

Feeder Supply Neighborhood Meeting

Thursday, March 14, 2013 – Conference Room A, 281 North College Avenue

Meeting Attendees:

Applicant - Jon Prouty

City Staff - Ryan Mounce, Timothy Wilder, Seth Lorson and Sherry Albertson-Clark of Planning; Karen McWilliams and Josh Weinberg of Historic Preservation

Approximately 20 residents attended the meeting

Applicant Presentation

The existing building has no setback from the street, but the new addition is setback further for the patio and line of sight down Linden to see the side of the Feeder Supply Building.

Will add windows on the second level for sunlight and to use the upper levels as a conference or banquet room.

A 28' alley for fire access is located behind the Feeder Supply building. Behind this are the apartments. There are three small additions to the building that in one study were deemed not to have historical value that would be demolished.

The doorway and loading dock are preserved for the patio, but not used as they don't meet current codes. Tearing into older buildings and adapting to meet code can be difficult and there is the possibility of damaging the historic structure.

Many of the windows on the bottom level would be enlarged or saved.

As you come down Linden, we want you to be able to look through the courtyard and see as much of the west elevation as possible.

The building features beautiful stepped parapet walls - very unique; gabled tin-roofs; stone base with stucco-covered brick and the large, high glass front. The building has a lot of structural integrity for its age.

On the east facing facade, there is the original mill portion and then the warehouse addition. The goal is to keep this exactly as you see it today to the maximum extent possible. Part of the reason for adding windows to the second floor is so you don't have to change the existing street front facade on the lower level.

An indoor/outdoor patio with steel and glass on the side facing Willow. On Linden there is a sense it should be participating more in the Old Town architectural design aspects, but on Willow you're more into an industrial or quasi-industrial area with unique design characteristics. An entrance with a ramp for handicap accessibility. Old freight door will be kept and respected, but not used.

One suggestion the LPC had was don't impact the addition by putting a second level or elevator on it. The second level is setback 28 feet and the elevator has moved to a place to the interior of the addition, not adjacent or impacting the existing building.

The Mill portion is the jewel to be saved and make it the focal area for views.

The apartments are proposed behind the building.

There is a need and opportunity for the City to decide what kind of character we want to have unfold as Willow develops. It shouldn't be just what Old Town looks like, but what exactly should it look like? What design elements that should participate with Old Town or are new and eclectic? When advance planning was purposing the river district, two purposes were 1) creating a unique, new neighborhood between old town and the river and 2) create a sense of place. Willow should continue to evolve in an eclectic and unique industrial design statement/fashion -- complementary to Old Town.

There is an old mill across from the co-op with cornices, but not as elaborate as Old Town. A nice base, simple sills that create an elegant mill style.

A lot of steel, brick, concrete, railroads, tin. Many businesses in the area. New buildings as well (mixed-use, townhouses, Aztlan Center).

Suggested to take a look at the mill building concept as a way to approach architecture for the apartments. Originally looked at more modern or contemporary architecture, but now looking at using a mill building as a theme for the district, but also complementary to the theater building. Rectilinear and horizontal elements.

Proposing a building that is an interpretation of a mill building design. Essential is a central element that projects 2 feet with stone detail on the corner and sides, picking up the stone base. Articulation in terms of bay windows, decks. Horizontal detail with the brick and a cornice, but not too ornate with setbacks on the upper levels.

Looking at a plan view of the apartment, the tower element has the elevator and stairs and mailboxes and can go through it into a courtyard with trees, grass, shrubs, etc. Created studio apartments on the ground level with the intent that in the future if the retail trade increases in the area, there is the opportunity for those to be retail.

Concept for spaces and design for bicycle usage. Bicycle locked in unit with appropriate space and design elements.

Comments, Question & Answers

Q: The Feeder Supply and New Building - is that all restaurant and what is the square footage?

A: Yes; 7,000 sf. What will probably not be successful in that area is a small restaurant; it needs to be a destination restaurant.

Q: What kind of parking for the restaurant?

A: The parking that will exist will be parking that is on the street and there's about 50 that will go in. The parking on Willow will be parallel parking on both sides and diagonal parking in the middle down the full length, about 220 spaces. About 50 to be built with this project and about 70 within a block and a half on Linden and 16 on Pine. City has talked about building another parking structure but we don't know when.

Q: What kind of access is there to the south, is there an alleyway?

A: A 30' public access.

Q: Is there any impact on the building next door (Thompson Building)?

A: Don't anticipate any impact.

Q: What additional parking is there for the apartments?

A: The apartments have 1 parking space per unit. We feel we're a bicycle city and people walk or bike in this location, but most people still own a car. We don't want to build an apartment without having room for each unit to have a car.

