

# **SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NARRATIVE**

2850 E Main Street

Submitted on behalf of:



Submitted by:

WELKER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Jeff D Welker  
3125 E Dover Street  
Mesa, AZ 85213  
Phone: (480) 209-7167  
Email: jeffw@wdrllc.net

Submitted to:

**The City of Mesa**  
55 N Center Street  
Mesa, AZ 85201

**December 20, 2018**

## **A. PROJECT SUMMARY & REQUESTS**

Welker Development Resources, LLC ("Applicant"), on behalf of Red Mountain Asset Fund I, LLC ("Owner"), respectfully submits this project narrative and supporting documents in support of a Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit ("SCIP") for Lot 3 of the final plat "Northeast Corner of Main Street and Lindsay Road", also known as 2850 E Main Street in Mesa, Arizona ("Property") and APN: 140-22-160. The specific requests are as follows:

- A. SCIP to allow the majority of the existing Property site conditions associated with an existing building and site to remain.

If approved, the SCIP will accommodate the repurposing and operation of new retail businesses within the existing building that was vacated when the Dollar Store relocated to Lot 2 in October 2017.

## **B. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND/CURRENT USE OF PROPERTY/SURROUNDING SITE USES**

When the Property was initially developed in 1974-1975, Mesa's approval included an approximately 85,201 s.f. Kmart discount department store with full site improvements. A few years later, an additional 42,681 s.f. of retail space, with supporting site improvements, was constructed adjoining the east side of the Kmart site. For over 30 years, this Kmart - anchored shopping center was a vibrant revenue-generating retail anchor in east Mesa.

Over the years, large retailers like Kmart suffered as customers moved their patronage away from older shopping centers to newer retail developments. In early 2015, Kmart announced it was closing its store at this location and shut its doors permanently in October 2015. In 2016 and 2017, the Owner invested millions of dollars to redevelop and repurpose the existing buildings located on Lots 1 and 2 of the Property. This investment has revitalized the center and created energy with new retailers that has created demand to for redeveloping the existing vacant building on Lot 3. The site is zoned LC - Limited Commercial with a General Plan designation of Mixed Use Activity District - Transit Corridor.

The surrounding zoning and uses are identified as follows:

	<b>Existing Zoning</b>	<b>Current General Plan</b>	<b>Existing Use(s)</b>
<b>North</b>	RM-4	Neighborhood Manufactured Home	Mesa Spirit RV Resort
<b>South</b>	Main Street & GC	Mixed Use Activity District - Transit Corridor	Main Street, Mobile Homes Sales & TitleMax Office
<b>East</b>	LC	Mixed Use Activity District - Transit Corridor	Big Lots, Pawn Shop & Jack in the Box
<b>West</b>	Lindsay Road & LC	Mixed Use Activity District - Transit Corridor	Lindsay Road, Retail Business & Child Day Care

## **C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

As demonstrated on the plans included with this application, the proposal involves constructing a demising wall that divides the existing 33,800 s.f. vacant building into two separate retail spaces - 16,000 s.f. and 17,800 s.f. respectively. Besides creating new retail spaces, the Owner's intent to upgrade the old building exterior consistent with the design elements established with the redevelopment of Lot 1 and Lot 2. In addition, the site and landscape plans submitted clearly show upgrades in accessible parking, lighting, and landscaping infrastructure.

This next phase in the ongoing redevelopment of this aging development confirms the Owner's commitment to rejuvenating this site by enhancing the visual quality and providing an attractive environment. As was done in the initial phase, the Owner intends to generally conform to the General Plan where possible. Creating a more stable retail center that will be a long-term asset is the primary goal.

## **D. BUILDING DESIGN CONCEPTS**

The original shopping center design is from the mid 1970's with the building facades facing Main Street. The existing building parapet is 16'-6" high above the adjacent sidewalk. This proposed design provides for two tenant suites with individual tenant entrances and entry elements. The materials proposed are masonry columns, EIFS fascias and metal awnings.

## **E. LANDSCAPE**

As demonstrated on the attached plans, the landscape concept proposed will incorporate low water use plant material focused on introducing color and form to both the existing and new proposed landscape areas. The plant pallet consists of native and non-native plants found within the Arizona Department of Water Resources plant list and consistent with Mesa standards.

The intent of the design is to re-introduce vibrancy to the existing landscape areas and to establish new landscaping - all in an effort to revitalize the existing retail center. Numerous new landscape medians in the parking lot are proposed. The existing landscape areas adjacent to Lot 3's Main Street frontage was completely reconstituted as part of the redevelopment work performed with Lots 1 and 2.

## **F. PARKING**

As noted above, the parking areas within the boundaries of the project will be upgraded with resurfacing of the asphalt, restriping the parking spaces, and the reestablishing accessible parking spaces. As demonstrated in the "site data" on the plans, the 953 total parking being provided exceeds Mesa's requirements for both standard and accessible spaces.

## **G. PUBLIC UTILITIES & STORMWATER RETENTION**

It is not anticipated or proposed that any new City of Mesa water, wastewater, or gas utility services will be needed for this proposed redevelopment. As demonstrated on the site, stormwater retention for this site is maintained in a large retention area within the existing parking lot. No changes in drainage patterns or runoff volumes are anticipated or proposed.

