



**PLANNING DIVISION  
STAFF REPORT**

**Planning and Zoning Board**

**February 24, 2021**

CASE No.: **ZON20-00538**

PROJECT NAME: **Waypoint 5**

Owner's Name:	Salt River Point LL LLC
Applicant's Name:	Michael Edwards, The Davis Experience
Location of Request:	Within the 1200 to 1400 blocks of West Bass Pro Drive (south side) and the 1100 block of North Alma School Road (west side). Located south of the 202 Red Mountain Freeway on the west side of Alma School Road.
Parcel No(s):	135-33-586, 135-33-587, & 135-33-588
Requests:	Modification to the Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay on the property; and Site Plan Review. This request will allow for a new office building and parking garage within an existing office development.
Existing Zoning District:	Planned Employment Park with a Planned Area Development overlay (PEP-PAD)
Council District:	1
Site Size:	30.9± acres
Proposed Use(s):	Offices
Existing Use(s):	Office complex
Hearing Date(s):	<b>February 24, 2021 / 4:00 p.m.</b>
Staff Planner:	Ryan McCann
Staff Recommendation:	Approval with Conditions
Planning and Zoning Board Recommendation:	
Proposition 207 Waiver Signed:	No

On **January 20,1959**, the City Council approved the annexation of a 1,195± acre area that included the subject property and subsequently zoned the site to Single Residence 9 (RS-9) (Ordinance No. 358)

On **November 11, 2004**, the City Council approved a rezoning of the subject property as part of a larger area from Light Industrial, Single Residence 43 (RS-43) and Single Residence 9 (RS-9) to

Limited Commercial (LC), General Commercial (GC), and Planned Employment Park (PEP). The rezoning was part of the Mesa Riverview Development (Case No. Z04-087, Ordinance No. 4311).

On **October 23, 2019**, the City Council approved a site plan to allow development of a private drive (Bass Pro Drive) on the subject property (Case No. Z06-024, Ordinance No. 4542).

On **May 17, 2007**, the Planning and Zoning Board approved a site plan on the subject property to allow development of a six (6) building office park (Case No. Z07-048).

On **May 19, 2008**, the City Council approved a rezoning of the subject property from PEP to PEP with a Planned Area Development (PAD) overlay to allow for the subdivision of the existing office complex and allow private streets within the subdivision. The approval also included a site plan modification to remove a previously approved screen walls from the north and south sides of the property (Case No. Z08-025, Ordinance No. 4847).

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Background:**

The request is for a site plan and a planned area development (PAD) modification to allow development of a 3-story office building totaling approximately 153,000 square foot and a 4-story parking garage on the subject property. On May 19, 2008, the City Council approved a rezoning of the property with a PAD overlay and associated site plan. The approved site plan showed six (6) buildings and no parking garage structure. In 2014, the City approved an administrative site plan to allow minor modifications to the approved site plan. Specifically, the modification allowed reconfiguration of the site to allow for a total of 4 buildings and a parking deck to the approved site plan. Per Section 11-67-10 of the MZO, the current proposed development constitutes a major amendment to the 2008 approved PAD and associated site plan. Section 11-67-10 of the MZO, requires Planning and Zoning Board review and City Council approval of major modifications to approved PAD with associated site plans.

Currently, the majority of the property is developed as an office complex that consists of four buildings. Three of the buildings are two stories tall and the remaining other building is three stories tall. From the submitted site plan, the proposed office building will be constructed in the center of the property and the parking structure will be constructed on the southern section of the property, adjacent to an SRP canal (See exhibit 3.2). According to the information submitted with the application, the proposed building will be used as professional services and offices. Per Section 11-7-2 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), professional services and office are permitted in the PEP zoning district.

### **General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:**

The General Plan character area designation on the property is Mixed-Use Activity with a regional scale sub type. Per the Plan, Mixed Use Activity areas are large in scale (typically over 25 acres) consisting of community and regional activity areas that usually have a significant retail and commercial component, including shopping areas such as malls, power centers or lifestyle centers designed to attract people from a large radius.

