

FILE NO.: Z-5380-D

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NAME: Woodruff School Apartments Short-form PD-R

LOCATION: Located at 3010 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street

DEVELOPER:

Moses Tucker Real Estate  
200 River Market Avenue, Suite 501  
Little Rock, AR 72201

SURVEYOR:

Brooks Surveying  
20820 Arch Street Pike  
Hensley, AR 72065

ARCHITECT/ENGINEER:

Cromwell Architects and Engineers  
101 South Spring Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

AREA: 1.90 acres

NUMBER OF LOTS: 1

FT. NEW STREET: 0 LF

WARD: 3

PLANNING DISTRICT: 9

CENSUS TRACT: 48

CURRENT ZONING: R-3, Single-family with a CUP for a school

PROPOSED ZONING: PD-R

PROPOSED USE: Mixed Use – Residential, Community activities, Commercial kitchen

VARIANCE/WAIVERS: None requested.

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A. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The applicant is requesting to rezone the site from R-3, Single-family to PD-R, Planned Development Residential to allow the conversion of the existing building into a mixed use facility which includes apartments, on-site outdoor community space and a food and beverage operation. The new multi-family is proposed as a

significant part of the plan which is to introduce a residential component to the surrounding area. The applicant is proposing 38 one- to two-bedroom apartments amounting to roughly 25,000 square feet of the building. According to the applicant the neighborhood around the Woodruff building and campus is in need of new residential housing and the redevelopment plan proposed will combine traditional layouts with an open-spaced, more contemporary aesthetic that makes use of the existing features. The applicant indicates as best they can the intention is for the apartments to represent the neighborhood itself, both its unique history and its hopeful future.

The community/media room is proposed by reserving roughly 1,000 square feet on the first (partial basement) level. The community/media room is proposed for use by local non-profits, local neighborhood association and nearby community stakeholders such as UAMS and Arkansas Children's Hospital. The applicant states this will create a collaborative, media-rich space that can host both small and large, formal and informal events. According to the applicant the redevelopment of the Woodruff building and campus will also serve to link community members both from the immediate neighborhood and elsewhere in the City. To this end, the rationale behind the community room is simple: to provide a space where positive and purposeful connections can be made. The applicant envisions everything from organized lectures, meetings seminars and community forums to more informal events such as book readings and theater classes.

The community outdoor space, located outside the building on the north side, is proposed to create a small, thoughtfully designed park space and courtyard/plaza. According to the applicant this will include new playground equipment and passive paved plaza space that can be used for outdoor dining, weekend festivals, farmers markets and other community uses. This will provide the entire community with a safe, family-friendly place to play. All of these components help support the belief that outdoor activities – enabled by planned design and development – are essential to a culture of healthy living from which any and every community stands to benefit.

The food and beverage operation is proposed within the existing cafeteria/auditorium on the north side of the building which is proposed to be converted to a space for a full service restaurant. This space will utilize the existing commercial kitchen and grease trap on-site today.

**B. EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

The site is located north of 7<sup>th</sup> Street, east of Lamar Porter field and Johnson Street, south of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and west of Booker Street. The school encompasses an entire block. The area is predominately single-family with the exception of the Lamar Porter field and the community garden both located to the west of this site. There is a commercial building, which appears to be vacant, located south of the site which is indicated on the Future Land Use Plan as MX, Mixed Use. Other non-

residential uses are located to the east of the site along Woodrow Street and south of West 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

All property owners located within 200-feet of the site along with the Capitol View Stiff Station Neighborhood Association were notified of the public hearing.

D. ENGINEERING COMMENTS:

PUBLIC WORKS CONDITIONS:

1. Repair or replace any curb and gutter or sidewalk that is damaged in the public right-of-way prior to occupancy.
2. Access ramps at intersections should be constructed to the current ADA and City of Little Rock standard details.
3. The 30 degree angled back-in parking should be revised to a parallel parking configuration.
4. All parking within the right-of-way is public.

