



## Planning Commission Staff Report

March 23, 2016  
Item 5.a.

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| <b>SUBJECT:</b>                       | <b>P15-0739</b>  |
| <b>APPLICANT/<br/>PROPERTY OWNER:</b> | John G. Maze   |
| <b>PURPOSE:</b>                       | Application for Design Review approval to retain the existing residence and construct three new apartment units at the rear and related site improvements.   |
| <b>LOCATION:</b>                      | 236 Ray Street   |
| <b>GENERAL PLAN:</b>                  | Retail, Highway, and Service Commercial; Business and Professional Offices   |
| <b>SPECIFIC PLAN:</b>                 | Downtown Specific Plan – Downtown Commercial   |
| <b>ZONING:</b>                        | Central-Commercial (C-C), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District  |
| <b>EXHIBITS:</b>                      | A. <a href="#">Draft Conditions of Approval</a><br>B. <a href="#">Project Plans dated "Received December 4, 2016"</a><br>C. <a href="#">Arborist Report</a><br>D. <a href="#">Green Building Checklist</a><br>E. <a href="#">Location and Notification Map</a> |

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### BACKGROUND

The subject property currently has a single-family dwelling, constructed in 1940, and a detached garage. John Maze, the property owner, has applied for Design Review approval to demolish the detached garage and construct three apartment units, four garage parking spaces, and related site improvements behind the existing single-family home. Design Review applications of this nature are subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission.

### SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject site is an approximately 9,150-square-foot parcel located in the Downtown on the south side of Ray Street (please refer to the location map in Exhibit E and Figure 1). The property contains an approximately 1,170 square-foot, one-story, single-family dwelling and a detached garage (please refer to Figure 2). The relatively flat site contains six mature trees,

three of which are defined as “Heritage Trees” by the Pleasanton Municipal Code (PMC). Trees are located along the east, south and west sides of the southern end of the property.

**Figure 1: Aerial Image of 236 Ray Street**



**Figure 2: Street View of 236 Ray Street**





The property is located in an area of mixed land uses, which is typical of the C-C zoning district in the Downtown. The property is bordered on the east by Golden Valley Home Loans' building (218 Ray Street), on the south by R&S Landscape Construction and Maintenance's storage and parking garage (201 Spring Street), and on the west by a multi-family development that contains a single-family home and two detached apartment units at the rear (254 Ray Street). Single-family dwellings and the Fountain Creek Plaza office building are located to the north, across Ray Street.

## **PROPOSED PROJECT**

The applicant has proposed to retain the existing one-story, two-bedroom, single-family dwelling (which was not part of the City's adopted Historic Resources Survey because the property is not zoned residential), demolish the detached garage, and construct a two-story, two-unit apartment building; a two-story, one-unit apartment building above a four-car garage; and two uncovered parking spaces behind the existing single-family dwelling (referred to as Unit 1 on the plans in Exhibit B). The two-story, two bedroom apartments (Units 2 and 3) are each approximately 1,053 square feet in area and the second floor, one bedroom apartment (Unit 4) above the garages is approximately 867 square feet in area. The two new buildings are approximately 27 feet, 11 ½" inches in height, measured from finished grade to the tallest point of the roof ridge. All four units would be rental housing. Additional site improvements include removing the existing lawn at the front of the property and installing low water use landscaping throughout the site. The existing asphalt would be removed and replaced with permeable concrete pavers. Please refer to the landscape plan, sheet L1 in Exhibit B, for additional details.

### Site Layout

The proposed two-unit apartment building would be located towards the rear of the lot and would be set back approximately 5 feet from the rear (south) and side (east and west) yard property lines and approximately 148 feet from the front (north) property line. The proposed one-unit apartment and four-car garage building would be more centrally located on the lot and would be set back approximately 97 feet from the front (north) property line, approximately 24 feet from the side (east) property line, approximately 43 feet, 6 inches from the rear (south) property line, and approximately 3 feet from the side (west) property line.

Vehicular access to the site would be provided by a 10-foot wide drive aisle constructed with interlocking concrete pavers and a landscape strip. The drive aisle would provide access to the six parking spaces for the dwellings: four spaces in the garage, one dedicated to each unit, and two uncovered parking spaces that will be shared between all four units. A mailbox kiosk for all four units would be located in the front yard adjacent to the sidewalk and trash receptacles for all four units would be located such that most would be screened from street views.

