

JAN 27 2017

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

### Background

The Purple Cliffs at Escalante project is a proposed new mixed-use building and full site development at the northwestern corner of River Road and Escalante in Durango, Colorado.

The zoning is Planned Development (PD) and allows for mixed-uses. The proposed project includes commercial retail, restaurant, office and residential uses. The Escalante Crossing PD Agreement (est. 2002), the City's Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) and a previous project, called the Lofts at Escalante, which was proposed and approved in 2005 for the site, but never got built. The Purple Cliffs at Escalante was informed by the previous design which was similar in scale, and scope to the Lofts.



The site is in an area that is beginning to see significantly more development and change along Escalante to the North and La Posta Road to the southwest. A mix of residential (single family homes, condos, duplexes, and soon apartments), commercial retail, big box retail, open space, the river trail, bike trails, and the Animas River all are in close proximity to the site. The project has been presented to the neighborhood as well as the Escalante Crossing Architectural Review Committee (ARC) who have given approval of the scope and design.

### Vision

The vision for the Purple Cliffs at Escalante comes from the local developers, Jerry and Karen Zink, who are very active in the Durango community. The two have a variety of interests that are reflected throughout the design. Ultimately, their desire is to develop a project that supports a healthy, interconnected and sustainable way of living for generations to come in Durango. Jerry runs Sunnyside Meats and StoneAge Inc., while Karen is a local nurse practitioner and runs Southwest Women's Health. More than just developers, the Zink's intend to be tenants in the building as well. The other retail uses envisioned include a coffee shop, bakery and restaurant all of which support a healthy, local and sustainable model. Eating healthy, being socially connected, living within a diverse community, experiencing nature, and enjoying art, are all important to balance and harmony. The Zink's are working to bring their vision to life and considering everything from the site to the tenants, from the micro to the macro level. They want the Purple Cliffs to improve the quality of life for all users in Escalante Crossing and Durango.

### Goals

- Create a destination and a neighborhood gathering place.
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle with tenants that support that concept.
- Provide social spaces for the community inside and outside (5k run, bike race, outreach, meeting rooms)
- Minimize noise from traffic on adjacent streets by placement of the building and residential occupancies.
- Maximize the site, open space and amenities above for landscape and art.
- Provide an active and engaging envelope. Develop patio areas, storefronts and visual connections on all sides.
- Improve neighborhood connections, accessibility and pathways to the adjacent trail, homes, etc.

## **Site Design**

The site presents multiple challenges due to the shape, topography, location of existing utilities and program. The project site is made up of two separate lots, Lot 20 (northern lot) and Lot 21A (southern lot) which are going to be consolidated into a single lot as part of the process and will total approximately 1.52 acres. Lot consolidation will be completed once approval of the site plan has occurred. Combined, the site is roughly 125'-0" wide (East/West) and 490'-0" long (North/South). The north-central part of

**Purple Cliffs at Escalante**

Durango, Colorado

January 26, 2017

JAN 27 2017

the site heaves in the middle. The building is located on the northwest end of the site to capitalize on the views across the Anima River to the Purple Cliffs. The grade change across the site is significant and the parking garage structure takes advantage of the elevation differences by tucking parking under the building. The previous Lofts project built up the south end of the site and located the building on top of a parking structure as well with a large retaining wall along River Road.

Landscaping

Landscaping is an important consideration in this mixed-use design. Driving around Escalante Crossing, the emphasis on landscaping is apparent and helps reduce the impact of adjacent uses such as the Home Depot and Grease Monkey. The landscape design here is applied to the entire site. The south end of the site provides landscaped connections, pathways and strategically framed views from River Road to the building. Landscaping all around the site will mitigate the views of parked cars, building mass, daily traffic and service vehicles. An outdoor patio and dining area is attached to the restaurant. A water feature with landscaping buffers the dining area from the street and is an attractive transition between grades. The northwest corner of the site is one of the most sacred spaces on the site capturing the views to the Purple Cliffs. The design highlights that experience at various locations and is supplemented by art, water features and landscaping. A large landscaped buffer yard, larger than required, exists on the west.

Plantings will include colorful perennial plantings in front of the sign and a few flowering ornamental trees behind the sign. The existing detached sidewalk will be retained on three sides of the project including the landscape strip with street trees dividing the street from the sidewalk. The area along the eastern edge of the project will include steep slopes. This area will be planted with spreading groundcovers to stabilize the slope and reduce the need for mowing maintenance along this edge of the project.

Colored concrete accent paving directs visitors to the building. Café spaces and outdoor seating areas are integrated on all sides of the building with a dynamic envelope that provides a range of experiences from private niches to wide open patios. The pedestrian experience is much more interesting with a meandering sidewalk, ramps, landscaping, light, shadows, visibility into the building and covered semi-enclosed outdoor spaces. A staircase with colored concrete accents at the entry of the restaurant connects the building to the corner as well.

