



## PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** June 15, 2022

**TO:** Hearing Officer

**SUBJECT:** Minor Conditional Use Permit #6924 &  
Certificate of Exception #391

**LOCATION:** 139 South Catalina Avenue

**APPLICANT:** Robert Montano, Adept Architecture

**ZONING DESIGNATION:** CD-5-LD-23 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue sub-district, Green Street Village Landmark District), CD-5 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue sub-district) and RM-48 (Multi-Family Residential, 0-48 dwelling units per acre)

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Medium Mixed Use and High Density Residential

**CASE PLANNER:** Alison Walker

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt the Environmental Determination and the Specific Findings in Attachment A to **approve** Minor Conditional Use Permit #6924 and Certificate of Exception #391 with the conditions in Attachment B.

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**PROJECT PROPOSAL:** In conjunction with the construction of a new mixed-use project with surface and subterranean parking, the following are proposed:

- 1) Minor Conditional Use Permit: To allow valet parking for the nonresidential portion of the mixed-use project; and
- 2) Certificate of Exception: To allow a lot line adjustment between adjacent parcels 5735-027-032 (Parcel #1) and 5735-027-005 (Parcel #2). The proposed lot line adjustment would shift the interior lot line north 10 feet, taking 1,760 square feet from Parcel #1 and allocating to Parcel #2.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

This project has been determined to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, (Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and Section 15305, (Class 5, Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations); and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt classes; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances. Section 15303 exempts from environmental review the construction of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures, such as but not limited to a new single-family residence, duplex, store, motel, office, or accessory structures. The project includes the use of vertical lifts for valet parking services which is within the scope of the Class 3 categorical exemption. Section 15305 exempts minor lot line adjustments in areas with an average slope of less than 20 percent that do not result in any changes in land use or density, or in the creation of any new parcel. The lot line adjustment would shift an interior lot line in an area with an average slope less than 20 percent, and would not result in any changes in land use or density or creation of any new parcel.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Site characteristics:**

The site is comprised of six adjoining lots totaling approximately 1.21 acres on the west side of South Catalina Avenue between East Green Street and Cordova Street. The project site is currently developed with an existing 62,663 square-foot nonresidential building (Thatcher Medical Building at 960 East Green Street), and a surface parking lot with 202 parking spaces that serves the existing nonresidential building.

**Adjacent Uses:**

- North – Commercial
- South – Multi-Family Residential
- East – Mixed-Use
- West – Commercial and Multi-Family Residential

**Adjacent Zoning:**

- North – CD-5-LD-23 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue sub-district, Green Street Village Landmark District)
- South – RM-48 (Multi-Family Residential, 0-48 dwelling units per acre)
- East – CD-5 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue sub-district) and RM-48 (Multi-Family Residential, 0-48 dwelling units per acre)
- West – CD-5 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue sub-district)

**Previous Zoning Cases on this Property:**

Minor Conditional Use Permit #6829: To allow nonresidential parking to incorporate tandem configuration. Of the 208 nonresidential parking spaces included in the proposed project, 28 spaces, or 13.5 percent, of the nonresidential parking spaces, are

proposed in tandem configuration. Approved with conditions on July 1, 2020.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The applicant, Robert Montano of Adept Architecture, has submitted a Minor Conditional Use Permit (MCUP) application to allow valet parking to serve nonresidential uses within a planned mixed-use project. The mixed-use project was approved through Concept Design Review on November 12, 2019, and Final Design Review on July 14, 2020. The approved project includes the construction of a new three-story multi-family residential structure and two levels of subterranean parking containing a total of 362 parking spaces. The existing 62,663 square-foot Thatcher Medical Center building would remain and be incorporated into the project.

The proposed valet services would be limited to 200 nonresidential spaces located on level one of the subterranean parking structure and would serve employees and visitors of the Thatcher Medical Center. A majority of the parking for the residential component of the project would be concentrated on level two. The Zoning Code allows valet parking with the approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit.

