

AGENDA ITEM

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

THROUGH: Brandon Opiela, Planning Manager

FROM: Samantha Pickett, Planner II

SUBJECT: Conduct a Public Hearing to Consider/Discuss/Act on a Meritorious Exception for the McKinney Urban Village, Being Fewer 10 Acres, Located Approximately 975 Feet South of Spur 399 and Approximately 590 Feet East of Medical Center Drive

APPROVAL PROCESS: The Planning and Zoning Commission is the final approval authority for the proposed meritorious exception.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the proposed meritorious exception request due to the proposed building elevations' inability to ensure that an innovation or exceptional quality building will be constructed.

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL DATE: September 15, 2014 (Original Application)
September 30, 2014 (Revised Submittal)

ITEM SUMMARY: The applicant is requesting a meritorious exception to Section 146-139 (Architectural and site standards) of the Zoning Ordinance for McKinney Urban Village Apartments, a multi-family residential development, located approximately 850 feet north of Frisco Road and on the west side of State Highway 5 (McDonald Street). The applicant has indicated that the proposed elevations for the multiple-family residential development feature a "Classical/Traditional" style that utilize a combination of stucco, fiber cement panels, and various other masonry products (i.e. brick and architectural CMU) with several colors, varying roof planes, and multiple wall offsets. Additionally, the applicant is requesting a meritorious exception in order to allow covered parking structures to be of a wood trellis design.

The meritorious exception is being requested because the proposed architectural elevations:

1. Do not meet the required minimum 85 percent masonry for each exterior wall visible from public right-of-way or adjacent properties used or zoned for residential purposes.

2. Do not meet the required minimum 50 percent masonry for each exterior wall located within a courtyard or not visible from public right-of-way or adjacent properties used or zoned for residential purposes.
3. Feature hardi plank (fiber cement panel) on the south, west, north, and interior courtyard elevations of Building A; the north, east, south and interior courtyard elevations of Building B; and the east, west, and north elevations of the carriage house.
4. Feature covered parking structures (wood trellises) with columns not finished in masonry materials to match the primary structure.

The applicant has submitted and received approval of an associated site plan (14-068SP) and record plat (14-124RP).

COMPLIANCE WITH ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS: The purpose of the architectural standards is to set minimum standards for the appearance of multi-family buildings and corresponding site elements, which are recognized as enhancing property values and are in the interest of the general welfare of the City of McKinney. Due to the masonry percentages provided per wall, proposed prohibited exterior finishing material (fiber cement panel), and timber support columns for covered parking structures, the McKinney Urban Village Apartments do not satisfy the minimum requirements of the architectural standards.

The provisions within the Architectural and site standards section of the Ordinance regarding meritorious exceptions states that “it is not the intent of this ordinance to discourage innovation. An architectural and site design that does not conform with the specific requirements of this ordinance, but which has merit by marking a positive contribution to the visual environment and which is appropriate to the site and use, may be submitted for consideration as a meritorious exception.”

The Architectural and Site Standards section of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to granting a meritorious exception states that the Planning and Zoning Commission shall consider the following factors in determining the extent of any exception to be granted:

1. The extent to which the application meets other specific standards of this ordinance;
2. The extent to which the application meets the spirit and intent of this ordinance through the use of building materials, colors, and façade design to create a building of exceptional quality and appearance;
3. The positive or negative impact of the proposed project on surrounding property use and property values, in comparison to the expected impact of a project which could be built in conformance with the standards of this ordinance; and

4. The extent to which the proposed project accomplishes City goals.

MERITORIOUS DESIGN: The intent of the Architectural Standards Ordinance is to set standards for the appearance of multi-family buildings and corresponding site elements, which are recognized as enhancing property values and are in the interest of the general welfare of the City.

The applicant has described in the letter of intent the following building design characteristics:

“The design of the buildings and site amenities is critical to creating an interesting architectural experience that projects a sense of timelessness, quality, and visual interest, while promoting a sense of public and private experiences through the elevation design and material palette. Our design vernacular is purposely classical/traditional in its approach...”

While the proposed elevations have incorporated several different exterior finishing materials in an effort to add architectural interest to the building, Staff is of the opinion that a similar design can be accomplished through the use of approved finishing materials (meeting the required masonry percentages per wall) and therefore cannot support the request. Furthermore, Staff does not feel that the addition of specific exterior finishing materials alone constitutes a project of exceptional quality or innovative design.

IMPACT ON EXISTING DEVELOPMENT: Staff believes the proposed design would have no negative impact on existing developments surrounding the subject property (medical office complex to the west, undeveloped land to the north and south, and a plant nursery to the east).

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION: Per the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, a meritorious exception shall not be granted to serve as a convenience to the applicant or for reasons related to economic hardship. Staff believes that this is not the case with the proposed architectural design and meritorious exception.

OPPOSITION TO OR SUPPORT OF REQUEST: Staff has not received any comments either in opposition to or in support of this request.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Location Map and Aerial Exhibit
- Letter of Intent
- Proposed Architectural Elevations
- Proposed Covered Parking Structures
- PowerPoint Presentation