



PROJECT LETTER

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Date: October 25, 2015

To: City of Boise
Planning & Development
150 N. Capitol Blvd
Boise, ID 83702

Project: Identity

Job No. 15-215

Subject: CUP Letter of Explanation

From: David Ruby, AIA

Dear Staff,

The following is a letter of explanation to accompany our Conditional Use Application. We are respectfully requesting a parking reduction and a height exception.

Boise State University is currently seeing large growth in their student population and with that an increased need for providing housing choices for their students. As you are aware, to meet such demand, there has recently been an increase in the number of new off-campus student housing options to compliment the many on-campus housing options the University provides. Four of these private student housing projects have recently been or will soon be completed just west of campus across from Capital Boulevard.

Our site, which is directly across the street from campus, is ideally located near the geographic center of the overall campus in the east-west orientation. The shortage of student housing in the area has traditionally been addressed by converting existing houses in the surrounding neighborhood into student housing rentals. Developing the proposed project on this site will protect existing single-family and low density residential neighborhoods from encroachment by incompatible student renters and will contribute to a reduction in the displacement of existing residents by providing more appropriately located new higher density housing options along Beacon Street and Boise Avenue, adjacent to the University, commercial services, and transit facilities.

The triangular shaped piece of ground that our project will occupy is strategically located at the mid-point of the southern edge of campus. It sits at the intersection of three key roadways, and will be a key landmark separating the campus to the north; the single-family student housing area to the south, and the large lot single-family residential areas to the southwest. The intersection currently has a gas/convenience store on the southwest corner, a convenience store on the southeast corner, a two-story campus housing facility on the northwest corner, and our site which contains approximately 50% vacant land, along with (4) dilapidated single-family rental houses.

Our request to provide reduced parking will actually help the traffic and parking issues in this neighborhood. Our experience with these types of housing projects, located directly across the street from a major college campus, has shown us that encouraging residents to not bring a vehicle and instead relying on walking, cycling (we will have ample secured, covered bike parking onsite), car sharing and

public transportation, results in less vehicle trips per day, and less of an impact to the environment as opposed to providing large amounts of space simply to store a vehicle that is not often used. We have learned that if you provide the parking spaces, the residents will bring their cars, which in the context of the project's ideal location and product type, is wholly unnecessary and will only result in negative traffic and environmental impacts, safety issues and needless costs, not to mention endorse poor public policy. This site is in close proximity to the campus, nearby entertainment, shopping, and transit facilities, and is thus very well suited for a reduced parking requirement.

Our request for a height exception is closely tied to our overall goal of creating a high quality, dense housing project as a bookend to the Original South Boise neighborhood to the east. In order to achieve the density required to support the investment in this project and to create a vibrant community unto itself, a certain number of units need to be provided. The unique triangular site provides for some nice design opportunities, but also presents some unique challenges in creating an efficient floor plan, especially when accounting for modulations, breaks and setbacks. Increasing the height of the building will allow us to retain the unique qualities imposed on the design by the triangular site while still providing enough units to make the project economically feasible. Creating a taller more prominent bookend will also become a community landmark, defining the edge of not only the campus, but the Original South Boise subdivision as well.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to call with any questions or concerns, 639-6406.

Sincerely,



David Ruby, AIA
The Architects Office, PLLC

Google Earth image of site with surroundings looking north toward campus



Google Earth image of site looking southwest from campus

