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Project Narrative – Greenfield Industrial
Design Review Board / Planning & Zoning
Pre-Application Meeting Date: December 16, 2021
Pre-Application Case #: PRS21-01194
Design Review Case #: DRB22-00730
Zoning Case #: ZON22-00731

Purpose of Request:

The purpose of this request is to process a Design Review approval to allow for a new employment/industrial development. The subject site is approximately +/- 16.58 acres and is located South of McDowell Road and West of Greenfield Road.

Project Summary:

The project consists of three buildings that will be developed to meet the growing demand for employment and industrial facilities in the east valley. The buildings total approximately +/- 278,850 s.f. and each building is designed for 1-4 tenants. Surface parking is efficiently dispersed throughout the site with loading, refuse, and storage areas located at the rear of the buildings and screened from view with CMU walls. The property is currently zoned LI Light Industrial with Airfield Overflight Areas AOA 2 & AOA 3. The proposed use is allowed in this district and fits within the city General Plan for the area.

Site Design:

Streets and Access

The primary access for this project will be from McDowell Road for Building 1, and Greenfield Road for Buildings 2 and 3. Secondary access for truck yard access has been provided on both McDowell Road and Greenfield Road separate from primary visitor/employee access.

The City of Mesa's 2040 Transportation Master Plan has identified McDowell Road and Greenfield Road as 4 lane arterial streets with existing 55' ROW, with the exception of a 146.5' portion of McDowell Road that has an existing 40' ROW. As part of this project the ROW along McDowell will increase to 75' along the entire length of the parcel. Greenfield Road will increase to 65' ROW along the entire length of the parcel with this project. Greenfield Road links directly with the Loop 202 approximately 1 mile to the north and McDowell Road links directly with the Loop 202 approximately 3 miles to both the east and west of the site. Regional circulation also includes State Route 87 located 6 miles west at the interchange with the Loop 202 and U.S. Route 60 located 5.5 miles south.

ELEVATE *the*
HUMAN EXPERIENCE
THROUGH DESIGN

Building Placement & Orientation

The site is designed, and the building is placed to efficiently use the site while providing a strong relationship to the street and visual interest in areas visible from public view. Site infrastructure includes a complimentary landscape palette, hardscape paving, site screen walls and site lighting.

Drainage

Regional topography around the site generally falls from north to south, however the onsite topography generally falls from west to east. The site does not currently accept offsite flows from surrounding properties or bordering roads.

The proposed drainage plan will capture and retain both the onsite flows and runoff generated from the proposed half-street improvements. Once the runoff is captured it will be conveyed by storm drains where it will be retained by 4-120" CMP underground retention tanks. The underground retention tanks will be bled off using an orifice plate to control the discharge rate into the existing storm drain below Greenfield Road. All storm drainage will be designed to City of Mesa Standards and coordinated with city staff.

Parking, Loading, & Vehicular Access

Parking is dispersed throughout the site to provide convenience for employees and visitors. Parking has been provided for Office and Industrial to meet the City requirements. Please refer to architectural site plan data information for required and provided parking.

A decorative masonry screen wall is provided along McDowell Road and Greenfield Road to screen parking from public view and identify public entry and access. Landscaping is also provided throughout the parking areas (except in loading areas). The loading and service areas for the project are internal to the site, screened from public view by the buildings, screen walls and landscape.

Landscaping & Shading

Landscape Theme: The selection of plant material prescribed for trees, shrubs, groundcovers and accents will be selected from the Arizona Department of Water Resources low water use plant list for the Phoenix Active Management Area (Phoenix AMA). The landscape theme will include enhancing the quantities of trees and shrub massing at strategic points along the Greenfield and McDowell Road frontages and the interior private streets.

Landscape Design: Per the Landscape section of the Mesa Zoning ordinance a vast number of areas need to be quantified and data tables need to be provided on the landscape plans to show compliance. The landscape drawing provided shows the required and provided categories for all areas onsite and the proposed design meets or exceeds the Mesa requirement in all categories.

