

D/DRC Case

823 Lady Street

City Center Design/Development District

TMS: 09013-13-17

DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION
DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT
EVALUATION SHEET
Informational Presentation

ADDRESS: 823 Lady Street

APPLICANT: Ajay Champaneri, developer

TAX MAP REFERENCE: 09013-13-17

USE OF PROPERTY: undeveloped parcel

REVIEW DISTRICT: City Center Design/Development District

NATURE OF REQUEST: INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION ONLY

FINDINGS/COMMENTS:

5.3.1 Building Heights

As a general rule and consistent with current zoning provisions, buildings within most of City Center should be no more than five stories... It is however, critical that in applying these Guidelines- as well as other development regulations- that the City be consistent in considering the height of proposed structures as they relate to the adjacent development context.

The building is five stories, with an additional basement level on the western end where the grade drops.

5.3.2 Façade Proportion and Rhythm

Whenever an infill building is proposed that is much “wider” than the existing characteristic facades on the street, the infill facades should be broken down into a series of appropriately proportioned “structural bays” or components typically segmented by a series of columns or masonry piers that frame window, door, and bulkhead components.

The contemporary design of the building is strongly horizontal and does not lend itself to traditional structural bays; however, the articulation of the street wall and storefront features, which have a strong impact on the pedestrian realm, will be addressed in a later section.

5.3.3 Proportion of Openings

Maintain the predominant difference between upper story openings and street level storefront openings (windows and doors). Usually, there is a much greater window area (70 percent) at the storefront level for pedestrians to have a better view of the merchandise displayed behind as opposed to upper stories, which have smaller window openings (40 percent).

The proportion of openings on the upper floors, while slightly less than 40%, works well with the design of the building, with pairs of punched windows at the rooms and glass and metal panels transitioning to the corner element. Integrating the vents into the punched openings below the windows (rather than having separate vent openings) reads as larger window openings and is the preferable configuration.

The percentage of storefront at the street level is very high at the corner and along the lobby. Along Lincoln Street, the blank brick wall at the corner will require some additional articulation such as a window into the stairwell.

Along Lady Street, the storefront is continuous until the grade starts to drop in front of the basement. While windows do not make sense here, this expanse of wall below the outdoor dining area needs something to maintain the interest of the pedestrian along this sidewalk. Windows were added along the western end of the Lady Street elevation at the restaurant at the request of staff, which helps with the overall percentage of window openings.

5.3.5 Wall Articulation

Large, unbroken façade surfaces should be avoided, especially at the storefront level. This can be achieved in a number of ways including: (a) dividing the façade into a series of display windows with smaller panes of glass; (b) constructing the façade with small human scale materials such as brick or decorative tile along bulkheads; (c) providing traditional recessed entries; (d) careful sizing, placement, and overall design of signage; and (e) providing consistent door and window reveals.

As mentioned previously, the black brick wall at the north end of the Lincoln Street elevation and the long stretch of basement wall along Lady Street needs to be articulated. Art on the wall could be an option, especially since the building is on the property line. Staff recommends that the developer contact One Columbia to discuss options for public art on this/these wall(s).

5.3.6 Roofs and Upper Story Details

Roofs may be flat or sloped. The visible portion of sloped roofs should be sheathed with a roofing material complementary to the architectural style of the building and other surrounding buildings.

Cornice lines of new buildings (horizontal rhythm element) should complement buildings on adjacent properties to maintain continuity.

Radical roof pitches that create overly prominent or out-of-character buildings are strongly discouraged. Shallow gables or fenestrated parapets may be allowed if in character with surrounding buildings.

The flat roof and corner tower element with a wide overhang reinforces the strong horizontal design of the building, and is consistent with the surrounding context.

Roof mounted mechanical or utility equipment should be screened. The method of screening should be architecturally integrated with the structure in terms of materials, color, shape, and size. Equipment should be screened by solid building elements (e.g., parapet wall) instead of after-the-fact add-on screening (e.g. wood or metal slats)

Roof-mounted utility equipment is not shown at this point in the design process; details of roof any roof-mounted equipment and related screening shall be submitted for review when it becomes available.

5.4.1 Setbacks

The maximum setback for any new structure should be the average of the existing setback in the block and adjacent blocks where the project is to be constructed. In situations where the average is not established, the setback will be ten feet.

The building sits at the property line on both street frontages.

5.4.2 Street Orientation

Storefronts should be designed to orient to the major street frontage. While side or rear entries may be desirable, the predominant major building entry should be oriented toward the major street.

The storefronts are properly located along the street edge. There are two entries, the one on Lady slightly above grade with steps, and the one on Lincoln at grade providing ADA access. Both entries address the street with lighted canopies and signage.

