

Magnolia Boutique Hotel

Frequently Asked Questions

January 9, 2017

What are the components of the project?

- 1) A boutique hotel of up to 138 rooms including a ground floor restaurant and bar facing Magnolia, a suite of ground floor meeting/conference rooms, a 2,100 SF rooftop events space and “back of house” space comprising non-public hotel functions like storage, receiving dock and garbage.
- 2) A small number of apartments that will be attached to and serviced by the hotel, facing Oleander.
- 3) A parking garage of approximately 470 spaces. Around 300 of the spaces will be needed to serve the needs of the proposed project and the existing Mehl Building, including hotel guest/valet spaces which will be in a separate below grade level. The remainder, up to 170 spaces, will be available to serve the needs of the adjacent businesses and to relieve on-street parking in the adjacent neighborhoods.
- 4) Approximately 12 condominiums on the north side of the garage, facing Oleander. Parking for the condos will be in a small garage accessed from 5th Avenue.

Why does this project require a zoning change?

The zoning application is for a PD (planned development) with a site plan. The site plan is binding, so the development must comply with the site plan as submitted. The project as designed complies with the existing zoning, including the building heights, except for the four waivers being requested in the PD:

- 1) To allow a hotel as a use. Hotels are not allowed by right in the base Near Southside “T4” zoning districts, a provision intended to guard against “cookie cutter” suburban hotel buildings.
- 2) To allow for a parking garage to front onto a street. Due to the dimensions of the property, the garage cannot be screened by other buildings and must front directly onto the street. The garage is stepped back from the west property line to allow for additional landscape buffering. The garage façade will be designed in compliance with the Near Southside design guidelines and will be subject to final review by the Urban Design Commission.
- 3) To allow for an off-street drop-off at the hotel entry. The drop off allows hotel guests to pull off the street and out of traffic for check in or valet service.
- 4) To allow for a service bay garage door to face the street. In order to avoid

having service vehicles use either Oleander or the alley on the east side of the building (in consideration of the townhome owners) the service door has been designed to face Henderson, but is recessed to minimize its visual impact.

How tall are the buildings and do those heights comply with the property's zoning?

The Near Southside zoning ordinance is written to encourage the type of development that is being proposed and offers height bonuses for structured parking and mixed use projects. Those components are included in the project, so those height bonuses are being employed to achieve four stories on the north half of the project (the "T4-N" section of the site) and six stories on the south side (the "T4" section).

It is worth noting that the sixth story of the project is designed with setbacks and terraces in an attempt to mitigate the impact of the height. Also, the Magnolia building face has been set back in a further attempt to minimize the height. The current design is conceptual, but as the actual architectural design progresses, the design team will continue to search for opportunities to mitigate the height and scale of the buildings.

For comparison, the stepped back, five-story height of the hotel along its Magnolia and Henderson facades will be about 6' taller than the Historic Masonic Lodge, or Magnolia Center, located on the block immediately to the southwest.

Why is this hotel called a "boutique" hotel?

While there is no precise definition of a boutique hotel, it is generally regarded as a highly-serviced hotel of less than 150 rooms in an urban setting, that is uniquely stylized in a way to connect it to its location. Boutique hotels often include destination restaurants and lounges and serviced residences and are typically not a part of a larger hotel chain. It is the developer's intent to plan, develop and operate a hotel that meets this definition.

How will the new development impact drainage in the area?

A drainage study for this project is not required by the city as a part of the zoning process but will begin concurrent with final design. If the zoning application is approved, a civil engineer will be retained to study drainage and to design any necessary mitigation features for the project. The project will comply with the City's stormwater design standards, which prevent projects from negatively impacting the area's drainage.

How will traffic be impacted by the project?

The existing two-lane configuration of Henderson Street won't be changed by the development, however, it is planned to remove the current on-street parking along Henderson. Hotel valet and arrival will be via an off street drop-off lane

adjacent to the lobby. A queuing circle on the west side of Henderson will provide additional valet waiting capacity to reduce the likelihood of cars blocking the Henderson traffic lanes.

The entries to both the lower floor of the garage and the upper floors are along Henderson to minimize the use of Oleander as a primary traffic route.

If the zoning is approved and the project enters the design stage, the design team will work with the city's transportation department regarding traffic and circulation, including an option to improve traffic circulation along Henderson by constructing an additional turn lane at the Magnolia/Henderson intersection.

It is anticipated that the peak hours for hotel-related traffic will fall outside of peak morning and evening commuting times. This should help reduce traffic impacts compared to other uses that alternatively could be developed on the property, such as office and multifamily residential.

Will the project cause more parking problems in the adjacent neighborhoods?

As noted above, the proposed garage will have more spaces than the new development requires, with the goal of reducing parking in the surrounding neighborhood.

Is this the final architectural design for the buildings?

No, final architectural design will begin after a decision on the zoning by the City Council. The conceptual design to date was completed to show an intent to incorporate materials and colors that are sympathetic to the surrounding context. The conceptual design also shows an intent to step back and articulate the facade along Magnolia to minimize the height differences. The design also shows an intent to break up the façade and materials along Henderson to reduce the scale of this long façade. The Zoning Commission's recommendation for approval of the project was subject to maintaining the intent of the conceptual design.

The final design will be undertaken once the hotel branding is complete in order to have the interior and exterior architecture be reflective of that brand. The final design of the hotel, garage and condominiums will be subject to review and approval by the Urban Design Commission.

Does the property owner have alternative development plans if this project does not move forward?

Not at this time, however he has received numerous inquiries from interested parties to develop medical office and multifamily projects. The property owner has worked for a long time to find design and development partners that share his vision and goals for the site and is hopeful that the zoning will be approved.

Did the project team solicit input from nearby residents and property owners prior to the December 14 Zoning Commission hearing?

Yes, beginning in early November the team contacted adjacent residents, property owners, business owners, and the Fairmount neighborhood's historic preservation committee to set up meetings for detailed discussions. During the month prior to the Zoning hearing there were meetings with the immediately adjacent homeowners and business owners regarding the project, and the design has been adjusted to reflect many of their concerns. There have also been ongoing meetings with the officers, preservation committee members, and other various constituencies of the Fairmount neighborhood in an attempt to understand and address their concerns. The project team's goal is to work with all the stakeholders to create a structure to allow a continuing dialogue as the design and construction of the project progresses. Discussions of that ongoing process are already underway.

When does the City Council vote on the zoning change?

The zoning change will be voted on at the January 24 council meeting which begins at 7PM.

Is there a proposed change to the Near Southside rules that would allow hotels by right in all NS-T4 areas?

No, hotels are excluded specifically to allow for case-by-case review of any T4 hotel proposals, and to prevent the type of typical national prototype that isn't a good match for T4 areas.