



NuLu Review Overlay District

Report of the Urban Design Administrator to the Committee

From: Joseph Haberman, AICP, Planning & Design Manager
Through: David Marchal, AIA, Deputy Director / Urban Design Administrator
Date: November 8, 2019
Meeting Date: November 13, 2019

CASE INFORMATION:

Case No: 19-COA-1067
Classification: Non-Expedited
Property Address: 820, 822, 826, and 828 E Main St

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT and COMMUNICATIONS WITH STAFF:

On April 24, 2019, the Committee approved an Overlay Permit to redevelop the subject property with a new development known as NuLu Marketplace. The proposal included a new building at 820 E Main with a parking area behind it. The new building included a drive-through by which motorists could access the surface parking area from E Main. During the meeting, the applicant submitted revised plans that were substantially different from the plan submitted with the application for the 820 E Main parcel. The revised plan removed the new 2-story building at 820 E Main and added a low masonry wall along the E Main frontage. While the Committee found that the development as a whole complied with the Guidelines and approved the Overlay Permit, a condition of approval required the applicant to modify the proposal to include more appropriate screening for the new parking area:

Condition #4: The new parking lot at 820 E. Main shall be screened in compliance with Guideline SP4. The design shall be submitted to Staff for review and approval.

After the meeting, staff and the applicant worked together to find a design for the screening that would meet the condition and intent of the Committee. After reviewing several options, the applicant determined that such a facade-scale screen design would not be economically feasible proposed two smaller walls and landscaping for the screening. Since this concept is not in line with the Committee's discussion as understood by staff, staff determined that the design should be reviewed by the Committee.

The Overlay Permit/Report of the Committee, a rendering of the 820 E Main proposal from the application (received March 12, 2019), a rendering of the 820 E Main proposal from the meeting (received April 30, 2019), and a rendering of the current 820 E Main proposal (received October 16, 2019) are attached to this report.

Staff has prepared this report for evaluation of the screen walls alone.

FINDINGS:

The following Principles and Design Guidelines are applicable to the screen wall proposal: **6-Site Planning & Parking**. Staff's findings of fact and conclusions with respect to the Guidelines are attached to this report.

Conclusions

The Guideline referenced in Condition #4 is Site Planning and Parking Guideline SP4:

"Parking areas adjacent to the public sidewalks must use landscaping, trees, colonnades or other construction, to maintain the building line created by structures along the sidewalk. Side parking lots which exceed 40% of the total linear lot frontage adjacent to right-of-way shall provide a 36" high masonry, stone, or concrete wall that makes reference to a similar design within the surrounding area extending from the principal structure across the front of the parking area. Surface parking lots with no principal structure shall provide the 36" wall as described. The 36" tall wall can wrap around any existing or proposed monument signage to maintain visibility."

As stated in the Committee's report:

"The proposal for a new, unscreened parking lot does not comply with Guidelines SP3 and SP4. A new curb is to be installed along E Main to allow access into the surface parking lot located behind 820 E Main which conflicts with Guideline SP3. In this instance, the proposed surface parking lot is replacing and improving upon what previously an unimproved lot and will provide parking for an associated development. The curb cut associated with this new lot is of the minimum size required for access. The parking lot, however will need to be mostly screened from view."

The proposed screen walls are of a contemporary design, which can be complimentary of other, contemporary designs found in the district. The renderings suggest the screens consist of metal and panels of semi-transparent glass, which should be confirmed. The screens have a metal bar that runs horizontally along its top, providing a consistent height of approximately 10'. However, the walls are not fully clad in glass and the glass panels vary in dimension and placement, providing an abstract design that makes the walls appear to have a height that varies. In addition, the west wall includes a short segment that returns along the western side property line that adds to its massing from a vantage of E Main looking east.

The walls are not situated along the entire E Main frontage and do not screen the entire parking area. There is a gap of approximately 24' allowing for a drive between the two walls and a gap of approximately 5' allowing for pedestrian access between the screen and the building at 826 E Main. This 24' gap could be reduced while maintaining proper width for two way access to the lot. The use of transparent materials will allow light to go through the wall and could create some interesting lighting effects; however pedestrians will also be able to see through it. Based on the level of transparency, which is unknown, vehicles may be visible through the wall and thus not adequately screened.

