

April 10, 2025

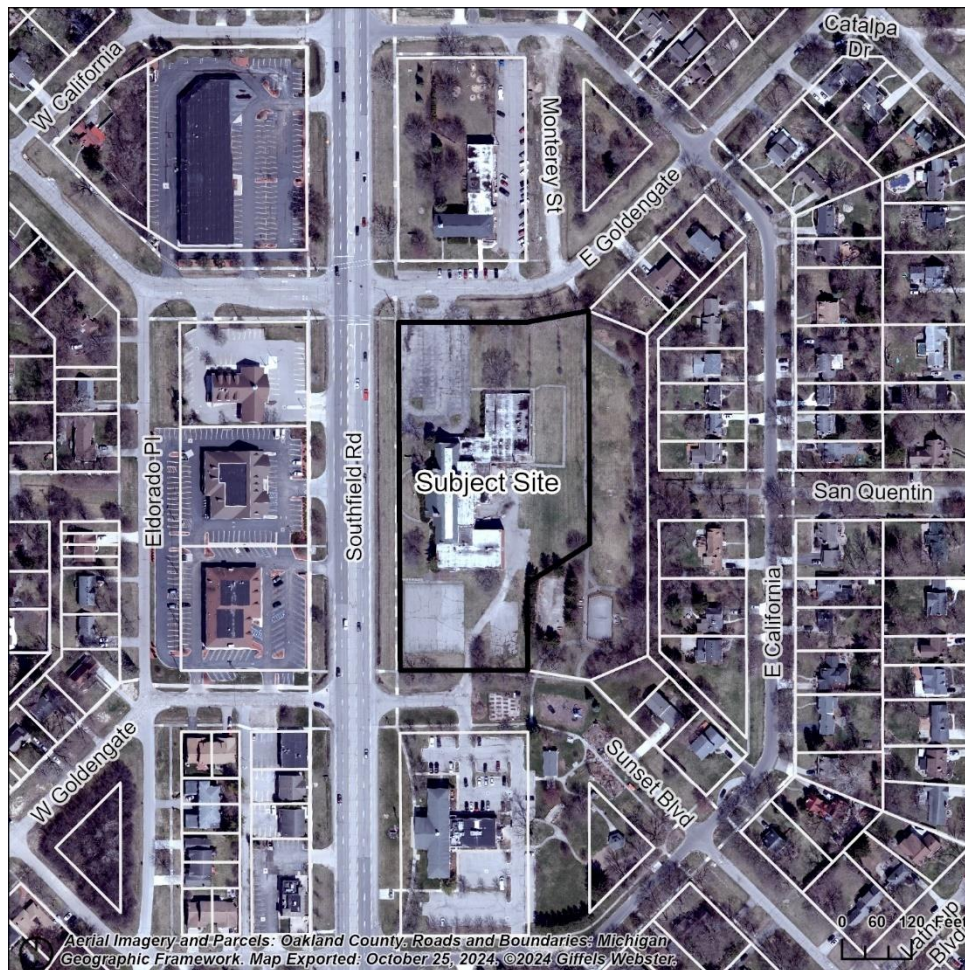
Planning Commission
City of Lathrup Village
27400 Southfield Road
Lathrup Village, MI 48076

Site Plan Review

Site: 27700 Southfield Road
Applicant: Akiva Investments, LLC
Plan Date: October 21, 2024
Zoning: VC Village Center District
Parcel ID: 24-13-303-021
Proposal: Mixed Use: Residential & Commercial

Dear Planning Commissioners,

We have reviewed the site plan application and a summary of our findings is below.



