



PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT

Planning and Zoning Board

March 10, 2021

CASE No.: ZON20-00838	PROJECT NAME: Vivo Living Apartment Homes
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Owner's Name:	Vivo Apts Owner LLC
Applicant's Name:	Brennan Ray
Location of Request:	Within the 200 to 300 block of West Main Street (north side) and within the 0 to 100 block of North Morris (east side). Located east of Country Club Drive on the north side of Main Street.
Parcel No(s):	138-55-022D and 138-55-023A
Request:	Site Plan Review; Special Use Permit. This request will allow for a multiple residence development.
Existing Zoning District:	Downtown Core with Downtown Events Overlay (DC DE)
Council District:	4
Site Size:	3.49± acres
Proposed Use:	Apartment Buildings
Existing Use:	Motel (currently closed)
P&Z Hearing Date:	March 10, 2021 / 4:00 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Jennifer Gniffke, Planner I
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On July 14, 1883, the square mile between Country Club and Mesa Drives and between University Drive and Broadway Road was incorporated as the City of Mesa. (Ordinance No. 1). The subject property was subsequently zoned General Commercial (GC).

On September 8, 1987, the City Council approved an amendment to the Mesa Zoning Ordinance to create zoning districts for all properties within Mesa's Town Center. The subject property was zoned Town Center Core, now known as Downtown Core (DC) (Case No. Z87-040; Ordinance No. 2254)

On November 7, 2011, the City Council approved the Downtown Events (DE) Overlay district for the 150± acre area from Country Club Drive to Centennial Way/Sirrine between 1st Street and 1st Avenue. The subject property is within the DE Overlay area. Specifically, the overlay allows special events to occur within the overlay area throughout the year (Case No. Z11-017, Ordinance No. 5065).

On January 23, 2012, the City Council adopted a Central Main Plan with the goal of creating a more active and viable downtown area for Mesa. The subject property is within the Downtown Transit Node character area of the plan (Resolution No. 9980).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The subject request is for a site plan review to allow the conversion of an existing motel into a 130-unit studio apartment development. The site is located on the north side of Main Street, east of Country Club Drive, and is zoned Downtown Core (DC) within the Downtown Event (DE) Overlay area. Per Section 11-8-3 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), multiple residence uses are allowed in the DC zoning district.

Per Section 11-8-6 of the MZO, development standards within the DC zoning district may vary according to the type of development, the propose use, and the size, scope and density of the project. The purpose of the subject site plan review is for approval to establish the residential density, building area and yard regulations on the property. In accordance with this section of the MZO, the maximum residential densities and building heights within the DC are established through approval of the Planning and Zoning Board.

Currently, the property is developed with a vacant motel that consist of five-buildings and an existing restaurant. From the submittal documents, the applicant is proposing both internal and some limited external modifications to the vacant motel buildings to be used as multiple residence dwellings. There are no proposed changes to the existing restaurant on the property. The specific modifications to the site include adding a new overheard entry structure to the front of building one that connects the property to main street on the south of the site, modifying an existing wall in front of the property along Main Street to add pedestrian walkway along that section of the property. The site plan also shows installing new landscaping on several areas on the site that includes landscape islands, and constructing 63 covered parking spaces on the property. The proposed covered parking spaces will be located along the north and east sides of the property. Overall, the proposed density for the redevelopment of the motel for multiple residence use is 37.2 units per acre. The subject request also includes a Special Use Permit to allow reduction in the number of required parking spaces on the property.

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:

The General Plan Character designation on the property is Downtown with a Transit District overlay of Corridor Station Area. Per the General Plan, the focus of the Downtown character area is the creation of a pedestrian oriented, transit-rich environment with a lot of activity. In

addition, the goal for the character area is to make it a people-friendly area that is alive with options for housing, employment, shopping, entertainment, and events. Buildings in the character area are to be designed and placed to engage the street and help provide an active street life. Multi-residential housing options, when designed to engage the street, are appropriate for the Transit Corridor, especially in Station Areas.

This subject property is also located within the Downtown Transit Node Character Area of the Central Main Street Area Plan. The Central Main Plan promotes pedestrian-friendly developments in the subject development area, such as designing buildings to engage the street and including material and construction quality that meets or exceeds the level of quality established by the public investment in the light rail line (Policy PFC 3.5). Pedestrian oriented design options including landscaping, hardscaping and public art are included at light rail transit stops and as screening for some of the light rail infrastructure.

Staff reviewed the request and determined it is consistent with the development review criteria outlined in Chapter 15 (pg. 15-1) of the Mesa 2040 General Plan. The proposed redevelopment of the site conforms with the goals of the Downtown character designation on the property by converting an existing vacant building to multiple residence to contribute to providing a wider range of housing options within the character areas, and also connectivity of the building to Main Street.

Zoning

The subject property is zoned Downtown Core (DC) within the Downtown Events (DE) Overlay Area. Currently, the development on the property consists of a restaurant and a vacant motel. The applicant is proposing to maintain the restaurant use and redevelop the existing motel into a multiple residence development. Per Section 11-8-3 of the MZO, restaurant and multiple residence uses are allowed within the DC zoning district.

Site Plan and General Site Development Standards:

The proposed site plan shows redevelopment of an existing five motel buildings on the property into multiple residence with 130 studio units for a density of 37.2 dwelling units per acre. The existing restaurant on the property will remain with no proposed changes to the façade of the building. The existing five residential buildings are located in the center of the site with a centralized courtyard that consist of a swimming pool and a hot tub. Access to the site is through two existing drives off Main Street on the south and two existing drives from Morris on the west.

