Planning & Development Services

Boise City Hall, 2nd Floor
150 N. Capitol Boulevard
P. O. Box 500
Boise, Idaho 83701-0500

Phone: 208/384-3830
Fax: 208/384-3753
TDD/TTY: 800/377-3529
Website: www.cityofboise.org/pds

Design Review Committee
Hearing Minutes of March 14, 2012

Committee Members Present	Rodney Evans, Chairman, Brian Garrett, James Marsh, Tom Zabala and Katie Keller
Staff Members Present	Sarah Schafer, Andrea Tuning, Josh Wilson, Rob Lockward and Nicki Heckenlively

---

DRH12-00033 / River 8 LLC / Steve Hosac
Location: 620 South 9th Street
Design Review for a seven story mixed use building to include commercial, structured parking and residential development in a C-5DD (Central Business District with Downtown Design Review) zone.

ANDREA TUNING: This is a seven-story mixed use building that will contain 8,600 square feet of commercial and office space along with 130 residential units as well as associated structured parking. The parcel is located within the C-5DD zone which is a Central Business District with Downtown and Design Review overlay. The site is 1.206 acres and currently houses an unoccupied warehouse with another associated warehouse. Those warehouses will be razed for the construction of this project. The first two floors will contain structured parking as well as office and commercial space of 8,600 square feet. Floors three through seven will contain residential apartment units. The structure is constructed out of tan yellow brick as well as stucco throughout the building. White, green and orange stucco are proposed on the exterior of the structures which is noted on the materials palette. The project will be constructed in three phases. The first phase will begin with the initial tower as well as associated structured parking and commercial. Phase two will begin the middle tower and phase three will complete the project. The project is bound by 8th, 9th and River Street. It is located in the Downtown zone so we do have streetscapes standards that have been adopted by Boise City Council as well as Capital City Development Corporation (CCDC). This site is also located in a Parking Overlay District so there is no required parking to support the uses. However, the applicant has proposed structured parking. The structured parking will be encompassed by a concrete structure as well as black metal mesh that can also be identified in the materials packet. After reviewing the applicant's proposal we met with them on numerous occasions. Most of the items staff had concerns with have been worked out through the process. We have identified a few conditions of approval which include closing those curb cuts along 8th and 9th if they go unused, revising the streetscape along River Street to have the eight foot planter as well as the eight foot sidewalk to match the Adopted Streetscape Standards as well as coordinating with CCDC in regard to the streetscape along 9th Street due to the fact that it is going to be constructed this summer and spring.

APPLICANT TESTIMONY

STEVE HOSAC (Applicant / Developer): I would be happy to answer any questions, but I don't have any additional testimony.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ZABALA: With regard to the phasing plan shown can you tell me, if the project moves forward and if circumstances result in the fact that phase two and/or phase three are not built, how you envision the balance of the project being completed so we don't end up with a project that is half finished?

STEVE HOSAC: It is a good question. The best answer is phase one includes the eastern two-thirds of the parking garage and the first tower which is the eastern tower on 8th Street. If two- thirds of the parking garage is constructed and the first phase building is constructed and that is successful then the second phase building should be more or less slam dunk because the parking garage will already have been completed and we just started building. I'm not concerned about the first two phases. Once we start phase one you'll see both phases without much risk. The third phase is in a little bit different category because it requires construction of the rest of the parking garage. I suppose that it is conceivable that if the economy or residential apartments were to tank we haven't built it by the time phase two was finished and phase three had to be delayed then I could see that as a possibility. However, in the event that happens we would be in a situation where we would be in a delay mode not a failure mode. The first two phases involve the first two and the parking garage and only one tower build and then we'll have to get some sales and get them sold out to a certain degree and then build the second tower and get that sold out. The phase three plan is going to sit there for a couple of years. So that it doesn't sit there in an unsightly condition our plan as part of phase one would be to go ahead and probably put in a basic sprinkler system and hydro seed that to get it looking good so it is not just a piece of dirt.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GARRETT: I have a philosophical question. I've been looking through this and it looks as though everything meets the Ordinance and is fine. It has modulation and differentiation of materials and everything else, but at the same time it looks very much like a repeat of the last handful of mixed use or residential towers that have come up in Boise from 13th and Myrtle and even Jefferson. The material palette and the overall design looks very…I hate to say uninspired, but it looks very similar to what we've seen over and over again in Boise. Why have you chosen to go in this direction and not try to do something that would stand on its own?