The proposal includes landscaping in front of the wall, including four street trees and low shrubs at its base.

RECOMMENDATION

Considering the information furnished, if the Committee agrees that the proposal is acceptable, the Urban Design Administrator recommends the following conditions:

1. Final design details and materials of the screen and associated landscaping shall be submitted to staff for final review and approval, including opacity of the panels to ensure proper screening of the parking area from the public way.
2. Applicant should reduce the 24' gap between the walls to improve the screening of the parking lot.
3. Final streetscape design including light fixtures, street furnishings, street trees, and paving materials shall be submitted to staff for final review and approval.

6 Site Planning and Parking Guidelines

Checklist

+ Meets Guidelines

NA Not applicable

- Does not meet Guidelines

TBD To be determined; insufficient Information

+/- Meets Guidelines with conditions as noted

| Guideline | Finding | Comment |
|---|------------|--|
| SP1 Development Plans shall minimize the adverse visual impact of utility lines on the area. Underground lines or service from the alley, where feasible, is encouraged. | NA | |
| SP2 Combining existing small, under-utilized lots to create shared parking areas that are more efficient and more accessible is encouraged. | NA | |
| SP3 Additional surface parking lots and drive-throughs shall not be permitted in the District. | NA | Already approved |
| SP4 Parking areas adjacent to the public sidewalks must use landscaping, trees, colonnades or other construction, to maintain the building line created by structures along the sidewalk. Side parking lots which exceed 40% of the total linear lot frontage adjacent to right-of-way shall provide a 36" high masonry, stone, or concrete wall that makes reference to a similar design within the surrounding area extending from the principal structure across the front of the parking area. Surface parking lots with no principal structure shall provide the 36" wall as described. The 36" tall wall can wrap around any existing or proposed monument signage to maintain visibility. | +/- | The proposed wall is at least 36" in height. It is unclear if vehicles will be adequately screened due to the transparent materials being utilized. The 10' height of the wall improves its ability to maintain the building line of the block. However, there is a 24' wide gap between the walls which reduce effectiveness in screening of the lot. |
| SP5 Adequate perimeter landscaping, fencing, or a combination of both is required to help screen vehicles and/or equipment from public view. The screening height for vehicle parking lots shall be 36" above finished grade of the lot. This height will enable drivers of vehicles to safely see and avoid other pedestrians and vehicles while screening most parked cars. A 7'-0" max high screened fence or wall can be used for industrial or commercial sites to screen for large vehicles or equipment on site. | + | The proposal includes landscaping in front of the wall, including four street trees and a line of low shrubs at its base. There is no scree or landscaping around the perimeter of the site |
| SP6 New commercial developments should provide adequate and significant screening to adjacent residential structures. Opaque landscape buffers and other forms of screening should be used to minimize noise and lighting impact. | NA | |
| SP7 Fencing and screening shall be constructed of materials compatible with the principal structure. | + | While the proposed wall is contemporary in nature and adjacent to an historic building on the property, its design and materials are consistent with eclectic architectural styles of the District. |
| SP8 Chain link fencing must not be visible within the District. | + | Chain link fencing is not proposed. |
| SP9 Intensity, location, color, and direction of outdoor lighting shall be sensitive to nearby residential areas. | NA | |
| SP10 The number and width of curb-cuts in the District should be minimized to promote pedestrian circulation. Existing continuous curb-cuts should be reduced to widths necessary for vehicular traffic, or removed altogether. | NA | Curb cut already approved |
| SP11 Minimum 4'-0" wide landscape buffer area (LBA) containing a 36" minimum height (at maturity) screen shall run along 90% of the lineal area in front of the patio, plaza, or outdoor space that faces the street. | NA | |
| SP12 Existing trees located within the property or adjacent property along the street, alley, or access easement shall be preserved and protected unless the city arborist determines they are not healthy or are dangerous and should be removed. | NA | |
| SP13 The construction or installation of a deck or structure built off the ground and over existing landscaped areas in front of a building's primary facade is prohibited. | NA | |