



CITY OF PALM DESERT

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Chair and Members of the Commission

From: Nikki Gomez, Assistant Planner

Date: January 10, 2023

Case No: MISC21-0023

Subject: Consideration to approve a Design Review for a four-story, 96-room, 83,106 square-foot Staybridge Suites hotel located at 74755 Technology Drive (APN 694-190-096)

BACKGROUND

On March 26, 2015, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1281 approving the Millennium Palm Desert Specific Plan (MPDSP). The MPDSP consists of a 152± acre area located near the City's northern city limits, south of Interstate-10 and the Union Pacific Railroad, between Portola Avenue and Cook Street. It is bounded by Portola Avenue on the west, Gerald Ford Drive on the south, and Technology Drive on the east. The project is a new Staybridge Suites hotel located on Planning Area 5 of the MPDSP. Planning Area 5 of the MPDSP allows for the development of between 175 to 250 hotel rooms up to four (4) stories.

On July 17, 2018, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution No. 2724 approving Precise Plan (PP) 18-0002 and Tentative Parcel Map (TPM) 37488 within PA 5. The PP approved the site design for two (2) four (4) story hotels developed in two phases. The Tentative Parcel Map approved the subdivision of the 3.92-acre lot into two parcels:

- Parcel 1 – 1.91 acres – Phase 2, Future 90-room hotel (Proposed Staybridge)
- Parcel 2 – 1.96 acres – Phase 1, 96-room room hotel (Holiday Inn Express)

Phase One (Parcel 2) consisting of a four-story, 96-room Holiday Inn Express and Suites, 105 parking spaces, and landscaping, was completed in 2021. Phase Two (Parcel 1) included a four-story, 90-room future hotel, 105 parking spaces, and landscaping. An approval by the Architectural Review Commission (ARC) would be required to proceed with construction of Phase 2.

On March 12, 2019, the applicant, Prest-Vuksic Architects, Inc. received approvals by the ARC, Case No. MISC 19-0005 approving the architecture and landscaping for a 90-room, four story Staybridge Suites hotel.

On July 29, 2021, the applicant, ACE Design LLC, filed a new application (MISC21-0023) for a revised design for the Staybridge Suites hotel.

January 10, 2023

On October 12, 2021, the Staybridge Suites Hotel project was brought before the ARC for a preliminary review and discussion of architectural design. The ARC requested for the item to be continued and rescheduled to a future ARC meeting as the project applicant was unavailable to provide a presentation to the Commissioners.

On October 26, 2021, the Staybridge Suites Hotel project was presented to the ARC as a preliminary review for architectural comments. The ARC provided design comments and concerns for the project, but no action was taken on the item as it was brought forth solely for ARC comments.

PROJECT SUMMARY

On December 20, 2022, the project applicant, PVG Architects on behalf of Desert Hospitality Group, submitted a revised design for the Staybridge Suites hotel (MISC 21-0023). The proposed hotel is four stories and contains 96-rooms totaling 83,106 square feet with guest amenities including a fitness room, outdoor pool, and patio area. There are two (2) vehicular access driveways off Technology Drive and associated parking areas. The project landscaping is comprised of a mix of low and moderate water usage desert native plant species.

A. Property Description:

The proposed hotel project will be situated at the northernmost part of Planning Area 5 (APN:694-190-096), Phase 2 of the hotel development under PP18-0002 on a 1.91-acre parcel north of the newly built Holiday Inn Express and Suites within the MPDSP.