### Architectural Design

The two new buildings would be rectangular in shape with massing broken up by the use of balconies and projected or recessed building walls to provide variation in the wall plane. Each new unit will have a private balcony. Both buildings will have roof designs that include both side and front gables, which creates more variety in the design and breaks up the massing.

The new buildings would feature stucco walls with stone veneer, board-and-batten wood siding at the gables, and composition roofing. Architectural elements would feature earth-tones and would include: khaki walls, light beige board-and-batten siding, and dark olive trim. The stone veneer at the base of the new buildings would be light brown and the roofing color would be a dark brown color.

The existing house has yellow stucco walls with white trim, two green fabric awnings over the front windows, and a grey composition roof. There are no interior or exterior modifications proposed for the existing single-family home; however, the applicant is proposing to paint the home to match that of the new buildings. A color board for the buildings will be available for the Commission's review at the public hearing.

### Landscaping and Existing Trees

The lawn in front of the existing dwelling would be removed and replaced with low water usage landscaping and trees. New shrubs and vines would border the property and buildings, where space is available. Existing trees on the property include three non-heritage sized trees (two purpleleaf plums and one incense cedar) and three heritage-sized trees (two additional incense cedars and one southern magnolia). In order to accommodate the proposed development, the applicant is proposing to remove all six trees. As indicated in the attached tree report (Exhibit C), the arborist found that the six trees were not suitable for preservation and recommended their removal. In addition, there are six off-site, non-heritage sized trees located at 218 Ray Street near the project site's east side property line that could be impacted by the project. The arborist evaluated these off-site trees and found that the trees could be retained with proper mitigation measures during construction.

In addition to the new landscaping, the applicant is proposing to relocate the existing redwood fence such that it follows the western property line of the site (the fence is currently off-set from the property line by as much as 3 feet).

## **ANALYSIS**

The proposed project conforms to the requirements of the General Plan, Downtown Specific Plan, and Zoning Ordinance, and the architecture is consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines as detailed in this analysis section.

### General and Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Conformity

The General Plan designates the subject property as "Retail, Highway, and Service Commercial/Business and Professional Offices." Residential uses in the Downtown are consistent with this land use designation.

The subject property is located within the Downtown Specific Plan area. Specifically, the site is located in one of the five heritage neighborhoods, the Spring Street and Ray Street neighborhood, identified in the Downtown Specific Plan. The Downtown Specific Plan land use designation for the subject property is "Downtown Commercial" which allows pedestrian-oriented commercial uses on the ground floor and retail, office, and residential uses on the second floor. The existing single-family residence predates the adopted Downtown Specific Plan. Because the owner plans to continue to use the existing residence as rental housing,

ground floor commercial uses would not be viable on the site. Because the new residential units would be located on the rear portion of the lot, staff believes that the project is consistent with the intent of this policy. The multi-family residential project promotes Specific Plan policies that encourage an increase the amount of housing within walking distance of the Downtown to provide more patronage of retail stores, services, and restaurants. The buildings would also have features and architectural detailing that complement existing buildings in Downtown's Spring Street and Ray Street neighborhood. Therefore, staff believes that the project is consistent with the intent of the Downtown Specific Plan goals and policies.

Staff notes that transportation policy No. 9 of the Specific Plan indicates that Railroad Avenue should be extended from Spring Street to Ray Street. A study to investigate possible alignments of this extension was conducted in 1991, and two of the three alternatives studied at that time show the extension cutting through a portion of the subject site's rear yard. No specific alignment was ever adopted by the City Council, and there could be other options for the Railroad Avenue extension that would not affect this property. Should an alignment option be selected that affects this property, the City may need to pay more for the land, assuming this Design Review application is approved and that a final alignment goes through one or both of the new structures. Furthermore, the adjacent property at 254 Ray Street (which could also be affected by an extension of Railroad Avenue) received Design Review approval, allowing for construction of a similar development in 2004/05 under the same Specific Plan. Therefore, approval of this project would not be inconsistent with the Downtown Specific Plan.

