



Staff Report

PLANNING DIVISION
COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

To: Salt Lake City Planning Commission
From: John Anderson, 801-535-7214, john.anderson@slcgov.com
Date: August 23, 2017
Re: PLNPCM2017-00414 Goldman Sachs Childcare Facility Conditional Building and Site Design Review

Conditional Building and Site Design Review

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 421 S. Main St.
PARCEL ID: 16-06-306-001
MASTER PLAN: Downtown
ZONING DISTRICT: D-1 Central Business District

REQUEST: Troy Anderson, an architect is representing Goldman Sachs, in their request to apply privacy film to the ground floor windows along Main Street. The film would cover approximately 60 percent of the ground floor, street facing windows leaving 47 percent open. The Zoning Ordinance requires that 60 percent of the ground floor windows in the Main Street Retail Core allow unhampered and unobstructed visibility into the building. Modifications of the design standards can be requested through the Conditional Building and Site Design Review. The portion of the building in question is currently being remodeled to house a childcare facility for the employees of Goldman Sachs.

RECOMMENDATION (Conditional Building and Site Design Review): Based on the findings listed in the staff report, it is the Planning Staff's opinion that overall the project does not meet the applicable standards and therefore, recommends the Planning Commission deny the Conditional Building and Site Design request.

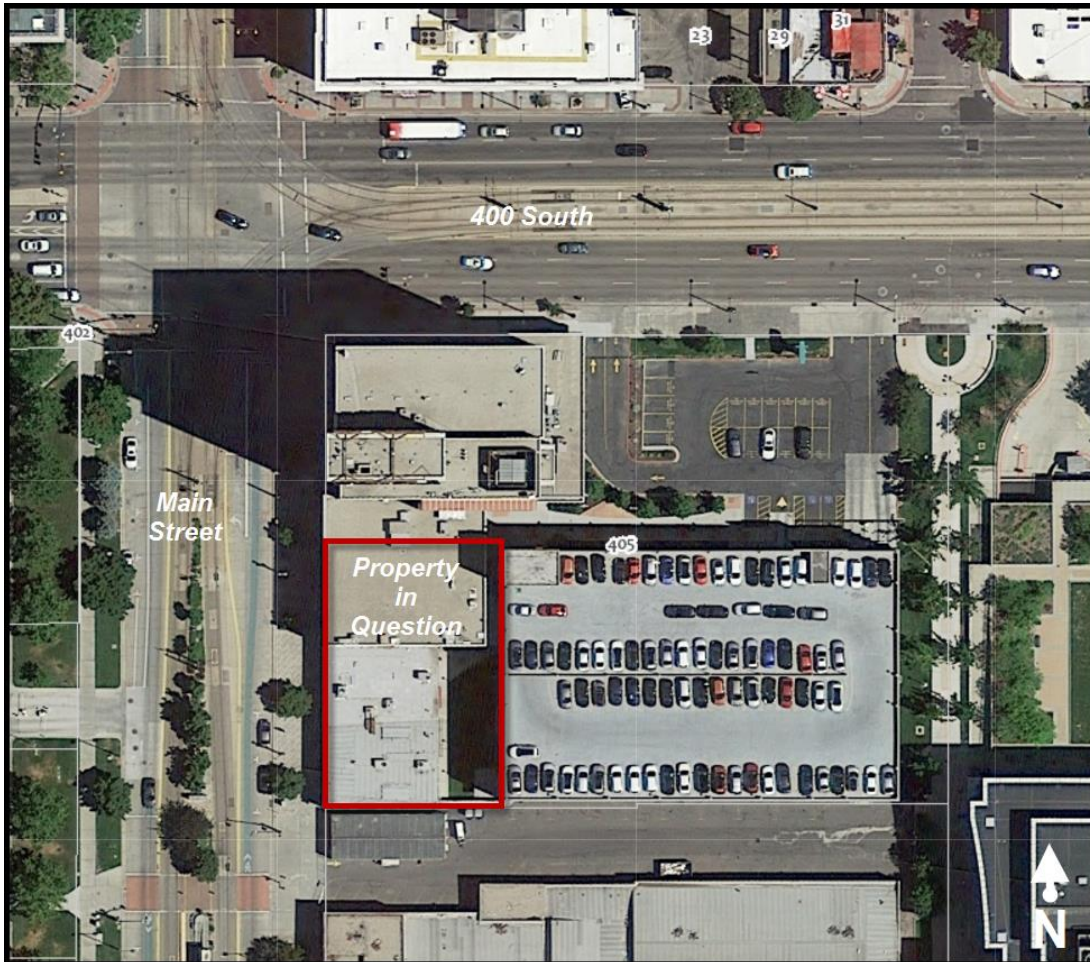
ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. First Floor Building Layout
- C. Building Rendering
- D. Applicant Information
- E. Photographs
- F. Existing Conditions
- G. Analysis of Standards – Conditional Building and Site Design Review
- H. Public Process and Comments
- I. Department Review Comments