Q: Where will the parking be?

A: On the ground level, under the apartments.

Q: Are you the architect, owner, or builder?

A: Have property under contract, but don't own it yet.

Q: The Northern Colorado Feeder Supply, are they going out of business?

A: They are thinking of moving to a new location from what I have been told.

Q: Will you be the owner of the restaurant?

A: Remains to be seen, we don't want to own a business (restaurant) we don't know how to run. Several established restaurant folks from town have been talking with us.

C/Q: What matters to me is our loss as an agriculture person who buys their feed from them. A lot of people interact with Feeder Supply and support their business. What you told this lady is different than from what I have heard. I'm not sure where this stands. We have agriculture roots here and this is what Fort Collins is about, the community and in the county and rural areas supporting the city and coming in. I see this whole area becoming a little Boulder. Were turning into that and every little piece is being taken by developers and losing a lot of land to tax-base money. I think the individual person, the small business person gets lost in the shuffle. In the whole process I never heard anything about the owner being contacted in the review process. Did you talk to Dennis, is he on board? I heard eminent domain thrown around.

A: If Dennis was not interested and very supportive we wouldn't be doing this project at all. We've had lots of problems with the railroads because the railroads in the area own a spider web of archaic easements. They are very hard to get rid of (easements) and the railroads are not easy to deal with.

A: (City) In order for the City to accept a formal application, the owner's authorization is required to pursue a project. No known eminent domain is being pursued relative to this property.

Q: Has the City looked at the surrounding properties, with interest to change them? There are a number of small businesses that you're talking about changing the looks of them.

A: (City) Not that I am aware of unless an individual comes to us with a development proposal. There was a hearing in this room Tuesday for the Encompass Project which is on the corner of Linden near the Linden Bridge, north of El Burrito. That's the only other thing I am aware of in the area.

C/Q: I live in downtown now and plan on moving into the Legacy Senior Apartments for quiet, and I am concerned about noise impacts in the area. It is getting pretty bad in Old Town. I wanted to move to a quiet part of town, will this be a bar/restaurant or restaurant with bar, and what will be the noise impact?

A: Our thought is that it will be a destination restaurant and it will have a bar, but the bar is not the primary purpose.

Q: What is the use of the Feeder building itself?

A: Tables and chairs; we would like to see minimal changes to this portion of the building. The ambiance is already there.

Q: Can you give us an example of a destination restaurant.

A: Austin's on Harmony. The folks redoing the Stonehouse Grill, that is surprisingly big. There are a lot of 3,500 and 4,000 square foot restaurants, but when you go to 6,000, it cuts it way down.

C: I have an interest with Wendy as we work with the theater. One of the things that is striking to me is the character of Jon. Many of you have known him a long time and he has been a real anchor in our community and you know he is involved in a number of important social projects in town. It is not something he talks a lot about, and one of the important things he has done with the theater -- we had aspirations of bringing the theater across the railroad tracks when most people were unwilling to take that kind of risk. Jon played a key and important role in helping us to do that. He has also built some apartments next to the theater and the theater is also seen as a destination -- a place people come to. In order for something to succeed across the railroad tracks, it does have to be a destination. We will have a theater and people coming in on the ground and helping to make it a safer neighborhood. We think this concept, mixed-use, restaurant fit very well with the theater. I'd like to see the City go further and to tie the two together with a pedestrian bridge to cross the tracks and Linden Street, particularly for things like the gallery walk. This will help integrate the neighborhood. I thank Jon very much for his forward-looking view on what might be done.

C: I own a restaurant with a variety of different buildings in Old Town. I've been there 34 years and I remember 34 years ago looking forward to what Old Town might look like. A lot of conversation back then was about how Jefferson would block things moving forward. Is there any pressure or how does the City view a seed mill as the pollution it is creating. Maybe that's not the best area for these uses anymore.

A: (City) Those are uses that are viable there as long as they want to be there. If we get a proposal such as this we react to it and see how it meets City standards. This site is a well-known-landmark as is Ranchway Feeds and both play an important role in the area. As we've talked with Jon on the evolution of this on the design in November, the concept has been to design something that fits into the neighborhood, not necessarily something from Old Town. Not aware of anything City-related that has encouraged Feeder Supply to leave; that is a decision they will have to make as individual owners.

Q: Did they get away from the theme of the fort? The original fort? Nothing has happened and is the theme of the fort going to carry through?

A: (City-Historic Preservation) There was at one point some interest in building a reconstructed fort, mimicking the original fort. That project fell by the wayside and I have not heard much interest in trying to do anything with the fort site itself. Part of the problem is many buildings now sit on what used to be the fort site. The parade grounds are now under many buildings around the area. Talking about reflecting the heritage of the fort site through sidewalk details and elements. More interpretive rather than physically building a new fort.