Buildings on corners should include storefront design features for at least 50 percent of the wall area on the side street elevation.

Lincoln would be considered the side street; there is close to 50% storefront, however adding a window to the blank portion of brick wall at the northern end of this elevation would be an improvement.

5.5 Open Spaces in Private Development

City Center's streets, with their street trees and pedestrian amenities, are the district's primary open space. The narrow setbacks are intended to prevent development of the broad landscaped open spaces typical of suburban campus-like settings. Any unbuilt zones along the setback line (i.e. plazas, entrance courts) shall be small, intense areas that are placed and designed so that they will be occupied at various times of the day.

To invite public use and ensure user security, plazas or other public open spaces should be visible from streets and sidewalks, and should be surrounded by actively programmed building spaces such as shops, restaurants, residential units or offices.

The design of plazas and open spaces in private development should conform to the guidelines for public open spaces, and the landscaping guidelines in the following section.

The east portion of the parcel is being transformed from a driveway to an outdoor patio and pedestrian alley that leads to the parking garage on the adjacent parcel. The design of this alley is critical. Staff has recommended the applicant work with a landscape architect to design the space adjacent to the hotel (former driveway onto Lady) to ensure the space is a safe, attractive, highly finished urban space for pedestrians to use. It should include typical street light fixtures that match the City standards for the Vista; shade trees for daytime comfort, high-quality paving wide enough to accommodate pedestrians passing comfortably, and high-quality, commercial grade site furnishings. There are many recent local examples of mid-block alleys that have been done very well for reference.

5.7.1 Storefront Composition, Accessories, and Detail

The main entry leading to a lobby, stair, or central corridor, should be emphasized at the street to announce a point of arrival in one or more of the following ways... covered by means of a portico (formal porch) projecting from or set into the building face (refer to zoning guidelines for allowable projections); punctuated by means of a change in roofline, a tower, or a break in the surface of the subject wall... Buildings situated at the corner of a public street should provide a prominent corner entrance to street level shops or lobby space, in a manner consistent with Main Entries, as described above.

The building is well articulated at the corner by the taller tower element. At the storefront level, both entrances are marked with the Aloft Hotel signature canopy.

Commercial storefront entries are typically recessed and/or sheltered by a covered arcade structure, canopy, or awning... Recessed entries should be retained and are strongly encouraged in new storefront construction, although overly deep entries (over 5-feet) should be avoided, as they may attract transients.

The Lady Street entrance is recessed more than the recommended 5 feet. However, it is a few feet above street level. As well, given the use of the building, hotels have an active presence 24/7 that would add a safety element to this space.

Door and Window Design

Use of clear glass (at least 88 percent light transmission) on the first floor is recommended.

The proposed glass is “lightly tinted.” More details shall be submitted for review and approval.

5.7.2 Exterior Walls/ Materials

The following materials are considered appropriate for City Center. The number of different wall materials used in any one building should, however, be kept to a minimum (ideally, two or less).

Building walls: clear glass, ... stucco/exterior plaster (smooth trowled), new or used face brick, cut stone, rusticated block (cast stone)...

The following materials are considered inappropriate in City Center and are discouraged: imitation masonry, reflective or opaque glass (at the street level), vinyl, aluminum, or other metal siding, unfinished wood..., plastic panels, vertical siding...

This building presents a materials challenge, due to the fact that it is more modern in design and using some less-traditional materials. The primary material is brick, which is considered appropriate and widely used. There are three additional materials that could be considered major elements on the building: aluminum panels on the corner tower, cement board panels on the Lincoln Street elevation, and stucco along the base on Lady Street. The aluminum panels are above the street level and make a statement on the corner of the building; they are also visually tied to the canopies and signage.

Staff recommends a single material be used at the base of the building, and the cement board panels nicely accentuate the horizontality of the building. This would help the design of both street elevations appear more unified. The cast concrete detailing is a recommended material and works well as an accent in the large expanse of brick, again emphasizing the strong horizontal lines of the design.

5.8.3 (Upper Façade) Windows

Upper story window should create a sense of scale and add articulation and visual interest to the upper façade.

The upper story windows are properly scaled for the building. The architect has provided details/sections of the window configuration that indicate a 5” reveal, giving relief to the punched openings. This is an important detail on a modern façade that has fewer architectural detailing.

5.10 Parking Facility, Location, Landscaping, and Screening

Generally, the parking required for each block should be contained within the block. Where parcels within a block are developed by different owners, the parking requirements of each development should be accommodated within its own parcel unless a cooperative parking plan is submitted at the time of the earliest development.