REVIEW SUMMARY

1. The following is a numerical summary of the ordinance standards table and comments that follow, beginning on page 3 below. The proposed development consists of multi-family residential units on the ground floor of two new buildings, which is permitted, subject to a number of ordinance standards requiring consideration and approval by the Planning Commission. The bold text emphasizes action needed by the applicant or Planning Commission considerations. The proposed north and south building placements are not required to demonstrate compliance of the build-to line standards outlined in Section 3.1.8. These standards are provided in the table below for the intention of guiding the Planning Commission when considering to allow for flexibility of the buildings' placements at the site.
2. The Planning Commission shall consider and find the building elements and building compositions to be in character with a traditional downtown, as laid out in the spirit of the ordinance and Master Plan.
3. The previous version of the plans, showing vertical and horizontal metal panels, has been updated to replace the metal panels with Hardey Board and Batt system at different scales. These material changes bring the buildings closer to the required 90% of approved materials; however, **the applicant shall demonstrate the amount of required building materials meets the minimum required by the ordinance.**
4. The ordinance allows some flexibility with respect to parking, allowing the Planning Commission to waive up to 25% of the required parking in the VC district. The applicant proposes 1.5 parking spaces, or 218 spaces for the 145 dwellings, based on their market research and past residential development experience in several surrounding communities. The site proposes 200 spaces on site and 18 parking spaces off-site, within the Golden Gate Drive E. right-of-way to the north. **The Planning Commission may consider a waiver of up to 72 spaces (25% of the required 290 spaces); the construction of 18 on-street spaces requires approval and agreement from the City following approval by the Planning Commission. The applicant should correct the table on sheet SP03, which says there are 128 units and the requirement is one space per unit.**
5. Any additional parking demand generated by the central amenities within the existing historic building will be satisfied by parking agreements with adjacent properties to the north and west. According to the applicant, the site will also implement a valet parking service.
6. **The Planning Commission shall consider the adequacy of the one loading area, adjacent to the east side of the south building.**
7. **The south security gate requires review regarding location, vehicular turnarounds, pedestrian conflict, and overall circulation. The security gates should include consultation with the City Administration and City Engineer.**
8. Certain landscape items, such as street furniture and planter walls, may be under the Planning Commission's consideration of the overall site and landscape plans.

DETAILED REVIEW

Project Summary

The 4.066-acre site is zoned VC – Village Center District and is located in the heart of the city, at the southeast corner of Southfield Road and Goldengate Drive. The existing building, known as the former Annie Lathrup School, has been vacant for a number of years and consists of two floors and 29,810 square feet at the ground level. The original school building was constructed in 1926 and is included in the Lathrup Village Local Historic District. Two additional building wings were constructed in the 1950s and are planned to be removed as part of the redevelopment project. Parcels on all sides of the site are zoned VC-Village Center. Given the unique proposed use of multi-family residential on the ground floor, the applicant will be required to address a number of Village Center zoning standards.

Proposed

1. **Use.** The applicant intends to renovate the original 1920s school building for a mix of uses primarily focused on amenity space for residents/tenants of the development and the greater community. Two new, 4-story residential apartment additions on both the north and south sides of the renovated school building will connect the residential units to the middle amenity spaces. Off-street parking for the development will be provided in a surface lot on the east side (rear) of the buildings.

The exterior architectural details of the historic school building will be preserved and restored. The interior renovation will include a mix of recreational and shared community meeting, gathering, and learning spaces, with a purposeful preservation of historic details.

A surface parking lot is proposed behind the building and no direct vehicular access will be taken from Southfield Road. Residents and guests will access the buildings by entryways adjacent to the parking lot; however, the front of the building is designed to engage walkable pedestrian and amenity zones, with a central gathering space in front of the point of interest that is the existing historic building. East of the parking lot is the Annie Lathrup Park, which currently serves as the central open space of the community and is anticipated to serve as an important amenity accessible to the residents and patrons of the proposed development.

We note a significant update to the north and south building additions now includes the removal of a 3rd and 4th floor unit closest to the front ends of the historic former school building. This is to allow a reduction in scale of the new buildings to further honor the presence and preservation of the former school building as a focal point at the center of the site. As an element of this elimination, the new red brick, adjacent to the new glass building connector, will wrap around to the front or west sides on the third and fourth floors with windows into the building corridor.