A large buffer yards on the west side of the building separates the building from the adjacent neighbors. The existing grade slopes up dramatically on the west side. The low point of 50 River Oaks Drive is the entry for the garage and allows parking to be tucked under the building. After meeting with the neighborhood and ARC, an important takeaway was the need to landscape the west side of the building as much as possible and visually buffer the building and mass from the neighbors. Due to some utility lines running along the western property line, landscaping and trees is challenging, but the design team is working to include as much landscaping as possible. The landscaping will also help dress up the entry to the garage which will be attractive and as tight as possible. All landscaped areas will have an automated and underground irrigation system.

Art

One important component to the site design is art. The Zink's want the site to have a fun, creative and special quality that is different from other commercial sites. The inclusion of art at various places around the site will improve the overall experience for people using the site and for traffic moving around the site. Art adds another dimension to the mixed-use project and improves quality of life for all users. Jerry Zink already put up a piece of art on the SE corner of the site he calls Arc of Spring. It is playful in concept, rustic in terms of materials, the colors are contextual and overall the piece adds interest to the site with a graceful form and quiet strength.

Parking + Circulation

Parking provisions meet the minimum parking requirements per the LUDC while maximizing amenities, site features and landscaping. The underground parking provides 23 spaces and the surface lot fits up to 64 spaces for a total of 87 parking spaces. The project takes advantage of all bike and shared parking allowances to minimize the automobile parking spaces required. Per the LUDC, including all allowed reductions and shared parking calculations, 86 spaces are required. The parking analysis is included at the end of the narrative.

Utilities + Services

The service area is located on the southwest corner of the building and accessed off the main parking lot. The original design included a full loading dock, but after talking to the neighborhood and hearing their concerns, the developer agreed to eliminate

**Purple Cliffs at Escalante**

Durango, Colorado

January 26, 2017

JAN 27 2017

the dock. Deliveries must be walked up along the west side of the building under a covered walkway and accessed through one of the various man doors. The Owners will work with the adjacent neighborhood on a proposed delivery schedule. Noise will be reduced to a minimum. The trash and recycling area has been relocated after conversations with the neighborhood as well. The trash is now adjacent to the stair tower and fits in a pocket of the architecture, which is largely screened from view. Unsightly utilities are concealed. The electrical meters and panels are in a niche north (left) of the garage entry. The fluid cooler, which is loud and large, fits on the roof of the south stair tower, concealed by the parapet. The residents support relocation of the utilities.

Emergency Vehicles

The site is designed to accommodate fire department vehicle access through and around the site. The site has been designed to allow for the required turning radiuses for the fire department apparatus as well. DFPD has reviewed the project.

Lighting

Exterior lighting at the new entry will be minimal and will conform to the City's LUDC requirements and Dark Sky Ordinance.

Master Sign Program

A monument sign is proposed at the southeast corner of the site. A sign permit application will be a deferred submittal but will be submitted to the City and the neighborhood Architectural Review Committee for approval. Building signage will be important for the multiple retail and office tenants. A few areas have been identified as future sign locations. The sign program will conform to both City of Durango standards and the Escalante Crossing Master Declarations.

Building Design

Parking Garage Level – 11,216 GSF

- 23 Vehicles + Mechanical, electrical room, bike storage.
- 12'-0" floor to floor. The height works with the natural grade above and lowest point of 50 River Oaks Dr.

First Floor – 13,761 GSF

- Four retail spaces with a common service, storage and loading area.
- 13'-8" floor to floor provided between the retail level and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor office area.

Second Floor – 10,488 GSF

- A mix of small to medium size professional offices that are health care related.
- The offices on the west and south have a small patio deck.

Third Floor – 9,158 GSF

- A multi-purpose room with adjacent roof deck.
- Five residential units with roof decks (approx. 1,000 -1,200 SF each)

Massing + Scale

Escalante Crossing Architectural Review Committee

The Master Declaration of Escalante Crossing includes specific design criteria for the various lots and also requires a Design Review Committee from the Escalante Crossing PD be established to review all development in the area. An Architectural Review Committee (ARC) was established back in September of 2016 after the developers and design team organized a neighborhood meeting to present the project. The team documented all the concerns of the overall neighborhood and then from that point after, the design team met with the ARC to further refine the design. The ARC is made up of a representative group of stakeholders. 9 members make up the Committee and each of the various sub developments in Escalante Crossing are represented including the Boulders, the Villas, the single-family residents, and an original ARC member who helped establish the Escalante Crossing PD.

