The Locks, LLC has filed an application for a Riverfront Corridor Overlay District site plan review for construction of a 34-dwelling-unit residential development at approximately 1980 1st Avenue. The development includes a proposed four-story structure that has ground-floor under-roof parking and three upper-story residential floors and a private 15-space surface parking lot (see site plan). The approximate six million dollar project is being developed by the Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation, subject to a development agreement with the City for the site (site is currently part of the City owned Lot C parking area at 1st Avenue and 20th Street).

Size of Property:
The site is 220 x 150’ (33,000 square feet).

Existing Land Use:
The site consists of a City parking lot, zoned B-2.
North: Schwiebert Riverfront Park, zoned B-2.
South: City parking lot and proposed MetroLINK bus transfer station.
West: Business uses, zoned B-2.

Zoning History
None.

Comprehensive Plan Designation:
The Comprehensive Plan identifies general commercial land use for the site.

Access:
The site has access to 1st Avenue and 20th Street.

Physical Characteristics:
The site is flat and slightly above street level.

Coverage and Setbacks: The Zoning Ordinance does not have any building setback requirements for structures in a B-2 district. The proposed “footprint” of the four-story structure is 20,720 square feet, which will cover approximately 63 per cent of the site. Balconies will extend from the third floor of the north and east facades (see building elevation). The proposed structure will have a setback of six feet off 1st Avenue and 15 feet off 20th Street (both front yards for this corner site). The west setback (adjacent to existing property/structure owned by Alfred Klass) will be approximately ten feet and the south setback will be eight feet off the public alley right-of-way.
Parking:
The re are no off-street parking requirements identified in the Zoning Ordinance for any uses within the B-2 zoning district. The applicant will provide 44 parking spaces on the first floor and 15 additional surface parking spaces in the southwest corner of the site (total of 59 spaces).

Landscaping/Signs/Lighting:
Street trees along 1st Avenue and 20th Street are identified in the site plan to remain. Additional landscaping (no specifics provided) is proposed along the south façade of the structure adjacent to surface parking areas. Screened refuse areas are proposed on the west side of the private 15-space parking lot and adjacent to the south façade of the building adjacent to the entrance to the under-roof parking area. No signs or exterior lighting are identified on the site plan.

Analysis:
The proposed development will be an approximate six million dollar investment to provide a new residential option for people choosing to live/work in or near downtown. The establishment of downtown housing is consistent with the Downtown Strategic Plan (2007), RiverVision Plan (2004), the City of Rock Island Consolidated Plan, the Illinois Comprehensive Housing Plan and Live/Work policies from Renaissance Rock Island. The development will create four studio, eleven one-bedroom, 14 two-bedroom and five three-bedroom apartments. Market rate rents will range from $650 to $1,980. Out of the 34 units, six are targeted for income restricted households.

The scale of the four-story structure corresponds to other adjacent residential development (Spencer Towers and the McKesson Lofts). The location will provide great views of Schwiebert Riverfront Park and the Mississippi River. The site will have adequate parking even though not required by ordinance in a B-2 district. Staff believes that the site plan meets the standards of the Riverfront Corridor Overlay District in terms of property size, compatibility, site planning, access and parking.

Public Hearing Comments:
Paul Fessler, Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation, represented the request at the public hearing. He responded to questions regarding on-street bus parking from the adjacent proposed MetroLINK bus transfer station and security for the under-roof parking area (Commission suggested looking into some type of gate or other secured parking entrance). He indicated that buses will rarely need to park adjacent to the site as they will start parking near the intersection of 2nd Avenue and 20th Street. He said the units will be a rental facility for at least 15 years until the corporation will consider selling any of the dwelling units. He said completion date is proposed to be March 2014.

Recommendation:
The Planning Commission voted seven to zero to recommend approval of the site plan because the proposed new development is an attractive, functional and well planned design that will have adequate access and parking that meets the standards for the Riverfront Corridor Overlay District.

Submitted by: Alan Fries, Urban Planner II
                Alan M. Carmen, Planning and Redevelopment Administrator
                Jeff Eder, Community and Economic Development Director

Approved: Thomas Thomas, City Manager
Note: The information presented is not survey accurate & is for illustrative purposes only.
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