



STAFF REPORT

Downtown Design Commission

11/21/2024

Agenda Item VII. A.
Case No. CE-01133
Property Address 616 N Walnut Ave
Applicant Name Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority
105 N Hudson Ave, Suite 101
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
District DBD

A. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. To provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission for a request to close the platted right-of-way for 6th Street between the intersection of Harrison and Walnut Avenues on the west and I-235 on the east and the platted right-of-way for the alley running east-west between N Walnut on the west and I-235 on the east, NE 5th/I-235 on-ramp to the south and Harrison Avenue to the north.

B. BACKGROUND

1. Location

These rights-of-ways are located within the parcel of land bound by N Walnut, N Harrison, I-235, and NE 5th/I-235 on-ramp.

2. Site History/Existing Conditions/Intended Use

The 1919 Sanborn Maps shows that this area was located in an established residential neighborhood, consisting of single-family homes, duplexes, and small apartment buildings. None of these structures remain today. Currently this site is vacant.

This site and others were acquired by ODOT for the construction of the I-235 Interstate Highway. The Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority (OCURA) is the current owner and is working with a developer for the redevelopment of the site. The site was previously rezoned into the Downtown Business District (DBD). Staff has had communications with OCURA and the development team regarding the anticipated project but no application has been submitted at this time.

3. Surrounding Environment

The surrounding area contains office uses, restaurants, apartments, and vacant land. Adjacent to the east is I-235.

4. Previous Actions/Other

According to Section 59-3250.2.C., the Downtown Design Review Committee shall have the power to “comment upon and provide recommendations on actions proposed to other City boards, committees, and commissions with respect to the effect of such actions upon the District.”

In 2022, this property was rezoned into the Downtown Design District (PC-10810).

C. ITEMS IN COMPLIANCE

1. Unless noted below in Section D. Issues and Considerations, all other case items of this proposal comply with the Development Regulations and Guidelines of the Downtown Design District zoning ordinance as referenced below:

None

Note: All other Regulations and Guidelines of the Downtown Design District zoning ordinance not listed above are either not applicable to this case or apply to elements of this project to be considered as a separate case at a later date.

D. ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

1. Development Guidelines

This proposal may not comply with the Development Guidelines of the Downtown Design District zoning ordinance as follows:

a. **RE: Request to close street right-of-way and alleyways, Case Item A.**

- 1) Description: The applicant proposes to close the street right-of-way and alleyway for the site.
- 2) Reference: §7200.1.G.(4) Development Pattern
“(a) *New development should incorporate the approximate scale and proportions of the traditional block pattern, concentrating mass and height at key intersections and along major pedestrian corridors.*”

Reference: §7200.1.A. Purpose and Intent.

“This commercial district is intended to support diverse forms of business and residential activity, including mixed-uses in a single building, within the central area of the City. Development regulations and guidelines in this district are intended to:

- (1) Promote the development and redevelopment of the downtown area in a manner consistent with the unique and diverse design elements and urban character of the downtown districts;*
- (2) Ensure that a proposed use is compatible with the commercial, cultural, historic, and governmental significance of the downtown districts;*
- (3) Promote the downtown area as a vital mixed-use area;*
- (4) Create a network of pleasant, safe, and connected public spaces and pedestrian amenities in the downtown area;*
- (5) Enhance existing structures and circulation patterns; ... ”*

Reference: §7200.2. Downtown Business District (DBD).

A. *Purpose and Intent.*

“The DBD District is intended to support diverse forms of business and residential activity, including mixed-uses in a single building, within the central area of the City. Development regulations and guidelines in this district are

intended to promote the development and redevelopment of the downtown area in a manner consistent with the unique and diverse design elements and urban character of the downtown district; ensure that uses are compatible with the commercial, cultural, historical and governmental significance of downtown; promote the downtown as a vital mixed-use area; create a network of pleasant, safe, and connected public spaces and pedestrian amenities; enhance existing structures and circulation patterns; and encourage preservation and restoration historic features.”

Considerations: The street right-of-way and alley located within this site are no longer extant, having been removed for the construction of I-235. Even if they were to be reconstructed, they would dead-end into the interstate highway. This, combined with the unusual shape of the lot created by the interstate on-ramp and the angular intersection of Harrison and Walnut, create a condition where redeveloping the site with the typical block pattern and lot configuration is not practical.

The anticipated development for this site, which will require review and approval of a Certificate of Approval by the Downtown Design Commission, intends to use the entire property for one development, further negating the need for reinstatement of streets and alleys across the site.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Provide a recommendation of **approval** to the Planning Commission for the request to close the platted right-of-way for 6th Street between the intersection of Harrison and Walnut Avenues on the west and I-235 on the east and the platted right-of-way for the alley running east-west between N Walnut on the west and I-235 on the east, NE 5th/I-235 on-ramp to the south and Harrison Avenue to the north.

Note: Staff recommendations do not constitute Committee decisions.

Attachments: Zoning Map, CE Application, Drawings, Photos.