

Project Narrative

Old Mammoth Place Redevelopment Project
August 20, 2009; Revised February 2, 2010

INTRODUCTION

In late April 2009, a multi-disciplined planning team commenced a comprehensive site constraints and opportunities study of a 6.1 acre parcel located at the northwest corner of Old Mammoth Road and Sierra Nevada Road in the eastern Sierra resort community of Mammoth Lakes, California (the "Property"). The Property is subject to the Clearwater Specific Plan that was prepared and recently adopted by the Town of Mammoth Lakes for the site in anticipation of a new, mixed-use redevelopment that would re-energize the property into a vibrant four-season destination location for Mammoth locals and visitors alike. The Property's owner, Jim Demetriades of Metric Mammoth, LLC (the "Applicant"), engaged Severy Realty Group and Bull Stockwell Allen, Architecture and Planning, to fully realize the site's potential and rethink the planning strategies employed to date. The library of information derived from this site specific and contextual analysis has informed the programming and conceptual site and building design for the anticipated redevelopment. A collaborative design review process involving the Applicant, representatives of the Town's Community Development department and the Town's Advisory Design Panel (ADP) has resulted in project enhancements that further the planning objectives for the site. With its site sensitive design, innovative architecture and host of public amenities, Old Mammoth Place has the opportunity to define the heart of Mammoth Lake's downtown district. The following paragraphs outline this dramatically different project planning and design approach in greater detail.

PROPERTY SUMMARY

Location: Northwest corner of Old Mammoth Road and Sierra Nevada Road in Mammoth Lakes, California

Parcel size: 6.1 acres

APN #(s): 35-230-05; 35-230-06; 35-230-07

Planning area: Clearwater Specific Plan ("CSP")

Land use designation: Commercial – 2 ("C-2") albeit the standards set forth in the CSP will replace and supersede the existing zoning and land use designations

Existing improvements: Five older wood-framed one and two story buildings, three of which currently utilized as a lodging property with the other two being historically utilized for restaurant uses but which have been vacant for several years.

SITE CONSTRAINTS and OPPORTUNITIES

The Property is bounded on three sides by public streets - to the west, Laurel Mountain Road; to the east, Old Mammoth Road; and to the south, Sierra Nevada Road. To the north, the Property abuts a mix of existing commercial and residential buildings. Current improvements on the property include five older commercial buildings. These one and two story wood framed buildings are distributed across the 6.1 acre site and separated by asphalt paved parking lots. Existing landscaping is minimal. Three of the buildings are undergoing a short-term upgrade and are operated as a lodging facility previously under the Rodeway Inn moniker and now known as the Sierra Nevada Lodge. The other two existing buildings front Old Mammoth Road have been restaurants in the past. Although these buildings have been vacant for a number of years, one has recently reopened as the Rafters Restaurant.

Although the site “reads” flat, it does include a meaningful slope, with the high point of elevation 7864 located along Laurel Mountain Road in the northwest corner of the site. From there, it slopes down to the east/southeast approximately twenty feet. The greatest change in slope across the site, east to west, occurs at the site’s northeast corner where the current change in grade approaches 8%. As part of the Clearwater Specific Plan, this is the proposed location of the connector road between Old Mammoth Road and Laurel Mountain Road.

Due to the extent of the existing paved parking and building footprint areas, the most natural feature remaining on the site is the large stand of trees located at the highly visible intersection of Sierra Nevada Road and Old Mammoth Road. The Town of Mammoth Lakes, as part of the Clearwater Specific Plan (“CSP”), had indicated the importance of these trees. The design team also identified the preservation of this dramatic stand of pine trees as an important planning opportunity to create a portal to the development

The southern exposure of the Property provides outstanding solar orientation and reinforces the opportunities to employ passive solar principles to further the shared environmental stewardship objectives of the community and the project Applicant. Further, this outstanding solar exposure certainly informed the placement of the expansive outdoor public plazas and associated amenities envisioned for the redeveloped site. The site is afforded dramatic views of the Sherwin Mountains to the south and Lincoln Mountain to the west.

For downtown redevelopment, 6.1 acres constitutes a relatively large site capable of substantively furthering the long-term planning and design goals of the Town. The site occupies a strategic location along the important commercial district defined by Old Mammoth Road. Today, however, an array of older buildings and surface parking lots relegate the area to a suburban, automobile oriented typology that does not reinforce a sense of place or facilitate pedestrian activity. The Property represents an ideal candidate for redevelopment as it can become the new town center or social hub of Mammoth Lakes. Indeed, the redevelopment of the Property will serve as the catalyst for the long awaited revitalization of the downtown commercial core to the benefit of local residents and visitors to this eastern Sierra resort community. As such, the planning team identified the importance of creating a compelling and inviting streetscape along Old Mammoth Road and providing strong pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighborhood. This commitment to

“feet first” design pervades the redevelopment concept for the Property. Based on input from the Town’s ADP, the site’s northeast corner was also identified as an important focal point of the project for both pedestrians and vehicles traveling south on Old Mammoth Road.

PROJECT ENTITLEMENT OBJECTIVES

The project Applicant is committed to moving forward with its application to the Town of Mammoth Lakes for a Conditional Use Permit and tract map approval for its redevelopment initiative known as Old Mammoth Place. In spirit and substance, the application respects the planning tenets of the CSP and aims to facilitate the long awaited revitalization of the downtown business core in Mammoth Lakes. The Applicant is requesting an Amendment to the Clearwater Specific Plan in order to clarify how height is measured from existing adjacent grade, particularly with respect to buildings above structured parking. As allowed in Section 10 of the Clearwater Specific Plan, there is also an accommodation in order to provide additional scale variation in building heights within the project’s 35’-0” height zones along Old Mammoth Road and a small portion of Laurel Mountain Road.

