Bloomington Case
PL202100257
PL2021-257

MEMORANDUM

kaas wilson architects

Date: January 24, 2022
Attention: Michael Centinario, Planner for the City of Bloomington
Re: 8200 Humboldt Ave Apartments

Summary

The proposed project at 8200 Humboldt Ave is a 4-story, mixed-income housing development that would add 149 units. The proposed unit mix consists of studios, alcoves, 1-bedroom units, 2-bedroom units, and 3-Bedroom units, with 9% of the units (14 total) being at 60% of area median income. The existing site consists of a semi-occupied office building (total building size is 50,635 SF) and a surface parking lot with 233 parking stalls. The subject site sits on Irving Avenue S and I-35W, spanning between W 82nd St to W 83rd St in the B-1 Neighborhood Office zoning district, which this project proposes to re-zone to RM-50. The building would include amenities such as heated garage parking, fitness and yoga center, community room, multiple outdoor courtyards, a pocket park, and a top-floor sky lounge with a rooftop deck. This proposed development would progress the housing goals of Bloomington by replacing an under-utilized office building with a thoughtfully designed, attractive building that diversifies Bloomington's housing stock by bringing roughly 200 renters to the community.

Density

At 149 units on a site acreage of 2.745 acres, the total proposed density is 54.28 units per acre. After rezoning to RM-50, which allows for 50 units per acre, the total allowed units on the site would be 137; however, after adding an additional 1 bonus dwelling unit for each 60% AMI unit (of which there are 14 units) the total allowed density becomes 151 units.

Site Design and Building Massing

The site has been separated into two distinct areas: a pocket park anchoring the northern corner at the intersection of 82nd and Irving Ave and the housing structure to the south extending to 83rd. The proposed building height of 4 stories and 46 feet in height is below the RM-50 maximum allowable height of 4 stories and 60 feet.

Surface parking is located on the east side of the building to conceal the traffic, lights, and noise from neighboring properties and to create a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape along Irving Ave. However, locating the parking lot on the east side of the building instead of the west side requires the footprint of the building to move further west such that a variance to reduce the setback along Irving Ave from 40 feet to 24 feet at its narrowest is requested. The visual impact of this reduced setback is mitigated by the building's reverse "E" massing, which breaks up the western façade with two pedestrian-accessible courtyard spaces that face out to Irving Ave. The western façade beyond these courtyards is set back 80 feet from the property line, which effectively doubles the required setback. Additionally, the included shadow studies demonstrate that the potential shadows cast by this new development are comparable to those cast by the existing commercial building on the site. Ultimately, we believe that the benefits of reducing traffic and noise to the neighboring properties and creating a more pedestrian friendly streetfront for the public along Irving Avenue outweighs the potential downsides associated with reducing the western setback for a portion of the building.

Parking

The development includes 157 enclosed below-grade parking stalls as well as a 67 stall surface parking lot, totalling 224 parking spaces for a ratio of 1.5 parking spaces per unit, which is in alignment with the anticipated parking demands and exceeds the 214 required parking spaces after a 30% OHO reduction. Additionally, an independent traffic and parking study concluded that 211 parking spaces were sufficient for 144 units, which was only a 1.46 parking spaces per unit ratio that this proposal has now improved upon.