STEVE HOSAC: I'm sure you're familiar with my previous housing project. I don't know how you personally feel about how that looks, but it seems that the comments that I've received over the years have always been very positive. We have, on the River 8 project, worked extremely closely with City staff and with CCDC staff in trying to make this project look as good as we possibly could make it look and at the same time keep it affordable. In this tough market we're in right now and for this project we're looking for a better market in the next year or two. Nevertheless we want to be able to bring on these condominiums in a price range that working folks can afford. We are going to have a certain number of these units that meet the standard for workforce housing. It is all, to some extent, about trying to balance cost with choosing more expensive materials. Personally most people that I've worked with on this project feel that this project actually is superior to many of the other projects…even the City Side Lofts. We've done some things with this project especially with the decks and roof overhangs. I'm actually proud of it and what we've accomplished. We have

probably held at least four early assistance meetings with the City to work on materials. We've brought in brick and window samples and we've worked really hard with City staff to try to come up with the best design we can and yet stay within a budget that is affordable for the citizens who will be a part of this.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GARRETT: My comment isn't about placing any conditions or saying you haven't met the requirements, but the similarities between this building and again, most of the new...especially residential or mixed use buildings in Boise...I myself would prefer to see someone try to break some new ground. It seems to me that Boise is becoming a breeding ground for this type of building and personally I would like to see us, as a city, try to push the envelope a little bit more design wise. I understand where you're going with this and I don't think it is a bad building and I don't want my comments to be misconstrued that way. It is just that you have an opportunity to do something interesting and I don't find this interesting.

STEVE HOSAC: I appreciate your thoughts. One final comment, as this community moves into the future and if we ever start to see projects like this that start to sell at $400 per square foot plus prices ranges or even $600 per square foot which is common in places like Seattle where projects like this run you'll probably see more of what you're suggesting you'd like to see. But, right now we're still stuck down below the $300 per square foot price range.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GARRETT: You're building over a warehouse area and this is not a warehouse district per say, but you have an opportunity to potentially play off warehouse themes or you could do anything.

STEVE HOSAC: We tried to build in with several different colors and stuccos. We tried a lot of different color schemes and I think if we pull this off and build it that you'll like it.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GARRETT: It doesn't look like a bad building and I don't want to be misconstrued as saying it is a bad building, it is just similar to what we've seen in Boise up to this point...very similar.

STEVE HOSAC: Duly noted.

NO PUBLIC TESTIMONY

PUBLIC PORTION CLOSED

COMMITTEE MEMBER MARSH: I agree with where Committee Member Garrett is going and the philosophy with that. Until we get that critical mass of housing in downtown Boise I don't think we can ask for a whole lot more than this especially since it meets the standards. Hopefully this will be a catalyst and it will work well and proceed through all three phases and spawns some other development that can charge those higher numbers and inspire some different design.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GARRETT: I hate to have two philosophical about design, but there are any number of things you can do with massing that don't cost any more or less than this particular style. We have the brick stucco with the dark and the light. We have the base that offsets the punch-out of the decks. These are all elements that we've seen over and over again in Boise in almost the same scale and almost the same rhythm as quite a few other buildings. My comments aren't about

adding zinc cladding or special detailing, but just overall massing and differentiating buildings from one another. If I were to describe this building without pictures nobody would know what building I was talking about in Boise. They would say, "Are you talking about the one off 13th, the Jefferson or the one off Idaho and 11th, The River Plaza?" Again, it is not a bad building or an ugly building. I'm not anticipating developers coming in and spending lots of money. I would like to be inspired by a building in Boise and I'm not feeling that right now. I'm not slamming this building. The building is in front of us so I'm having this discussion.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ZABALA: With regard to the question I posed to the applicant. I'd like to suggest that possibly the applicant work with their design team to come up with a few more drawings that would illustrate the phased parts of the project we're not seeing here. As an example on page one. Essentially that parking lot is going to be sliced through to an end that we're not seeing in this particular packet. So in the interim period before phase three comes along and goes away or whatever we need to see what that looks like as well as the remaining unfinished lot would be until such time or a concept of that. I understand the grass and that we don't want to put a lot of investment in a parcel that is going to be immensely developed on, but you could do some basic things in this particular area of town…at least on an interim basis might be a pocket park if you will or something along that order. It doesn't have to be fully developed, but at least a place for people to go to throw a Frisbee or do whatever they want to do. This needs to be carried out, again, under the worst of circumstances if phase one is the only piece that is built and phase two never comes along how is the top of the parking deck then finished. I assume it will be a covered pad to cover the parking, but the edges…there will be elevators and those stair towers poking up through it and there will probably be a need for a railing or something around that has to be demonstrated at a particular point and time. I would like to suggest that we ask the applicant to work with staff to come up with some additional illustrative examples of how the phased pieces on those sides we haven't seen are finished.

CHAIRMAN EVANS: Do you see that being added condition?

COMMITTEE MEMBER ZABALA: Yes and it can be handled at staff. They've obviously had a lot of meetings with CCDC and City staff already. I'm comfortable that those parties can resolve this.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ZABALA MOVED TO APPROVE DRH12-00033 BASED UPON THE FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW WITH THE RECOMMENDED SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS AS INDICATED WITH THE ADDITION OF SITE SPECIFIC CONDITION D. THE APPLICANT SHALL DEVELOP ILLUSTRATED DRAWINGS DEPICTING THE INNER CONDITIONS OF THE ELEVATIONS AND SITE CONDITIONS THAT WILL AWAIT FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND THESE DRAWINGS SHALL BE REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY STAFF.

COMMITTEE MEMBER MARSH SECONDED THE MOTION.

ROLL CALL VOTE 4:0. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.