

Re: Development Standards Adjustment

Site Location: 501 North Wahsatch Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Zoning: R-4: Multi-Family Low

Request: The current parcel contains two single-family homes and a former laundromat on .2249 acres. We propose to convert the vacated laundromat to a single-family residence.

Code Section: Seeking a waiver of residential density on the site UDC Table 7.4.2-A. R-4 zoning allows Residential Density (maximum): 8 du/ac.

Justification: The Unified Development Code (UDC) states under 7.2.206 R-4: Multi-Family Low, that the zone district accommodates attached and detached single-family, two-family, and small multi-family dwelling structures. Its development is intended to be adjacent to collector or arterial streets, in transition areas at the edges of low-density neighborhoods, and in areas adjacent to R-Flex, Mixed-Use, or PDZ districts where similar densities or intensities of development are permitted.

Currently the parcel contains two single-family homes and a former laundromat on .2249 acres. This amounts to a current residential density of two homes on .2249 acres equaling 8.89 du/ac. Our proposed conversion of the vacated laundromat to a single-family residence would increase the density to 13.33 du/ac (three homes on .2249 acres.) No new building is being constructed on the site. The calculated increase in density (du/ac) is due to the conversion of the former laundromat into a residence.

The lot's density with two existing homes and a vacant former laundromat exceeds the R-4 density of 8 du/ac, as the historic makeup of the neighborhood's overall density came well before a development code.

The former laundromat, which we seek to convert into a single-family home, was built in 1904. The single-family residences sharing the lot were constructed in 1917. Owing to this historical era, predating the common use of motorized vehicles, homes were built near each other. The community was dimensioned at "walking scale", or, at best, horse and carriage scale.

As time progressed, and electric washers and dryers were more easily afforded by homeowners in the area, fewer patrons visited the laundromat. Even small ranch and bungalow homes have sufficient space for stackable washer and dryer units. The laundromat was no longer profitable, and became available for sale.

Compensating Benefit: As the R-4 designation allows, under its uses, a single-family detached dwelling is a permitted use and the designation of this zoning is primarily a residential category.

Its previous use as a commercial laundromat does not conform to the current zoning on this site. The home would seem to be a preferred use of the building, complimenting the neighborhood of like-vintage, small residences. There will be a diminished amount of both, noise and light to the neighborhood, following conversion from a commercial use to residential. Although a small step, the addition of an affordable home within the City seems a goal with great appeal.

The interior of the building will be converted into a more traditional residential layout. The exterior of the building with its historic façade will remain as it is. There will be some enhancements to the exterior. This primarily consists of additional landscaping around the frontages of Wahsatch Avenue and East St. Vrain Street to comply with current City landscaping standards. Large shade trees at the southeast of the site will be preserved.

With the conversion of the site from commercial to residential, park and school fees will be required at the time of building permit. This provides a contribution to open space and educational needs, not contributed under the previous commercial designation.

Recommendation: The applicant recommends the conversion of the former laundromat into a single-family residence. We believe that this is consistent with the surrounding residential neighborhood use. While the R-4 zoning maximum is exceeded, the benefits of having an occupied building providing much needed housing in the area would seem to provide an acceptable request for a development standards adjustment.