

Sossaman Heights



Zone Change (from RS-6 & OC to RM-4 PAD)

on approximately 1.2 acres located north of the northwest corner of Baseline Road and Sossaman Road in the City of Mesa

APN 218-56-007N, 304B, 305, 306, 307A, 307B, 308, 309, 310

Applicant:

Cherry Street Apartments

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Application Case #: ZON21-00050

1st Submittal: January 19, 2021

2nd Submittal: March 15, 2021

3rd Submittal: March 29, 2021



Introduction & Purpose of Request:

The purpose of this request is to develop a beautiful 2 and 3-story multifamily project on a small, undeveloped infill site known as Sossaman Heights. The +/- 1.2-acre site is located north of the northwest corner of Baseline Road and Sossaman Road. The request is to rezone the site from RS-6 & OC to RM-4 PAD.

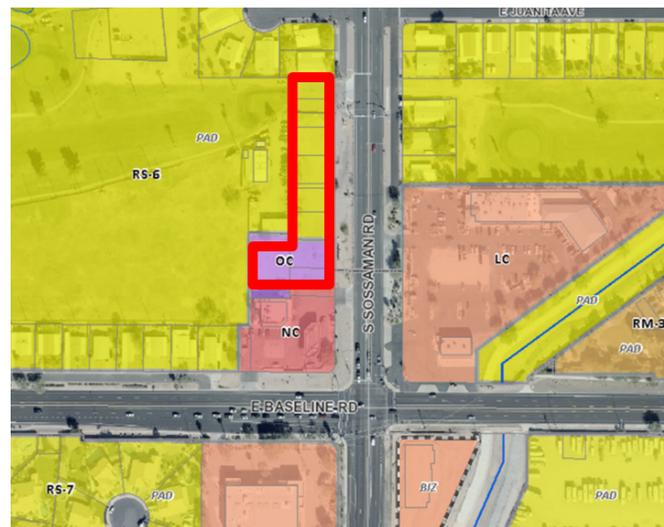
The site consists of nine parcels (APN 218-56-(007N, 304B, 305, 306, 307A, 307B, 308, 309, 310)). The parcels are adjacent to each other and are approximately 52,354 square feet (1.20 acres) combined. Immediately adjacent uses include a Circle-K convenience store and the Desert Sands Golf Course.

The developer of this project is Cherry Street Apartments, LLC's (Cherry Street). One of the two leads in Cherry Street is Brian Sandstrom, who also works as a practicing architect in the valley. Brian's expertise and experience are in designing architecturally enhanced multifamily buildings. That is why the architectural design of this project is so high. This enhanced design has been a key focus of Cherry Street on this site from day one.

Cherry Street intends to:

- Combine all the site's discrete parcels into one consolidated parcel.
- Rezone from RS-6 & OC to RM-4 PAD.
- Develop the site into an attractive and luxury rental multi-family development, and by so doing bring new life and increased density to the area and act as a positive catalyst for future development.





Existing Zoning Map

Description of Proposal:

The site's existing parcels range in size from 1,155 SF (gross) to 12,545 SF (gross). After these parcels are combined into one parcel, the resulting parcel will be 1.20 acres (gross). The parcel is proposed for rezoning to RM-4 to allow for a luxury and architecturally enhanced multifamily project.

The development would consist of three separate buildings—two apartment buildings and one clubhouse. The apartment buildings will vary in height: two stories at the outer edges and three stories at the middle of each building mass. These height dynamics provide variety and architectural interest to the building façade as well as ensure the lowest portions of the buildings are nearest to the residential to the north and the commercial to the south. In this way, we are able to bring architectural interest and density to this area while remaining compatible with the surrounding development.

The stair stepping of height also allows the development to remain consistent with the City's requirement for a 15-foot setback per story. The three-story sections are setback greater than 45 feet from each side yard (north and south). Note that because the golf course owns two parcels on the north side of the site, in between the site and the residential further north, there is a built-in, permanent buffer between the project and the residential to the north.

There are no buildings immediately adjacent to Buildings 100 & 200 at the north, west, east and south. Additionally, there are easements noted within which renders these areas non-buildable in the future.



Conceptual Rendering

As shown above with the dashed line, the project is built along the eastern property line. Thus, we are requesting a 20' reduction in our eastern setback, from 20' to 0'. But in practice, this deviation will not be noticed. That is because Sossaman Road has +/- 20' of excess ROW between the pavement and the property line. Thus, we are reducing the setback by 20' to offset the excess 20' of ROW.