2. **District Development Standards – Village Center (Section 3.1.8), & Site Standards (Section 5.)**

Development Standard	Zoning Ord Section	Required	Provided	Comments
Use Standards				
Ground floor	3.1.8.B.	Multi-family subject to 3.1.8.I.	Multiple family proposed	Requires PC Approval₁
Upper floors		Multiple family permitted	Multiple family proposed	Compliant
Lot Size	3.1.8.C.	5,000 square feet	4.066 acres; 177,119 square feet	Compliant
Maximum Height		5 stories or 60', whichever less	4 stories 52'-8"	Compliant

Setbacks				
Front Yard	3.1.8.C.	0 ft. minimum	4.5' (north bldg.) 2.4' (south bldg.) Approx. 50' (ex. bldg.)	Compliant
Side Yard		0 ft. minimum	5.8' (north side)	Compliant
			6.5' (south side)	
Rear Yard		5 ft. minimum	121'-10" (north bldg.)	Compliant
	52'-4" (south bldg.)			
Build-to-line Coverage & Building Placement				
Primary roads (Southfield Rd.)	3.1.8.C. 3.1.8.D.1.	90% (187.2') <i>*100% is 208' for each wing</i>	54% (113') north bldg.	Requires PC Approval ₂
			54% (113') south bldg.	
			0.0% (0'-0") ex. school	Existing Nonconforming
All other roads	3.1.8.C. 3.1.8.D.2.	75%	70% (137.5') north bldg.	Requires PC Approval ₂
			70% (115') south bldg.	
Building jogs	3.1.8.D.1.A.	≤ 5'-0"	> 5'-0"	Requires PC Approval ₃
Primary building entrances	3.1.8.D.1.B.	3'-5' from build-to-zone	66'-0" – 70'-0" from build-to-zone	Requires PC Approval ₄
Forecourts	3.1.8.D.1.C.i. 3.1.8.D.1.C.ii.	≤ 15'-0"	50'-0" – 71'-0"	Existing Nonconforming Requires PC Approval ₅
Paved areas	3.1.8.D.1.D.	All areas btw. building & street	Only sidewalk areas btw. new buildings & street	Requires PC Approval ₂
Frontage zone	3.1.8.D.1.D. 3.1.8.D.1.C.ii. 5.12.	Paved 2' strip at face of bldg.	Not provided (total of 14' between building & curb) Bldg. placement / frontage flexibility for consideration by PC.	Requires PC Approval ₂
Pedestrian zone		Unobstructed 7' wide path		
Amenity zone		5' width abutting street curb		
Minimum Floor Height				
Ground floor	3.1.8.C.	14'	13'-4"	Requires PC Consideration & Approval Compliant
Upper floors		10'	11'-0"	
Building Elements				
Front, side, & park-facing facades	3.1.8.E.	Traditional downtown features	See elevations	Requires PC Consideration & Approval ₆
Building Composition	3.1.8.E.1.A.	Base: arcade, storefront, residential	Residential apartment units	Requires PC Approval ₆
	3.1.8.E.1.B.	Middle: Visible break	Visible break of materials & colors	Compliant ₆
	3.1.8.E.1.C.		Noticeable metal roof edge	Compliant ₆

