



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT CITIZEN'S DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE December 4, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Katherine Harrison-Rogers proxy Heather Watenpaugh
Susan Landin
Vince Vaccaro

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tessa Abeyta (Councilor)
Zackery Meyer

STAFF PRESENT: Adam Ochoa, Senior Planner/Building Inspection Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT: Alexis Girad
Joseph Fuemmeler
Connor Murray
Jackie Clowny
Scott Eschenbrenner

I. CALL TO ORDER (10:00)

H-Rogers: All right, I'd like to call this meeting of the UDCDRC December 4th, it's about five after 10:00.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - June 5, 2023

H-Rogers: The first item of business is the approval of minutes. Did everybody get an opportunity to look at those? Yes, no. All right. Very good. Were there any corrections or any comments on those minutes. All right, do I have a motion for approval.

Landin: Motion to approve.

Vaccaro: I'll second.

H-Rogers: All right. Very good. And all those in favor say "aye."

MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

III. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Case 23DR0500141:** A request for design approval for a proposed new business/shopping center to be located on the northern vacant portion of a

1 property located at 1685 E. University Avenue within the University District-
2 University Avenue Zone (UD/UAZ). Submitted by Desert Peak Architects.
3

4 H-Rogers: All right. Now on new business. We only have the one case. It's Case
5 23DR0500141. This is a request for design approval for a proposed new
6 business/shopping center to be located on the northern vacant portion of a
7 property located at 1685 E. University Avenue with the University District,
8 specifically the University Avenue Zone. Submitted by Desert Peak
9 Architects, and they are here, present. I'm going to go ahead and turn it
10 over of course to Adam to do the presentation. Adam.
11

12 Ochoa: So the property we're looking at here is 1685 E. University Avenue. It is
13 the, like Katherine stated before, it is the northern vacant portion of this
14 property, the southern part is the gas station. It is the northern part that will
15 be developed. The location of that area is roughly about 285 feet north of
16 the intersection at E. University Avenue and S. Locust Street. That portion
17 of this property is roughly about 1.18 acres in size and it is zoned UD/UAZ,
18 University District/University Avenue Zone. Shown here the subject
19 property in red. Shown here is the aerial. As you can see the southern
20 portion already developed right on University. This is the area that we're
21 looking that will be developed. Shopping center currently located directly
22 north. The Pan Am Plaza to the east. Restaurant here to the east as well,
23 just to give you kind of a bearing of where we're at. University to the south.
24

25 So what is being proposed with this development is a new business/
26 shopping center. Incorporates essentially two separate buildings with a
27 total of about five leasing areas or suites what is being proposed. The uses
28 that will be allowed in those suites or areas will be those uses that are
29 permitted by right by University District/University Avenue Zone. Parking
30 as proposed as shown in your staff report does appear to meet all
31 development requirements for parking including setback requirements on
32 the street. Landscaping is being provided throughout the property as well
33 including landscaping islands within the parking area as required by the
34 University District as well. The new development will follow all requirements
35 of the University District, including building design requirements, frontage
36 element requirements, outdoor lighting requirements, so on and so forth.
37 The new development will also be required to follow all other adopted
38 building codes and 2001 Zoning Code Requirements as required by the
39 City.
40

41 Kind of showing here floor plans of those two different buildings, the three
42 different suites as you can see there. Here is a layout of that property. As
43 stated before it does meet a lot of the elements for the design of the
44 property. Parking located, and a minimum of 40 feet from the front, and to
45 the rear of the building as required by University District. An open, kind of
46 passive/active area in the front for easy pedestrian access to the property
47 and for use by people. Buildings pushed up to the front.
48