The Certificate of Exception (CE) application would shift the interior lot line between adjacent parcels 5735-027-032 would and 5735-027-005 (Parcel #2) 10 feet to the north, taking 1,760 square feet from Parcel #1 and allocating it to Parcel #2. The remaining four parcels that make up the project site would remain unaffected by the proposal. A CE application is required for a lot line adjustment between two or more adjacent parcels. No demolition of existing structures or new construction was proposed as part of this application. Further, the application does not address the design or construction of any structures or improvements previously approved for the project site.

## **ANALYSIS**

The subject site is located within the RM-48 (Multi-Family Residential, 0-48 dwelling units per acre), CD-5 LD-23 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue sub-district, Green Street Village Landmark District) and CD-5 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue sub-district) zoning districts. A purpose of the RM-48 zoning district is to promote multi-family residential developments having maximum economic life and stability, while the Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue Sub-district identifies existing rear parking lots as opportunities for compatible, residential and mixed-use in-fill development in conjunction with structured parking. The planned project includes the replacement of the existing surface parking lot with a multi-family residential structure, and a two-level subterranean garage. The requested applications facilitate the construction of the planned mixed-use project and are further described and analyzed below.

### Minor Conditional Use Permit: To allow valet parking

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 17.46.020.M (Basic Requirements for Off-Street Parking and Loading – Valet parking), valet parking (attendant parking) is subject to the approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit (MCUP). Valet parking is defined as a parking facility where a lot attendant parks vehicles for drivers. The MCUP process allows the City to review a project to determine if it would be compatible with the surrounding area and require adherence to specific conditions related to the operation of the proposed use. The Hearing Officer may approve the MCUP only after making six findings in the affirmative. These findings relate to a project meeting

the intent and purpose of the subject property's zoning district and the Zoning Code, not having a negative impact on the surrounding properties, and being compatible with surrounding uses among other criteria.

Valet parking would serve the nonresidential parking spaces on level one of the subterranean parking structure. The parking attendant would be on-site at all times during the Thatcher Medical Center building operation hours. Of the 200 parking spaces available on level one for nonresidential uses, 182 are vertical lifts, which is a type of tandem parking configuration, with the remaining being single car parking spaces. The valet parking attendant would assist employees and customers in using the parking facilities.

As it relates to the residential component of the mixed-use project, the majority of the residential parking will be located on level two of the parking structure. As proposed, no more than 30 percent of the parking spaces for the residential use would be arranged in a tandem configuration, pursuant to 17.46.080.B.2 of the Zoning Code. The valet parking attendant would not assist residents or their guests in using the parking facilities.

The proposed valet parking utilizing vertical lifts within the subterranean garage allows more parking spaces to be provided without a negative impact to the surrounding uses. The provision of valet parking within the subterranean parking structure provides a simplified parking experience, may allow for greater parking capacity across subterranean levels, and greater safety because of the familiarity of the attendant with the structure and mechanical equipment. The proposed mechanical lifts to be used for valet parking may also reduce the amount of land devoted to parking by providing a more efficient use of space. In addition, all parking spaces would comply with applicable provisions of the Zoning Code, such as standards for parking space dimensions, aisle widths, vertical clearances, and access.

Staff anticipates that the valet parking services utilizing vertical tandem lifts within a subterranean garage would not impact those working or residing on the property, or the surrounding properties. Valet parking requires that a parking attendant be available to park cars for drivers, and a required condition of the approval is that the parking attendant be on duty at all times the nonresidential component (Thatcher Medical Center) of the mixed-use project is in operation. The presence of a parking attendant provides a simplified parking experience with assurance of the orderly movement of cars within the parking area.

#### Certificate of Exception – Lot Line Adjustment to shift an interior lot line

Applicants may request a CE application for a lot line adjustment between two or more adjacent parcels, where: 1) the land taken from one parcel is added to the adjacent parcel; and 2) a greater number of parcels than originally existed is not thereby created. The Hearing Officer may approve a CE provided the resulting parcels conform to the General Plan, any applicable Specific Plan, and zoning and building ordinances.

