



REPORT TO:  
STILLWATER PLANNING COMMISSION No. PZ-16-2070  
ISSUED BY THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT - STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA

**Date of Meeting:** March 15, 2016

**Subject:** Alternative Compliance & Warrant, TR Inscore, 4<sup>th</sup> & Hester Student Housing

**Purpose of Report:** The applicant requests review and approval of a Form Based Code Alternative Compliance and Warrant for property addressed as 406 S Hester Street.

**Background:** The project consists of a five story apartment building with a four story parking garage located on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Hester and Ramsey. Several of the design elements deviate from the City's Form-Based Code which requires action from the Planning Commission.

**Application Processing Information:**

Applicant - TR Inscore  
Owner – Stillwater Enterprises, LLC  
Notice – No notice is required  
Assigned Planner – Patty Evans, Planner II

**Processing Track:**

Submittal Date – March 1, 2016  
Planning Commission – March 15, 2016

**Project/Site Design Data/Details:**

Zoning – T6  
Existing Use – Single family homes for rentals  
Proposed Use – Apartment building and parking garage  
Lot – 2.13 acres  
Buildings – 14 existing structures  
                  One apartment building and parking garage proposed  
Parking – Garage

**Adequate Public Facilities Findings/Improvements:**

- Streets/Traffic: The structure will front onto 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Hester Street and Ramsey Street.
- Transit Facilities/Bike Lanes or Trails/Sidewalks: A bike route is located on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and a bus route runs on Hester. A minimum of 6 foot wide sidewalks will be provided on all three streets adjacent to the property.
- Water Service: City water service is available
- Sanitary Sewer Service: City sewer service is available
- Electric: City electric service is available

**Applicable City Plans/Policies:**

Corridor Redevelopment Plan: Mixed Use and Medium Density Residential (Page 10)

**Discussion:** The Form-Based Code (FBC) is based on alternative transportation methods and a live-work area. This takes the form of higher densities, more commercial uses and offices, and attention to a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly atmosphere. In order to achieve a pedestrian friendly public realm while having large scale developments, design guidelines are incorporated into the FBC. When a development does not conform to the design guidelines, action is needed from the Planning Commission in the way of an Alternative Compliance or a Warrant.

The proposed development has six items that deviate from the FBC requirements. Five are included in the alternative compliance. Number six is the warrant submittal.

1. The 10 foot step-back for the 5<sup>th</sup> floor.
2. The garage design.
3. Windows required to be 18" above ground level.
4. Eighteen inch base.
5. Expression Lines.
6. The metal canopy over garage opening.

1. 10' step-back: Table 20 in the FBC indicate the building configurations for each transect. Transect six shows a 10' step-back for the 5<sup>th</sup> floor to avoid the feeling of a structure looming over the public realm and to enhance the pedestrian friendly atmosphere.

The proposed design does not have the 10' step-back. The applicant has addressed this issue by some portions of the building being recessed while others are projecting out from the main façade. To try to enhance the set-back, the required 42 inch parapet is set slightly back from the façade.

2. Garage design: The following sections relate to a parking garage design.

Section 4.10.3

2. All buildings on the same site shall be related in architectural style, color scheme and building materials.
3. All elevations visible to the public shall have repeated architectural design elements.

Section 4.4.1

- 2(f). Required parking spaces may be provided in a carport or garage. The carport and/or garage must match the architectural style of the principle building.

The materials for the proposed apartment building are brick, stucco, metal shingle, metal panel balcony railings and architectural metal screen elements at the garage opening. The perforated metal panels that are proposed for the balconies are also proposed as three walls approximately 52 feet tall and 29, 33 and 40 foot wide divided by two open areas approximately 11 and 14 feet wide. The metal panels are the only building material like those of the main structure that are incorporated into the garage. The design of the garage and extensive use of one material does not match the architectural style of the principle building.

3. 18 inch base: The FBC requires a structure to be comprised of three major elements, the base, the body and the cap. The base extends vertically a minimum of 18 inches measured from the ground and should be clearly identifiable with horizontal elements.

The proposed structure has a very limited and loosely defined base. The east elevation along Hester has the strongest base with the exposed concrete extending from the ground to window sill height across the facade. The west elevation on Ramsey does have the exposed concrete under all the windows but the center portion encompassing eleven windows only has approximately six inch exposure. The north elevation on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue does not have a consistent base due to the approximate ten foot elevation change. The west portion of the building is partially below ground level so the windows cannot be relocated.

4. 18 inch height requirement for windows: This requirement goes along with the base requirement of 18 inches. Due to elevation changes and a portion of the building being below grade the windows cannot be raised to 18 inches.

5. Expression lines: Expression lines are horizontal elements usually continuous that are located between the second and third floor in large structures to reduce the perceived height by dividing the building mass into smaller scale components. Reducing the scale of a building enforces the pedestrian friendly atmosphere. These elements may be a different material or color to strongly represent the horizontal line.

The proposed structure doesn't have any strong expression lines. The balconies don't read as a horizontal feature because they are not continuous and are usually located in a strong vertical element. The expansion joint lines are small and may not read as an expression line.

Warrant

6. Metal canopy over garage opening: Section 4.10.2 under Architectural Provisions lists the materials that may be used for different elements of the structure. Number 5 states "Awning material shall be canvas, cloth or polyester. Metal or other non-traditional materials shall be by warrant."

The proposed design indicates round metal rods extending horizontally into the right-of-way over the garage opening acting as an awning. The intent of the code for awnings was not only to provide shade for pedestrians but to also reinforce the pedestrian scale of a structure.

### **Findings:**

1. An alternative compliance and warrant are required to permit the design changes of the proposed development.
2. The proposed design does not incorporate the required 10 foot step-back on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor.
3. The design and large use of one material does not relate the garage to the principle structure.
4. The 18 inch base and window height is difficult on the east and north elevations due to the approximate 10 foot elevation change and a portion of the building being below grade.
5. The proposed structure does not have a strong expression line above the second floor.
6. The architectural metal rods located over the garage opening are interpreted as an awning.
7. Discussion with applicant should provide means, methods, materials to comply through alternative ways.

### **Alternatives:**

- 1. Accept findings and approve the proposed alternative compliance and warrant as presented.
- 2. Accept findings and approve the proposed alternative compliance as amended and identified and approve the warrant as amended and identified.
- 3. Find that the alternative compliance and warrant is not an appropriate use for the property based upon the impacts to the surrounding vicinity and do not approve the request.
- 4. Find that additional information or discussion is needed prior to making a decision and table the request to a certain date.

**Prepared by:** Patty Evans, Planner II  
**Reviewed by:** Paula J. Dennison, Development Services  
**Date of Preparation:** March 10, 2016  
**Attachments:** Area map, revised alternative compliance narrative, elevations and perspective  
**Map Designation:** SW  
**Related Reports:** None