



Austin Design Commission

January 31, 2017

To: City of Austin Staff
From: Design Commission
Re: Review of 48 East for substantial compliance with Urban Design Guidelines
Meeting date: January 23, 2017
Applicant: LD&C (Shirley Vega)
Motion By: M. Gonzalez, second by B. Whatley, approved on a unanimous vote of [10-0].

The project location is 48 East Avenue. It was presented as a multi-family apartment project.

The existing zoning is CBD.

The applicant is seeking a density bonus to raise the FAR from 8:1 to 15:1 FAR (within 15:1 maximum allowance). The lot area is 0.41 acres (17,859.6 sq ft), and the total project area is 267,975 sf ft.

The FAR increase is primarily due to a building height increase; from 40'-0" allowed, to a proposed total height of 350'-0" or 33 floors.

Community benefit of affordable housing being offered for this residential project includes:

1. 5% of units, affordable to 80% MFI, within 8:1 FAR increase of 106,267 sf, results in 7 units of various configurations, totaling 5,832 square feet.
2. A fee-in-lieu will be paid for the density increase above the 8:1 FAR, 125,055 sf, which results in a \$518,790 community benefit as per the Applicant's attached letter from COA Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Dept.

Per the Density Bonus Program ordinance, the applicant is required to provide streetscape improvements along all public street frontages consistent with the Great Streets Standards, and the applicant shall commit to a minimum of 2 star Green Building rating. The Mayor and City Council and the Planning & Development Review Director will determine appropriate bonus area in light of community benefits to be provided.

Key positive attributes of the project:

1. Creates dense development.
2. Sensitive design considerations for such a limited lot size.
3. Variety of exterior building materials nicely breaks up vertical massing.
4. Incorporates art in screened parking.
5. Great Streets element will hopefully set precedent for upcoming projects on this street.

Evan Taniguchi, Chair

Bart Whatley, Vice Chair

Heyden Walker, Secretary

David Carroll

Aan Coleman

Samuel Franco

Martha Gonzalez

Conor Kenny

Ben Luckens

Melissa Henao-Robledo

**Katie Mulholland,
Executive Liaison**

**Nichole Koerth,
Staff Liaison**

6. Activates street side of building by exposing more lively functions through glass walls, creating link to Great Streets sidewalk.
7. Reflects local character.
8. Provides an affordable “family unit” as a density-bonus community benefit.

Key concerns/suggestions for the project:

1. Does not include mixed-use, but market probably would not support retail in this specific location.
2. Should confirm that sidewalk lighting is not required by Great Streets.
3. Further refine the artistic parking garage screen.
4. Encourage use of more efficient HVAC system, rather than proposed DX units.
5. Raises future concerns of tall buildings sprouting up so close to each other on limited size lots and their effects on one another.
6. Raises future concerns of high traffic in this area and its effect on pedestrian safety.
7. Fee in lieu \$5/sf for the Rainey District versus \$10/sf in the core downtown seems out of line.

The Commission has determined that the project, as presented, is in substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines.

We appreciate this opportunity to review and comment on this project.

Respectfully submitted,

Evan K Taniguchi

Evan Taniguchi, AIA
Chair

cc: Katie Mulholland, COA Design Commission Executive Liaison (for distribution)