		Top: Parapets & equipment	Heating units: interior AC units: center of roofs	Compliant ⁷
Windows & Doors	3.1.8.E.2.A.	Materials	Canopies, signage, mullions	Compliant
		Shutters	Not applicable	N/A
		Façade Opening	Vertical proportions of: porches, doors, windows	Compliant
Ground floor windows / doors	3.1.8.E.2.B.	Integral design	Windows & doors provided	Standard Met
		Transparency: Btw. 70% - 90%	55%	N/A ₈
			31% existing building	Existing Nonconform.₈
		Entry: 1 door per 75' lineal ft. of <u>storefront</u> , access by street	New buildings: ≤ 48' Access from inside bldg.	N/A ₈
			Existing building: 86'	Existing Nonconform.₈
Upper windows & doors: glazing	3.1.8.E.2.C.	30% - 50%	50%	Compliant
Building Materials				
Facing street, park, or plaza	3.1.8.E.3.A.	≥ 90% glass, brick, wood, stone, concrete	Brick, glass, hardie board	Compl. material 90% TBD Verific. Req.₉
			Metal panels/cap	
Corner bldgs.	3.1.8.E.4.	Architectural accents	None identified on north or south wings	Verific. Req.₁₀
Canopies & Awnings				
Style, height, material, color	3.1.8.E.5A-D	8' straight shed	> 8', black metal (west façade)	Compliant
Signage	3.1.8.E.5.E.	8" height & ≤ 80% tot. width	No signage details shown	Compliant ₁₁
Balconies & Overhangs				
Size	3.1.8.E.6.A.	≤ 6' from building facade	Approx. 9' Inset & flush w/ bldg. facade	Compliant
Materials	3.1.8.E.6.B.	Compatible with building	Black aluminum railings	

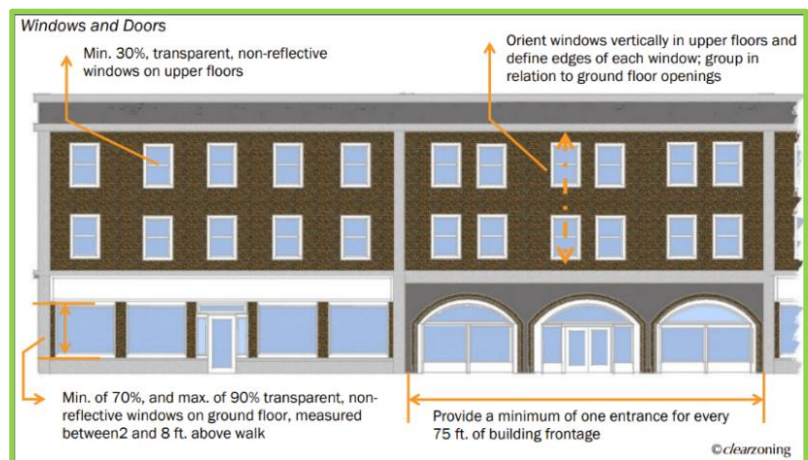
- Multiple-family uses are permitted on the ground floor of buildings in the Village Center District, subject to consideration and approval by the Planning Commission. When ground floor residential is permitted by the Planning Commission, there is no prescribed building frontage, except that building fronts should generally run parallel to the street. Facades facing public rights-of-way, parks, and plazas should contain windows proportionate to the building façade (Sect. 3.1.8.E.1.A.iii.). Review of the proposed buildings above the ground floor, as applied to the VC District standards, continues as outlined in the remainder of this letter.
- The proposed setbacks of the north building are between 4.5' and 12.2' along Southfield Road. Southfield Road setbacks of the south building range from 2.4' to 10'. **At the January 21, 2025 meeting, the Planning Commission expressed concern with the proximity of the residential units to the sidewalks within the rights-of-way. While the proposed buildings aim to incorporate characteristics of the Frontage, Pedestrian, and Amenity Zones, the Planning Commission shall**

consider flexibility with the placement of the sidewalks and amenity features in relation to the ground floor residential units (Sect. 3.1.8.E.1.A.iii.).