Landscape Pedestrian Areas: The proposed landscape and pedestrian area designs provide enhanced shade for pedestrians. Additionally, the pedestrian plaza spaces offer enhanced spaces for pedestrian use, which includes shade, seating, trash receptacles, synthetic turf, and paver hardscape materials.

Screening

Along the McDowell and Greenfield Road frontages, there will be primarily 3'-4" of screening installed along the front of the parking stalls with periodic breaks to an offset shorter 3'-0" of screening in the form of a CMU wall or in combination with a landscaped berm. Longer stretches of CMU parking screen walls shall have accent block at intervals no greater than 10'-8". Truck courts, where visible from Greenfield Road, shall be screened with an 8'-0" height CMU wall with accent block at intervals no greater than 40'-0".

Refuse

Refuse is anticipated to be provided within the service yards away from public view with bollard protection. Generally, the project is served by several double bin refuse enclosures, which are located in the loading area. The enclosures are screened from the street by the buildings and the 8-foot-tall masonry screen walls at each side of the loading area. Rolling gates to the loading areas are opaque to screen containers from view.

Exterior Lighting

Lighting fixtures have been chosen to be harmonious with the overall building design and architectural theme of the project. Exterior lighting consists of energy efficient LED lighting for parking and service yard areas on sustainable timed control systems. Accent lighting is provided at main entry points of the industrial buildings. Lighting is used to accent focal features, such as building entries. Multiple light sources will be used including decorative facade lights, thematic site lighting at the public and employee gathering areas, decorative lighting at all building entries and general area lighting in service areas.

Architectural Design:

General Design

The highest level of architectural details for the project are focused on the building public frontage, but consistent features are shared with all the entry sides of the Project.

The nature of the anticipated industrial uses requires large buildings with tall internal clear storage capacity. The facade design has buildings that are visually broken up into smaller components by wall details including material changes, panel reveals, shadows and changes to the roof line. Weather and sun protection, as well as shade and shadow interest, are provided by adjustments in the building elevations. At the pedestrian level, canopies have been provided for visual ties to the site features and are concentrated near public and employee entrances.

Entrances

As previously noted, building entrances are oriented towards the predominant public view and street frontage. Building entrances are served by pedestrian walkways and are also clearly defined by building design elements including storefront designs and metal shade canopies.

Massing & Scale

Although the nature of the proposed use requires large buildings, the building massing is reduced by vertical or horizontal wall offsets / articulated details around entrances or other method of visual relief. These methods are continued around the sides and rear of the buildings.

Facade Articulation

Facade articulation is provided along all facades including roofline variation, changes in materials and plane changes around building entries. Varying patterns of decorative reveals surround the building to provide visual interest and define building entries.

Materials & Colors

Building colors and materials reinforce the overall building design. An architectural mix of colors, reveal patterns, and concrete is provided along with metal canopies and metal window frames with insulated glazing.

Service Areas & Utilities

The overall site layout has been designed and oriented to keep service, loading and utility areas screened from public view. These areas are located centrally within the site. Mechanical equipment, including roof-mounted systems and roof drainage systems are architecturally screened and design to be integral to the buildings.

Outdoor Common Amenity Area Design

The proposed design incorporates 3 pedestrian amenity areas (1 for each building). These areas provide users a beneficial outdoor space as a compliment to the indoor environments. ADA compliant seating has been provided for tenants/employees to utilize for sitting, eating, or outdoor break areas. Along with the tables trash/ash bins have been provided to encourage use for outdoor lunch time by providing ease of waste disposal. The ground plane consists of enhanced paving (pavers) to differentiate the space from the standard paving throughout the site. Synthetic turf in each of the amenity areas provides users with the ability for passive recreation being able to picnic, but also allow flexibility for company events to use actively for bocce ball or cornhole. Lastly, tree planters have been built into the amenity areas to allow seating opportunities in both the shade and sun depending on the season. The Quercus virginiana or Southern Live Oak provides a consistent evergreen canopy that is very upright and works very well in patio/urban environments. Lastly, steel umbrellas have been added to the tables to maximize the shade and promote year-round use of the exterior seating.