### Zoning and Uses

The site is zoned Central Commercial (C-C), Downtown Revitalization, Core Area Overlay District. Multi-family residential uses are permitted uses in this District. Therefore, no rezoning of the property is necessary to allow the proposed development. Additionally, the purpose of the Core Area Overlay includes facilitating the development of smaller multi-family rental housing projects (10 units or less), such as the proposed project, by modifying development standards (see Site Plan and Density section below for details).

### Building Design and Downtown Design Guidelines

The Downtown Design Guidelines recommend the use of traditional materials, finishes, colors, and detailing. Specific Downtown Design Guidelines that pertain to the proposed project include:

- Duplex or triplex units behind single-family homes are to match the materials, elements, and architectural style of the front home. Single-story units are preferred where feasible.
- Transition from multi-story, multi-family housing to adjacent single story single-family homes can be made with stepping down of building forms. Dormers, articulated chimneys and stairways, landscaping, architectural molding, and window bays that reduce the mass of the building wall can also be helpful.
- Multiple family housing complexes should be designed to follow the rhythm and scale of the surrounding homes.

- Duplexes or triplexes located behind single-family homes are preferred over large-scale structures to maintain the small-town character of Downtown neighborhoods and to retain the single-family residential streetscape.
- The architectural style of the development should match an existing style in the immediate neighborhood. If many styles exist, select the one which is most appropriate for the development.
- New construction is to use a rich variety of detailing appropriate to the style of the building and that found in similar homes in the neighborhood. This includes elements such as roof eave, door and window trim, balconies, railings, and material accents such as tile or shingle patterns.

Staff finds the architectural form, stucco and vertical siding, window treatments, and colors to be generally consistent with the guidelines. Although the proposed buildings do not match the design of the existing single-family home, the existing home would be painted to match the new buildings. The applicant has provided relief to the massing through articulation, gable roof forms, window penetrations, and balconies on building elevations that are appropriate for the neighborhood and that provide sufficient visual interest from the street. The proposed colors of the siding and windows complement the mix of cool and natural tones in the vicinity.

Overall, staff believes that the architectural style of the buildings is attractive and appropriate for the Downtown and that the project, subject to the Conditions of Approval in Exhibit B, complies with the Downtown Design Guidelines. In addition, staff does not believe that single-story units are feasible given parking and other site requirements on this narrow, constrained site. Staff believes the proposed plan meets the intent of the Design Guidelines and code requirements, while providing three additional units of rental housing. Lastly, the “GreenPoint Rated Checklist” for the proposed project is provided as Exhibit D and identifies 56 points, which exceeds the overall 50-point minimum for a multi-family residential project and meets or exceeds the minimum points required for each category in the checklist.

#### Site Plan and Density

The site development standards for the C-C district do not require setbacks, allowing structures to be built to the property line on all sides. The PMC, which allows a maximum of one dwelling unit per 1,000 square feet of site area, would, theoretically, permit a maximum of nine units on a site of this size. A maximum 300% floor area ratio (FAR) and a 40-foot height limit are also allowed for structures in the C-C district.

As noted above, the site is within the Core Area Overlay District. This District was established for the purpose of facilitating the development of smaller (10 units or less) multi-family rental housing or mixed-use multi-family rental housing/commercial and office projects in the Downtown. The Core Area Overlay District has modified standards which relax the standard requirements for setbacks (for multiple-family zoned properties), parking, and open space in order to accomplish this objective.

As shown in Table 1, the proposed development would meet or exceed the site development standards of the C-C, Core Area Overlay District with respect to residential density, building setbacks, FAR, open space, and height limits.