The applicant's proposal would take land from one parcel and add to an adjacent parcel for the purpose of providing emergency egress from the rear of the property to the public right-of-way and establish a permanent setback from the Thatcher Medical Center to establish a no-build zone consistent with California Building Code requirements. As demonstrated in the following table, a greater number of parcels would not result, and the total size of the two subject parcels would not change (i.e. no net increase or decrease).

Parcel	Zone	Address	Assessor's Identification Number	Existing Lot Area (square feet)	Proposed Lot Area (square feet)
1	CD-5-LD-23	960 East Green Street	5735-027-032	10,560	8,800
2	CD-5	99 South Catalina Avenue (to be 139 South Catalina Avenue)	5735-027-005	10,560	12,320
			Total	21,120	21,120

In the CD-5 zoning district, the minimum lot width and minimum lot size are determined through the subdivision process. After the lot line adjustment, there would be no net gain or loss of total lot square footage as the area from Parcel 1 is proposed to be allocated to Parcel 2. Though they are separate lots, the two parcels are proposed to be developed as one project site. The Thatcher Medical Center is located on Parcel 1 and a portion of the new residential building and parking structure serving the medical offices and residences would be located on Parcel 2 and other adjoining lots to the south.

The mapping action would facilitate the construction of the planned multi-family residential building and subterranean parking structure on Parcel 2 and adjoining parcels to the south. The proposed building would be in compliance with the Zoning Code development standards, including the setback requirements, garden and common area requirements, and parking requirements.

**GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:**

The project site is designated Medium Mixed Use and High Density Residential in the General Plan Land Use Element and is subject to the Central District Specific Plan. The purpose of the Central District Specific Plan is to provide for a diverse mix of land uses designed to create the primary business, financial, retailing, and government center of the City. The proposed request to allow for valet parking is consistent with General Plan Land Use Element Policy 19.3 (Parking Management), which encourages management of parking to reduce the amount of land devoted to frequently vacant parking lots through parking management tools. Valet service for tandem parking spaces is a tool that reduces the amount of land devoted to parking by providing for a more efficient use of space. This tool will allow the mixed-used development to concentrate parking across one surface parking lot and a two-level subterranean garage, creating for a denser, transit- and pedestrian-oriented project.

The proposed lot line adjustment would relocate the shared interior lot line between two adjacent parcels, facilitating mixed-use development and is in conformance with the General Plan and the goals and policies of the General Plan Land Use Element. The proposed lot line adjustment would be consistent with General Plan Policies 1.2 (Targeted Growth), and 31.1 (Focus Growth), 31.8 (Street Vitality During Evenings and On Weekends), and 31.9 (Housing Choice), as the proposed mapping action would facilitate development on the site that would infill an existing surface parking lot with a new multi-family residential building and subterranean parking. The new project will serve the larger project site including the existing Thatcher Medical Center.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

This project has been determined to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and Section 15305 (Class 5, Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations); and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt classes; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances. Section 15303 exempts from environmental review the construction of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures, such as, but not limited to, a new single-family residence, duplex, store, motel, office, or accessory structures. The project includes the use of vertical lifts for valet parking services which is within the scope of the Class 3 categorical exemption. Section 15305 exempts minor lot line adjustments in areas with an average slope of less than 20 percent that do not result in any changes in land use or density, or in the creation of any new parcel. The lot line adjustment would shift an interior lot line in an area with an average slope less than 20 percent, and would not result in any changes in land use or density or creation of any new parcel.

## **COMMENTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS:**

The Building and Safety Division, Design and Historic Preservation Section, Fire Department, Transportation Department, and Public Works Department reviewed the request for valet parking and the lot line adjustment and had no comments.

