

City Council

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City of Sebastopol Design Review Board Staff Report

Meeting Date: March 2, 2016
Agenda Item: 8A
To: Design Review Board
From: Jonathan Atkinson, Assistant Planner
Garret Hosley, Planning Intern
Subject: Preliminary Review: Hotel Sebastopol
Recommendation: Provide Comments
Applicant/Owner: Piazza Hospitality Group/Bella Commercial Management, LLC
File Number: 2016-08
Address: 6828/6826/6824 Depot Street
CEQA Status: To Be Determined
General Plan: Downtown Core
Zoning: CD: Downtown Core

Introduction:

This is a Preliminary Review application, requesting Design Review Board comments on a proposed mixed-use hotel at 6828 Depot Street and a parking structure at 6826 and 6824 Depot Street. 6828 Depot Street is currently home to the Sebastopol Tractor Company and was formerly home to the Diamond Match Company, which operated a lumberyard at the site for several years. 6826 and 6824 Depot Street are currently vacant lots.

The Planning Commission will also provide comments on this Preliminary Review application, subsequent to the Board. Following Preliminary Review, the Planning Commission will review a Use Permit application for the hotel use, and if approved, the Board will review a Design Review application for the final design of the hotel.

Project Description:

The project involves the development of a 65-room hotel, which will consist of multiple buildings, ranging from two to four stories with a height of 50 feet at its highest elevation. The hotel will contain the following amenities and mix of uses: A lobby and reception area, retail space, artist-maker studios, restaurant, bar, lounge, wellness center, public courtyard, private gardens, outdoor rooftop decks, meeting rooms, and various other hotel amenities.

The project also involves the provision of 110 parking spaces. 88 of the spaces will be located directly east of Brown Street at 6826 and 6824 Depot Street and be provided within a mechanical parking lift system structure. This structure will either be covered in vines or a kinetic sculpture. 22 of the spaces will be provided on the street on Petaluma Avenue and McKinley Street.

Building massing will be broken up into smaller buildings to establish compatibility with the existing site context and be oriented around the public courtyard and private gardens. The hotel will contain multiple passages, which will improve pedestrian circulation in and around the site. The applicant prepared a written statement, which is included as part of the Preliminary Review submittal, and attached to this staff report.

Zoning Ordinance Consistency:

The site is located in the CD: Downtown Core District. The CD District has a maximum building height limit of three (3) stories and forty (40) feet, pursuant to Section 17.64.060 of the Zoning Ordinance. The hotel would have four (4) stories at a height of fifty (50) feet, which exceeds the maximum allowance.

Chapter 17.220: 'Off-Street Parking Regulations establishes' parking standards for all properties within Sebastopol City-limits. The hotel will provide 88 parking spaces as part of a mechanical parking lift system structure. Chapter 17.220 of the Zoning Ordinances does not contain any provisions that address this type of parking arrangement.

Zoning Code Amendments are required to allow a four story building with a height of fifty feet in the CD District and a mechanical parking lift system structure. The Planning Commission would review the proposed Zoning Code Amendments and make a recommendation to the City Council for final action. The Planning Commission will have an opportunity to comment on both of these components as part of Preliminary Review.

The Board may wish to provide specific comments on both of these components.

Public Comment:

Piazza Hospitality Group hosted two public workshops prior to this application to receive community feedback on the concept of a hotel at the site and design preferences. The Planning Department has not received any comments from the public on the application, as of writing this staff report. However, there will be future opportunities for public comment as the project requires a Use Permit and Design Review.

City Departmental Comment:

The Planning Department circulated the application to the following City departments: Building and Safety, the City Arborist, Engineering, Fire, Police Services, and Public Works. The site appears to be located just within the flood plain. The Building Official commented that an elevation certificate is required and that there may be additional comments based on the elevation certificate.

Required Findings:

Section 17.310.030.B.2 of the Zoning Ordinance establishes the following Design Review Procedure and will be the formal finding required for final Design Review: In considering an application for design review, the Design Review Board, or the Planning Director, as the case may be, shall determine whether:

- a) The design of the proposal would be compatible with the neighborhood or and with the general visual character of Sebastopol.
- b) The design provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right of way.
- c) It would not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood,
- d) The design is internally consistent and harmonious.
- e) The design is in conformity with any guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to this Chapter.

Recommendation:

The applicant is presenting the project for Preliminary Review at this time. This gives the applicant an opportunity to identify design options under consideration so that the Board can provide feedback. This also gives the Board the opportunity to make comments on the application and seek clarification on any project components that may be unclear.

The Board does not take any votes under Preliminary Review. However, it would be helpful if the Board articulated a general consensus or majority perspective on the project, to the extent feasible. This would allow the applicant to gain a general understanding, regarding the design of the project and any recommended revisions that should be considered.

Staff recommends that the Board receive a presentation from the applicant, hear from any interested members of the public, and provide comments on the project.

Attachments:

- Master Planning Application Form
- Preliminary Review Submittal