B. Zoning, General Plan and Adjacent Uses:

Table 1 – Adjacent Land Use and Designations

	Existing Uses	General Plan	Zoning
Project Site	Vacant	Neighborhood Center (NC)	Planning Area (PA) 5 of MPD SP/ PC (2) Planned Commercial
North	Vacant	Neighborhood Center (NC)	PA 4 of MPDSP / S.I. Service Industrial
South	Holiday Inn Suites	Neighborhood Center (NC)	PA 5 of MPDSP / PC (2) Planned Commercial
East	Hotel (Fairfield Inn and Suites)	Town Center Neighborhood (TC)	PC-3, FCOZ – Planned Commercial, Freeway Commercial Overlay District
West	Vacant – Approved Millennium Apartments 330 Units	Town Center Neighborhood (TC)	PA 7 of MPDSP / PR Planned Residential - 22

Building Design and Architecture

The hotel architecture is a desert contemporary design. It is characterized by angular and layered pop-outs and complimentary contrasting earthtone exterior colors. The elevation depicts recessed windows with metal awnings adding shade and shadow elements throughout the building facade. The building exterior materials and finish supports the contemporary modern design including acrylic smooth sand stucco finish in five earthtones colors. Accent tile with wood design finish will be installed on the first floor, southwest corner, visible at the entrance of the proposed hotel building. The metal roofing is narrow batten in a dark bronzed color. The roof line of the main building is characterized by varying parapet heights generally at 47 feet high and punctuated by a butterfly roof tower as the tallest element at 62 feet in height.

Site Plan and Parking

The proposed hotel site will share vehicular and pedestrian access and drainage between Parcel 1 (Holiday Inn Express and Suites Hotel) and Parcel 2 (Staybridge Suites Hotel). The hotel is an “L” shape footprint centrally located on the project site with two access points from Technology Drive. Drive lanes are 30-feet wide, adequate for fire access and circulation with shared vehicular and pedestrian access between Parcel 1 and 2 from the west portion of both parcels. The parking area surrounds the building footprint, with retention areas to the west and southwest portion of the project site fronting Technology Drive. There are 108 parking spaces for the proposed hotel and 106 existing parking spaces (Holiday Inn Express and Suites Hotel) totaling in 214 parking spaces. The project will construct a retention basin which will serve parcels 1 and 2 of PM 37488.

Access and Circulation

The proposed hotel will have two vehicular access points, totaling four vehicle access points from Technology Drive as approved by PP18-0002 between the existing hotel and the proposed hotel.

Screening

The butterfly tower element serves as screening for the rooftop mechanical equipment. The butterfly tower element height of 15 feet high is sufficient for a man door access while completely screening the proposed mechanical equipment at 4 feet, 5 inches in height. The fire riser and electrical rooms are integrated into the first floor of the hotel. The pool equipment located behind the hotel will be screened using a block wall with an access gate.

Landscape

Landscape for the site consists of a mix of desert appropriate live plant materials which includes the following:

Trees:

- California Fan Palm (Washingtonia Fillifera), Swan Hill Olive Tree (Olea Europaea), Mulga Tree (Acacia Aneura).

All tree specimens will be a minimum 24-inch box size at the time of planting and low and moderate water use.

Shrubs/Accents/Groundcover:

- **Low Water Usage:** Parry's Agave, Ocahui Agave, Barbados Aloe, Grey Desert Spoon, Emu Bush, Pink Parade Yucca, Cimeron, Little Illie Olive
- **Moderate Water Usage:** Beauty Natal Plum, Green Carpet Natal Plum, Spotted Emo Bush, Purple Lantana, New Gold Lantana, Philodendron, Cape Honey Suckle

All proposed shrubs and plants will be a minimum 5-gallon size at the time of planting.

Hardscape:

- Primary ground cover: 3/8-inch Tan Decomposed Granite (Mojave Gold)
- Accent: Cobble, Copper Canyon – 1-inch to 3-inch rock
- Boulders: (84 total) which consist of 48 boulders which are 1 foot x 2 feet in size, 28 boulders which are 2 feet x 3 feet, and 8 boulders which are 3 feet x 4 feet.

Under the MPDSP, landscaping should provide shade where needed including parking areas. The landscape plan shows shade trees such as Swan Hill Olive and Mulga trees in the parking areas and around the retention areas. In addition, the landscape treatments should maximize the use of native desert and compatible drought-tolerant plant materials. The proposed landscape consists of native desert and drought-tolerant plan materials. Furthermore, final landscape plans will be submitted to the City's Planning Department and the Coachella Valley Water District for review and approval to ensure plant species are compliant with water conservation ordinance requirements.

