

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
JUNE 15, 2017

PROJECT TITLE

Courthouse Square Hotel

APPLICANT

Hugh Futrell

ADDRESS/LOCATION

19, 25 Old Courthouse Square

PROPERTY OWNER

David M. Poulson; 19 OCS, LLC.

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

010-056-005, -006, -015

FILE NUMBER

DR16-070

APPLICATION DATE

December 1, 2016

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

May 19, 2017

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Design Review

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Building Permits

PROJECT SITE ZONING

CD-10-SA (Downtown Commercial;
Station Area)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Retail and Business Service

PROJECT PLANNER

Patrick Streeter

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR BURCH AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
FROM: PATRICK STREETER, SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY AND FINAL DESIGN REVIEW – COURTHOUSE
SQUARE HOTEL

AGENDA ACTION: ADOPT RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Design Review Board, by resolution, approve Preliminary and Final Design Review for the Courthouse Square Hotel, located and 19 and 25 Old Courthouse Square.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project proposes the adaptive reuse of an existing two-story commercial building located at 19 Old Courthouse Square, new street-level restaurant and service uses, and a new courtyard created by the demolition of the existing building at 25 Old Courthouse Square. The hotel will include guest rooms and facilities within the Empire Building at 37 Old Courthouse Square, however changes to building exteriors, and therefore the scope of this Design Review action, will be limited to 19 and 25 Old Courthouse Square. Staff finds the proposed project to be consistent with the General Plan, the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, the Zoning Code, and the Design Guidelines and is recommending approval.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The Courthouse Square Hotel project proposes renovation and adaptive reuse of an existing two-story commercial building at 25 Old Courthouse Square, demolition of the existing commercial building at 19 Old Courthouse Square to construct a courtyard gathering area, and tenant improvements to the interior of the Empire Building at 37 Old Courthouse Square. The proposed changes would accommodate a mixed-use development across much of the western boundary of the unified Courthouse Square. The development would include hotel rooms

and services, ground floor restaurants and a coffee house, a third-floor terrace area, a third-floor kitchen and café, and a courtyard connector/gathering area between 19 Old Courthouse Square and the Empire Building.

The modification to 19 Old Courthouse Square includes internal tenant improvements to create 21 hotel guest rooms, two restaurant spaces with a shared kitchen, a coffee house, and associated circulation and service areas. Additionally, a new third level will be created to accommodate eight hotel rooms, two hotel suites, meeting rooms, a kitchen and café, and a roof terrace. The exterior façade of the building will include recessed and projecting features, new spandrel details, useable balconies, and space for vertical trellising and a mural.

The existing structure at 25 Old Courthouse Square is proposed to be demolished as part of this project. The resultant courtyard will include an ornamental gate on the east and a covered walkway on the west. The covered walkway element will act as a connecting corridor between hotel facilities in the Empire Building and those within the building at 19 Old Courthouse Square.

No exterior changes are proposed for the Empire Building. The existing façade will be preserved and protected during demolition of the adjacent building and construction and operation of the hotel.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North:	Office; restaurant and retail beyond
South:	3 rd Street corridor; office beyond
East:	Courthouse Square public plaza
West:	Financial services

The project site is located on the western boundary of the Courthouse Square public plaza. To the north of the project site, the 4th Street corridor provides a major retail and dining destination. 3rd Street to the south, acts as a cross-city arterial road. The surrounding land uses, excepting Courthouse Square itself, are predominately commercial. The project site is within the City of Santa Rosa's downtown central business district. It is approximately 300 feet from the Santa Rosa Plaza shopping mall, 300 feet from the downtown transit mall, and 1000 feet from the Highway 101 corridor and Railroad Square beyond.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The structure located at 19 Old Courthouse Square was constructed in 1976 and has operated as a commercial office building since that time. The adjacent building at 25 Old Courthouse Square has transitioned through several retail and service tenants and is presently vacant on the ground floor and contains office uses on the second floor. The Courthouse Square frontage of the project parcels was recently improved with new pedestrian and vehicle facilities as part of the Courthouse Square unification project.

4. Project History

On December 1, 2016, an application was submitted to the Department of Planning and Economic Development for Design Review for the project.

On March 16, 2017, an Issues Letter was provided to the applicant detailing additional information and clarification that would be necessary for staff to complete review of the application. Many of the issues related to California Building Code compliance.

On March 14, 2017, a Valet Parking Agreement to serve guests of the proposed hotel was approved by the City Council.

On May 9, 2017, following several meetings with the applicant team, the Santa Rosa Chief Building Official determined that the project application could proceed with discretionary review.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable to this project.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The project site and its surroundings are designated Retail and Business Services in the Santa Rosa General Plan which envisions service enterprises, offices, restaurants, and general retail uses.

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.

UD-A-5 Require superior site and architectural design of new development projects, to improve visual quality in the city.

UD-B Preserve and strengthen downtown as a vital and attractive place.