## **CONCLUSION:**

It is staff's assessment, based on the analysis of the project, that the findings for approval of the Minor Conditional Use Permit for valet parking and the Certificate of Exception can be made. The project features proposed conditions of approval to ensure that the project will not cause adverse impacts on surrounding properties and that the operations will occur while maintaining the safety and general welfare of the surrounding area. Any future development on the subject parcel would be required to conform to the applicable development standards in the Specific Plan, General Plan, and Building Code requirements in place at the time of any construction activity. Therefore, staff recommends that the Hearing Officer approve the applications with the findings in Attachment A and the recommended Conditions of Approval in Attachment B.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A: Specific Findings for Approval  
Attachment B: Recommended Conditions of Approval

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**FINDINGS FOR MINOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT #6924 AND**  
**CERTIFICATE OF EXCEPTION #391**

Minor Conditional Use Permit – To allow valet parking

1. *The proposed use is allowed with a Minor Conditional Use Permit within the applicable zoning district and complies with all applicable provisions of this Zoning Code.* Zoning Code Section 17.46.020.M (Basic Requirements of Off-Street Parking and Loading – Valet Parking) allows valet parking with the approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit. Additionally, the proposed project complies with all standards of the City’s Zoning Code, including the requirement for a full-time parking attendant, who would be on duty at all times while the nonresidential building is open, and the project has received necessary Design Review entitlements.
2. *The location of the proposed use complies with the special purposes of this Zoning Code and the purposes of the applicable zoning district.* The subject site is located within the RM-48 (Multi-Family Residential, 0-48 dwelling units per acre) and CD-5 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue sub-district) zoning districts. One purpose of the RM-48 zoning district is to promote multi-family residential developments having maximum economic life and stability, while the Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue Sub-district identifies existing rear parking lots as opportunities for compatible, residential and mixed-use in-fill development in conjunction with structured parking, as is proposed with this project. The replacement of the existing surface parking lot with a multi-family residential structure, including replacing the existing nonresidential parking spaces located on-site, will allow for a mixed-use project that is economically sustainable, while also providing the required parking for the existing commercial building. The proposed valet parking in a tandem configuration within the subterranean garage allows for more parking spaces to be provided without a negative impact to the surrounding uses. In addition, all parking spaces will comply with applicable provisions of the Zoning Code, such as standards for parking space dimensions, aisle widths, vertical clearances, and access.
3. *The proposed use is in conformance with the goals, policies, and objectives of the General Plan and the purpose and intent of any applicable specific plan.* The project site is designated Medium Mixed Use and High Density Residential in the General Plan Land Use Element and is subject to the Central District Specific Plan. The purpose of the Central District Specific Plan is to provide for a diverse mix of land uses designed to create the primary business, financial, retailing, and government center of the City. Valet parking is consistent with Policy 19.3 (Parking Management) of the General Plan Land Use Element, which calls for the management of parking to reduce the amount of land devoted to frequently vacant parking lots through parking management tools. Valet for the commercial uses will utilize tandem parking which is a tool that reduces the amount of land devoted to parking by providing for a more efficient use of space. This tool will allow the mixed-used development to concentrate parking across two subterranean levels, creating for a denser, transit- and pedestrian-oriented project, as also identified in the Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue Sub-district.

In addition, the proposed lot line adjustment will be consistent with General Plan Policies 1.2 (Targeted Growth), and 31.1 (Focus Growth), 31.8 (Street Vitality During Evenings and On Weekends), and 31.9 (Housing Choice), as the proposed mapping action would facilitate development on the site that would infill an existing surface parking lot with a new multi-family

residential building and subterranean parking. The new project will serve the larger project site including the existing Thatcher Medical Center.

4. *The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use would not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the health, safety, or general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed use.* All valet parking spaces for the mixed-use project will be located on the first level of a subterranean parking structure. All spaces will be designed to comply with minimum standards for parking space dimensions, aisle widths, vertical clearances, and access, which should prevent any detrimental impact. The parking attendant will be on-site at all times while the parking structure is in use for the purpose of parking vehicles for drivers. This will minimize any detriment to the safety or general welfare of persons using the structure, residing or working the neighborhood.
5. *The use, as described and conditionally approved, would not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City.* The provision of valet parking will not be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the City. The parking attendant will park all vehicles on-site within the subterranean parking structure minimizing any detriment or injury because of the familiarity of the attendant with the structure. All proposed valet activities will occur within the structure on the project site; therefore, there will be no impact to property or improvements beyond the project site.
6. *The design, location, operating characteristics, and size of the proposed use would be compatible with the existing and future land uses in the vicinity, in terms of aesthetic values, character, scale, and view protection.* All parking spaces will be designed to comply with applicable requirements of the Zoning Code, including standards for parking space dimensions, aisle widths, vertical clearances, and access. Further, the nonresidential component of the approved mixed-use development is intended to predominantly consist of medical office uses for the long term. Office uses generate fewer trips relative to other uses when spread across the day because peak periods are generally limited to morning and evening. As a result, a high turnover of parking is not anticipated, suggesting that valet parking will be compatible with the proposed and future uses of the site. In addition, the project has received approval of Final Design Review which ensures compatibility with the City's design guidelines.