ANALYSIS

Development Standards

The project site is zoned Planned Commercial (PC-2) within the MPDSP which allows for hotel uses with the approval of a Precise Plan (PP) by the Palm Desert Planning Commission in accordance with Palm Desert Municipal Code Section (PDMC) 25.72.030. The Planning Commission previously approved PP18-0002 which complied with development standards provided for Planning Area 5 of the Millennium Palm Desert Specific Plan. The table below summarizes the project's conformance analysis for the proposed hotel project, Staybridge Suites Hotel (Phase 2):

Table 2 – Development Standard Consistency

STANDARD	PC 2 (PLANNING AREA 5)	PROJECT	CONFORMS
Lot Size, Min.	1 acre	1.91 acre	Yes
Front Yard Setback	0'-0"	49'-6"	Yes
Side Yard Setback	0'-0"	56'-2", 11'-6"	Yes
Street Side Yard Setback	0'-0"	NA	NA
Rear Yard Setback	0'-0"	0'-0"	Yes
Floor Area Ratio	0.50	0.24	Yes

Maximum Height, Hotel and Mixed Use***	50'-0"	47' building height and 62'-0" tower height highlighting the entrance	Yes
Maximum No. of Stories	4 Stories	4 Stories	Yes
Maximum Building Size	100,000 square feet	83,106 square feet	Yes
Minimum Landscaping (% of lot area)	15%	22%	Yes
Parking Requirement	1.1 per guest unit – 106 parking spaces	108 parking spaces	Yes

Table 2 shows that the proposed project conforms with the MPDSP Development Standards. The project lot size is 1.91 acres which is above the minimum 1-acre lot size requirement. The front setback of 49 feet, 6 inches, side setbacks of 56 feet, 2 inches and 11 feet, 6 inches, and 0' rear yard setback is in conformance as the allowable setback is 0' from front, side, and rear yard. The building floor ratio is .24 which is within the .50 ratio standard. The proposed hotel is at four-stories which conforms with the height standard. The proposed hotel is 83,106 square feet which is within the 100,000 square foot maximum building size. The project site landscape area is 22% conforming with the 15% minimum landscape percentage lot area. The proposed 108 parking spaces exceeds the required 106 parking spaces.

Under the MPDSP, "Table 4 – Planning Areas 3,5 and 6 Development Standards", identifies the maximum height for a hotel is 50 feet, with a notation that "*Maximum height not including architectural projects and towers which may exceed this standard.*" The proposed hotel elevations show the building height of 47 feet with a butterfly roof tower element of an additional 15 feet extending the overall height to 62 feet. Since towers may exceed the 50 feet height standard, the proposed hotel conforms with the MPDSP.

Parking

Under PDMC Section 25.46.040 Parking Requirements, there is a parking ratio of 1.1 parking space per room. The proposed hotel contains 96 rooms which requires 106 parking spaces. The proposed site plan includes a total of 108 parking spaces, exceeding the minimum parking requirements by two 2spaces.

ZONING ORDINANCE SUMMARY

ARC approval of a design review is required for development of a vacant parcel for a proposed hotel project per PDMC Section 25.68.020(A). Findings for ARC decisions are listed under PDMC Section 25.68.040 – Findings of the ARC. Findings in support of the project are listed below: To approve a design review application, the ARC shall find the following:

- A. That the proposed development conforms to any legally adopted development standards.

The proposed hotel complies with the original development standards adopted per the MPDSP and is consistent with the prior entitlement approval under Planning Commission

Resolution No. 2724 regarding the building height, setbacks, parking, and number of hotel rooms. The proposed hotel elevations show the building height of 47 feet with a butterfly roof tower element of an additional 15 feet extending the overall height to 62 feet. Under the MPDSP, architectural projects and towers may exceed the 50-foot hotel height standard. The proposed hotel will have 96 rooms, the recently completed hotel has 96, totaling 192 rooms, and falls within the allowable range of the 175 to 250 rooms allowed under the MPDSP and CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration. The proposed development conforms with legally adopted development standards set forth by Planning Area 5 of the Millennium Palm Desert Specific Plan.