UD-B-5 Promote street life in the downtown through attractive building designs with street level activities and façade windows, public art, trees, fountains, and other landscaping elements that are pedestrian friendly. Discourage blank parking garage or office block frontage. Implement this policy through development review and the City's Capital Improvement and Downtown Programs.

- UD-D Avoid strip patterns of commercial development.
- UD-E-2 Provide an open space network that is linked by pedestrian and bicycle paths, and that preserves and enhances Santa Rosa's significant visual and natural resources.
- T-K-1 Link the various citywide pedestrian paths, including street sidewalks, downtown walkways, pedestrian areas in shopping centers and work complexes, park pathways, and other creekside and open space pathways.
- 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-C Promote new retail and higher density uses along the City's regional and arterial corridors.
- EV-D-1 Continue to promote Santa Rosa's role as a regional center.
- EV-D-6 Pursue expansion of the number of hotel rooms and conference facilities in order to attract more meetings and conventions to the city. Aggressively promote the city to the visitor and convention markets.

The project provides an opportunity for exterior updates and adaptive reuse of buildings in a heavily visited downtown area. The project would create new retail and service tenant spaces along what has traditionally been an office block frontage. In addition to creating new service industry jobs, the development would provide lodging and street-activating uses adjacent to Santa Rosa's newly created Courthouse Square plaza. With easy access to US 101, the proposed Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) line, and several bus lines, the hotel will serve in a regional context.

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 Courthouse Square sub-area in which commercial and residential development is encouraged and activity-generating uses are required on all public streets. Many of the goals and policies within the Specific Plan mirror the General Plan in the promotion of walkable, high density neighborhoods

within the vicinity of the transit stop.

3. Zoning

The project site is entirely within the CD-10-SA (Downtown Commercial – 10 Stories; Station Area overlay) district. This zoning district is intended to provide for high density development with a mixture of ground-floor, pedestrian-oriented commercial uses that serve the entire City. The Station Area overlay implements development standards that direct development to be consistent with the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan. All of the land uses proposed as a part of this project are permitted by right within the zoning district.

Parking

The project is within the Downtown Parking District and is therefore not required to provide on-site parking. A Valet Parking Agreement was approved by the City Council on March 14, 2017.

Development Standards

The CD-10 zoning district permits 100% lot coverage and a maximum building height of 10 stories, or 150 feet. The Station Area combining district also applies these development standards with the additional requirement that new development includes a ground floor retail component. The project will be increasing the building height of 19 Old Courthouse Square from two stories to three stories and will be creating new retail and service tenant spaces along 3rd Street and Courthouse Square.

4. Design Guidelines

The following is a list of applicable goals and policies from the City of Santa Rosa Design Guidelines that apply to the proposed project:

Core Area:

- 2.1.1 Encourage dense development in the downtown area and station area, redirecting the focus of current growth away from the periphery and concentrating uses in an area with existing infrastructure and services.
- 2.1.2 Encourage buildings that accommodate mixed uses in the downtown to promote synergy between uses and pedestrian activity that extends beyond the typical 9 to 5 workday and decrease the need for commuting.

- 2.1.4 Encourage the inclusion of civic art to help define public spaces, provide detail and include the rich expressions of our Santa Rosa heritage.
- 2.1.6 Encourage appropriate interfaces between old and new structures, thoughtfully considering scale, building articulation and mass.
- 2.2.2 Provide generous street-level windows.
- 2.2.3 Incorporate appropriately designed utility and mechanical equipment.
- 2.2.4 Install pedestrian friendly materials at street level.
- 2.3.7 Encourage superior design with well-crafted and detailed building facades, particularly at the street level.
- 2.3.8 Create buildings that provide human scale.
- 2.3.9 Encourage buildings with active and open facades that interest those walking by and create an active pedestrian oriented streetscape.
- 2.3.11 Encourage buildings that minimize energy consumption.

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.

The proposed project is designed to address its adjacency to the Courthouse Square Plaza and central location in the downtown. The use of varied materials, articulation, relief, and architectural features such as trellises and balconies act to reduce the massing of the structure while still providing visual interest. The renovated façade of 19 Old Courthouse Square and the design of the adjacent courtyard are meant to acknowledge the functional relationship with the Empire Building without matching the design or mirroring its features. Generous glazing and multiple building entries are provided along the Courthouse Square and 3rd Street frontages.

5. Neighborhood Comments

At the time of this writing, no comments from the surrounding neighborhood have been received in relation to this project.

6. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

Frontage improvements were recently constructed in association with the Capital Improvement Program project to reunify Courthouse Square. Minor modifications to the Courthouse Square street frontage may be required in order to accommodate the proposed valet service.

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

Not applicable.

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

The project as originally proposed, presented Building Code issues related to ingress and egress, occupancy concerns, and fenestration along lot lines. The applicant team has worked closely with staff to address these issues to the satisfaction of the Chief Building Official.

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 May 23, 2017
- Attachment 5 - Trip Generation Study, prepared by Transpedia Consulting Engineers (TCE) and dated January 11, 2017
- Draft Resolution - Approving Preliminary and Final Design Review

CONTACT

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