Certificate of Exception – Lot Line Adjustment to shift an interior lot line

7. *The parcel resulting from the lot line adjustment will conform to the local general plan, any applicable specific plan, any applicable coastal plan, and zoning and building ordinances.* The parcels resulting from the lot line adjustment will comply with development standards of the CD-5 (Central District Specific Plan, Lake Avenue sub-district) zoning district and all applicable ordinances. The proposed lot line adjustment will result in one parcel with an area 8,800 square feet and the other parcel with an area of 12,320 square feet. A greater number of parcels would not result, and the overall total lot area will not change. Any future development on the site is required to conform to the development standards of the underlining zoning district and Building Code.



**ATTACHMENT B  
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR  
MINOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT #6924 AND CERTIFICATE OF EXCEPTION #391**

The applicant or successor in interest shall meet the following conditions:

General

1. The site plan and elevations submitted for building permits shall substantially conform to plans submitted with this application and stamped "Approved at Hearing, June 15, 2022," except as modified herein.
2. This approval authorizes valet parking for nonresidential uses located on level one of the planned two-level subterranean garage.
3. This approval authorizes a lot line adjustment between adjacent parcels, 5735-027-032 (Parcel #1) and 5735-027-005 (Parcel #2). The proposed lot line adjustment would shift the interior lot line north 10 feet, taking 1,760 square feet from Parcel #1 and allocating it to Parcel #2, as depicted on the approved site plan.
4. This approval and associated conditions of approval shall supersede Minor Conditional Use Permit #6829 and associated conditions of approval.
5. The right granted under this application must be enacted within 36 months from the effective date of approval. It shall expire and become void, unless an extension of time is approved in compliance with Zoning Code Section 17.64.040.C (Time Limits and Extensions, Extensions of Time).
6. The applicant or successor in interest shall provide to the Zoning Administrator a legal description and plan exhibit of the parcels resulting from the Lot Line Adjustment. The legal description and plan exhibit shall be prepared by a licensed civil engineer or land surveyor and shall include the wet stamp and signature of the author.
7. The applicant or successor in interest shall be responsible for recording with the Los Angeles County Recorder a Certificate of Compliance that has been approved by the Zoning Administrator, and furnishing a Grant Deed containing a legal description matching the legal description contained in the Certificate of Exception. This lot line adjustment shall not be effective until recorded with the Los Angeles County Recorder.
8. Any change to these conditions of approval or expansion of the use shall require the modification of this Minor Conditional Use Permit or a new Minor Conditional Use Permit.
9. The applicant or successor in interest shall meet the applicable code requirements of all City Departments.
10. The final decision letter and conditions of approval shall be incorporated in the submitted building plans as part of the building plan check process.
11. The proposed project, Activity Number **ZENT2021-00110**, is subject to the Inspection Program by the City. A Final Zoning Inspection is required for your project prior to the

issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy or approval of the Final Building Inspection. Contact Alison Walker, Current Planning Section, at 626-744-6742 to schedule an inspection appointment time.

Planning Division

12. A maximum of 30 percent of the total number of residential parking spaces on-site shall be provided in a tandem configuration.
13. An on-site valet parking attendant shall be on duty at all times the parking facility is in use by nonresidential uses. The plans submitted for building plan check process shall indicate the location of the full-time parking attendant on-site in a position to service the valet spaces.
14. The subterranean parking garage and all parking spaces and aisle widths shall comply with Zoning Code Chapter 17.46 (Parking and Loading).