E. Utilities/Fire Department/Parks/County Planning:

Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority: Sewer available to the site. Capacity fee analysis required. Contact Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority for additional information.

Entergy: Entergy does not object to this proposal. Service is already being provided to this property with no apparent conflicts with existing facilities. However, the six proposed parking spaces on the southwest corner of the development appear to be in a location where there is a single street light pole. This pole may be in conflict with one of these parking spaces. Contact Entergy in advance to discuss any changes to electrical service requirements, or adjustments to existing facilities (if any) as this proposal proceeds.

Centerpoint Energy: No comment received.

AT & T: No comment received.

Central Arkansas Water:

1. All Central Arkansas Water requirements in effect at the time of request for water service must be met.
2. Please submit plans for water facilities and/or fire protection system to Central Arkansas Water for review. Plan revisions may be required after additional review. Contact Central Arkansas Water regarding procedures for installation of water facilities and/or fire service. Approval of plans by the Arkansas

Department of Health Engineering Division and the Little Rock Fire Department is required.

3. The facilities on-site will be private. When meters are planned off private lines, private facilities shall be installed to Central Arkansas Water's materials and construction specifications and installation will be inspected by an engineer, licensed to practice in the State of Arkansas. Execution of a Customer Owned Line Agreement is required.
4. Due to the nature of this facility, installation of an approved reduced pressure zone backflow preventer assembly (RPZA) is required on the domestic water service. This assembly must be installed prior to the first point of use. Central Arkansas Water requires that upon installation of the RPZA, successful tests of the assembly must be completed by a Certified Assembly Tester licensed by the State of Arkansas and approved by Central Arkansas Water. The test results must be sent to Central Arkansas Water's Cross Connection Section within ten days of installation and annually thereafter. Contact the Cross Connection Section at 501.377.1226 if you would like to discuss backflow prevention requirements for this project.
5. Fire sprinkler systems which do not contain additives such as antifreeze shall be isolated with a double detector check valve assembly. If additives are used, a reduced pressure zone back flow preventer shall be required.

Fire Department:

1. Maintain Access:
2. Fire Hydrants. Maintain fire apparatus access roads at fire hydrant locations as per Appendix D of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1 Section D103.1 Access road width with a hydrant. Where a fire hydrant is located on a fire apparatus access road, the minimum road width shall be 26 feet, exclusive of shoulders.
3. Grade. Maintain fire apparatus access roads as per Appendix D of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1 Section D103.2 Grade. Fire apparatus access roads shall not exceed 10 percent in grade except as approved by the fire chief.
4. Loading. Maintain fire apparatus access road design as per Appendix D of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1 Section D102.1 Access and loading. Facilities, buildings or portions of buildings hereafter constructed shall be accessible to fire department apparatus by way of an approved fire apparatus access road with an asphalt, concrete or other approved driving surface capable of supporting the imposed load of fire apparatus weighing at least 75,000 pounds.
5. Gates. Maintain fire apparatus access road gates as per Appendix D of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1 Section D103.5 Fire apparatus

access road gates. Gates securing the fire apparatus access roads shall comply with all of the following criteria:

1. Minimum gate width shall be 20 feet.
  2. Gates shall be of swinging or sliding type.
  3. Construction of gates shall be of material that allow manual operation by one person.
  4. Gate components shall be maintained in an operable condition at all times and replaced or repaired when defective.
  5. Electric gates shall be equipped with a means of opening the gate by fire department personnel for emergency access. Emergency opening devices shall be approved by the fire code official.
  6. Manual opening gates shall not be locked with a padlock or chain and padlock unless they are capable of being opened by means of forcible entry tools or when a key box containing the keys to the lock is installed at the gate location.
  7. Locking device specifications shall be submitted for approval by the fire code official
  8. Electric gate operators, where provided, shall be listed in accordance with UL 325.
  9. Gates, intended for automatic operation shall be designed, constructed and installed to comply with requirements of ASTM F 2200.
6. Multi-family Residential Developments - As per Appendix D, Section D106.1 of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1. Projects having more than 100 dwelling units. Multiple-family residential projects having more than 100 dwelling units shall be equipped throughout with two separate and approved fire apparatus access roads.
- a. Exception: Projects having up to 200 dwelling units may have a single approved fire apparatus access road when all building, including nonresidential occupancies are equipped throughout with approved automatic sprinkler systems installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2.
  - b. As per Appendix D, Section D106.2 of the 2012 Arkansas Fire prevention Code Vol. 1. Projects having more than 200 dwelling units. Multiple-family residential projects having more than 200 dwelling units shall be provided with two separate and approved fire apparatus access roads regardless of whether they are equipped with an approved automatic sprinkler system.
7. Fire Hydrants. Locate Fire Hydrants as per Appendix C of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code. Section C101 – C105, in conjunction with Central Arkansas Water (Jason Lowder 501.377.1245) and the Little Rock Fire Marshal's Office (Capt. Tony Rhodes 501.918.3757 or

