for off-site parking

**PROJECT SITE ZONING**

TV-M-H-SA (Transit Village – Mixed Use,  
Historic and Station Area Overlays)

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION**

Transit Village Mixed Use

**PROJECT PLANNER**

Patrick Streeter

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approval

For Joint Meeting of Design Review Board and Cultural Heritage Board: February 21, 2017

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD AND CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD

TO: CHAIRS BURCH AND DE SHAZO AND BOARD MEMBERS  
FROM: PATRICK STREETER, SENIOR PLANNER  
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
SUBJECT: AC HOTEL BY MARRIOTT

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Department of Planning and Economic Development that the Design Review Board and the Cultural Heritage Board jointly approve Preliminary Design Review for the Santa Rosa AC Hotel.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project proposes construction and operation of a 5-story, 142-room hotel within the Railroad Square Preservation District. A new 77,000 square foot building would occupy the entirety of the project parcel, which is currently developed as a surface parking lot. In addition to hotel rooms, the project includes a fitness facility, small meeting rooms, a public restaurant and lounge, and approximately 1000 square feet of commercial retail space. Twenty-six on-site, tandem parking spaces are proposed. Approval of the project would be contingent upon a Conditional Use Permit for an off-site parking facility to provide the remainder of required parking spaces. Red maple trees will be planted along the street frontages, with ginkgo trees accent the hotel main entrance on Davis Street. Landscaped planters will be installed at the northwest and southwest corners of the project site and near building entrances. A second floor outdoor garden/deck is proposed for the Davis Street frontage.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The project proposes a new hotel development on the eastern boundary of the Railroad Square preservation district. The existing surface parking lot would be removed and a 5-story, 142-key hotel would be constructed. The 77,000 square

foot hotel development would include 26 tandem valet parking spaces, a 1,800 square foot public restaurant, a 1,500 square foot lounge area, open to the public, and 1,000 square feet of commercial retail space. The hotel would include a library, small meeting rooms, a fitness facility, and a second-story outdoor garden/deck area.

The building will follow an “H” shaped plan, with a central section of the east and west elevations pulled back. The building utilizes stepping, articulation, and variation in materials to reduce the perception of mass and to allow for a transition in scale between the Highway 101 overpass, the hotel, and surrounding architecture. Façade materials include brick cladding, painted cement plaster, formed concrete, metal cladding, and lap siding. The building will also feature painted metal trellises and canopies, roll-up glass doors, and Cor-ten planters. Landscaping will include red maple and gingko street trees, grasses and shrubs in planters, and a garden, potentially with a water feature, on the second-story deck area.

## 2. Surrounding Land Uses

North:	Single-story retail and restaurant building
South:	Four-story office building
East:	Elevated section of US 101, parking below
West:	Retail and restaurant uses

The project site is surrounded by commercial uses. The majority of the shops and restaurants of Railroad Square are found to the west, across Davis Street, though none of the businesses have frontages facing the proposed hotel location. A restaurant and retail storefront have frontages across 5<sup>th</sup> Street facing the project site and the office building south of the project site fronts onto the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Davis Street. An elevated segment of US Highway 101 is directly adjacent to the project site on the east and the Santa Rosa Plaza Mall takes up a large area beyond. A surface parking lot is located beneath the elevated highway segment and the mall parking garage is the dominate feature further to the east. The project site is on the eastern boundary of the Railroad Square historic preservation district and approximately 700 feet east of the impending Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) station.

## 3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The half-acre project parcel is developed as a surface parking lot with 63 metered parking spaces and an electric vehicle charging station. The lot is accessed via curb cuts on 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The parcel had previously operated as a service station, but structures associated with that use were razed in 2006.

4. Project History

On October 27, 2007, the Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit and adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for a proposed five-story, mixed use retail and office building.

On November 15, 2007, the retail and office building project received Preliminary Design Review approval at a joint meeting of the Design Review Board and the Cultural Heritage Board. Subsequently, the Design Review Board granted Final Design Review approval at its December 6, 2007, meeting. Entitlements for the retail and office building have since expired.

On August 18, 2016, the AC Hotel by Marriott project was presented to a joint meeting of the Design Review Board and the Cultural Heritage Board as a concept item.

On October 12, 2016, a pre-application neighborhood meeting was held to introduce the hotel project to members of the neighborhood and gather feedback.

On October 13, 2016, an application for Design Review was submitted to Planning and Economic Development.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

In October of 2007, the Council adopted the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan (Specific Plan), which envisions a transit-oriented downtown district, supported by the future SMART station. In November of 2009 and August of 2010, the General Plan and the Zoning Code respectively, were updated to reflect land use changes initiated by the Specific Plan. The project site is within an area zoned TV-M-H-SA (Transit Village – Mixed Use, Historic and Station Area Overlays) with a Transit Village Mixed Use General Plan land use designation.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The General Plan envisions a Transit Village Mixed Use land use designation for the project area. This type of land use accommodates higher density residential, commercial, and office development, supported by a high-volume transit facility. The following General Plan goals and policies are applicable to this project:

- LUL-I-1 Provide a range of commercial services that are easily accessible and attractive, that satisfies the needs of people who live and work in Santa Rosa and that also attracts a regional clientele.
- LUL-O Provide recreational and cultural facilities for visitors and residents of the [Downtown Station] specific plan area.
- UD-A-2 Strengthen and emphasize community focal points, visual landmarks, and features that contribute to the identity of Santa Rosa using design concepts and standards implemented through the Zoning Code, Design Guidelines, Preservation District Plans, Scenic Road Policies, the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, and the Citywide Creek Master Plan.
- UD-A-5 Require superior site and architectural design of new development projects, to improve visual quality in the city.
- UD-D Avoid strip patterns of commercial development.
- EV-A-5 Maintain diversity in the types of jobs available in Santa Rosa to lessen the impact of economic cycles.
- EV-B Facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses and provide sufficient land for business expansion and attraction of new employers that utilize the area's existing labor pool.
- EV-D Maintain the economic vitality of the downtown, business parks, offices, and industrial areas.

The project proposes to construct and operate a commercial business that is consistent with the vision presented in the General Plan on an underdeveloped parcel. The proposed hotel would accommodate a greater volume of visitors to downtown Santa Rosa and the proposed retail, restaurant, and lounge spaces would increase pedestrian activity at the street level.

## 2. Downtown Station Area Specific Plan

The project is within the boundaries of the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan. The Specific Plan is consistent with the General Plan in envisioning a transit oriented downtown, supported by and supporting the anticipated SMART station. The introduction to the Specific Plan identifies one of the plan objectives to be an increase in the number of residents and employees within walking distance of the SMART site through the intensification of land uses in the plan area. The project is located within the Railroad Square sub-area which specifically identifies hotel and retail development as desired land uses. Many of the goals and policies within the Specific Plan mirror the General Plan in promotion of walkable, high density neighborhoods within the vicinity of the transit stop. The Specific Plan identifies development guidelines for the project parcel to include a

minimum of two stories and a maximum of five, with ground floor retail. The 4<sup>th</sup> Street frontage is to include activity generating uses.

### 3. Zoning

The project is surrounded on all sides by the TV-M-H (Transit Village Mixed Use, with a historic combining district) zoning district. Most, but not all of the surrounding parcels are also included in the -SA (Station Area) combining district. To the east, beyond the US 101 overpass, the Santa Rosa Plaza mall is zoned CD (Downtown Commercial). The project site itself is within the TV-M-H-SA district. This zoning district is intended to support a diverse mix of high density residential and commercial development that will act to stimulate the downtown shopping district and capitalize on the anticipated transit station under construction nearby. The historic overlay charges development with being consistent with the context and character of the Historic Railroad Square preservation district in which it is located.

#### *Parking*

Consistent with Table 3-4 of the Zoning Code, nonresidential uses within the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan boundaries are to require “one shared space for each 500 square feet of new floor area.” The prescribed parking supply for the 77,000 square foot building would therefore be 154 off-street spaces. A traffic impact study, prepared for the project by the engineering firm W-Trans, identifies a peak demand of 126 parking spaces for the project. The project proposes 26 on-site parking spaces, with the remainder to be provided off-site. Pursuant to section 20-36.070 of the Zoning Code, the applicant will pursue a Conditional Use Permit and parking reduction in order to satisfy the parking requirement for the project. The Planning Commission is the review authority that will be acting on parking entitlements.

#### *Development Standards*

The TV-M zoning district does not provide standards for building setback, though the Station Area combining district requires at least 80% of the building frontage along 4<sup>th</sup> Street to be at the property line. Table 2-9 of the Zoning Code provides that the maximum allowable height for a building north of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street within the TV-M zoning district is 5 stories, with a minimum of 2.

Zoning Code Section 20-28.040 provides development standards for combining districts. Building height limits for structures within the -H combining district are the most restrictive, with a maximum of 35 feet. Zoning Code section 20-28.040(E)(3)(c) allows the review authority to approve an increase in height provided that the review authority finds first that the increased height does not detract from the character of the preservation district or any adjacent contributing properties. The review authority is given direction to include conditions of

approval that will help to preserve existing or anticipated residential privacy. This consideration is not applicable to the specific project site.

#### 4. Design Guidelines

The following is a summary of the most appropriate City of Santa Rosa Design Goals and Guidelines which apply to the proposed project:

##### *Neighborhood Design:*

- 1.1 I.C To encourage neighborhood design that supports pedestrians, bicyclists, and use of public transit as well as automobile use.

##### *Building Design*

- 3.2 III A 1 Break up the mass of larger structures with articulation of the form, use of color and the use of multiple materials, including: horizontal wood, cement fiber and composite siding, vertical wood siding, stucco, wood shingles, real and cultured masonry.
- 3.2 III A 4 Avoid dressing up fronts of building with higher quality materials and switching to less expensive siding material on the sides and back. Design all four sides of buildings.
- 3.2 III C 1 Incorporate features such as balconies, cantilevers, dormers, bay windows, patios, entries, accent materials, etc. to provide articulation and interest.
- 3.2 III C 2 Avoid buildings with a massive appearance. Divide buildings into segments that break down the scale.

