

Rodney Evans + Partners, PLLC
1014 S. La Pointe St., Ste. 3
Boise, Idaho 83706
p: 208-514-3300
www.reandpartners.com



Landscape Architecture + Urban Planning + Land Use and Site Planning + Entitlements + Graphic Communications + Project Management

July 27, 2020

Planning and Development Services
City of Boise
150 N. Capitol Blvd.
Boise, Idaho 83701

Re: Robert Street Condos – 1511 S. Robert St., Boise, ID 83705 – Letter of Explanation

To Whom it May Concern,

The application before you is for the rezone and a Conditional Use Permit for a Planned Unit Development on the parcel located at 1511 S. Robert St., Boise, ID 83705 for the development of a condominium building consisting of sixteen (16) one-bedroom units. This application also includes a variance request, and the design will go through an additional Design Review process. The developer is proposing to enter into a Development Agreement in order to limit the total number of units to 16, as well as to require the units to be one bedroom. A future condominium plat will be submitted once the construction is completed.

The current zoning of the parcels is C-2D, and the property is proposed to be rezoned to R-OD to accommodate the density of the development and provide for much-needed housing in the area through the inclusion of owner-occupied condominium units. This project rezone does include a Development Agreement as well as maintaining the Design Review requirement. This will ensure that the architectural design, finishes, and materials will provide an aesthetic addition to the surrounding area, as well as provide for the limitation of the development to sixteen one-bedroom units. The R-OD zoning designation is compatible to other developments to the east that are zoned L-OD, as well as R-1C further to the east. The properties to the north, south, and west are zoned C-2D and contain multiple commercial businesses, restaurants, and offices, which are likewise compatible with the proposed project. Overall, properties within the immediate vicinity contain multi-family, single-family, and commercial properties, which this development would enhance through the inclusion of an additional housing type.

The creation of the 16 condominium units will require the CUP/PUD process for the residential use within the R-OD zone. Each residential unit will be approximately 800sf, which exceeds the minimum size for a unit in R-OD of 500sf per dwelling unit. There is also a minimum of 100sf of private open space associated with each unit, with the inclusion of private balconies on level 2 and 3 units, and rooftop patios for the 4th floor units. The balconies on the 2nd and 3rd floor will encroach into the side yard setbacks, but will be a minimum of 1'-0" from the property line. There is a variance requested to reduce the side yard setbacks to 5', instead of the 7.5' required in the R-O zone (15' combined side yard setbacks). This variance is requested due to the uses on either side of the lot, as well as due to the increase in setback when rezoning from C-2D to R-OD. To the south is a single-story commercial building that houses tenant spaces, which are variably leased. To the north of the site is a surface parking lot for use by the adjacent Wells Fargo bank employees. The variance to the side setbacks and subsequent encroachment of the balconies only impacts those 2 properties. If the zoning were kept at C-2D, the side yard setbacks could be 0', as the properties on both sides are also zoned C-2D. The impact on the surrounding properties of this setback variance and encroachment of the balconies into the setback is reduced with the addition of substantial landscaping, as well as the location of the balconies being pushed further back from the front setback along Robert. The front setback of 10' off of Robert St. will be to the stair and elevator towers, with the main body of the building being approximately 18'1" from the right-of-way for the first 3 floors. The rear of the building will be approximately 27' from the alley right-of-way to the rear stair tower, and 30'4" to the hallway on the 2nd and 3rd floors. The 4th floor will be stepped another 11' back from both the front and rear body of the building, placing the 4th floor façade approximately 29'1" from the Robert St. right-of-way and 45'10" from the alley in the rear. This exceeds all of the setback requirement of either the C-2 or R-O zones.

