



Mesa Drive and Main Street | Mesa, Arizona

Palladium Grid LLC, the City of Mesa and Benedictine University Mesa.

## **Special Use Permit Narrative**

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We are proposing a new and exciting urban mixed-use community on Main Street at Mesa Drive, The Grid. The Grid includes retail, office, and residential uses in a mid-rise structure next to Benedictine's Mesa-Campus. Uniquely, utilizing a surface parking lot and underused parking garage, The Grid is designed to fill a void in the urban fabric of Main Street, complete the block's streetscape and bring much needed contemporary luxury market rate residential to Mesa's Downtown core. On only 3.33 acres, serviced by Valley Metro's light rail station on the east side of Mesa Drive, and amenitized by Gateway Park, this setting offers Mesa's first luxury market rate rental and for sale mixed-use urban living.

The retail and office elements are strategically located along the Main Street frontage to engage the streetscape. On the ground level, dining patios extend into the 25' – 30' deep sidewalk zone, engaging pedestrians on street. The ground level uses are designed to be visually and physically porous, encouraging interaction between the tenant and Main Street with glass walls, corner doors, and walls that can open to take advantage of the weather in the high season. The second level office spaces extend over the right-of-way creating shade for the ground level users and providing long views down the length of Main Street.

Above the retail and office space, accessed from a lobby off of Pomeroy, are four levels of residential units in the Main Street Tower. Seventy-five urban flats called micro units with floor to ceiling views of the McDowell's and Red Mountain. These efficient urban living spaces come complete with a galley kitchen and highly versatile built in furniture.

Along Pomeroy at the ground level, hiding the existing parking garage and an extension of the garage to the north are three level, walk up, rowhomes. Fifteen of them are designed to have the building re-engage the urban streetscape. Each has a private dooryard at the front stoop, opening to a great room living area. The second level is the master suite with huge walk in closets and views to the great room below. The third level is designed with options as a second master suite, a guest bedroom and study or a pair of bedrooms for the kids. The main level has direct access to reserved private parking in the garage for the home owners. These are designed as condominium ownership units with the right to two dwelling units each.

Above the parking garages on levels 4, 5, 6, and 7 are 196 market rate Sky Apartments, offering tremendous views of the City and beyond. These apartments are accessed via a grand lobby at the corner of the building opposite Gateway Park. With easy access from the light rail station across the park, residents enter a two-story, glass lobby with a dramatic chandelier hanging above, ascend in the elevator with a glass window wall looking out over the plaza to each floors' private urban living room space and lounge. These gathering spaces on each residential level are set up with fire places, balconies, glass walls that open when the weather is nice, and comfortable lounge furniture to create a community gathering point on each floor. These are accented by a party room available for private functions on the third level and a sky lounge on the roof with uninterrupted views of the East Valley mountain ranges – the perfect

setting for the nightly sunset show. Between the block of units on the upper levels are peaceful garden courtyards. These courts are open on the north side to take advantage of the stunning distant views. Between the apartments and the micro units is the amenity deck on top of the parking structure. Here both groups of residents enjoy the outdoor pool amenities as well as the indoor fitness or workshop activities.

Delivery, loading and trash locations are located in three spots. One at the southeast corner of the Main Street Tower, the second at the southeast corner of the Pomeroy parking garage and Sky Apartments. Trash is located at the southwest corner of the Pomeroy parking garage and Sky Apartments and it is served from the private drive via the City Courts yard to the south. Access to the parking garages will be from Pomeroy at the center of the north end of the existing garage and at the southeast corner of the garage.

Developed in partnership with the City of Mesa, Benedictine University Mesa, and Palladium Grid LLC, The Grid is a unique public-private partnership to bring residential development to Downtown, Mesa. This partnership will provide student housing for Benedictine's future expansion and realize the next step in Mesa's urban vibrant urban vision for the downtown. As part of this partnership, the project will also include improvements to South Pomeroy, Gateway Park and the vehicular access to the site from Mesa Drive, just south of Pete's Fish and Chips. South Pomeroy will be narrowed and transformed into an urban plaza, lined with Date Palms and designed to engage pedestrians and permit the east west segment of the street to be closed to vehicular traffic for regular special events. Gateway park will be enhanced with the addition of public walkway connecting the light rail station with Pomeroy plaza and invigorating the park with new activity. The vehicular access from Mesa Drive will be enhanced to make it a pleasant walking connection and proud residential entry providing convenient access to the parking garage for guests and visitors.