Capt. John Hogue 501.918.3754). Number and Distribution of Fire Hydrants as per Table C105.1.

Parks and Recreation: No comment received.

County Planning: No comment.

F. Building Codes/Landscape:

Building Code: Project is a change in occupancy and is therefore subject to current building code requirements. Review and approval is required by Building Codes Division before occupancy takes place. For information on submittal requirements and the review process, contact a commercial plans examiner:

Curtis Richey at 501.371.4724; [crichey@littlerock.org](mailto:crichey@littlerock.org) or  
Mark Alderfer at 501.371.4875; [malderfer@littlerock.org](mailto:malderfer@littlerock.org)

NOTE: Contact Fire Marshal Capt. Chris Sanders to coordinate an on-site review 501.918.3782.

Landscape:

1. Any new site development must comply with the City's landscape and buffer ordinance requirements.
2. Any existing vehicular use area that does not meet current code requirements may continue as nonconforming until such time a building permit is issued to rehabilitate a structure on the property exceeding fifty (50) percent of the current replacement cost of the structure. At such time fifty (50) percent of the existing vehicular use area shall be brought into compliance with this chapter and shall continue to full compliance on a graduated scale based upon the percentage of rehabilitation cost.
3. The City Beautiful Commission recommends preserving as many existing trees as feasible on this site. Credit toward fulfilling Landscape Ordinance requirements can be given when preserving trees of six (6) inch caliper or larger.

G. Transportation/Planning:

Rock Region Metro: Location is served by METRO on route 5 West Markham. We have no objections to the site improvement planned for this existing development.

Planning Division: This request is located in I-630 Planning District. The Land Use Plan shows Public Institution (PI) for this property. This category includes public and quasi-public facilities that provide a variety of services to the community such as schools, libraries, fire stations, churches, utility substations, and hospitals. The

applicant has applied for rezoning from R-3 with a CUP (Single-Family District - Conditional Use Permit) to PD-R (Planned Development Residential) to allow mixed use including residential community outreach and a commercial kitchen.

Master Street Plan: West 6<sup>th</sup> Street, West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Booker Street and South Johnson Street are all shown as Local Streets on the Master Street Plan. The primary function of Local Streets is to provide access to adjacent properties. Local Streets that are abutted by non-residential zoning/use or more intensive zoning than duplexes are considered as “Commercial Streets”. A Collector design standard is used for Commercial Streets. These streets may require dedication of right-of-way and may require street improvements for entrances and exits to the site.

Bicycle Plan: There is a Class III Bike Route shown on West 7<sup>th</sup> Street. These bike routes require no additional right-of-way, but either a sign or pavement marking to identify and direct the route.

H. SUBDIVISION COMMITTEE COMMENT: (September 20, 2017)

The applicant was present. Staff presented an overview of the item stating there were additional items necessary to complete the review process. Staff requested Mr. Fowler provide the proposed signage plan. Staff also questioned the proposed restaurant use. Staff stated the cover letter indicated 72 parking spaces. Staff questioned the location of the proposed parking.

