



PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT

Planning and Zoning Board

September 25, 2019

CASE No.: ZON19-00477	PROJECT NAME: ASU Creative Futures Lab
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Owner's Name:	City of Mesa
Applicant's Name:	City of Mesa; Holly Street Studio Architects
Location of Request:	Within the 0 to 100 blocks of East Pepper Place (both sides), the 0 to 100 blocks of East Main Street (north side), the 0 to 100 blocks of East 1st Street (south side), the 0 to 100 blocks of North Center Street (east side) and the 0 to 100 blocks of North Centennial Way (west side). Located north of Main Street and east of Center Street.
Parcel No(s):	138-37-005, 138-37-006A, 138-37-005
Request:	Site Plan Review
Existing Zoning District:	Downtown Core (DC), Downtown Event Overlay, Historic Landmark (HL) Overlay
Council District:	4
Site Size:	5± acres
Proposed Use(s):	University Campus and Public Plaza
Existing Use(s):	Parking Lot
Hearing Date(s):	September 25, 2019 / 4:00 p.m
Report Date:	August 22, 2019
Staff Planner:	Tom Ellsworth
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On **September 8, 1987**, the City Council approved a rezoning request that established the Town Center Zoning Area. The subject site was specifically zoned Town Center Core (TCC) as part of the zoning designation (Case #Z87-040). The TCC zoning designation is currently referred to as Downtown Core (DC) within the City's current zoning ordinance. The purpose of the Downtown Core District is to encourage the highest intensity of land uses to be developed, redeveloped

and maintained within the Downtown. It is also the purpose of the DC District to provide incentives for the development or redevelopment of under-utilized and bypassed properties within Downtown and to promote the development of a vital, vibrant activity area. The regulations for the DC District are intended to ensure that higher-intensity land uses are appropriate for the fulfillment of the purpose of the Downtown Core District as a vibrant focal point for the city. At the same time, the Downtown Core District is created to serve residents, businesses, employees and visitors and to ensure that the visual image of the core of the Mesa Downtown will be maintained and enhanced.

On **November 7, 2011**, the City Council approved an overlay to designate a Downtown Event (DE) District (Case# Z11-017). This overlay covers the area between Country Club Drive and Centennial Way/Sirrine and between 1st Avenue and 1st Street. The purpose of the overlay district is to allow a greater number of special events in the Downtown Area in comparison with other areas of the city. The subject site is within the overlay area.

On **September 23, 2013**, the City Council approved a Historic Landmark (HL) overlay for the former Mesa Public Library (now City of Mesa ITD building) (Case#13-033HL). The subject request includes a portion of this building.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The subject request is for approval of a site plan review to allow the development of the Arizona State University's (ASU) Creative Futures Lab on the property. The site is approximately five acres and mostly used as vehicular parking areas for the City of Mesa municipal building and civic plaza complex employees and visitors.

The proposed site plan shows development of a three-story building with technology services and amenities associated with the programming of the building. The site plan also includes a proposed plaza that will be developed by the City of Mesa located south of the proposed building and consists of a public park, ice skating rink, restrooms and other supporting amenities.

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals

The Mesa 2040 General Plan character designation for the site is Downtown and specifically is identified as being within a station area within the transit corridor character area. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, the focus for this character type is the creation of a pedestrian-oriented, transit rich environment with a lot of activity. This area is recognized as the governmental, cultural, financial, and entertainment center of the community. The goal for this area is to make it a people-friendly area that is alive with options for housing, employment, shopping, entertainment, and events. The proposed development of the site for a university campus and a public plaza is in conformance with the General Plan goals of creating a high level of activities through the concentration of governmental, entertainment, and cultural facilities and events.

Central Main Street Area Plan

The subject site is also located within the Modern Downtown Core development character area within the Central Main Street Sub-Area Plan. The intent of this area is to provide mid- to high-rise developments as an integral component of an office, commercial, cultural, and entertainment core. The proposed multi-story building with an associated public plaza meets the form and development criteria for the Modern Downtown area as specified in Chapter 4 of the Central Main Street Sub-Area Plan. From the site plan, the proposed building is set closer to the street, along Pepper Place, with an active ground floor programming space to engage the public. The proposed site plan is in conformance with the sub-area plan.

Zoning District Designations:

The subject site is zoned Downtown Core (DC) and within the Downtown Event (DE) Overlay Area. The proposed development of a university campus and public plaza is an allowed use within the Downtown Core zoning district.

As part of the proposed development, a section of the City's Information Technology Building will be repurposed to support the development. This includes making certain alterations to the building. Some of the features of the building that will likely be altered includes the canopied walkways on the south side of the building.

On September 23, 2013, the City Council approved a Historic Landmark (HL) Overlay designation on the property. Per Section 11-74-3 of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance, the request to alter the location of the canopies and building will require the review and approval of the Historic Preservation Officer (see condition #4).