3. To allow variation and design flexibility, portions of the building façade may include jogs up to 5' from the property line. Additional variations in setback for architectural features that meet the intent and spirit of this ordinance may be permitted at the discretion of the Planning Commission. **The Planning Commission shall consider the location of the residential patios and balconies as “jogs” that meet the spirit of the ordinance (Sect. 3.1.8.E.1.A.iii.).**
4. There are four building entrances along the Southfield Road frontage with setbacks of approximately 66', 69', and 71'. These proposed entrances are due to the locations where the north and south buildings connect to the existing building, which is no less than 50' to the Southfield Road property line. There will be no direct entrances to the north and south ground floor multi-family units. **The Planning Commission shall consider flexibility with the placement of the primary entrances in relation to the ground floor residential units and existing center amenity building (Sect. 3.1.8.E.1.A.iii.).**
5. The 50'-70' setback of the existing building allows for the mid-block portion of the development to function as the forecourt mentioned in the ordinance. Per Section 3.1.8.E.1.D.ii., **the Planning Commission may allow flexibility for building placement for historic buildings and additions, provided that the development is found to meet the intent of this district.**



6. **Base Level (ground floor) frontage base types are required to consist of either an arcade or storefront, as shown in the image at right, or residential, which is subject to consideration and approval by the Planning Commission.** The proposed buildings consist of multi-family dwelling units with windows and private patio doors that reflect much of the intent of the standards of this section of the ordinance. Base level material consists of brick.



Per Section 3.1.8.E.1.A.iii., when ground floor residential use is permitted by the Planning Commission, there is no prescribed building frontage, except that **building fronts should generally run parallel to**

the street. Facades facing public rights-of-way, parks, and plazas should contain windows proportionate to the building façade.

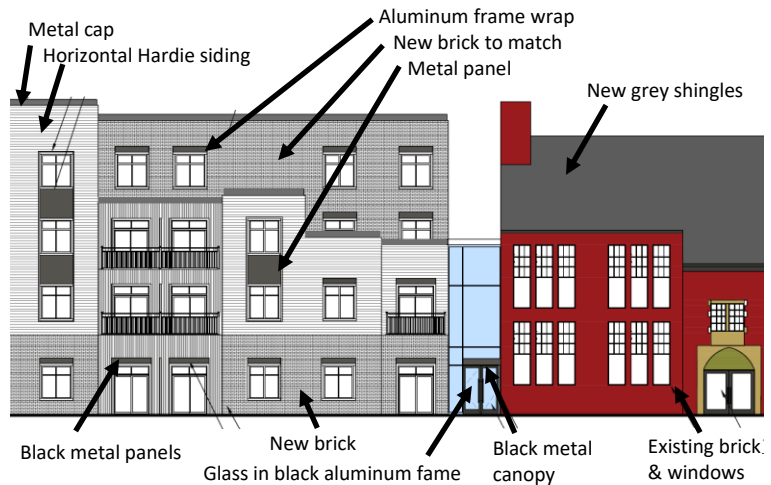
The middle sections of the buildings are depicted by a change in material from brick to sections of vertical and horizontal Hardie Board. Four segments along the Southfield Road frontage consist of balconies with black metal railings. Vertical metal siding has been removed.

The elevations and renderings show a minor metal cap as the defining feature of the top of the buildings which satisfies the noticeable roof edge requirement.

7. The applicant states the heating units will be located within each residential unit and AC equipment will be installed at the center of the roof of the buildings, screened by the roof parapets and site lines from the ground. All mechanical units shall be positioned and screened to minimize views from adjacent properties and obscure views from the public rights-of-way.
8. The minimum transparency requirement of the ground level façade is 70%, but is not applicable to the buildings with ground floor residential uses. The center building consists of about 31% transparency, an existing nonconforming condition. We note, these specific transparency requirements apply to individual tenant space store fronts, as depicted in the storefront diagram above.

Additionally, one doorway shall be provided for every 75' in horizontal building length, with the primary entrance off the street. **This standard applies to individual storefront tenant spaces only.** We note, each residential unit includes a patio doorway along Southfield Road; however, the primary access is from within the building.