The parking is provided in the Washington Street garage, which shares the rear property line with this parcel. Again, the approach to the parking garage must be carefully designed and submitted for approval as it is developed.

SITE PLAN

Please see attached Site Plan Approvals Comments Sheet.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:



2 LINCOLN STREET / RIGHT EXTERIOR ELEVATION
 A2.1 SCALE: 1/8" = 1' - 0"



1 LADY STREET / FRONT EXTERIOR ELEVATION
 A2.1 SCALE: 1/8" = 1' - 0"

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 ARCHITECT

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No.	Revisions	Date

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Project Title ALOFT HOTEL
 COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

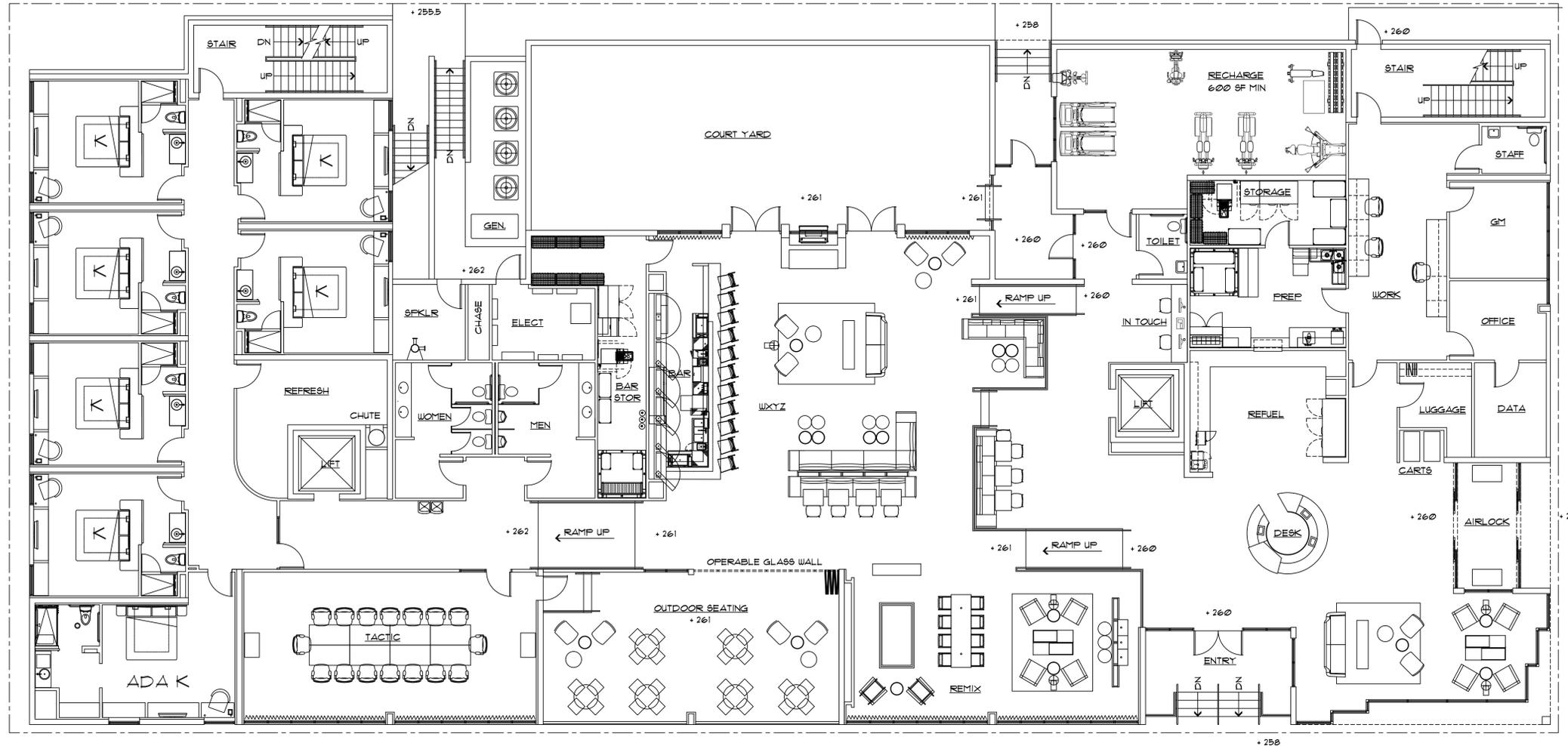
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Consultant

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 Drawing No.

A2.1

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



1
A1.1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1' - 0"
 HEATED AREA: 13,404 SQUARE FEET

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Project Title ALOFT HOTEL
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

Drawing Title FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Consultant

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	Drawn By	OTTO
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