Per the General Plan, regional-scale districts are typically larger than 60 acres and contain multiple big box stores, unique features (lifestyle center), an enclosed mall, and/or auto malls that attract customers from a large trade area. This character type may include one or more community-scale districts as a component of creating the regional district. Regional-scale districts may have significant areas devoted to office, research and development or other light industrial uses and may contain areas of supporting, integrated residential uses. The goal of the character type is to provide a location for businesses and attractions that brings people to Mesa from the larger region.

The proposed development of an office building conforms to the goals of the Mixed-Use character area with the regional scale district sub-type designation. Specifically, the development is planned to be occupied by various professional office users which will likely create employment opportunities in the area, as well as attract people from the larger region to the area to conduct commercial activities.

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.

**Zoning District Designations:**

The subject property is zoned Planned Employment Park with a Planned Area Development overlay (PEP-PAD). Per Section 11-7-2 of the MZO, office uses are permitted in the PEP zoning district.

**Planned Area Development (PAD) Modification:**

Section 11-67-10 of the MZO requires any major modification to an approved PAD and site plan to be reviewed through the same procedure as the initial approval. The proposed request is considered a major modification to the approved PAD and associated site plan. In addition, condition number 1 of the approved PAD required any development on the property to conform to the approved site plan, hence the requirement for the City Council to review the proposed major modification to the site plan. Beside modification to add a building to the site and addition of a parking garage on the property, there are no other requested changes to the PAD and site plan.

**Site Plan and General Site Development Standards:**

From the submitted site plan, there are three existing access points onto the site from Bass Pro Drive, located on the north and west side of the property. The site plan also shows the proposed office building will be constructed in the center of the site that is directly off of the main drive aisle onto the development. The proposed parking garage will be constructed directly behind the newly proposed office building and adjacent to an SRP canal to the south side of the property.

Per section 11-32-3 of the MZO, the required number of parking spaces for the office development is 1,566 parking spaces. According to the site plan submitted, 2,757 parking spaces will be provided on the property. The proposed number of parking spaces exceeds the number required. However, per section 11-32-3 of the MZO, the maximum number of parking spaces

can exceed the required maximum number if the parking spaces are located within a building footprint of a structure (e.g. multi-level parking structure).

Per section 11-7-3 of the MZO, the maximum building height allowed in the PEP zoning district is determined at the time of site plan approval. From the elevations submitted, the applicant is proposing a maximum building height of 55-feet and 6-inches (55'-6") for the new office building and 44-feet and 8-inches for the parking garage. During the review of the project with the surrounding property owners, a substantial number of the surrounding residents expressed opposition to the to the height of the parking garage. The neighbors opposition stems from their concern that the garage will block their view of surrounding mountains. As a result of the discussions with the neighbors, the applicant revised and reduced the height of the southern section of the parking structure to 26-feet and 5 inches. The front section of the garage is proposed to be 44-feet 8-inches.

Currently, the height of the existing buildings on the property are 2- and 3-stories high and 40 feet for the buildings along Alma School Road and Bass Pro Drive (located north and east of the proposed building). The building located along the canal to the south of the site is 55 feet. In accordance with Section 11-69-5 of the MZO, the proposed site plan conforms to the requirement of the City's Zoning Ordinance for site plan review.

**Design Review:**

On October 13, 2020, the Design Review Board reviewed the proposed building elevations and landscape plan for the development and recommended certain modifications. The recommended modifications included changes to the parking garage design and landscaping. Specifically, to enhance the proposed screening of the parking garage to prevent vehicular headlights shinning onto the adjacent residential development. The Board also recommended the applicant to increase the width of the proposed landscape buffer on the southern edge of the property. A number of residents also spoke at the DRB meeting to express their opposition to the request. The residents specifically expressed their opposition to the height of the office building and parking garage, light spillage onto their property from vehicular headlights likely to emanate from the parking garage, substandard architectural design of the parking garage, and inadequate landscaping buffer on the southern section of the property. Because of the expressed unresolved concerns from the Neighbors, the Board requested the applicant to continue to collaborate with the neighbors and schedule the project for another review by the Board after more extensive discussions with the neighbors.