The purpose of this +/- 20' of excess right of way was to allow enough room for an entire frontage road to fit between the curb and the property line, for single family residential. And that is what was done for the Desert Sands community to the north, which fronts onto a frontage road (see aerial below). This type of street design is no longer used along arterial roads, and thus this excess ROW would never be utilized in this manner.

Even with the future Capital Improvement Project (CIP) planned for Sossaman, this excess ROW will still remain. The proposed site has been designed to include those future CIP improvements.



Access Road to the North Was the Purpose of the Excess Right of Way. Not Needed for Subject Site.

Our deviation allows us to not stack a 20' required setback on top of 20' of excess ROW. Pushing the building back that far would be contrary to the City's current trend toward urban design whereby buildings are pushed closer to the street and parking is located in the rear, to provide a better pedestrian experience.

In a typical development, the ROW would be approximately 20'-22' from the pavement line, and the setback would be another 20', for a total of 40'-42'. In our case, we have 42' of ROW and a 0' setback. Thus, our building will technically have a 0' setback but it will feel like a regular 20' setback. Without this deviation, it is difficult to see how this narrow parcel could be effectively developed and as such has sat vacant for many years.

The site features upgraded open space areas that will provide for a community pool, dog walking areas, barbecues, yard games, and other outdoor social gathering type amenities. The site is laid out to provide private patios at the grade level units. The proposed plan also features patio spaces on elevated unit floors that provides desirable private outdoor space to dwelling units.

The building architecture is the desert-modern typology that connects the structure to the climate and materials proven and familiar to this region. Viewing decks and windows

will be carefully placed to minimize unwanted solar heat gains and maximize natural light and connection to the surrounding environment and any views unique to the site. Site lines will be studied to reduce where possible visual trespass onto and from the neighboring properties.

PAD Development Approach

Under current zoning, these lots cannot produce a viable development for many reasons, but with the proposed rezoning, include the PAD overlay, a high-quality development is possible.

Certain development in this area could be classified as economically challenged. There are numerous properties nearby that are vacant or have been in growing states of decay for many years. This new development will reduce the vacant lot count in this area and be a step in a new positive direction for this area. We expect that it will act as a catalyst for positive redevelopment.

The shape of the site also creates a challenge. The site is shaped like the letter “d” with a long and skinny stem. Fitting a quality development and parking within this area is challenging. That is part of what makes the quality of Cherry Street’s proposal so remarkable. They are not just proposing *something* on the site, they are proposing something of great quality and character.

Cherry Street is seeking the following modifications to the City’s development guidelines to make the proposed development a viable solution on a very challenging parcel:

- **Building Setbacks:** As previously mentioned, Cherry Street is seeking a setback reduction on the east side because of the excess right of way on Sossaman and because of the City’s desire to avoid pushing buildings too far away from walkable areas. We are also seeking to reduce the western setback because of the narrow shape of the lot and because there will be no negative impact to the golf course to the west.
- **Landscape Setbacks:** In conjunction with the building setback mentioned above, the landscape setback will also be reduced. Again, along the street frontage, 20’ of landscaping will be provided, but it will be located within the excess ROW that is to remain. The count of trees may be reduced as well, due to all the existing utilities located within this excess ROW. Additionally, landscape setbacks will be reduced along the north, west and south boundaries to 0’; 20’ is required. Although we are reducing to 0’ there will still be landscape provided along the majority of these boundaries where possible. Due to the small size and awkward shape of this property, drive aisles, parking spaces and trash receptacles conflict with landscape setback.
- **Parking Setback:** Typically, parking is setback from the property line 50’ when it is associated with an access drive aisle. We are proposing this setback to be

37'-9". Again, due to the excess ROW, we are requesting that this measurement actually be taken from the back of curb. We are providing 63'-3" from back of curb to the first parking stall curb. With the extra width of the access, we feel is an appropriate amount of space to maneuver.

- **Parking Reductions:** Cherry Street is requesting a deviation from the City's parking requirements to utilize an alternate parking concept that looks more closely at the actual unit mix of a development. This model is more common in other recent multi-family developments. See attached Parking Study for more detail.