1 Landin: That's Locust that we're seeing.
2
3 Ochoa: That is correct, yes. This is Locust Street that we taking about right here.
4 Landscaping, as well as you can see landscaping does appear to be met
5 as well. Landscape islands within the parking area. Landscaping with a
6 passive open space along the front and along the buildings. Number of
7 trees, shrubs, and ground cover is being met as proposed by the applicant.
8 And here are the elevations that were submitted to you all that staff does
9 recommend an approval for this. As you can see they do meet landscaping,
10 height requirements, and architectural requirements as per the University
11 District Overlay. The one thing that is going to be brought up for discussion
12 for the board will be rear elevation which would be I believe; this is the rear
13 of the buildings. We will talk about that a little bit further when we get to that
14 slide. But here is just kind of an artist's rendition of what those building will
15 look like.
16
17 Landin: Looks really nice.
18
19 Ochoa: Yes. Very definitely in keeping with the University District requirements.
20
21 Landin: Much better than an empty lot.
22
23 Ochoa: So the one thing that was brought up, there is an alternative elevation that
24 is being requested by the applicant for the rear of the buildings. Per the
25 University District there is a minimum glazing requirement for building, in
26 the front minimum of 50% of your frontage must be glazed, in other words
27 have glass if you will or windows. And all other sides need a minimum of
28 20% to be glazed. What the applicant is proposing to provide no glazing to
29 the rear. And I will open it up to the applicant so they can kind of justify that
30 or explain what that request is being made for. But that essentially kind of
31 shows what that elevation would look like in the rear of the buildings. That
32 really isn't seen from the front. Really the only people that will see that there
33 is people working there, people parking in the very back of the property.
34
35 H-Rogers: Is there on-street parking?
36
37 Ochoa: On-street parking is not permitted on Locust.
38
39 H-Rogers: I didn't think so. Okay. I just wanted to make sure.
40
41 Ochoa: The number of parking stalls being proposed does easily meet requirements
42 for parking, as well as bicycle parking as well, actually that exceeds from
43 what I saw from the bicycle parking as well.
44
45 Public notice was sent out all adjacent property owners. Staff did receive
46 one phone call, people being happy, seeing a vacant piece of property with
47 people finally develop this area. Somebody is going to be happy to see this
48 portion of the property being developed. With that staff does recommend,

1 did review the site plans and elevations and found them being keeping with
2 the 2001 Zoning Code, and more specifically the University District Overlay.
3 We do recommend approval for the proposed project as originally
4 submitted. The discussion about the alternate elevation for the rear can be
5 discussed here. And with that your options are 1) to vote “yes” and approve
6 the proposal as originally proposed; 2) to deny it; 3) to vote “yes” with
7 conditions allowing per say the alternate elevation if the Board seems
8 amenable to it; or 4) to table and postpone and direct staff and the applicant
9 accordingly. Like I said the applicant is here with the representative. But I
10 stand for questions, if you have any questions from me.

11
12 Vacarro: What’s behind the area that looking to not to have windows? On the other
13 side of the parking lot what is there? Are those apartments? It’s open land.

14
15 Ochoa: Right. A lot of it is still vacant land, the majority of it is still vacant land. Back
16 there a small portion will be the apartment complex. That’s more where the
17 parking area is.

18
19 Vacarro: Right.

20
21 Ochoa: That’s there.

22
23 Landin: So this is all commercial, it’s not apartments.

24
25 Ochoa: This will all be commercial. This development is all commercia. It’ll be
26 either service uses, business occupancies, or hotel and assembly
27 occupancy, like restaurants, cafes, so forth like that.

28
29 Vacarro: Has anybody spoken about the other piece of vacant land behind the
30 apartments. Has any discussion come up for that?

31
32 Ochoa: Today nothing has been brought forward to that. I believe that’s privately
33 owned. NMSU I believe does not own that correct?

34
35 Vacarro: No, but I think that there’s been some discussion, Max Bower has brought
36 some stuff before in the past to do some multifamily that would go back
37 there and wrap around the church.

38
39 H-Rogers: That’s property that off Jordan.

40
41 Ochoa: That’s correct.