Site Plan and General Site Development Standards:

Per section 11-8-6.A of the zoning ordinance, the minimum lot area and yard setbacks will vary according to the type of development, the proposed use, and the size, scope and density of the project. Further the code gives the Planning and Zoning Board the authority to determine the specific density, area, building, and yard regulations for such projects through site plan review. For this request the board will be reviewing the site plan for building and yard regulations.

Section 11-69-5 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance outlines the review criteria for approval of a site plan. The subject request conforms to the review criteria. The site is approximately 5± acres and is currently used as a parking area for the City of Mesa Municipal Building and Civic Plaza employees and visitors. The site plan shows development of a 127,062 square-foot, 3-story university campus building along the north side of East Pepper Place. The proposed building height is 65'. The building is setback approximately 19' from the curb along Pepper Place with an approximate 12' canopied sidewalk. The building design features a walk-through breezeway that will facilitate pedestrian circulation from the light rail station on Main Street through the site to 1st Street. The plaza component of the site plan will feature a new public park, ice skating rink, restroom facilities, and a water feature.

Parking

Per Section 11-32-3.A of the zoning ordinance, one parking space per 200 square feet is required for use of a building as a college or university campus. Section 11-32-6.C of the City's

zoning ordinance allows for a 10% reduction in the required parking spaces if the closest portion of the proposed development is no more than a ¼ mile radius from a light rail station or bus rapid stop. This site is within ¼ mile of the light rail station at Main Street and Center. Overall 572 parking spaces are required for development of the site. This includes the reduction of 10 percent as outlined in Section 11-32-6 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Per section 11-8-6 of the zoning ordinance, the required parking can be provided on-site or off-site as approved through the site plan review by the Planning and Zoning Board. The applicant is proposing to incorporate required parking spaces for the development as part of the City’s municipal parking program within the downtown area. Section 11-8-7 of the zoning ordinance allows such parking provision. Specifically, per the section, required parking spaces may be provided off-site in a privately or municipally owned parking garage, commercial parking lot or other approved facility and the term of the parking agreement shall be the same as the length of the term of the lease of the property. There are multiple municipal parking facilities within a 1/4-mile radius of the site that have enough capacity to handle the parking required by the proposed development.

Design Review:

The request is required to be reviewed through the Design Review process. Initial review of the development is scheduled on the Design Reviewed Board’s meeting on August 13, 2019. The purpose of the initial discussion is to solicit feedback from the Board of the design concepts of the building prior to the final design and review. Staff will provide the Board with an update from the design review meeting during the scheduled study session on August 28, 2019.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

<p>Northwest DC City Buildings</p>	<p>North DC City Buildings</p>	<p>Northeast DC City Buildings</p>
<p>West DC City Buildings</p>	<p>Subject Property DC City Buildings</p>	<p>East DC Mulit-Residential</p>
<p>Southwest DC City Buildings</p>	<p>South DC Mesa Arts Center</p>	<p>Southeast DC Office</p>

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:

The site is located in the middle of the municipal building complex and is adjacent to other DC zoned properties on all sides. The proposed development will not be out of character with the surrounding area and uses.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments

There have been several neighborhood participation forums to solicit input from the public over the last few years. The first meetings to discuss development of the site occurred in May and June of 2014 with over 100 attendees. These meetings included a series of innovative exercises to engage City of Mesa planners, staff, business owners, and residents as an effort to

develop consensus among the diverse needs of the community and develop priorities for the City Center site. Through these exercises the following common themes were identified that should be addressed in any plan for the city center: the need for shade, the arts, a variety of spaces, entertainment, the creation of a destination, and parking.

The most recent meeting to solicit residents' feedback on the project occurred on April 4, 2019 in the Mesa Public Library. The meeting included representatives from ASU, City of Mesa staff, representatives from RAIL Mesa, and residents of the city. A brief overview of the project was discussed with residents. The feedback obtained from the discussion included the need for walkability and connectivity, the location of parking, the design should incorporate shade elements, landscaping and a diversity of materials, and the need to create an iconic memorable place.

As of writing this report, neither the applicant nor staff has received any comments/concerns from surrounding property owners notified of the request. The applicant will be providing an updated Citizen Participation Report to staff prior to the August 28, 2019 Study Session. Staff will provide the Board with any new information during the scheduled Study Session.

Staff Recommendations:

The subject request is consistent with the General Plan, the Central Main Street Sub-Area Plan, and meets the review criteria for Site Plan Review outlined in Section 11-69-5 of the MZO; therefore, staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

Conditions of Approval;

1. Compliance with final site plan submitted.
2. Compliance with all requirements of Design Review.
3. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.
4. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, review and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Historic Preservation Officer is required for modifications to the City of Mesa ITD building (former City Library) located at 59 East 1st Street.