Request for Special Use Permit (SUP)

Due to the clear storage capacity required by industrial uses, we are requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) that will allow us to increase the maximum building height to 45'. This is a 5' increase from the 40' height permitted in the Light Industrial (LI) Zone. The 45' building height is necessary to achieve a 32' clear height on the interior, meeting current market requirements for industrial users. This allows enough parapet to shield the HVAC units from view, while allowing enough space for the roof structure, roof slope, RTUs, and a 2' step down to 43'.

Approval of this will advance the goals and objectives of the General Plan for this area, which was rezoned to Light Industrial (LI) in 1980 to promote this exact use in the area. The location, size, design and operating characteristics of the warehouse buildings we are proposing align with the type of development outlined within the definition of the Light Industrial zone within the Mesa Zoning Ordinance:

LI Light Industrial. To provide areas for limited manufacturing and processing, wholesaling, research, warehousing, and distribution activities take place within enclosed buildings, with restricted accessory outdoor storage as needed to support the primary uses. Light Industrial areas can be used to buffer General Industrial uses from other less intense uses. This district also provides for a full range of commercial activities, generally on a limited scale, including high-impact commercial uses, outdoor display and outdoor sale. Individual developments include well-designed buildings on sites that may or may not have campus-like settings, and areas visible to the general public include well-designed landscape areas.

The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area, which include other warehouses, properties zoned Light Industrial (LI) and Planned Employment Park (PEP), and Falcon Field Airport. We have confirmed that adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project.

Request for Alternative Compliance - Maximum 50% Façade material and colors per Section 11-7-3(B)(6) of the MZO:

Section 11-7-3(B)(5)(b) – No more than fifty percent (50%) of the total façade may be covered with one (1) single material.

The approving body shall find that the request meets the following criteria from Section 11-7-3(B)(6)(b)(iv):