## **H. CIRCULATION SYSTEM**

The site is located at the north east corner of Main Street and Lindsay Road. Primary access is via existing commercial driveways off both of those arterial streets. This project will not change its historic impact on the surrounding circulation system. The on-site circulation will be simply controlled by the drive aisles within the site. Site ingress and egress will not change from its current use.

## **I. SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PERMIT (SCIP) CRITERIA**

This SCIP request is to allow the existing conditions to remain as recognized deviations from the zoning code, while making specific improvements to satisfy substantial conformance with the City's zoning code requirements. The approval of this SCIP is necessary and justified because: (a) strict compliance with current landscape standards on the existing site will cause a significant and unreasonable financial hardship, (b) requiring the redeveloped site to strictly comply with current landscape standards is not necessary to achieve the intended goals of these standards and (c) the non-conformities, such as foundation landscaping and landscape medians, do not impose unreasonable or negative impacts to surrounding properties and their uses. Accordingly, the Applicant hereby requests a SCIP to address the following code requirements:

1. **Deviation from the required landscape islands (Sect. 11-33-4).** The Owner is not proposing to revise existing parking within Lot 3. As demonstrated on the site plan and approved for Lots 1 and 2, the Owner is proposing to add landscape islands and introducing new landscaping to existing planters that have not had any vegetation for many years.
2. **Deviation from the required foundation base (Sect. 11-33-5A).** The existing building hardscape will be enhanced along the south elevation. Hardscape is non-existent along the north elevation. Conformance with this code section would be both a practical and financial hardship.

As demonstrated on the site/landscape plans and similar to what was approved for Lots 1 and 2, the Owner will be adding landscape planters along the south elevation where space allows. Landscape planters will not be at the base of the existing building but rather off of the curb. Unknown water protection at the foundation prohibits locating these planters directly adjacent to the existing building.

3. **Deviation from Mesa standards for compact parking (Sect. 11-32-2D).** Where existing light poles are located in the parking field and as approved for Lots 1 and 2, we are enhancing the existing landscape islands around the poles. The parking adjacent to these islands will be designed for compact parking. However, existing site conditions prohibit full compliance.
4. **Deviation from Mesa standards for parking stalls (Sect. 11-32-2H).** Existing parking to remain as originally designed. The standard depth is only 18'-0" not the new codes 21'-0" requirement. As was the case for Lots 1 and 2, revising the entire parking field is not a viable option. The existing parking lighting already installed would no longer align with the parking.
5. **Deviation from Mesa Standards for Pedestrian Access through parking area (Sect. 11-30-8A).** Due to the existing site conditions, we cannot add any pedestrian access (other than from accessible parking to the building) to the existing parking field. We will be adding ADA compliant pedestrian access as demonstrated on the site plan.
6. **Deviation from Mesa Standards for Screening of Parking Areas (Sect. 11-30-9H).** Due to existing site conditions providing screening for the existing parking on Lot 3 is not practical nor necessary. The recently remodeled Jack-in-the-Box restaurant visually screens more than 50% of the parking field for Lot 3.
7. **Deviation from Mesa Standards for Open space (11-6-5A3).** Due to the constraints of this existing site and acknowledged for Lots 1 and 2, open space cannot be reasonably provided.
8. **Deviation from Mesa Standards for Parking Setbacks from Buildings (11-6-5A4).** Due to existing site constraints, and acknowledged for Lots 1 and 2, the Owner cannot provide the 11-33-5 Foundation base of 20' plaza item or the 5' around the rear and sides of the building.
9. **Deviation from Mesa Standards for Site Entrance (11-6-5B3).** The drives are existing and constrained by the overall site layout. As was approved with the redevelopment of Lots 1 and 2, the Main Street entry drive has already been enhanced with additional landscape planters.
10. **Deviation from Mesa Standards for Pedestrian Facilities and Amenities 11-6-5B9).** Compliance with this standard presents both practical and financial burden for this existing site and cannot be reasonably accommodated.
11. **Deviation from Mesa Standards for Lighting (11-6-5B13).** As a redevelopment project we are proposing to replace the light fixtures at the existing light poles and adding accent lighting on the front elevation of the building at entrances. As was approved with the redevelopment of Lots 1 and 2, light bollards or ground mounted lights cannot be reasonably accommodated.

As noted above and approved with the redevelopment of Lots 1 and 2,, the reason for these requests is to allow repurposing the Property for new retail businesses. The proposed work does not increase the existing building size and the site is currently zoned for these types of uses. Strict compliance with the design guidelines and landscape requirements is not needed to improve the appearance of the development and would create a practical difficulty and unnecessary hardship to the Owner, especially because the site is already developed and has been operational for over 30 years.

## **J. CONCLUSION**

By taking a holistic view of this property, surrounding residential retirement-oriented neighborhoods, commercial businesses, and the opportunity to repurpose the current vacant building; we submit that this proposal achieves a wonderful balance that more effectively addresses the changing retail demands of local users. Accordingly, we respectfully request staff's support for this project as it progresses through Mesa required development and permitting processes.

# EXISTING BUILDING PHOTOS

## SOUTH/MAIN STREET ELEVATION



## NORTH ELEVATION