The proposed project is more than a commercial strip or merely a residential apartment building, but rather a healthy mix of uses and tenants. The site shape, topography, surrounding uses, and mixed-use nature, warrant a slightly different solution. The

**Purple Cliffs at Escalante**

Durango, Colorado

January 26, 2017

JAN 27 2017

team has met with the ARC and/or neighborhood 3 times over the past 5 months and been in touch via email to also respond to questions or comments. The ARC supports the project. The ARC voted was unanimously in favor of the height variance with stated conditions as did the Board of Adjustments. The overall design, uses, scale and finishes they have found to be acceptable. The design team intends to meet with the ARC again for final material + design review. The developers also have been working with the neighborhood regarding the shared maintenance agreement of 50 River Oaks Dr. Another meeting prior to construction will also be important to address everyone's concerns about work hours, traffic, schedule, duration, etc.

Mixed-Use

Mixed-use is a zoning designation that is typically used to increase density, use multi-modal forms of transportation and generally be a more sustainable form of development. It wants to have more volume, smaller footprint, encourage social activity and mobility in a growing neighborhood. The more commercial nature of the building and adding slightly more height still fits within the overall allowed 40'-0" height for commercial lots in Escalante Crossing.

Single Building vs Two

The two mixed-use lots were originally envisioned as two separate developments, two garages and two different buildings. Lot consolidation was not necessarily considered with the establishment of the PD. The Lofts at Escalante was a long linear building which was set back on the western edge of the property with a strip of parking in front along Escalante. The second building, while not completely designed was very similar version of the first building. The Lofts included a parking garage with 3 floors above. The impact of 2 large buildings on the site and the neighbors to the west would be much greater.

Maximize the Site

The goals of the proposed project and the vision of the Zink's is different. Developing a project that values views to the Purple Cliffs, art and spaces for the community more than max build-out is special. Their goals and vision are unique. Developing the streetscape by pulling a single building footprint to the front of the site is more sustainable and community friendly.

Housing

The top floor of the building is for housing and a community room. The 5 housing units are designed to be attainable and are smaller than all the other available housing types in Escalante Crossing. All the units are in the range of 1,000 SF to 1,200 SF. The added spaces create a new housing type in the area and add to the overall diversity and mix of units. Some of the tenants may support the other uses in the building, either by working in the professional offices, patronizing the retail uses, etc. The additional housing is much needed in Durango.

Larger Setback on the West (50 river Oaks Drive)

Along the west side of the building the building setback goes beyond the minimum required per the PD. After meeting with the neighborhood, the building was made significantly narrower and the entire storage, loading dock and additional mass was removed to provide a larger buffer between the residents and the proposed project. The required building setback is 15'-0" minimum. The proposed project is now setback 18'-0" at the narrowest point and up to almost 30" at the widest from the angled property line. The grade and planned landscaping establish a significant buffer yard to help mitigate the impact of the height. Small balconies project from the face of the building creating a dynamic façade and minimize height. A garage entry threshold, hanging plants and multiple materials on the west elevation increase the curb appeal.

Massing + Scale

Overall the mass of the building is broken up using materials, vertical elements, building step backs, corner elements, varying building heights, horizontal projections, stepping the building down, larger setbacks from the property line and landscaping. The thoughtful composition of commercial, office and residential uses help disguise the overall scale.

The mass of the building occurs in the central three story section, where the third level residential extends up. The first level of the building is the largest footprint of all the levels. The floor plates are smaller with each subsequent level. Visually, the base of the building wants to be a heavier material and be the focus for pedestrians. The circulation towers serve as vertical elements that visually separate the central mass of the building from the edges but also separate the materials. The horizontal paneling at the restaurant stops at the vertical stair tower and then the building steps up from there along with the grade. The south tower breaks up the bulk of the central mass, provides wall signage and screening for the service area.

**Purple Cliffs at Escalante**

Durango, Colorado

January 26, 2017

JAN 27 2017

Corner Elements

The corners of the building are critical and wanted to be treated differently since they have visibility along Escalante. The architecture should respond to the activity at these locations. The restaurant wants to turn the corner and be an inviting element. The curved envelope and unique material responds to the corner. The corner at the south end wants to visually be slightly taller to attract attention from the intersection to the south. By using a unique material at the upper level and stepping it back from the first floor below, it allows for visibility and interest. The architecture highlights the corner presence again helping to hide the larger mass of the building behind.

Building Height

Maximum height is also included. The maximum height for a mixed-use lot is 35'-0". The maximum height for a commercial lot is 40'-0". The two lots that are part of the proposed Purple Cliff project are listed as Mixed-Use, however, the focus of the first two levels is commercial. Development along Escalante includes other commercial development and in general the design team feels that the 35'- 40' is an acceptable range. Given the overall composition of the Purple Cliffs design, our team feels it meets all the design criteria of the PD.

