

**CITY OF OLYMPIA**  
**Olympia Design Review Board**

**CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW**  
**STAFF REPORT**  
**August 23, 2018**

**Case Number:** 18-2735

**Applicant:** Big Rock Capital Investments

**Project Representative:** Garner Miller of MSGS Architects

**City Staff Contact:** Nicole Floyd, Senior Planner P. 360-570-3768  
E. [nfloyd@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:nfloyd@ci.olympia.wa.us)

**Site Address:** 308 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue East

**Project Description:** 28,000sf four story mixed use building. 1<sup>st</sup> floor to contain 7,000sf of commercial use, upper floors to provide 30 residential units.

**Zoning District:** Downtown Business

**Applicable Design Criteria:** Basic Commercial and Downtown Commercial

**Comprehensive Plan:** Central Business District

**Scenic Vista:** Not Applicable

**Critical Areas:** None present

**SEPA Determination:** Exempt – Project meets the downtown area exemption criteria

**Notification:** Notice of the Neighborhood Meeting, Application, and Design Review Board Meeting was posted on the site, mailed to the adjacent property owners, and sent to Recognized Neighborhood Associations in the project vicinity on July 6, 2018.

**Board Responsibility:** The Design Review Board will review the project to determine compliance with the applicable design criteria and make a recommendation to the Site Plan Review Committee regarding the adequacy of the projects design. The Community Planning and Development Director makes the final decision. Conceptual Design Review involves the major design elements of a project as they relate to the general project design and how they comply with the specific design criteria of the design district. In situations where explicit compliance is not feasible, the Olympia Municipal Code encourages creative solutions in meeting the requirements as long as these design solutions are equal to, or better than, the guidelines listed in the requirement sections.

**Staff Provided Assistance:** City staff evaluated the project based on the applicable design standards and prepared a variety of support materials including design review checklists to assist in the Board's assessment of this project (see attached). This report focuses on issues that staff recommends for Board discussion. Suggested conditions of approval have been provided for the Board's review and recommendation.

**Project Context / Existing Site Conditions:** The site was most recently occupied by Griswold Office Supply but has been vacant since 2004 when the structure was severely damaged by fire. In 2016, the City of Olympia purchased the property with the intent to use the Community Renewal Area Process to help revitalize the blighted property within downtown.

In 2017 the City awarded a contract to redevelop the site to Big Rock Capital Investments. The project proposal will remove the existing structure and develop a new building in its place. The proposal is an urban design that occupies the entire site and does not include vehicular parking or landscaping.

**Review of Design Criteria:**

This project is required to comply with both the Basic Commercial Design Criteria (OMC 18.110) and the Downtown Design Criteria (OMC 18.120). Staff reviewed the project for compliance with these criteria and has provided a detailed analysis within the attached Design Review Checklists. The checklists identify areas of compliance and deficiency. Recommended conditions of approval are provided for the Board's consideration.

As outlined in the checklists, staff has found that the project design generally addresses the criteria within the code, however there are a few issues that staff suggests the Board pay specific attention to, as follows:

**Pedestrian Plaza Design (OMC 18.120.050, 18.16.080, and 18.110.020):**

A pedestrian plaza is not required for this project, however a small plaza has been provided by the applicant. This plaza is tucked under the second story of the building directly adjacent to the alley. The plaza includes a planter / seat / wall and bicycle parking. Although not extensive, it is located in a way creates a more prominent entry to the alley and allows for some pedestrian space. The bike parking occupies the bulk of the space. Staff looks to the Board to evaluate the design of this pedestrian plaza to see if minor modifications to the layout might provide enhanced functionality for a variety of pedestrian amenities.

**Plant Selection (OMC 18.110.180):**

A small amount of planting area is proposed within the pedestrian plaza. Staff looks to the Board to provide feedback regarding preferred plant selection within this small planter. Staff has prepared a condition of approval asking for additional information regarding the anticipated plantings with the Detail Design Review Packet.

**Written Public Comments:**

The Design Review Board does not take verbal public comment during the meeting. No written comments were submitted that directly relate to the project design prior to the date of the Design Review Board packet distribution. Public comments are available for review by the Board and include questions regarding:

- Questions about construction methods and impacts to adjacent structures.
- Concerns about impacts of the project design on adjacent structures. Plans appear to reduce the height of the neighboring property's wall. This raises questions about ownership and responsibility.
- Questions about property line locations and impacts to existing facilities such as solar panels.
- Questions about construction methods/hours of operation/ noise etc.

As these comments are not directly related to the proposed façade or exterior design of the structure, the Design Review Board does not have authority to address them. Instead, they will be addressed through the Site Plan Review Committee's review of the project.

Any comments submitted following the packet distribution, and prior to the start of the meeting that relate to the project design will be forwarded to the Board for review.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Based on review and analysis of the applicable Design Review Code Criteria, staff has determined that the proposal meets the intent of the Design Review requirements. Staff recommends the Design Review Board to recommend approval of the Conceptual Design to the Site Plan Review Committee, with the following conditions:

- A. Context Plan:** Recommend approval.
- B. Preliminary Site & Landscape Design:** Recommend conditional approval as follows:
  - 1. Cut sheets for each product intended to be installed in the pedestrian plazas shall be provided with the detail design review packet (OMC 18.110.050).
  - 2. Provide details regarding the landscaping and irrigation proposed within the planter wall with the Detail Design Review packet. (OMC 18.110.180 ).
- C. Preliminary Building Design:** Recommend approval:

**Submitted By:** Nicole Floyd, Senior Planner

- **Attachment 1:** This Staff Report
- **Attachment 2:** Design Review Checklists (Basic Commercial OMC 18.110 & Downtown OMC 18.120)
- **Attachment 3:** Concept Design Review application and plans