Since the DRB meeting, the applicant has held two (2) neighborhood meetings with the residents and as a result made the following modifications to the building elevations: 1) reduced the height of the southern section of the parking garage to transition the height from 26'-5" at the back section facing the residential neighborhood to 44'-8", 2) provided perforated metal screening to reduce visual impact of the parking garage and light spillage from vehicle lights, 3) provided additional trees along the southern property line between the parking garage and the adjacent residents, and 4) increased the size of trees from 36" box to 48" box trees to plant more mature trees. As of writing this staff report, the project is scheduled to be reviewed by the DRB on February 9, 2021.

**Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:**

<p><b>Northwest</b> (Across Bass Pro Drive) PEP-PAD-BIZ Hotel</p>	<p><b>North</b> (Across Bass Pro Drive) Maricopa County Sand and Gravel Mine</p>	<p><b>Northeast</b> (Across Alma School Road) RM-2 PAD Single Residential</p>
<p><b>West</b> LC-PAD Vacant</p>	<p><b>Subject Property</b> PEP-PAD Office complex</p>	<p><b>East</b> (Across Alma School Road) RS-9 Single Residential</p>
<p><b>Southwest</b> (Across the Tempe Canal) RS-9 Single Residential</p>	<p><b>South</b> (Across the Tempe Canal) RS-9 Single Residential</p>	<p><b>Southeast</b> (Across Alma School Road) RS-9 Single Residential</p>

**Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:**

The subject site is located adjacent to commercial development to the west and industrial uses to the north. The properties to the east and south of the site are developed as single family residential. The subject property is separated from the residential uses to the south by the Tempe Canal with a significant grade difference of approximately twenty-three feet (23') . With the proposed landscaping to the south of the property and utilization materials as part of the parking garage to mitigate potential vehicular light spillage, the proposed development will conform to the goals of the PEP, the City’s General Plan, and Zoning Ordinance.

**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 ½ mile and registered neighborhoods within 1 mile of the site. The applicant held two (2) neighborhood meetings using Zoom, 16 people attended the first neighborhood meeting, and 12 people attended the second meeting. The major concerns discussed at the first neighborhood meetings related to the parking garage, lighting, and buildings heights. The major concerns discussed at the second neighborhood meeting were related to landscaping, building heights and the parking garage.

1. Below is the summary of how the concerns and issues have been addressed by the applicant:

a. Landscaping:

- o Increased number of trees along the adjacent canal (i.e. the southern property line)
- o Increased the size of trees along the canal from 36” to 48” box trees to plant mature trees with larger canopies.

b. Lighting:

- o Revised pole lights on the top of the parking garage to be lower and shielded
- o Lights from vehicles within the parking garage will be screened by a 3’ screen wall on each level of the parking garage.

c. Height of parking garage:

- Height of the southern section of the parking garage has been reduced from 37'-2" to 26'-5". This is to create a transition in height from the southern section of the property to the front of the garage and minimized the visual impact to the adjacent residential development. According to the applicant, the proposed changes eliminated approximately 100 parking spaces.

**d. Glare from rooftop solar panels:**

- Solar panels have been removed from the rooftop parking area.

**e. Location of refuse enclosures:**

- Relocated refuse enclosures from southern side of parking garage.

As of writing this report, staff has received four letters of opposition and four phone calls from surrounding property owners. The concerns expressed related to I traffic congestion on roads, building heights blocking views of the surrounding residents, substandard architectural design of the parking garage, and noise from landscaping maintenance. The applicant will be providing an updated Citizen Participation Report to staff prior to the February 24, 2021 Study Session. Staff will provide the Board with any new information during the scheduled Study Session.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Based on the application received and the proceeding analysis, staff finds the subject request is consistent with the General Plan and 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 the final site plan submitted.
2. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.
3. Compliance with all requirements of Design Review (i.e building elevations and landscape plan, etc.)
4. Compliance with the conditions of approval for case Z08-025, except comply with the site plan approved with this request.

**Exhibits:**

**Exhibit 1- Vicinity Map**

**Exhibit 2- Staff Report**

**Exhibit 3- Application Information**

- 3.1 Project Narrative
- 3.2 Site Plan
- 3.3 Landscape Plan
- 3.4 Elevations

**Exhibit 4- Citizen Participation Plan**

**Exhibit 5- Citizen Participation Report**

**Exhibit 6- Neighborhood Opposition Letters**