A: (Audience) The streetscape improvement project that has been mostly completed is going to include a series of 8 interpretive signs that will be installed in the coming months. I helped prepare the signs and they will be installed up and down Linden Street. Each sign discusses a different topic, one will be about the fort, one about the mills, one about local Native Americans, one about the railroads, etc. The City is creating what will be like an outdoor museum so people can visit the area and learn about the history along the way.

C: It is important to remember that it was not what people typically think of as a fort. No walls, no defensible structure, but a series of small buildings and parade walls. Thought there were no foundations on the fort, but some people have found foundations in the area. Even found horse shoes.

C: When the fort closed and the railroad came in, it was actually a residential district, so what you may actually be finding are foundations from this era.

C: We talk about the River District or across Jefferson, that is all Old Town. Old Town was all the angled streets and many people working down there have a kinship with the angled streets that go down to the river, that really is all of Old Town. You have a huge vacant area directly across the street from the feed mill, the southeast corner, that is becoming more and more developable. Very likely there may be other proposals nearby. The commercial aspects of the feed mills and the battery company -- as more and more happens those properties are likely to be something else in the future. I can even see the day the big Ranchway decides they want a different location or space. Keeping what few significant buildings is going to be important. Once you had the silver crash in Colorado you had a shift away from the more ornate Victorian architecture and many other commercial properties built after 1893, more and more of the modern brick structures that have nice cornices, that have nice elements, but a simpler architecture. The Feeder Supply is not Victorian but represents a commercial brick building. I think this keeps that feel very well.

Q: As more people are down there with more units, are there any additional plans for more police presence in the area?

A: (City) As the demand increases, the police department would have to make that determination. Also goes to City Council for the budget request. I can't give a specific as to when/if that would happen. The police are made aware of applications coming through the process and have an idea of areas changing and growing.

Q: Does any of this growth impact the homeless shelters?

A: (City) The Open Door Mission now operated by the Denver Rescue Mission have recently talked to the City about looking at another location -- don't know if they will move or not. Possibly fix or expand their current site or find a different location. Deciding where they need to be. Catholic Charities, we haven't heard about changes/expansion.

C: We had the very same concerns when siting the Bas Bleu theater, but with people coming in and other foot traffic, it tends to make the place much safer.

C: I really like the way the two buildings look (two interesting buildings side by side). The apartments I don't love, it looks too much like one big square. A brick building I do like, is the energy research building on College near the river. I would like to see the apartments look more like that.

Q: How many apartments are you proposing?

A: 54

A: (City) City has a threshold when a project exceeds 50 units/75 bedrooms, it requires Planning & Zoning Board approval.

C: The only thing I worry about is parking, there isn't enough parking down there now. It's only due to my private parking (El Burrito) now in the back, I would be in bad shape. People park all day to go to work and we lose spaces in front of the restaurant.

A: We have 54 spaces on-site with the intention of giving every unit its own parking space. The plans for Willow, we have to improve all of the frontage from Linden to Schrader's property. Parallel parking on both sides and diagonal parking in the middle, 220 spaces from the City's plan. Right now the streets are not providing or realizing parking from a huge amount of public right-of-way.

Q: Will the other side of Willow be curb-and-gutter?

A: I'm told we'll be doing both and there will be a reimbursement provision for when the other side develops.

Q: Will we see curb and gutter on both sides of Willow all the way down from Linden and to College?

A: I can't commit to the City's timing.

A: (City) It is a question of timing, when there is more development occurring in the area those funds may be available sooner rather than later. As you see more activity those funds can be diverted to the area. Timing wise we hope it happens sooner.

Q: Will it be free parking along Willow?

A: (City) As far as I know; no intent to meter.

Q: What do you anticipate the capacity for the restaurant is?

A: I don't have an estimate. I certainly think there will be a substantial need for parking and that's why we're in favor of improving the parking along Willow; estimate 50 new spaces.

Q: What is the time-table?

A: Not determined which will be built first, or together.

C: I see parking as being a disaster down there. There's not enough.

Next steps:

2 weeks after this meeting, applicant has the ability to submit a formal application. We would do the first round of review which takes 3 weeks and provide comments back to him about changes needed. He will take the information and submit a set of revisions or re-submittal, the next review is only 2 weeks.

Potentially a couple months of review. when the project gets all issues resolved or near to being resolved, we send notices out two weeks prior to the P&Z Board hearing. P&Z hearings are held in Council Chambers and we encourage people to come to those and participate. From any point now until the future we encourage you to call us to keep up to date or ask questions.

The City's web-page has a page under Current Planning that has a list of current development applications to check status. Once plans get submitted to us, we put those online.