The proposed condominium building will be 4-stories and will be designed to be 45-feet in height at the roof peak, and approximately 43' to the midline of the pitched roof and stair/elevator towers, which is under the allowed height of the current and requested zoning (45' in C-2 and 65' in R-O). These restrictions in height will be part of the Development Agreement. The proposed building will provide a fire sprinkler system to comply with current fire code. The proposed height of the building is compatible with surrounding development, as there are 2 existing buildings within ½ block that are 40' minimum in height (the Gem Center for the

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Arts Building at 2417 W. Bank Dr. and the commercial office building at 2404 W. Bank Dr.). Additional commercial buildings in the immediate vicinity include the Hoppie Building at 1516 S. Vista Ave. and the Wells Fargo Bank at 1400 S. Vista Ave., both of which are 2+ stories, although the total height is unknown. Other uses within the vicinity include restaurants, multiple commercial/retail/business developments, a 5-unit multi-family building, as well as single-family residences (both owner-occupied and rental/investment properties). All but four of the single-family residences are over 300' from the subject parcel, with those four on the east side of Robert St. having been constructed in 2019 after receiving approval through a Planned Unit Development application, along with an associated variance request for a front setback reduction to 10' within the L-OD zone. We believe the proposed condominium building will be a great addition to this transitional area from the more intense uses of the Overland and Vista intersection into the more residential areas to the east of the subject parcel. As this area is also designated as an Activity Center, the additional housing option is desirable in order to take advantage of alternative methods of transportation and services in the area.

Parking associated with the condominium building is accommodated for each unit in the first-floor parking structure that is accessed from the alley to the west, along with 2 on-site outdoor parking spaces. No vehicular connection to Robert St. is proposed. Each one-bedroom unit is provided with one parking stall, along with a car lift, effectively providing 32 parking spaces on-site for use by the future residents and their guests. This far exceeds the required parking for the development of 18 parking stalls (1 space per unit plus 1 guest spot per 10 units = 18). Additional on-street parking is available throughout the surrounding commercial developments as well. This proposed building will also provide for a transition from the busy thoroughfares of Overland Rd. and Vista Ave. to the single-family homes within the residential neighborhood to the east, as well as enhance the surrounding commercial developments. Areas for on-site bike racks will also be provided for bicycle parking for the residents and guests. Street frontage improvements will be necessary to complete the sidewalk on the west side of Robert St. These frontage improvements will match the existing improvements along Robert St. and include street trees and a plaza area with benches.

During the neighborhood meeting, concerns regarding height, residential use, and traffic were the main topics. We believe that by limiting the number of units to 16, providing for 32 on-site parking spaces, and by maintaining a building height that is compatible with multiple surrounding commercial buildings, this proposal will provide for an aesthetic, functional, and desirable addition to Boise, the Central Bench Planning Area, and this neighborhood. The project will be constructed using Insulated Concrete Form (ICF) construction techniques, which allows for the building to be extremely efficient in energy use. This construction technique is also very high-quality, is extremely durable, and has a long lifespan. Materials used on the building will include stucco and cement board lap siding; prefinished composite windows and sliding patio doors; painted wood trim; standing seam metal roofing and fascia; decorative metal panels at garage openings; powder-coated steel railings on balconies; and an aluminum storefront window treatment at the ground floor lobby. Exterior doors at the stair towers, fire riser room, and mechanical room will be painted metal. These high-quality materials, along with their finishes and colors, will compliment the architecture of the building and enhance the overall surrounding area.

We believe that this proposed development will create a high-quality housing option, while enhancing the surrounding existing neighborhood, by providing for the infill redevelopment of this parcel. The project meets multiple goals of the comprehensive plan, and will incorporate housing in an area that is sure to see continued development of residential, commercial, and office uses, as this area is designated as Mixed Use in the comprehensive plan and the nearby intersection of Overland Road and Vista Avenue is designated as a Neighborhood Activity Center. The owner-occupied condominium units will also encourage the continued elevation of areas within the overall Depot Bench neighborhood and Central Bench Planning Areas, while providing much needed housing near commercial, retail, educational, healthcare, and office space.

Please contact me directly with any questions regarding the project at 208-514-3300 or ben@reandpartners.com

Sincerely,

Ben Semple, PLA, ASLA
Partner, Senior Landscape Architect