42
43 Vacarro: I think those plans are on hold though.

44
45 Ochoa: That is correct. That was, to clarify, thank you for reminding me about that.
46 To clarify, this actually did come before the University District Citizens
47 Design Review Committee in the past. This was a proposed multifamily
48 development that was being proposed, rather large one actually, that ran

1 along Jordan Road to that portion that's vacant all the way up to what is
2 Monte Vista to the north as well. But unfortunately that development has
3 not come to fruition as of yet. So eventually, hopefully since they already
4 got the sign approval they'll be able to get cement those plans and get those
5 built out. It will be multifamily that would be built back there. Katherine,
6 yes.
7

8 H-Rogers: Question for you Adam. The deviation in the glazing in the rear, that doesn't
9 trigger any sort of formal variance. It's something that this Board could
10 make a decision on, it doesn't have to move forward to P&Z, is that correct?
11

12 Ochoa: Correct. For clarification, this is more of a design element requirement that
13 the Citizen's Design Review Committee has the power to approve here so
14 they can move forward with the actual design and development of it, if the
15 alternate elevation is amenable to you all and you all are okay with what's
16 being proposed.
17

18 Fuemmeler: So I guess there's two motivations behind that request. One is they're shell
19 spaces; they might be retail so you have the front of the house and the back
20 of the house. And the back of the house is usually where the office is and
21 the storage and stuff like that like is. So if we do put glass back there it
22 might be opaque glass anyway because you don't want to see the back of
23 a storage closet. But it'd be a whole lot easier just to not have that glazing.
24

25 Landin: Yes, it's not like anyone wants to look out the window back there.
26

27 Fuemmeler: Yes, we'll probably cover up the windows with tinting or something because
28 they'll be a storage room or they'll be ...
29

30 Landin: Yes.
31

32 Fuemmeler: Manager's office back there.
33

34 Landin: Just a place for somebody to break in a window.
35

36 Fuemmeler: Which is the second concern is it's the parking lot, we will have all the
37 security lighting but if somebody's going to break a window, it's going to be
38 in the back. So that's the two motivations behind that request.
39

40 H-Rogers: I'd like to ask the applicants representative something. I concur with the
41 concerns about having the glazing in the rear, however I do also have
42 concerns about big blank walls. What sort of design elements are you all
43 going to incorporate to prevent the monotony of that big, blank wall. That's
44 my only concern is that aesthetically it may not be particularly pleasing to
45 anybody who has a view of that.
46

1 Fuemmeler: We could add some sort of architectural relief back there. We could do, I
2 wouldn't do any kind of vegetation. Sometimes you think of vines but that's
3 the west side.
4
5 H-Rogers: Yes, it's really hot.
6
7 Fuemmeler: I think it's mislabeled.
8
9 Landin: Why would somebody even want, you wouldn't sit there and look at the back
10 of the building.
11
12 Fuemmeler: No.
13
14 Landin: You just get out of your car, walk around to the front, right.
15
16 Fuemmeler: Right. I think at the bare minimum we could do like a pop out and then
17 maybe some lines that kind of ...
18
19 H-Rogers: Okay.
20
21 Fuemmeler: Just a little relief pattern.
22
23 H-Rogers: That would be truly my only concern about that is to make sure that there's
24 some character.
25
26 Ochoa: Another thing that the Board has the ability to recommend approval with
27 condition that some type of architectural relief happen to the rear, texturing,
28 whatever it is, pop outs, to kind of break up. The walls do kind of step back
29 from each other so not just one continuous wall. But if they did a little
30 something else for that back area and then when those plans do come in
31 for review, that's something we can sent out e-mail to the committee if
32 they're okay with what they propose for that.
33
34 Vacarro: Two lines of different color I think would be enough. I mean you don't have
35 to go crazy with it.
36
37 Ochoa: Okay. So with that, any more questions? Anybody near more clarification
38 from the applicant?
39
40 Landin: You can't put any Italian restaurants in there.
41
42 Eschenbrenner: I'm here to lend NMSU support behind this project. We've been partners
43 with (*inaudible*) Process since 1980, so 43 years as landowner for this
44 project. They were gracious enough to send us the plans in advance and
45 show us what was being planned for the area. I was able to take this to the
46 regents real estate committee which consists of the board of regents and
47 the president and other members on that as well, and they are all