Public Works comments were addressed. Staff stated any broken curb, gutter or sidewalk damaged in the public right of way would require repair and replacement prior to the issuance of a building permit. Staff stated the 30-degree angled back-in parking should be revised to a parallel parking configuration.

Landscaping comments were addressed. Staff stated any new site development was to comply with the City’s Landscape and Buffer Ordinances. Staff stated any existing vehicular use area that did not meet current code requirements could continue as nonconforming until a building permit was issued to rehabilitate the building in excess of fifty (50) percent of the replacement cost of the building. Staff stated at such time the landscaping was to come into compliance accordingly.

Staff noted the comments from the various other departments and agencies. Staff suggested the applicant contact the departments or agencies directly with any questions or concerns. There were no more issues for discussion. The Committee then forwarded the item to the full Commission for final action.

I. ANALYSIS:

The applicant submitted a revised site plan to staff addressing the technical issues raised at the September 20, 2017, Subdivision Committee meeting. The applicant has provided the proposed signage plan, revised the parking layout and indicated

the site will be developed in accordance with the City's Landscape Ordinance requirements.

The request is to rezone the site from R-3, Single-family to PD-R, Planned Development Residential, to allow the conversion of the existing building into a mixed use facility which includes apartments, on-site outdoor community space and a food and beverage operation. The applicant is proposing 38 one- and two-bedroom apartments which will result in the use of approximately 25,000 square feet of the building.

The request also includes the placement of a community/media room containing 1,000 square feet located on the first (partial basement) level. The community/media room is proposed for use by local non-profits, local neighborhood association and nearby community stakeholders. The intent is to create a collaborative, media-rich space that could host both small and large, formal and informal events. The applicant envisions everything from organized lectures, meetings seminars and community forums to more informal events such as book readings and theater classes.

The plan indicates a community outdoor space, located on the north side of the building and is proposed to create a small park space and courtyard/plaza. The plan indicates the placement of new playground equipment and passive paved plaza space that can be used for outdoor dining, weekend festivals, farmers markets and other community uses.

The plan includes the utilization of the existing kitchen/cafeteria/auditorium for a food and beverage operation. The applicant proposes to convert the space to allow the food and beverage operation to be a full service restaurant with bar service. The applicant indicates the capacity of the restaurant is between 75 and 80 persons. The request includes the allowance of a patio proposed for future construction. The restaurant is proposed to operate six (6) days per week for lunch and dinner.

The applicant has indicates there will not be any signage with this development. Should signage be required in the future the applicant indicates they will amend the PD-R to allow the signage.

Parking for the development is proposed with 28 existing parking spaces located in the west lot which will remain. The applicant is proposing to add 22 new spaces along the western portion of the site. Four (4) new parallel spaces will be added within the current drop off area on Booker Street for a total of 54 on-site parking spaces.

Additional street parking includes twelve (12) parallel spaces along West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, seven (7) parallel spaces along Booker Street and five (5) new parallel spaces along West 6<sup>th</sup> Street.



The plan indicates Johnson Street is a 50-foot right of way which has not been closed. The applicant is not proposing to close Johnson Street at this time but additional parking is proposed within the right of way allowing 49 parking spaces to serve Lamar Potter Field.

Staff is not supportive of the applicant's request as filed. Staff is supportive of the multi-family aspect of the development and the proposal to allow for community meeting space. Staff is not supportive of allowing the former cafeteria to be converted to a full service restaurant with bar service. The area is residential with the commercial uses limited to Woodrow Street, two (2) blocks to the east. Staff does not feel this is an appropriate location for a commercial restaurant use.

J. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the application as filed.

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PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(OCTOBER 12, 2017)

Mr. Dan Fowler of Cromwell Architects was present representing the request. There were registered objectors and supporters in attendance. Staff presented the item with a recommendation of denial.

Mr. Fowler addressed the Commission on the merits of the request. He stated the project had been a lengthy effort together with the neighborhood and the partners of the development. He stated he felt the development as proposed was a positive for the neighborhood. He stated there were letters of support from both Lamar Porter and the Boys and Girls Club for the project. He stated the Neighborhood Association was also in support of the request. He stated the vision was to have a restaurant that was not a high volume traffic generator to serve the neighborhood. He stated the development had added back the playground as requested by the neighborhood. He stated the request did not include the abandonment of Johnson Street but Lamar Porter was in support if this became an issue.