**Table 1: City Zoning Requirements vs. Proposed Project**

| <b>Site Development Standard</b>       | <b>City Requirements</b>   | <b>Proposed Project</b>   |
|--|--|---|
| <i>Residential Density</i>             | 9 units max.<br>(1,000 sq. ft. min. site area/<br>dwelling unit)                                 | 4 units (3 new units);<br>2,287 sq. ft. site area/dwelling unit   |
| <i>Floor Area Ratio</i>                | 300% maximum   | 45%   |
| <i>Building Height</i>                 |  |   |
| Per Code Definition<br>of Measurement* | *40 feet maximum   | 27 feet, 11 ½ inches – measured<br>from finished grade to the top of the<br>ridge.  |
| <i>Setbacks</i>                        |  |   |
| Front (north)                          | None required  | 148 feet (2-unit apt. bldg.)<br>97 feet (apt./garage bldg.)   |
| Side (east)                            | None required  | 5 feet (2-unit apt. bldg.)<br>24 feet (apt./garage bldg.)   |
| Side (west)                            | None required  | 5 feet (2-unit apt. bldg.)<br>3 feet (apt./garage bldg.)  |
| Rear (south)                           | None required  | 5 feet (2-unit apt. bldg.)<br>43 feet (apt./garage bldg.)   |
| <i>Open Space</i>                      |  |   |
| Private                                | 1-bdrm units:<br>75 sq. ft. minimum<br><br>2- or more bdrm units:<br>50 sq. ft. per bdrm minimum | Unit 1 (existing home): 105 sq. ft.<br>Unit 2 (2-bdrm): 112 sq. ft.<br>Unit 3 (2-bdrm): 112 sq. ft.<br>Unit 4 (2-bdrm): 57.75 sq. ft. |
| Group                                  | None required  | None  |

\*Note: Per PMC Chapter 18.84.140, for this type of proposal, height is measured from grade to mean height between eave and ridge.

Staff believes that the applicant's proposed development meets the purposes of the Core Area Overlay District: the one-story front dwelling would be retained and the new units would be placed at the rear of the lot, thus maintaining the historic streetscape; on-site parking would be located off a single driveway, thus reducing paving and maintaining on-street parking opportunities; and the proposed building height and separation of the new buildings from other neighboring structures would allow the project to integrate well with the surrounding development.

Overall, staff finds the proposed site layout and density to be functional as well as sensitive to the adjacent residential properties. Additional rental housing will become available in the Downtown and within walking distance of Main Street and the existing streetscape will be maintained.

### Parking

The modified standards for off-street parking spaces in the Core Area Overlay District require one and one-half parking spaces per one- or two-bedroom dwelling unit. In addition, no covered or visitor spaces are required in the Core Area Overlay District.

As proposed, a total of six off-street parking spaces would be provided for the site – four garage spaces and two uncovered spaces. The proposed number of parking spaces meets the relaxed parking standards of the Core Area Overlay District. No guest parking spaces are required, though parking would be available on-street on Ray Street.

### Grading and Drainage

Grading for the proposed project would be limited to the preparation of the building pads and foundations, driveway, and the installation of any below-ground utilities, such as electrical conduits, sewer, and water infrastructure. Stormwater from the proposed roof areas of the project would be conveyed to landscape areas for treatment and interlocking pavers would be used on the driveway and parking access areas to reduce untreated stormwater runoff to the City's storm drain system.

### Growth Management Allocations

The proposed project would require Growth Management Allocations. If the project is approved by the Planning Commission, the applicant would need to apply for Growth Management Allocations which could be issued by the City Zoning Administrator or City Council. Staff anticipates that there would be adequate building permit capacity for the three new units. This residential project would not change the City's inventory of housing sites because no rezoning is required.

### Tree Removal

Existing trees on the property include two purpleleaf plums, one non-heritage-sized incense cedar tree, two incense cedars and one heritage-sized southern magnolia trees. In order to accommodate the proposed development, the applicant is proposing to remove all six trees. Planting and/or relocating trees on-site is not feasible given parking and other site requirements on this narrow, constrained site. Therefore, staff has added a condition of approval that requires the applicant to submit a payment in the amount of \$9,550 to the City's Urban Forestry Fund for the removal of the three heritage-sized trees, Nos 87, 88, and 89 in the Arborist Report prepared by HortScience, attached as Exhibit C.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice of this application was sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and noticing maps as Exhibit E for reference. At the time this report was published, staff had not received any public comment.



## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

This project is categorically exempt per Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

## **CONCLUSION**

The proposed development meets all applicable requirements of the PMC, and is consistent with the provisions of the Downtown Specific Plan and the Downtown Design Guidelines. Given the constraints of a relatively small narrow lot, staff believes the applicant has proposed an attractive multi-family residential project. Staff also finds that the architectural style of the apartments is appropriate for Downtown and that the buildings would complement the existing buildings on Ray Street and in the surrounding neighborhood.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Case P15-0739, subject to the conditions listed in Exhibit A.

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