From the submitted site plan, the proposed improvements to the site will include replacing an existing porte-cochere in front of building one on property with a covered outdoor amenity area for residents, adding an overhead entry structure and new accent paving with a walkway to the sidewalk along Main Street, and reducing the number of driveways on the front of the property from two to one. These improvements will increase pedestrian activity by connecting the front of the building directly to Main Street. Other improvements to the site include installing additional landscaping on various areas of the property and constructing 63 covered parking spaces for residents. Regarding the residential units, the proposed improvements include internal renovations to the units. According to the plans submitted with the building

permit application, each unit will be remodeled to include new cabinets and countertop with a new sink and cooktop, and a new refrigerator and microwave. In addition, there is an exercise room in building number two. According to the applicant, the existing gym space area will be expanded with new workout equipment. Also, the application documents show the existing buildings to be repainted. Overall, the proposed improvements will aid in continuous revitalization of the property and the surrounding area of the property.

Special Use Permit:

Section 11-66-2(C) of the MZO allows the Planning and Zoning Board to consider a request and take action on an SUP when reviewed in conjunction with a request requiring action or recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Board. The applicant is requesting an SUP to allow a reduction in the number of required parking spaces from 226 to 153, and the number of required covered spaces from 130 to 63.

Parking Reduction

Per Section 11-32-3 of the MZO, 226 parking spaces are required for the proposed uses on the site. The request is to reduce the number of the total required parking spaces from 226 to 153, thus a reduction of 73 total parking spaces. In addition, per this section of the MZO, 130 covered parking spaces are required for use of the property as multiple residence. The applicant is requesting to provide 63 of such spaces, thus a reduction of 67 covered spaces. Overall, 226 parking spaces are required on the property (i.e 96 uncovered and 130 covered spaces). Section 11-32-6 of the MZO outlines the review criteria for approval of an SUP to allow reduction in the number of parking spaces. Below is a summary of the criteria for the SUP and findings:

Parking Reduction Required Findings (MZO Section 11-32-6)	Findings
1. Special conditions – including but not limited to the nature of the proposed operation; proximity to frequent transit service; transportation characteristics of persons residing, working, or visiting the site exist that will reduce the parking demand at the site.	The proposed development is within proximity to different modes of transportation (i.e. the property is located adjacent to a light-rail station, within 350 feet of Valley Metro bus stop along Country Club Drive, and within 200 feet of Mesa Bike Route 3 along 1 st Street. The proximity and availability of the different transportation system will likely minimize the number of residents with personal vehicles on the property and will not be needing vehicular parking spaces.
2. The use will adequately be served by the proposed parking.	The proposed multiple residential development consists entirely of studio units. According to the applicant, the parking demand for studio units is much less than that of 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom units found in

	most multiple residence developments.
3. Parking demand generated by the project will not exceed the capacity of, or have a detrimental impact on, the supply of on street parking in the surrounding area.	The parking demand is not anticipated to exceed the capacity provided or impact the supply of on-street parking in the area. The proposed development is within close proximity to various transit options and is within the Downtown area that includes a public parking program.

Per Section 11-70-5 of the MZO, granting a SUP must advance the goals and objective of the General Plan and not be detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City. As previously stated, the proposed redevelopment of a motel for multi-residential use is consistent with the goals of the General Plan by contributing to providing variety of housing options within the Downtown, and creating an active streetscape along the front side of the property adjacent to Main Street . In addition, the proposed reduction in the number of parking spaces will not be detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood, as the proposed number of parking spaces will be adequate and meet the needs of residents within the development.

Design Review:

The Design Review Board is scheduled to review the subject request on March 9, 2021. Staff will be working with the applicant to address any comments and recommendations from the Design Review Board.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest DC DE Bank	North DC DE Bank; Townhomes	Northeast DC DE Townhomes
West (across Morris) DC DE Fast-Food Restaurants with Drive-Thru’s	Subject Property DC DE Vacant Motel; Restaurant	East DC DE Townhomes, Courtyard Towers Senior Living, and Commercial uses along Main Street
Southwest (across Main Street) DC DE Commercial uses along Main Street	South (across Main Street) DC DE Commercial uses along Main Street	Southeast (across Main Street) DC DE Commercial uses along Main Street

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:

The subject site and surrounding properties are zoned Downtown Core within the Downtown Events (DC DE) Overlay Area. The site is adjacent to multiple commercial and service-oriented

businesses along Main Street. There is an existing bank to the north of the site. There is also townhome development and a high-rise multiple residence building located immediately adjacent to the east of the site. Overall, the proposed redevelopment of the site as a multiple residence use will not be out of character with the surrounding development.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:

The applicant has completed a Citizen Participation process which included mailed letters to property owners within 1,000 feet of the site, as well as HOAs within one-half mile and registered neighborhoods and interested parties within one mile. The mailed letters included information regarding the project and an invitation to a neighborhood meeting scheduled to be held virtually on February 17, 2021. As of writing this report, the applicant and staff have not received any comments or concerns from surrounding property owners. The applicant will be providing an updated Citizen Participation Report to staff prior to the scheduled March 10, 2021 study session of the Board.

School Impact Analysis

Mesa Public Schools reviewed the request and has determined there is adequate capacity to serve the development.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on the application received and the proceeding analysis, staff finds the subject request is consistent with the General Plan, the Central Main Street Plan, the review criteria for Site Plan Review outlined in Section 11-69-5 of the MZO and meets the review criteria for a Special Use Permit outlined in Section 11-32-6 and Section 11-70-5 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.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1-Staff Report

Exhibit 2-Vicinity Map

Exhibit 3-Application Information

3.1 Project Narrative

3.2 Site Plan

3.3 Landscape Plan

3.4 Elevations

Exhibit 4-Citizen Participation Report