9. **The plans shall provide the percentage of acceptable materials for every side of the building.** A sample of the materials used is shown in the image at right.



10. Buildings located at a street corner shall have appropriate architectural features and details that accentuate its prominent corner location through additional building height and /or adding a building peak or tower element at the corner. Other creative techniques may be used, subject to the acceptance of the Planning Commission. No unique architectural features are found on either the north or south wings. **Unless revised plans include features that address this ordinance standard, the Planning Commission shall consider approval of the absence of architectural details that satisfy this standard.**
11. The awnings and canopies are dimensioned to meet ordinance standards. An applicant response note states there is no plans for signage at this time.

Building Lighting				
Height	3.1.8.E.7.A.	$\geq 6'$, $\leq 14'$	None shown	Not Applicable
Contained light	3.1.8.E.7.D.	Lighting plan w/ contained light	Sheet L201 Photometric Plan Lighting contained on-site	Compliant
Outside illumination	5.8. 5.13.9.J.	Direct downwrd	20 parking lot pole lights Between 12' – 18' in ht. Light directed down Light contained within site	Compliant See Photometric Plan Sheet L201
		Kept within site $\leq 18'$ height		

Off-street Parking				
Min. number of spaces	5.13.13.	290 (2 sp. per unit)	200 on-site spaces 18 on-street spaces	Requires PC waiver/approval₁₂
Setbacks	3.1.8.C. 3.1.8.F.1.B.	5' from sidewalk	≥ 5'-0" from property line & sidewalk (Goldengate Dr.)	Compliant
			≥ 10'-0" from property line & sidewalk (California Dr.)	Compliant
		0' from interior lot line	Between 2'-0" & 7'-0" along east property line	Compliant
Location	3.1.8.F.1.A.	Behind building (primary roads)	Behind the building (Southfield Road)	Compliant
Driveway access	3.1.8.F.2.	Not off a primary road	Access is off of secondary roads	Compliant
Screening & landscaping	3.1.8.F.3. 5.13.6.	Combination of landscaping, brick wall, ornament. fence	Provided	Compliant
Location		Adjacent to streets		
Size		30" height		
Parking layout standards	5.13.9.	Stalls: 20' long 9' wide	All spaces 90 deg. 9' wide & 20' long (18' where 2' overhang)	Compliant ₁₃
		22' drive aisles	22' drive aisles	
		22' entry drives	≥ 22' entry / exit driveways	
		Wheel stops	Curbs function as wheel stops	
Adjacent right-of-way access	5.13.9.M.	Paved right-of-way widths	All existing	Coordination with City required ₁₄
Access gate locations		≥ 16' setback (north) At property line (south)	Subject to site plan approval Access alignment & gate obstruction	
Public right-of-way parking	5.13.10.	≤ 25% of required parking	8% (18 spaces)	Requires PC Approval₁₂
Parking reduction	5.13.20.	≤ 25% of required parking	72 spaces fewer than required (25%) if the City also permits the on-street parking.	
Signage	5.13.11.	Directional 13" wide, 18" ht.	Fire Lane & Accessible Parking Signs shown	Standard is met
Shared parking	3.1.8.F.4. 5.13.5.	Reduction allowed for 2 or more uses	Proposed development does not indicate the use of shared parking	Not Applicable
Construction & maintenance	5.13.8.	Asphalt or concrete, curb	Asphalt surface with curb	Compliant
Bicycle parking	3.1.8.F.5.	Required on site	Provided (center east side of existing building)	Compliant
Parking Facilities Landscaping				