We are seeking to apply similar standards to those found throughout the Valley with infill projects. It is clear from the traffic Study, that even with the proposed reduction, we are still providing more spaces than City of Phoenix, City of Scottsdale and City of Tempe require for multi-family, since their calculation is based on unit type/number of bedrooms. The current City of Mesa requirement of 2.1 spaces per unit is being reduced to 1.86 spaces per unit, a difference of 7 spaces in practice with 29 units proposed. The current site plan provides 1.96 spaces per unit, but flexibility is needed as the unit count and mix may vary slightly during final development for feasibility purposes, hence we are asking for 1.86 spaces per dwelling unit to provide that critical flexibility.

There are public transportation options nearby (300 feet for north /south & east / west bound) and a Rapid Transit bus route at the I-60, less than a mile away. The applicant believes public-transit-oriented renters, those wishing to utilize the Rapid Transit system, will be attracted to rent at this location, thereby reducing the number of cars needed per unit.

Residents will receive at least one dedicated covered parking space that gets assigned by its proximity to the unit, accessibility needs, etc.

- **Private Open Space:** Cherry Street is requesting a minimal deviation from the City's private open space requirements (patio/balcony space) – Section 11.5-5.3.a. With only 29 units in the development, Cherry Street is providing increased, upgraded public amenities, including but not limited to; a pool, club house, and pet park. This high standard of amenities is typically found in much larger developments. Additionally, many units front Sossaman Road. In order to maintain a quality, clutter free façade, the private patio spaces are designed to be large enough for a seating area, but small enough that they don't become storage spaces.
- **Solid waste:** In order to provide an aesthetically appealing entry and ease conflicts with utility easements, Cherry Street is proposing only one trash enclosure on the south side of the property. A concierge trash removal service is proposed for the residents of both buildings. Residents can leave their garbage next to their entryway and the concierge service will pick it up every week day and

place in the trash enclosure. This large communal trash enclosure will be scheduled for retrieval twice per week.

PAD Development Standards

Lot Standards	RM-4	PAD
Main Building Setbacks		
Primary Frontage	20'	<u>0'</u>
Side Lot Line	15' per story (45')	<u>15'</u>
Rear Lot Line	15' per story (45')	<u>15'</u>
Landscape Setbacks		
Primary Frontage	20'	<u>0'</u>
Side Lot Line	15' per story (45')	<u>0'</u>
Rear Lot Line	15' per story (45')	<u>0'</u>
Lot Coverage	55% Max	55% Max
Building Height	40' Max	40' Max
Parking/Unit	2.1 spaces per unit	1.86 spaces per unit
Parking Setback	50'	37'-9" (63'-3" measured from curb)
Private Open Space	0-1bed: 60SF 2 bed: 100SF 3 bed: 120SF	0-1bed: 53SF 2 bed: 61SF 3 bed: 83SF



Conceptual Rendering



Conceptual Rendering

General Plan Conformance:

The site is designated on the City's Land Use Map as Neighborhood, with a primary focus to provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community. The proposed development conforms to the General Plan and the General Plan Land Use map designation. No amendment is necessary or sought. The General Plan seeks to promote comprehensive direction for the growth, conservation and development of all physical aspects of the City. The proposed rezone meets or exceed the following goals outlined in the General Plan:

Goal: Creating and maintaining a variety of great neighborhoods

Policy P1: Encourage the appropriate mix of uses that will bring life and energy to neighborhoods while protecting the, from encroachment by incompatible development

Strategy: Investigate strategies and incentives to encourage appropriate infill and property reuse consistent with neighborhood goals and values.

This project will develop on a vacant site that has no development. This is true infill as development exists all on sides. The proposed development will bring new life to the area by energizing this site—all while complementing the surrounding existing uses. It will also provide an added density of residents to strengthen existing commercial in the area.

Strategy: Neighborhood Retrofitting.

As previously mentioned, the lots that Cherry Street is seeking to rezone are left over lots from the Desert Sands Golf Course master planned community. These lots are not favorable to develop residentially or commercially as they exist. This is evident by the fact that these lots have sat vacant and undeveloped for many years. Creation of a residential access road (similar to that to the north) would be required to guarantee access to each parcel. In the site's current state, this creates significant hardships due to the significant utility infrastructure that's placed within the adjacent right-of-way. Most notable is the City of Mesa pressure reducing valve station that is right in line with here an access road would be placed. Other utilities that would be an impediment to the connector street development include electrical transformers, fire hydrant and traffic light control stations. Additionally, there is an 8-foot public utility easement (PUE) that passes through all the parcels, significantly reducing the developable area.