The stair towers extend up to 43'-0" from finish floor. The code allows non-habitable tower elements to extend up to 10'-0" above the min. height required which is 35' for mixed-use lots per the Escalante Crossing PD. The top of the parapet for the restaurant is 26'-8". The top of the parapet at the SE corner element is 41'-0". The top of the parapet for the third-floor is 39'-6" from finish floor and the grade at the central part of the site. The existing grade tapers from the center part of the site down to River Oaks Dr, where the adjacent building wall plane is measured.

The third level is also the smallest floor plate of the building. The parapet height of this upper level reaches 39'-6". However, the east face of the upper level is stepped back 14'-0" from the lower level on the east, 14'-0" on the south and 27'-0" on the north side since the restaurant is one story. Projecting canopies and balconies break up the façade on the west since the loading dock was lopped off. Overall, the third story is buffered and treated in such a way to conceal the overall height.

Façade Treatment

The prominent elevations of the building are the north and east sides which face Escalante Dr. and River Oaks. However, in meetings with the neighborhood, it became evident that the treatment of the west façade as the "back" of the building was not acceptable. Consequently, the building has 4 main sides, all designed as if it were the front of the building.

Grade Transitioning

The design decision to not create too many steps or levels in the site also plays a role in the height variance. The team considered adding multiple steps in the building and the site, but the quality of the pedestrian experience seemed negatively impacted. There are precedents for public spaces where the topography dictated multiple steps and transitions around a building, but the long-term success and use of those spaces was diminished. An accessible and continuous edge with fewer changes in level made for a more comfortable space. Social spaces want to flow together and not feel chopped up. Therefore, the restaurant was dropped 2 feet and the main floor of the building was kept at one elevation.

The finish grade of the first level matches the grade at the central part of the site. The garage footprint sits under a portion of the first-floor retail. It works well with the parking garage below and existing grades of the alley so that it is almost entirely concealed except for the entry portal. The restaurant has a crawl space below and allows us to step it down on the site since the grades drop off on the north end of the building.

Site Features

Landscaping, art and the treatment of canopies all around the building also help mitigate the scale. Whether it be hanging flower baskets along the exterior service walkway or a planter around the roof deck at the 3<sup>rd</sup> level community room, or the landscaping around all sides of the building, site development will help buffer the building on all sides. Hiding parking by tucking it under the building benefits the entire community.

**Purple Cliffs at Escalante**

Durango, Colorado

January 26, 2017

JAN 27 2017

**Materials + Finishes**

The building envelope incorporates contextual colors and materials that is appropriate for Escalante Crossing. The Architectural Review Committee of Escalante Crossing will review the final color palette and material selection. The composition of the overall project is appropriate for the neighborhood. The design incorporates a coordinated color/material palette that helps to break up the overall mass of the building and will be attractive to current as well as future tenants for years to come.



**Schedule**

The 100% set of construction documents and permit set of drawings are scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2017. After working through City review, bidding and contracts, the team is hoping to break ground in late spring or early summer. The contractor, Kennebec Construction, has been working with the design team throughout the process. The preliminary construction schedule shows construction being completed by 2018.

**Purple Cliffs at Escalante**

Durango, Colorado

January 26, 2017

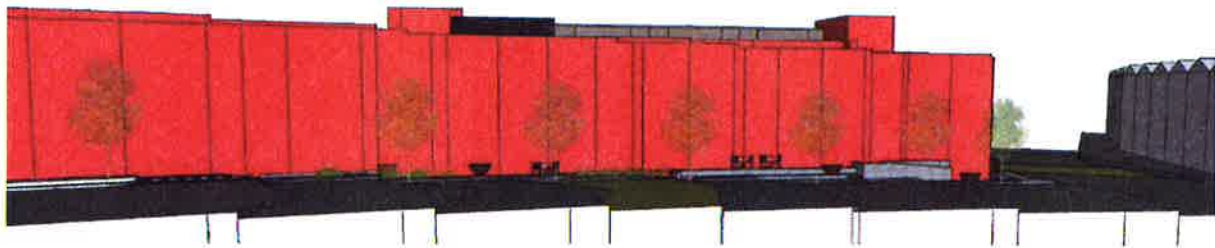
JAN 27 2017

**Buildable Area**

The area in red illustrates the entire buildable area of the site. The height of 35' up to setbacks is red. The impact of doing multiple buildings on the site to the max height is larger and more negative than a single building footprint. The 39'-6" top of parapet for the third floor and 41'-0" are shown in the exhibits below and extend above the red.



View From Escalante + Home Depot



**Existing Conditions**

The current site is vacant and a handful of site photos are below.