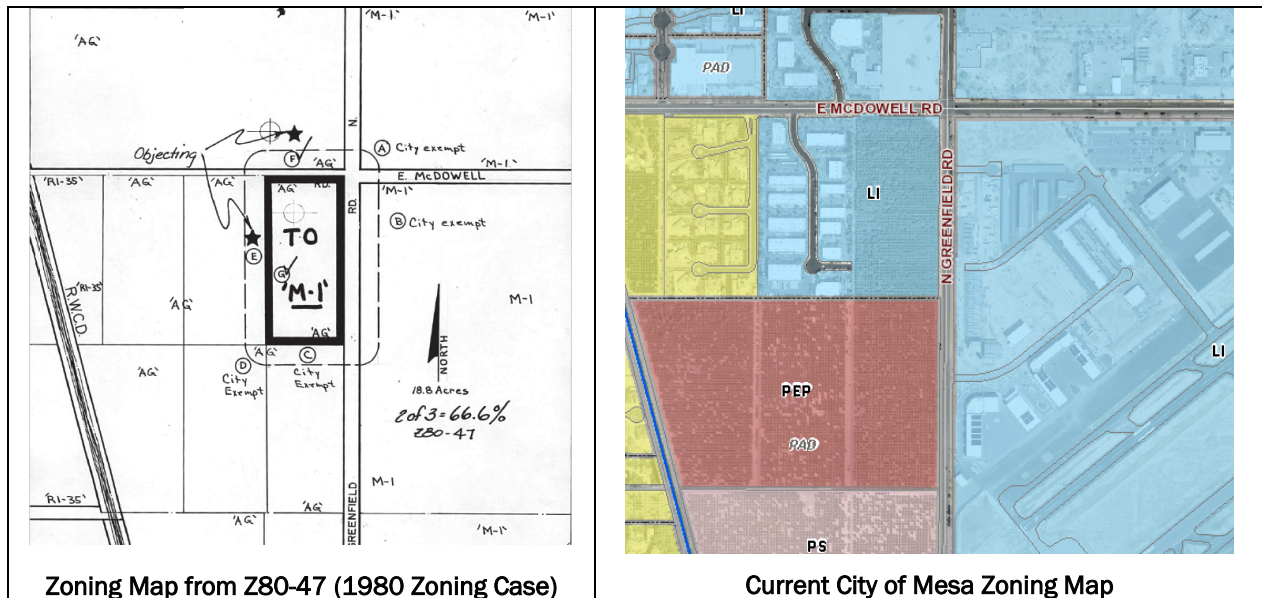
- Space limitations, unusually shaped lots and prevailing practices in the surrounding neighborhood, may justify alternative compliance for bypassed parcels and for improvements and redevelopment in older neighborhoods.
- The proposed alternative is aesthetically more complementary to the site, better fits into the context of the area, improves the overall architectural appeal of the area and/or meets or exceeds the design objectives as described in the City's General Plan.
 - RESPONSE: The building type that is typical for industrial, manufacturing, and warehousing uses of this size are typically constructed out of concrete tilt up panels which allows for the final product to be both durable for the tenant and cost efficient for the developers. The standard sizes, details and construction type help provide an efficient layout for users planning to use the space. The construction of this product type does heavily rely on these known factors for economic feasibility and does not fit with the Mesa Zoning Ordinance requirement to provide no more than 50% of one single material and therefore seeking Alternative Compliance Approval for this project. The design aligns with the intent of the design standards as well as other approved projects within the City of Mesa and provides variation in massing, vertical and horizontal articulation, enhanced building entries with framed accents, canopies to address human scale elements. The elevations also vary the façade with multiple shades on the field and as accents, recessed storefront with metal shade canopies at the entry areas to better define the arrival experience, and ribbed reveal patterned accent panels that will help set a standard for future developments within the surrounding Light Industrial (LI) zones. Per the City's request, we calculated the areas based on color and material changes. The longer north and south elevations are in compliance with the above section. The shorter east and west facing facades of Building 1 exceed 50% of Color 'A' (Building 1 = 58%). Refer to elevations for calculations.

Request for Modification of Zoning Stipulations

The current zoning district of L-1 (Light Industrial) on the subject property was approved by the City of Mesa City Council on June 6, 1980 through zoning case #Z80-47 (Note: original zoning designation was identified as M-1 at the time). The approval of Z80-47 also included the following stipulations:

1. Additional right-of-way requirements;
2. All access to be from Greenfield Road;
3. That two rows of citrus trees and a wall be maintained along the western boundary of the property as a buffer.

The purpose of the stipulations were to address some comments that came before the City from some adjacent neighbors regarding the desire for some buffering of their properties from the industrial use and for the access to be away from the AG zoning uses. As shown in the map clip below (Zoning Map from Z80-47), the surrounding zoning to the north, west, and south at the time were all zoned as AG. With that historical zoning pattern, it made sense for the Council to add those stipulations to address the neighbor's concerns.



However, the surrounding development and land use patterns have changed over the past 40 years since the 1980 zoning case was approved. As shown in the map above (Current City of Mesa Zoning Map), the current zoning map exhibits that the property is now surrounded by a mixture of LI (Light Industrial) and PEP (Planned Employment Park) zoning designations and the development pattern has followed the City's vision for the development of employment and light industrial uses around the Falcon Field Airport.

As such, the original stipulations approved with the Z80-47 rezoning case are no longer applicable to the proposed development request. As part of this request, the Applicant respectfully requests that the stipulations be removed to allow for the proposed development of the Site Plan and SUP requests of this Application.