1 enthusiastic and excited about this project. So we'd like to lend our support
2 behind this as well.
3
4 Ochoa: All right, I'll leave it up to you Madam Chair.
5
6 H-Rogers: So at this point in time we are ready for a vote. Is there a motion for
7 approval?
8
9 Landin: I motion to approve.
10
11 Vacarro: I'll second it.
12
13 H-Rogers: All right. And the Chair votes aye. There was no condition that was
14 attached to it so it moves forward without condition but I would encourage
15 maybe a little architectural relief in the rear, even though it wasn't
16 conditioned.
17
18 Ochoa: So point of order. The way it was proposed shows with the glass in the
19 back. So we'll have to take a re-vote that please.
20
21 H-Rogers: Okay.
22
23 Ochoa: Reconsideration on this one to do "yes" with conditions to allow the
24 alternative elevation, the rear of the buildings with some type of
25 architectural, texturing or relief.
26
27 Landin: Clarify, why do you want glass in the back?
28
29 Ochoa: Not glass. We just like bump outs, lines, something like we talked about.
30 Not necessarily the glass but that's what the conditions would be. So it
31 would be "yes" with that condition.
32
33 H-Rogers: So, Adam your recommendation is that we rescind the vote that we just did.
34
35 Ochoa: Yes.
36
37 H-Rogers: Because the original vote was for glass, because that's what was proposed.
38
39 Ochoa: Correct.
40
41 H-Rogers: And allow the deviation from the glazing perhaps with a condition that some
42 sort of architectural relief be provided in lieu of that.
43
44 Ochoa: Right.
45
46 H-Rogers: Okay. So I think at this juncture we need to vote to rescind the vote if we
47 could. So somebody could make a motion to do that, I would appreciate it.
48

1 Landin: I'll rescind the motion.
2
3 Vacarro: I'll second.
4
5 H-Rogers: All right. And the Chair votes aye on rescinding that vote. And let's see if
6 we can do a do-over. How about that?
7
8 Ochoa: So what you can do, you just say as stated. Vote to approve the proposal
9 with conditions that the alternate rear elevation is approved with additional
10 architectural relief to break up the solid wall.
11
12 Landin: Make it look nicer.
13
14 Ochoa: Yes, ma'am. So you can make that motion.
15
16 H-Rogers: You can make a motion and just say exactly what staff recommended.
17
18 Landin: I make a motion to approve what Adam just said.
19
20 Vacarro: I'll second.
21
22 H-Rogers: And so with that, the vote, I will let you go. So we've made the motion. Now
23 the vote, all those in favor.
24
25 **MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**
26
27 H-Rogers: Motion passes.
28
29 Ochoa: Thank you folks.
30
31 **IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
32
33 Ochoa: That's all we really have for today. We don't have any other public. I believe
34 everybody's applicants.
35
36 Landin: Well it's just nice to see all this blank land around the university being built
37 up.
38
39 Ochoa: That's a great thing to see, that's for sure. Yes, ma'am. Other than
40 Katherine I'll leave it to you.
41
42 H-Rogers: Yes. Any other information that anybody wants to add? The floor is open.
43 No.
44
45 **V. ADJOURNMENT (10:55)**
46
47 H-Rogers: With that, a motion for adjournment.
48

1 Vacarro: I'll motion to adjourn.

2

3 Landin: I'll second.

4

5 H-Rogers: All right. With that we are adjourned. It is about 20 minutes after 10:00.

6

7

8

9

10

11

Chairperson