Amount of landscaping	5.15.4.A.	Min. 15 sf. per parking space (2,880 sf.)	4,101 sf. provided	Compliant
Min. areas for landscaping	5.15.4.B.	Min. 150 sf. per area of park. lot		
Trees required per landsc. area	5.15.4.C.	8 deciduous or large evergreen	22 trees	Compliant
End islands	5.15.4.D.	Located at end of parking bays	Located at end of parking bays (7' wide)	Compliant
Functional Elements				
Loading zone (unobstructed)	3.1.8.G.1-2. 5.13.12.	On site 10' x 40'	One provided off-street	Requires PC Approval¹⁵
Dumpster enclosure	3.1.8.G.1-2. 5.3.C. & E.	≥ 20' from streets/sidewalk	Behind building. Approx. 168' north of California Dr.	Compliant
		Screening	Dumpster enclosure provided (Sheet SP.102)	Compliant
Mechanical equipment	3.1.8.G.1-2. 3.1.8.H.2.	Obscured from view	Obscured from view	Compliant ₇
Landscaping				
	5.15.1.	Landscape Plan	Provided on Sheet L2	Compliant
Yard landscaping (beyond parking facilities)	5.15.10.	Grass or ground cover in front, side, & rear yard.	Grass & ground cover provided	Compliant
Mechanical equipment	3.1.8.H.2.	Not in front or side of buildings. Must be screened	All mechanical units will be screened.	Compliant ₇
Buildings, fronts & backs	3.1.8.H.3.A.	Use of quality landscaping	Subject to admin. review of a sidewalk permit	Req. admin. approval on final site plan
Street trees & plantings	3.1.8.H.5.A. 5.15.11.	50' O.C. (primary streets)	Areas less than & greater than 50' O.C.	Consideration by PC
Tree wells	3.1.8.H.5.B.	5' x 5'	5' x 5' tree grates	Compliant
Clear vision	3.1.8.H.5.C. 5.1	≥ 30' from intersections	No new trees in clear vision areas	Compliant
Street lighting	3.1.8.H.6.A.	≥ 1 f.c. pedest.-scale warm light btw. bld. & curb	Pedestrian street lighting shown on plans.	Compliant Coordinate with City¹⁶
Street Lights	3.1.8.H.6.B.	Required per City standard		
Street furniture	3.1.8.H.7.A,B	Req. within the 5' amenity zone	Provided as intended.	Requires PC Approval¹⁷
Planter walls (where prop.)	3.1.8.H.7.C.	Min. 10" wide & 2.5' ht. at intersections & along the block	Boxwood shrubs shown similar to planter walls.	Requires PC Approval¹⁷

Open Space	3.1.8.H.8. A-E.	Practically located	Centrally located midblock along Southfield Road	Meets standards
		Functional with amenities	Focal point of interest with amenities & art	
		Awareness & security	To be included	
First Floor Uses on Primary Streets				
Retail & restaurant uses	3.1.8.I.1.	20' deep measured from front facade	Not applicable	N/A
Amount of different uses	3.1.8.I.2.	Variety of uses ≤ 25% of a primary street's block	Not applicable Proposed use is multi-family residential only	N/A

12. The ordinance requires two parking spaces per each dwelling, or 290 spaces for the 145 units. The applicant effectively proposes the ratio of 1.5 parking spaces for every dwelling unit, based on market research and past residential development experience in several surrounding communities, and asks for the Planning Commission to consider the 25% waiver. The parking lot will consist of 200 surface parking spaces and 18 on-street parking spaces, for a total of 218 spaces. The on-street spaces are proposed on the south side of Golden Gate Drive E. and will require approval from City Council.

Any additional parking demand generated by the central amenities within the existing historic building (2 stories and 12,949 sq. ft.) will be addressed by parking agreements with adjacent properties to the north and west. According to the applicant, the site will also implement a valet parking service. Sheet SP 101 (Architectural Site Plan) provides a breakdown of the number of one- and two-bedroom units that comprise the buildings, 83 and 62 units respectively. We note the sheet SP03 incorrectly notes the number of units as 128; this should be corrected.

The applicant should be prepared to discuss the proposed parking ratio and demonstrate the number of spaces is sufficient for residents and visitors.