Ms. Danielle Ray, President of the Capitol View Stiff Station Neighborhood Association, addressed the Commission in support of the request. She stated the neighborhood was very engaged in the development process. She stated there had been several meetings concerning the reuse of the school with the Little Rock School District prior to the closing of the school and it was determined by a committee that this project was the best use of the site. She stated the neighborhood wanted the school to remain but since this was not an option the development as proposed was a good fit for the neighborhood. She stated the neighborhood wanted a restaurant to anchor this area of the neighborhood. She stated there was little opportunity for economic development in the neighborhood and felt this location was a good fit. She stated the development was walkable for the neighborhood and was next to the Boys and Girls Club and next to Lamar Potter Field.

She stated the playground was important to the residents of the area. She stated parking was a concern but felt the development was providing adequate parking. She stated the site was an infill project and a unique opportunity for the neighborhood. She stated the neighborhood did not want to see the building remain empty. She stated the neighborhood association had passed a resolution in support of the development. She read the resolution into the record for the Commissioners.

Mr. Farris Hensley addressed the Commission with concerns. He stated he was not notified of the request and felt if the developers had come to him his concerns could have been addressed. He stated he contacted the Alert Center to get the president's name and number but was only given an e-mail address. He stated he did not get any response from e-mails sent to the address provided. He stated his concern was the placement of 38 apartments in a historical neighborhood. He questioned the available parking in the neighborhood. He stated he felt the developers and the neighborhood association should have reached out to more of the homeowners in the area.

Mr. Robert Walker addressed the Commission with concerns. He stated Brown Street was one-way because City planners did not plan for the street width and made the street too narrow for two-way traffic. He stated he was not opposed to the conversion of the school but felt the developers were trying to maximize the profit on the back of the neighborhood. He stated the developers were not providing adequate parking and were using City property to provide parking. He stated Johnson Street was closed to keep the children from the school from getting run-over as they were going to Lamar Porter Field for activities. He stated the street should be reopened since the school no longer needed the limited access. He stated the development should be done with larger apartments so that families could live in the apartments.

Ms. Ruth Bell, League of Women Voters, addressed the Commission in opposition of the request. She stated the multi-family portion of the development was a great addition to the neighborhood but she was concerned with the restaurant. She stated the playground space was an added addition to the development. She stated a full service restaurant with 75 to 80 seats would generate traffic at a rate of one (1) to two (2) times the number of seats. She stated in the restaurant business it was all about turning tables. She stated the tables would be turned one (1) to two (2) times per serving period, lunch and dinner. She stated that would mean more than 160 trips during the noon peak and same for the dinner hour. She stated persons leaving the restaurant at night could be loud and there would be slamming of car doors which could impact the nearby homes.

Mr. Fowler stated redevelopment was never easy clear or simple. He stated the goal of an open house was to reach the homes directly impacted. He stated he personally placed over 150 notices on the area homes. He stated the company was in business for a profit but the profit was not being made on the backs of the residents. He stated the last thing the neighborhood needed was for the building to be fenced and chained. He stated once this occurred it took a long time for the redevelopment to occur. He stated the restaurant was an important part of the development. He stated without the restaurant the numbers did not work for the multi-family portion of the development. He stated without the retail portion of the development the development would not occur.

There was a general discussion by the Commission concerning the development, the proposed rents, the number of units necessary for the development to occur. Mr. Fowler stated the rents would be around \$600 per month. He stated the units were small around 450 square feet and the market would dictate the number of units needed in the area. It was noted to allow development to occur it was a give and take and if the only way the project would occur was with the retail portion then the retail should be included in the project.

A motion was made to approve the request including all staff recommendations and comments except that of denial. The motion carried by a vote of 9 ayes, 0 noes and 2 absent.