The GRID takes an under utilized parking structure and turns it and the adjacent land into a place, a neighborhood and an instrument that is vibrant, exciting and that is likely to spur additional development into Downtown Mesa.

Location: Pomeroy Parking Garage Property (APN 138-65-006J) and the adjacent Parking Lot (APN 138-65-006H) – 255 East Main Street

Parcel Size: 3.33 acres

Residential Density: 301 Dwelling Units, 91 dwelling units per acre. (including dual unit condominium rowhomes)

Commercial Space: 19,138 square feet

Existing Zoning: T5-MS and T5-MSF

Request:

We request a Special Use Permit (SUP) to permit use floors 4-7 of the north building (per the attached graphic) as a Residential, Boarding House on upper floors.

## **Justification & Compatibility Statement**

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The Special Use Permit (“SUP”) to allow the appropriate land use category for dormitories (Group Housing) in the T5MS transect for the northern portion of The GRID Mesa meets all of the criteria outlined in the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance for SUP’s, specifically as follows.

1. Approval of the proposed project will advance the goals and objectives of and is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and any other applicable City plan and/or policies

The proposed dormitory use will advance the goals and objectives of the Central Main Street Area Plan and the Mesa 2040 General Plan.

The General Plan outlines examples of Mesa’s rise to becoming a premier city, and this proposal assists with the continued growth of one of these key elements, “dynamic growth in higher education.”. With dormitories permitted, this project will be a part of the continued support and growth of higher education in downtown Mesa. As outlined in the General Plan’s Vision, the dormitory use will add variety to the living environments in the downtown area, support the higher education campuses in downtown, preserve existing neighborhoods by relieving pressure to make them student rental properties, and reduce auto travel and energy use by locating them next to a university campus.

A key component of the General Plan, “Creating and Maintaining a Variety of Great Neighborhoods,” is supported by this request to add dormitory use. The dorms will improve connectivity and walkability for students living next to the university and close to light-rail, provide density in the downtown, and provide a healthy living environment. The dorms will respond to the housing needs of students already in downtown, will enhance the sustainability of the campus, and add to the diversity of housing offered in downtown. Similarly, the General Plan’s “Growing and Maintaining Stable and Diverse Jobs,” component is enhanced by the dormitory use that improves the business climate for education as a key industry while enhancing the educational opportunities available to Mesa residents.

The City’s Central Main Street Area Plan (“CMSAP”) sets as goals for, “A Prosperous Community,” a wide range of residential, cultivation of well educated, skilled workforce, and leveraging the multi-modal transportation network. This request to add dormitory use adds to the residential diversity in downtown, adds to the university’s ability to cultivate a well-educated, skilled workforce, and takes advantage of the great proximity to the light rail station.

The CMSAP sets as goals for, “A People-Friendly Community,” pedestrian-oriented development patterns, a well-designed built environment that enhances pedestrian activity, encourages a mix of uses to promote interaction among neighbors, and reinforcement of the multi-modal transportation system as an alternative to the automobile. This request to add dormitory use is designed with pedestrian-oriented patterns with the dorms occupying the space on Main Street above three levels of commercial space, right next to the university, with the building cantilevering over the sidewalk to provide built pedestrian shade to enhance pedestrian activity. The dorms provide a mix of uses and promotes interaction between neighbors at the street level, in the commercial space and at the fourth level pool court. The dormitory use also reinforces the light-rail investment by locating density near the station and reducing the resident’s need for an automobile because of this proximity and the proximity of the adjacent university.

The CMSAP sets as goals for, “A Diverse Community,” establishing a diverse and exciting place where a wide variety of people live, providing diverse housing stock to meet the needs of a wide range of lifestyles and incomes, and provide diverse transportation options. This request to add dormitory use will enhance the diversity in downtown, adding the excitement of students studying, exploring and hoping to change the future to the on-going dialogue. The dorms will widen the variety of people living downtown by adding more students to the mix, as well as providing housing stock to meet the lifestyle and income needs of the students. This request also provides diverse transportation options for residents by encouraging walking by being proximate and pedestrian-friendly at the street level, utilizing the exiting City automobile parking structure, and providing convenient access to the nearby light-rail station.