##### *Infill Development*

- 4.3 I A To provide for continuity of design between existing and new development.
- 4.3 I B To ensure that projects are designed in such a way as to reduce to a minimum possible negative consequences, such as: loss of privacy, noise, increased traffic and lighting overspill that infill development may have on existing neighbors.
- 4.3 II 1 Integrate new development carefully into existing neighborhoods with respect to scale, level of detailing, use of materials, landscaping, and other characteristics of the neighborhood.

##### *Highway Corridors*

- 4.6 III C 4 Screen rear service yards, product storage areas, and parking lots adjacent to highways. Screening may be by landscaping such as

berms, planting, and fencing.

- 4.6 III C 5     Design structures along highway corridors with the understanding that they will be viewed from traffic along the corridor. *Architectural detailing and use of materials should be consistent on all four sides of the building. Although buildings should be oriented to the local roads, they should not be ignored on the highway side.*

The project utilizes variety in materials, stepping and articulation, and thoughtful architectural features to reduce massing while providing visual interest to what is currently an underdeveloped “edge” area of the Railroad Square commercial district. While not identified as being located in a formal Gateway area in the Zoning Code, the proposed hotel will be a visually prominent structure for vehicles and pedestrians approaching downtown Santa Rosa and Railroad Square in particular.

5.     Historic Preservation Review Standards

The project site is located within the Railroad Square Preservation District. The district is characterized by commercial buildings that reflect the building style and construction techniques popular during the railroad era, both before and after the 1906 earthquake. The dominant building materials in the district are painted and unpainted brick, stone masonry, and stucco. The buildings reflect a commercial theme with simple detailing and human scale.

For large projects within preservation districts, the Zoning Code directs that Joint Preliminary Design Review will focus on how successfully a project design integrates with the historic district and neighborhood. The character defining elements identified by the CHB in concept review will be used as evaluation criteria.

6.     Neighborhood Comments

At both the neighborhood meeting and the concept Design Review meeting, the overwhelming concern from neighbors of the project was in regards to parking, both demand generated by the proposed hotel and the loss of inventory available to Railroad Square. Generally, neighbors have been supportive of the project design, but caution the need to analyze and account for traffic patterns along Davis Street and to request assurance that parking concerns will be addressed.

7.     Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

As an in-fill project, improvements to the surrounding streets will be minimal. Two of the four existing curb cuts would be eliminated and a queuing area for valet pick-up off of Davis Street is proposed.

### FISCAL IMPACT

Approval or denial of this Design Review application will not have a direct fiscal impact on the General Fund. However, the new hotel rooms that this project would create could result in an increase to income generated through the City's Transient Occupancy Tax.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183, in that the project is consistent with existing zoning and the Santa Rosa General Plan 2035, for which an environmental impact report (EIR) was certified and there no project-specific impacts which are peculiar to the project or its site. The project is also consistent with the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, for which an EIR was certified.

Additionally, the project qualifies for a Class 32 exemption, per Section 15332, as it involves an infill development on a site of less than five acres, within City limits, substantially surrounded by urban uses, with no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species, adequately served by necessary utilities and public services, and the project has no foreseeable significant adverse impacts.

### BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project was before the joint Design Review Board and the Cultural Heritage Board as a concept item on August 18, 2016. Comments during the concept meeting generally addressed pedestrian-scale design, direction to provide visual analysis and consider viewsheds, comments on architectural details, and direction to analyze the project's interaction with the Davis Street off-ramp. Minutes from the joint meeting are attached to this staff report.

### NOTIFICATION

The project was noticed as a Public Hearing per the requirements of Chapter 20-66 of the City Code. Notification of this public hearing was provided by posting an on-site sign, publishing notice in a newspaper of general circulation, mailed notice to surrounding property owners, electronic notice to parties that had expressed interest in projects taking place in this geographic area of Santa Rosa, and bulletin board postings at City Hall and on the City website.

### ISSUES

Approval of this project is contingent on the applicant's ability to demonstrate that adequate parking will be available for the life of the project. This requirement will be considered by the Planning Commission through the Conditional Use Permit process. If the land use proceedings result in required changes to design of the proposed

development, the project could return to the Design Review Board and/or Cultural Heritage Board for approval of modification to an approved design.

### ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Disclosure Form
- Attachment 2 - Location Map
- Attachment 3 - General Plan and Zoning Map
- Attachment 4 - Development Plan Set (Includes Project Narrative, Neighborhood Context Map, Site Plans, Landscape Plans, Elevations) dated received February X, 2016
- Attachment 5 - Joint Concept Design Review Minutes, August 18, 2016
- Attachment 6 - CEQA Consistency Determination, November 2016
- Attachment 7 - Archeological Study, dated received November 15, 2016
- Attachment 8 - Architectural Historic Resources Report, dated received November 15, 2016
- Attachment 9 - Lighting Spec Sheets, dated received October 13, 2016
- Attachment 10 - Draft Traffic Impact Study, November 15, 2016
- Attachment 11 - Public comments

Draft Resolution - Approving Preliminary Design Review

### CONTACT

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