In addition to the site access, existing PUE's, existing utility placement issues, a new factor should be considered: COVID-19. This pandemic has tremendously impacted the market for office developments, both in the short-term and, it appears from market reports, the long-term as well. A trending number of companies are not only sending employees home during the pandemic but are reporting an increased interest in having employees work from home in the future, at least in part. For example, Microsoft announced that for most roles, employees can now work up to 50% of their hours from home. Facebook announced that as many as 50% of its employees could be working remotely within the next 5 to 10 years—clearly indicating that the pandemic was the start of a new trend that will not end when COVID is gone.

Slack CEO Stewart Butterfield signaled the likelihood of allowing all of its employees to work from home indefinitely. He was recently quoted in a CNN Business article entitled "These companies plan to make working from home the new normal. As in forever" as follows:

"I don't know if it's impossible, but it's going to be very, very hard to walk back," Butterfield told Bloomberg's Emily Chang. "If you go down this path and 20% of your employees are remote and 50% of them adjusted the way they work and where they live to work in an environment where they're in the office a day or two a week and then at home the rest, unwinding that is a little bit hard to imagine."¹

With more work from home employment, the demand for office space is decreasing. These insights further highlight the unlikelihood this parcel would develop with a new office use.

¹<https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/22/tech/work-from-home-companies/index.html>

Relationship to Surrounding Properties:

This site is located in East Mesa, just north of Baseline Road, on the west side of Sossaman Road. The surrounding sites include the Desert Sands Gold Course and a Circle-K convenience store. Reference sheet GA-02 and Table 1 – Existing Conditions for zoning and use of the properties immediately adjacent to, and within a 300-foot radius to the site.

Table 1 – Existing Conditions

Direction	General Plan Designation	Zoning	Current Use
Site	Neighborhood	OC and RS-6	Vacant Land
North	Neighborhood	RS-6	Desert Sands Golf Course Residential
South	Neighborhood	Neighborhood Commercial	Circle-K convenience store
			Baseline Road – Arterial Street – 75' ROW
East	Neighborhood	Limited Commercial	Retail Shopping Center
			Sossaman Road – Arterial Street – 75' ROW
West	Neighborhood	RS-6	Desert Sands Golf Course Residential

Location and Accessibility:

There is existing access to this parcel from an existing shared drive with Circle K at the southeast corner of the property. We are also proposing a new, additional access point in the middle of the parcel along Sossaman. This arterial provides for regional connectivity to US Route 60 (approximately ¾- mile to the north). The Loop 202 is approximately 2 miles to the east.

Circulation System (on & off-site):

Site Services

The site design keeps fire, EMS, police, delivery, maintenance, waste management services and their related infrastructure to the interior of the site. Service, and emergency vehicles can access the site from either of the site's entrances. The primary interior drive aisle is 26'-0" minimum in width and is set back greater than 15'-0" from any building on site. Turning radii of 35' -0" (inner) and 55'-0" (outer) are provided to allow the anticipated service vehicles sufficient turning space to maneuver along the main drive aisle. This design has been coordinated with City Staff and has been

determined to be acceptable.

Community Facilities and Services:

The proposed development is located within the Skyline High School District, specifically within the respective boundaries for Jefferson Elementary School and the Fremont Junior High School. The project site is near to several public parks and amenities, including, but not limited to: Monterey Park, Mariposa Park, and Mesa Express Library.

Public Utilities and Services:

Water and Wastewater is provided by existing service(s) with the City of Mesa.

Refuse collection is addressed by The City of Mesa.

Police and fire protection are provided by the City of Mesa

Electricity service is provided by Salt River Project (SRP). Telecommunications service (phone, internet and television) is available from numerous sources.

Conclusion:

This proposal will not only bring a quality residential development to this underutilized, irregularly shaped and constrained site, but it will also have a beneficial impact on the existing surrounding land uses, including nearby dining, retail and services. It will also serve as a good transition from existing single family residential to the existing commercial uses.

The intent of the proposal is to provide a high-level quality residential development that compliments the area while upholding the planning principles and supporting goals of the City of Mesa. The long vacant infill site will be transformed into an attractive, high-quality residential development that will enhance the area as well as create visual interest along Sossaman Road. After we sent out renderings of the project to the community, a neighbor called and left the following voicemail: "I think this is a wonderful plan you all have for building those two beautiful apartment buildings here on Sossaman. I live over here on 77th Street and this is beautiful! I think you all have made a great decision to do this and I think you're gonna make our area look prettier. Thank you with all my heart."