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Goldman Sachs is remodeling a portion of an existing, high-rise office structure into a childcare facility for their downtown employees. The facility would occupy 3 stories of the building which would include over 100 feet of Main Street frontage. The Zoning Ordinance requires that 60 percent of the ground floor glass in the Main Street Retail Core allow unhampered and unobstructed visibility into the building. The applicant is requesting to reduce

the amount of transparent glass to 47 percent of the Main Street frontage by applying a translucent film to the windows up to a height of 6 feet. The existing building does currently meet the glass requirements. The applicant has stated that the request has been made to provide visual safety and actual security for those children that occupy the first floor classrooms of the facility. The provided layout of the first floor shows that all of the space along the Main Street frontage is occupied by children's classrooms. This layout can be found in Attachment B. The Planning Commission has the ability to modify all required design standards through the Conditional Building and Site Design process.



Map above displays the location of the project.

KEY ISSUES:

The key issue listed below has been identified through the analysis of the project, neighbor and community input and department review comments.

Issue 1 – Request to Reduce the Amount of Transparent Ground Floor Glass

The applicant is requesting to apply a film on the ground floor windows along the Main Street frontage of their new childcare facility which should open later this year. The film would diminish the ability to see through the glass and into the building. The applicant has claimed that this is being proposed in order to create a safer environment for the children that will occupy the classrooms along Main Street. The subject property is located in the Main Street Retail Core of the D-1 Central Business District which requires that 60 percent of the glass along street facing facades be transparent. The current proposal would diminish the amount of transparent glass to 47 percent. The Planning Commission has the ability to modify required design standards through the Conditional Building and Site Design process.



The image above displays the windows that are proposed to be covered.

The purpose statement of 21A.37 Design Standards states as goals, “The design standards identified in this chapter are intended to utilize planning and architecture principles to shape and promote a walkable environment in specific zoning districts, foster place making as a community and economic development tool, protect property values, assist in maintaining the established character of the city, and implementing the city’s master plans” The Zoning Ordinance requires that the applicant prove that they are meeting the intent of the design standard that they are requesting to modify. The applicant has stated that they do meet that intent as the façade is broken up with glass systems and solid wall areas and that the reflection of the glass adds interest and amplifies the activity of the street. Their complete explanation can be found in Attachment D.

Requiring transparent glass along street facing facades is a common planning tool implemented to create a more walkable and visually interesting neighborhood. The glass allows light and activity inside the building to spill onto the street creating visual interest for pedestrians. It further creates a more safe environment as transparent windows allows for “eyes on the street”. Without the transparency the glass wall becomes flat and dark and does not encourage pedestrians to walk along the block face. In addition, the film is being placed at eye level leaving transparent glass at the very top and bottom of each window. This is directly in opposition to what the Main Street Retail Core is attempting to accomplish which is to encourage new retail activities and increasing the pedestrian activity along Main Street.

The request will be reviewed against the existing standards for Conditional Building and Site Design. A full review of those standards can be found in Attachment G. Those standards focus heavily on the architectural design and the actual uses of the ground floor, street facing facades. The design should use architectural elements that create pedestrian interest and interaction along the street. The applicant’s claim is that the request is related to the safety and security of the occupants of the structure. Although safety is certainly a laudable goal it is not a standard of the Conditional Building and Site Design and all decisions to modify required design standards must demonstrate that the standards have been met as well as the intent of the design standards.

DISCUSSION:

As discussed above and in [Attachment G](#), staff does not believe that the proposal meets the standards for Conditional Building and Site Design Review or the intent of the design standards in the Zoning Ordinance. In general, the proposal to diminish the transparent qualities of the ground floor glass would be in opposition of the goals of the zoning district and overlay and would not meet the standards of the Conditional Building and Site Design process. As such, staff is recommending denial of the proposed design standard modification.

NEXT STEPS:

Conditional Building and Site Design Review Approval

If the Conditional Building and Site Design Review is approved, the applicant will be able to apply a film on the ground floor, street facing windows which would reduce the amount of transparent glass from the required 60 percent to 47 percent as requested.

Conditional Building and Site Design Review Denial

If the Conditional Building and Site Design Review is denied, the applicant will need to meet all design standards as required by the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant would need to demonstrate that they were meeting the requirement of 60 percent transparent glass along the Main Street façade of the structure.

ATTACHMENT A: VICINITY MAP

ATTACHMENT B: FIRST FLOOR BUILDING LAYOUT

ATTACHMENT C: BUILDING RENDERING

ATTACHMENT D: APPLICANT INFORMATION

ATTACHMENT E: PHOTOGRAPHS

ATTACHMENT F: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Downtown Master Plan Discussion

The proposal is located within the Downtown Master Plan area. The subject of transparent glass and its importance in creating a walkable and safe pedestrian environment is discussed in a number of sections of the plan. The plan includes the following policies related to the request:

We value a downtown that is vibrant and active, walkable and safe.