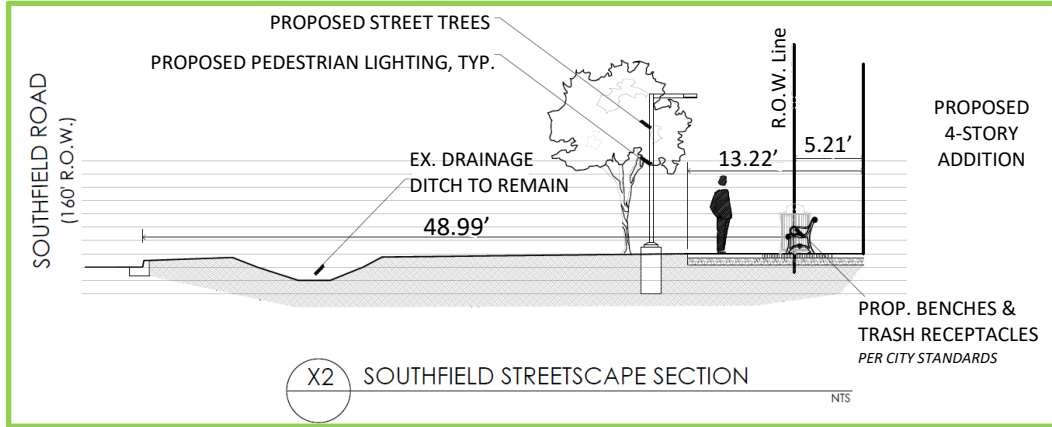
13. All walkways abutting 18' long parking stalls are found to be 7' wide to allow for a 2' vehicular overhang.
14. The north access security gate, as a component of the off-street parking facility, has been relocated from entirely within the public right-of-way of Goldengate Drive, to approximately 16+ feet from the property line. There no longer appears to be a pedestrian-vehicle conflict between the sidewalk and proposed vehicular gate at this location.

The south security gate is located approximately 2' within the property line; however, there is no turn-around area shown for vehicles unable to access the site. The configuration of the access drive from Southfield Road appears to create challenges when more than one vehicle is present at the gate at any given time. **The applicant shall coordinate with the City Engineer for potential improvements at the south access point, including the location of the security gates and sidewalks.**

15. The plans shall confirm the number of delivery vehicles required by ordinance. Multi-family developments require loading and unloading areas when tenants move in and out of the property, therefore, **the applicant should demonstrate that the one, 10' x 40' loading area on the east side of the south building is sufficient for the development.**

Delivery Vehicle Space	
Floor Area of Building	Number of Spaces
0 to 3,000 sq ft	0
3,000 to 20,000 sq ft	1
20,000 to 100,000 sq ft	1 each 20,000 sq ft (or fraction thereof)

16. **The applicant shall coordinate with the City regarding the standard, vehicular streetlights required along each right-of-way.** See proposed cross section below.



17. **Proposed street furnishings are subject to review by the Planning Commission**, who, per Section 3.1.8.D.1.C.ii, may allow flexibility for building placement for historic buildings and additions, provided that the development meets the intent of this district. The following four criteria may be used as guidance for Planning Commission consideration:

- 1) Must be placed within the Amenity Zone, which is defined as the 5 feet between the curb face and the pedestrian zone.
- 2) Shall be placed at least 2.5 feet from the curb face where on-street parking occurs, and 5 feet where travel lanes adjoin the curb, subject to road commission approval, where required.
- 3) Must be those identified by the City.
- 4) Planter walls, where proposed, shall be a minimum width of 10" and 2.5' in height, and brick to match pavers. Planter walls shall be located at intersections and placed at evenly spaced intervals along the block.

We look forward to discussing this review with the Planning Commission at the April 15th meeting.

Regards,
Giffels Webster

Jill S. Bahm

Jill Bahm, AICP
 Partner

Eric M. Pietsch

Eric Pietsch
 Senior Planner

