



STAFF REPORT

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Village Green Municipal Building, Council Chambers
47 Hall Street
Wednesday, April 10, 2019
7:00 P.M.

1. SKETCH PLAN

Applicant: McClurg Properties, LLC
Location: 204 South Liberty Street
Existing Zoning: Downtown Business District (DB)
Request: To review a Sketch Plan for demolition of existing buildings and construction of a new office and garage.

Aerial Site Image: <https://www.google.com/maps/@40.153598,-83.0745273,160m/data=!3m1!1e3>

Project Background

This is a new submittal for the property at 204 S Liberty Street, which is included in the Downtown Business District. McClurg Properties purchased the property in 2012, and has since used it as a residential rental property. The applicant is requesting to demolish the current structures and construct an office and storage garage in order to bring his business, Buckeye House Painting, into Powell.

Proposal Overview

McClurg Properties LLC is proposing to demolish the three existing structures on the property including a house built sometime prior to 1901 and in their place, construct a new office and garage.

Ordinance Review

In accordance with the requirements of codified ordinance 1143.11(a), the Commission shall review the Sketch Plan with the Owner and provide the Owner with comments during the meeting, it being understood that no statement by officials of the City shall be binding upon either. This submission is informal and for the purpose of establishing communication and discussing the concept for developing the tract. No formal action will be taken on the Sketch Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

This property is part of the Mixed Use Village Center where we want to see further mix of residential and commercial uses. Along South Liberty Street, there has been the development of various commercial and office users. The houses along South Liberty Street have transitioned from owner occupied to rental residential, and then from rental residential to commercial. This property is happening in the same manner. As such, this proposal is consistent with the comprehensive Plan.

Staff Comments

This proposal has two main components: A) whether demolishing existing structures is appropriate and B) whether the proposed office and garage are compatible uses with suitable architecture.

A) When considering demolishing a structure in the historic district, the Demolition Hearing Procedures of [Chapter 1143.18 \(I\)](#) in the Code of Ordinances will have to be met:

1. That the structure contains no features of architectural and/or historic significance;

2. That there exists no reasonable economic use for the structure as it exists or as it might be restored, and that there exists no feasible and prudent alternative to demolition, or that deterioration has progressed to the point where it is not economically feasible to restore the structure as demonstrated by the applicant through supporting documents such as cost analyses, structural reports, and/or other necessary documents.

Although this property can remain as-is and used for a rental residential use, Staff does not believe that this is a reasonable economic use for both the landowner and the City. In addition, there is no architectural or historical significance to these structures or property. Renovating the house to a commercial use is economically infeasible since the existing home is made of many different rooms and steep stairs going to the second floor. For utilization as a commercial use, it is best to demolish the structures and construct a new development that is consistent with the Architectural Guidelines.

- B) For new development within the Historic District, the intent is not to copycat the historic properties in Powell. Rather, the Guidelines state:

“When new construction is being contemplated in the Historic District, careful attention to details can help create architecture which is contemporary, but compatible with the historic character of the City. Exact replication of typical architectural and decorative elements in the City is not necessary or desirable. A more appropriate approach is to design new elements to reflect the important visual characteristics of typical Powell elements. Whether architectural and decorative elements are being repaired, replaced, or used in new construction, the effect of any one element on the whole composition of the building must be studied carefully. Although some elements, such as an elaborate porch, dominate visually, it is the effect of all the elements working together which truly defines the character of a building.”

It is in this manner that the proposed new buildings are contemplated. Although more contemporary in nature in the front with the proposed gathering porch, fireplace and design, the new front office building as a whole fits the design and scale of the Historic District. The side elevations, garage in the rear, and the rear storage building are consistent with the Historic District Guidelines. There should be more wood trim between the two levels of glass (the doors and the windows) in the front façade and the windows on the north and south elevations where the front room is. Additional trim on all of the other windows should be similar to those shown in the Architectural Guidelines.

From a site perspective, the entrance to the new development is located at the northern end of the property. Although we would like to see shared access drives, trying to utilize the pre-school driveway is not one of them. The site layout makes a lot of sense and there is plenty of room for staff and customer parking. The rear building is for storage of tools, supplies and vans utilized for their business. Most of the painting employees go from their home to the work site and never come into the office on a day-to-day basis. The proposed landscaping seems appropriate, except there should be more landscaping along the north property line, which is required as the property to the north is still in residential use.

Staff Recommendation

Staff likes the level of detail presented within the Sketch Plan review and recommends that applicant submit for a Preliminary Development Plan review.