- Encourage individual building entrances by use or tenant, a high amount of transparency for ground floor uses, and a mix of uses (including ground level live/ work units) to activate sidewalks and provide rhythm to the pedestrian experience.
- Walkability is more than supplying the basic pedestrian facilities of sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps. It means the provision of a comfortable and pleasant walking environment that stimulates the senses, contributes to the character of a place, provides route choice, and urges discovery. Places where people wonder, wander, and linger enable us to find delight in the city.
- Animate the public realm by limiting blank walls and incorporating ample architectural design features and clear, nonreflective glass at the pedestrian level in order to provide a high degree of ground-level transparency between indoors and out.
- Encourage new development to improve safety of the public realm by incorporating clear windows, doors, balconies, porches, etc. facing public spaces.

These Master Plan policies are discussed further in [Attachment G](#), under standard L.

ATTACHMENT G: ANALYSIS OF STANDARDS – CONDITIONAL BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN REVIEW

21a.59.060: Standards for Design Review: In addition to standards provided in other sections of this title for specific types of approval, the following standards shall be applied to all applications for design review:

Standard	Finding	Rationale
A. Development shall be primarily oriented to the street, not an interior courtyard or parking lot.	Complies	The proposed childcare facility is occupying a portion of an existing office structure. The project will have an entrance along Main Street as well as the east side of the building. The main entrance to the larger, office structure is located at the intersection of 400 South and Main Street. There are interior connections from that entrance to the childcare facility.
B. Primary access shall be oriented to the pedestrian and mass transit.	Complies	The existing structure is built to the property line along the sidewalks on Main Street. There is a wide, landscaped sidewalk along the façade of the street which leads directly to the mid-block crosswalk. This crosswalk provides access to a parking facility as well as the Courthouse TRAX station.
C. Building facades shall include detailing and glass in sufficient quantities to facilitate pedestrian interest and interaction.	Does not comply	The proposal is to reduce the amount of transparent glass along the portion of the building in question from the required 60 percent to 47 percent. This reduction would not facilitate pedestrian interest as there would be no interaction between the activities inside of the structure and those on the street. In addition, the film is being placed at eye level leaving transparent glass at the very top and bottom of each window.
D. Architectural detailing shall be included on the ground floor to emphasize the pedestrian level of the building.	Does not comply	Currently, the ground floor of the structure is varied in building materials, building articulation and design. To emphasize the pedestrian level of the building, the ground floor has sufficient glazing and entrances that provide access from the sidewalk into the structure. However, the proposal to reduce the amount of transparent glass would also reduce the building's emphasis on the pedestrian level of the building. Transparent glass is a significant architectural element and its reduction would harm the structures ability to emphasize the pedestrian level.
E. Parking lots shall be appropriately screened and landscaped to minimize their impact on adjacent neighborhoods. Parking lot lighting shall be shielded to eliminate excessive glare or light into adjacent neighborhoods.	Not applicable	The proposed childcare facility would utilize an existing parking structure on the site. There are no changes proposed to that structure related to the request in question.
F. Parking and on site circulation shall be provided with an emphasis on making safe pedestrian connections to the street or other pedestrian facilities.	Not applicable	The proposed childcare facility would utilize an existing parking structure on the site. There are no changes proposed to that structure related to the request in question.
G. Dumpsters and loading docks shall be appropriately screened or located within the structure.	Not applicable	The proposed childcare facility would utilize existing dumpsters and loading docks on the site. There are no changes proposed to these structures related to the request in question.
H. Signage shall emphasize the pedestrian/mass transit orientation.	Not applicable	This request is not related to proposed signage on the building. This standard is not applicable.

<p>I. Lighting shall meet the lighting levels and design requirements set forth in chapter 4 of the Salt Lake City lighting master plan dated May 2006.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>New lighting will not be installed and is not related to this request to reduce the amount of transparent glass.</p>
<p>J. Streetscape improvements shall be provided as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One street tree chosen from the street tree list consistent with the city's urban forestry guidelines and with the approval of the city's urban forester shall be placed for each thirty feet (30') of property frontage on a street. Existing street trees removed as the result of a development project shall be replaced by the developer with trees approved by the city's urban forester. 2. Landscaping material shall be selected that will assure eighty percent (80%) ground coverage occurs within three (3) years. 3. Hardscape (paving material) shall be utilized to designate public spaces. Permitted materials include unit masonry, scored and colored concrete, grasscrete, or combinations of the above. 4. Outdoor storage areas shall be screened from view from adjacent public rights of way. Loading facilities shall be screened and buffered when adjacent to residentially zoned land and any public street. 5. Landscaping design shall include a variety of deciduous and/or evergreen trees, and shrubs and flowering plant species well adapted to the local climate. 	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>The proposed childcare facility is being constructed in an existing office building. No new streetscape improvements are required.</p>
<p>K. The following additional standards shall apply to any large scale developments with a gross floor area exceeding sixty thousand (60,000) square feet:</p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The orientation and scale of the development shall conform to the following requirements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Large building masses shall be divided into heights and sizes that relate to human scale by incorporating changes in building mass or direction, sheltering roofs, a distinct pattern of divisions on surfaces, windows, trees, and small scale lighting. b. No new buildings or contiguous groups of buildings shall exceed a combined contiguous building length of three hundred feet (300'). 	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>The building does not exceed 60,000 square feet. This standard does not apply.</p>