- B. That the design and location of the proposed development and its relationship to neighboring existing or proposed developments and traffic is such that it will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood; and that it will not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or proposed developments and that it will not create traffic hazards or congestion.

The proposed 4-story hotel is compatible with existing developments surrounding the project site. The existing site has been previously approved as a two-phased hotel development with Phase 1 (Holiday Inn Express & Suites) to the south of the proposed hotel. To the east area of the project site is a 4-story hotel, Fairfield Inn & Suites. The northeast area includes a federal building (Department of Motor Vehicles) and a local restaurant/brewery. The southern area consists of a 3-story hotel (Hampton Inn & Suites) and a multi-tenant commercial building with fast casual restaurants. The surrounding area consists of hotels and complimentary commercial uses. The proposed hotel project will utilize egress and ingress from Technology Drive. Under the MPDSP, a traffic study was prepared and identified Technology Drive as a "Collector Street" with an ultimate width of a 72-foot Right of way (ROW) which is an acceptable level of service. The site plan proposes 108 parking spaces exceeding the minimum parking requirement of 106 parking spaces.

- C. That the design and location of the proposed development is in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and is not detrimental to the harmonious, orderly, and attractive development contemplated by this title and the General Plan of the City

The proposed four-story hotel is an allowable land use within Planning Area 5 of the MPDSP. The land use and site plan were previously evaluated under Planning Commission Resolution No. 2724 which approved the second hotel on the project site, and the project conforms to all applicable development standards of the MPDSP. The architecture, landscaping, building height and scale complement the recently completed Holiday Inn Express and Suites hotel located south of the proposed project site. Existing developments within the site vicinity are a variety of mixed uses including office, retail, restaurant, four-story hotels, and nearby planned three-story multi-family apartment developments. The architecture, color palette and landscaping are designed to be harmonious, orderly, and attractive development envisioned by the General Plan and Zoning and MPDSP.

- D. That the design and location of the proposed development would provide a desirable environment for its occupants, as well as for its neighbors, and that it is aesthetically of good composition, materials, textures, and colors.

The proposed design utilizes high-quality finishes and features a contemporary style characterized by angular and layered pop-outs and complimentary contrasting earthtone

exterior colors. The buildings provide for a quality visual aesthetic along Technology Drive. The project proposes extensive onsite landscaping including a mix of desert appropriate live plant materials which is consistent with the existing newly built hotel to the south, .

- E. That the proposed use conforms to all the requirements of the zone in which it is located and all other applicable requirements.

The proposed development conforms with legally adopted development standards for Planning Area 5 of the MPDSP. A summary of the conformance with these development standards, including setbacks, lot coverage, building height, open space, and parking is provided on the conformance analysis under Table 2, provided on pages four and five of this staff report. As summarized, the project conforms with all applicable development standards. The proposed rooftop equipment and other site utilities are screened in accordance with PDMC 25.40.090.

- F. That the overall development of the land shall be designed to ensure the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The approved preliminary grading plan for PP18-0002 was utilized for the proposed hotel project to ensure the design of the project incorporates the proper improvements including adequately sized retention basins for onsite drainage. In addition, the overall building design ensures the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare. The proposed project includes hard surface pedestrian pathways and connections from the public right of way to ensure walkability throughout.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the ARC determines that the requirements of the findings have been met based on the analysis and approves the Design Review for Case No. MISC21-0023 as presented. Any modifications required by the ARC be added to the motion as conditions of approval.

- Attachment: 1. Project Exhibits
2. Resolution No. 2724 approving Precise Plan (PP) 18-0002
3. Parcel Map (TPM) 37488
4. Notice of Action for MISC21-0023 dated November 11, 2021