The CMSAP sets as goals for, “An Environmentally Conscious Community,” reduction of energy use, vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions, and creation of pedestrian-oriented, pedestrian-friendly development patterns. This request to add dormitory use will reduce energy use, vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions primarily because it puts housing adjacent to the university, eliminating the need for a daily commute. The proximity of the light-rail station further supports the reduction of automobile use because the other is so close and attractive. The pedestrian-oriented, pedestrian-friendly development pattern of the GRID project as required by the downtown code, is further enhanced by the dormitory use encouraging walking to school by making the most convenient option.

The request for dormitory use is consistent with both long range plans.

2. The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed project are consistent with the purposes of the district where it is located and conform with the General Plan and with any other applicable City plan or policies

The location, size, and the design of the building would be the same with or without the SUP. Zoning and plan review for the building, its density, its size and its residential micro-units have all been previously approved. The SUP will only change the operating characteristics inside the building, allowing it to be used for dormitory housing for local college students, enhancing Benedictine University’s presence and offering in downtown.

The SUP request conforms with the General Plan and the Central Main Street Area Plan as outlined above.

3. The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area, nor will the proposed project or improvements be injurious or detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City

The SUP request will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent properties nor the greater neighborhood. Benedictine’s has been a good neighboring use to the existing Wells Fargo Bank and office building as well as Pete’s Fish and Chips. Their first dormitory at the Alhambra (on MacDonald) has been a great addition to the downtown. The SUP will permit an expansion of Benedictine University’s presence on Main Street and allow them offer additional housing to entice students. While many of the

market-rate residential units in The GRID Mesa will likely be leased by Benedictine students and faculty, the SUP will additionally allow Benedictine to lease the residential units in the north building as dormitory units. These units are physically separated from the market-rate apartments by the pool courtyard on the fourth level. Both have access to the pool, but have separate lobby entrances, mail rooms and elevators. There are no outdoor balconies on the dormitory units so that all private activity will be contained within the building envelope.

The dormitory units will be in very close proximity to school (next door) and the light rail station (600' to the east). This proximity will allow students to live without an automobile while at campus. Ample parking is provided however, in the existing City parking structure and there will be no increase to the approved traffic as there will be no increase in density.

4. Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project

The GRID Mesa is already approved for all of the dwelling units proposed in the building. The SUP will place no additional demand on public services, public facilities or public infrastructure. All are adequate and available to serve the project and the proposed SUP use. The proximity of the light rail station (600' east) makes this a particularly good site for dense uses such as dormitory living. This proximity will allow students to live without an automobile while at campus. Ample parking is provided however, in the existing City parking structure and there will be no increase to the approved traffic as there will be no increase in density.

## Good Neighbor Policy

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Benedictine University has been a good neighbor in Downtown Mesa for many years now. This new development and this SUP request for dormitory use in the north building has been designed to support Benedictine University and continue the “good neighbor” culture that has been established.

The GRID has had several meetings with Benedictine (to the west), Wells Fargo (to the north) and the City Courts (to the south) to establish a neighborly relationship with each. The building’s residential and commercial components are designed to enhance the Benedictine campus and support its growth. The project includes rowhomes wrapping the façade of the existing City parking garage to enhance the neighborhood aesthetic for Wells Fargo. Finally, the project has worked with the City Courts to improve their back of house security, vehicle entry gate safety and add a shared trash and recycling collection point for both properties. We continue this neighborly conversations and collaborations as we enter the construction phase of our project.

The GRID is designed with both market-rate residential units and micro-units (within which this SUP requests dormitory uses). These occur in the same project but in separate buildings with separate lobbies at the ground level, separate mail rooms, separate amenities, but a shared pool courtyard on the fourth level. It is this fourth level courtyard separates the two residential types physically from one another while providing a shared social space between them. However, the two have separate keyed entryways to the pool court.

The north building is designed to mitigate any negative effects of its typically younger residents on the adjacent market-rate residential (especially because they are part of the same project). The north building micro-units do not include any private outdoor balconies. All private activity in the north building will be contained within the building envelope.

There is a large physical void between the north and south residential portions so that privacy between facing windows can be achieved. Neither building has lights illuminating or pointed at the other.

Through these design elements and working relationships, we can insure that the addition of the dormitory use by the approval of this SUP will not hinder our “good neighbor” relationship with our existing or future neighbors.