<p>2. Public spaces shall be provided as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. One square foot of plaza, park, or public space shall be required for every ten (10) square feet of gross building floor area. b. Plazas or public spaces shall incorporate at least three (3) of the five (5) following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Sitting space of at least one sitting space for each two hundred fifty (250) square feet shall be included in the plaza. Seating shall be a minimum of sixteen inches (16") in height and thirty inches (30") in width. Ledge benches shall have a minimum depth of thirty inches (30"); (2) A mixture of areas that provide shade; (3) Trees in proportion to the space at a minimum of one tree per eight hundred (800) square feet, at least two inch (2") caliper when planted; (4) Water features or public art; and/or (5) Outdoor eating areas. 	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>The building does not exceed 60,000 square feet. This standard does not apply.</p>
<p>L. Any new development shall comply with the intent of the purpose statement of the zoning district and specific design regulations found within the zoning district in which the project is located as well as adopted master plan policies, the city's adopted "urban design element" and design guidelines governing the specific area of the proposed development. Where there is a conflict between the standards found in this section and other adopted plans and regulations, the more restrictive regulations shall control.</p>	<p>Does not comply</p>	<p>A portion of the purpose statement of the D-1 zoning district states , <i>“Development is intended to be very intense with high lot coverage and large buildings that are placed close together while being oriented toward the pedestrian with a strong emphasis on a safe and attractive streetscape and preserving the urban nature of the downtown area.”</i></p> <p>The Downtown Master Plan also discusses the importance of creating a pedestrian friendly environment. Specifically it states that transparent glass is critical to create a walkable and safe downtown. Staff believes that the proposed reduction in transparency in the ground floor windows is not supported by either the purpose statement of the zoning district or adopted master plan policy.</p>

ATTACHMENT H: PUBLIC PROCESS AND COMMENTS

Public Notice, Meetings, Comments

The following is a list of public meetings that have been held, and other public input opportunities, related to the proposed project:

- Planning Division Open House July, 2017

Notice of the public hearing for the proposal included:

Public hearing notice mailed on July 28, 2017

Public hearing notice posted on July 28, 2017

Public notice posted on City and State websites and Planning Division list serve on July 28, 2017

Public Input:

Project information was sent to the Downtown Community Council and reviewed at a Planning Division Open House. There was nobody in attendance at the open house and no comments have been received from the public except for those from the community council. The chair of the community council responded with comments but did not request that the applicant's attend an upcoming meeting. His comments are pasted below:

“Permeable surfaces at street level are essential for pedestrian piece of mind—and, by extension, walkability. This is a large strip of glazing being taken out of the equation along a critical block that connects the highly walkable Main Street from South Temple to 400 South to the Grand America and Little America hotels.

How does the applicant suggest to mitigate the negative impact of their request for privacy film?

Without a robust mitigation plan, my inclination is to oppose this request.

And why these?

- 1) Shade trees make walking pleasant in the scorching sun of April–September.
- 2) Shade trees planted between the pedestrian and traffic do a lot of the psychological work that permeable building surfaces are supposed to do... namely, they reinforce a sense of security.
- 3) If the privacy screen only goes a little higher than eye level then privacy is achieved without turning a permeable surface impermeable.
- 4) Adolescent specimens of stately trees (like those that could be harvested from the 600 South Main development property) will offer instant benefits to match the instant harms of privacy film.

And it's not like mitigation needs to be difficult...

The tree canopy along that stretch of Main Street is meager and sickly... if they install trees at 15 ft intervals (whatever the optimal spacing is for a dense canopy) along the entire block face with adolescent specimens of stately trees (maybe harvested from the parking lot that will soon be a major development on 600 South, between West Temple and Main), I'd totally sign off on having privacy film (assuming it was a handsome installation, perhaps with a strong graphic element and that it only went up to 7 ft above sidewalk).”

ATTACHMENT I: DEPARTMENT REVIEW COMMENTS

No pertinent comments were received following an internal review.