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The comprehensive planning process focused on creating a vibrant and inviting pedestrian oriented town center dedicated to the entire community of Mammoth Lakes, including year-round locals, part-time residents and visitors to the area. As such, a tremendous amount of attention has been paid to the character and quality of the spaces between the buildings, with the overarching objective to define animated and sun-filled public spaces that are major attractors for locals and visitors alike. The proposed public spaces are themselves “programmed” to promote varied uses including shopping and dining, relaxation, outdoor recreational activity, community events and flexible event and conference space. These public spaces are conceived as a series of “outdoor rooms” that are every bit as important as the architecture.

The mixed-use building program has five primary components that provide significant community benefits. They include a four-star branded full service hotel, state-of-the-art conference and banquet facilities, retail and food & beverage component oriented toward local tenancy, expansive outdoor public events plazas and related amenities, and on-site workforce housing. Additionally, parking requirements would be satisfied in a subterranean parking facility supplemented by a nominal on-street parking component. This mix of complimentary uses would be housed in five buildings of varying sizes ranging in height from one to five stories as contemplated in the CSP.

In the aggregate, approximately 355,000 square feet of mixed-use building area encompassing Mammoth’s first full-service hotel, conference and banquet facilities, and commercial space as well as workforce housing will be distributed across the expansive 6.1 acre site in five buildings. The combined building footprint of 112,000 square feet encompasses only 42% the overall site area, leaving 58% as open space. This vast open space component includes expansive sidewalks along Old Mammoth Road and numerous sun filled public events plazas and associated amenities. The underground parking facility will encompass approximately 160,000 square feet or about 60% of the

Property. This large parking structure will assure that the private car no longer dominates the site but is hidden from view.

As currently configured, the proposed development program for Old Mammoth Place includes approximately 471 lodging rooms, 40,000 square feet of retail space and food & beverage venues, 10,000 square feet of state-of-the-art conference and banquet space, 5,000 square foot quality spa and wellness center, workforce housing that satisfies all project requirements on-site, subterranean parking capacity for 619 cars, and expansive outdoor public events plazas and associated amenities. As noted, this program is contained within five buildings, which range in height from one to five stories, the latter the maximum allowable per the CSP.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN – INSPIRATION, DIRECTION, and INTENT

The design for Old Mammoth Place derives from a synthesis of factors that include the above referenced “feet first” use objectives and better pedestrian integration with the adjacent neighborhood. The proposed design underscores a contextual understanding of the characteristics of the Property, the creation of an inviting town center for the entire community, the primacy of the quality of the outdoor public spaces, the community related objective for the project to serve as a catalyst for the revitalization of the downtown commercial core, and an environmental approach to architecture. In summation, the key elements of this planning approach will:

- Reinforce the project’s pedestrian integration into the adjacent neighborhood by breaking up the so-called “superblock” that extends from Sierra Nevada Road to Tavern Road by creating a new east/west public street that connects Laurel Mountain Road with Old Mammoth Road at the north side of the Property.
- Provide primary vehicular access to the site via “Old Mammoth Place,” a new east/west connector street that will eliminate any need for curb cuts along the balance of Old Mammoth Road which would be disruptive to the pedestrian flows along this important commercial street.
- Emphasize pedestrian connectivity by providing extra wide sidewalks along the Old Mammoth Road frontage, allowing for the creation of a vibrant streetscape with planting areas, outdoor café seating areas, signage, a dramatic northeast corner retail component and other amenities.
- Locate the various buildings to effectively define a strong streetscape along Old Mammoth Road and serve as appropriate backdrops to the various outdoor public spaces all of which are oriented to maximize their solar exposure.
- Employ a design strategy that avoids a “one size fits all” approach to outdoor public spaces by creating a series of differentiated but complimentary public spaces that will broaden the project’s appeal to locals and visitors alike.

- Maintain, to the extent practical, the mature trees located on the Property, particularly those at the southeast corner of the site.
- Provide an array of amenities and related back-of-house functions that will serve to attract a four-star full service hotel operator to the Property to reinforce Old Mammoth Place's quality as a compelling year-round community and four season destination.
- Deliver a LEED certifiable project consistent with the shared environmental values of the Town of Mammoth Lakes and Metric Mammoth.
- Develop an environmentally sensitive architectural vernacular that departs from the repetitive and mostly uninspiring design solutions associated with earlier generation lodging properties within the community.
- Design a project that takes into account snow country design issues.
- Result in a compelling, iconic, and marketable project that differentiates the Property from other offerings in the community

These objectives have served to inform the character of the development program and shaped the resultant conceptual land and building plan for Old Mammoth Place. The primary question posed by the project team at the outset was "How do we create a compelling destination for visitors and locals alike that serves to make the project the de facto town center and that will also serve as a catalyst for the long awaited revitalization of the downtown commercial core?"

The vehicles to achieve this significant end were found in some of the renowned festival marketplaces and public spaces in North America. Specifically, the inspirational models for Old Mammoth Place include vibrant mountain "main streets" as well as the famed Pikes Place Market in Seattle; Granville Island in Vancouver, British Columbia; Faneuil Hall and Quincy Marketplace in Boston; and the redeveloped Union Square and Ferry Building in San Francisco. The manner in which these models reflect themselves in the development program is referenced below where several prominent project components are defined in more detail.

Outdoor Public Spaces and Amenities

As already noted, there has been a tremendous focus on the quality of the open space between the buildings consistent with the overarching objective to create animated and inviting public spaces at Old Mammoth Place that provide community wide use and enjoyment opportunities. In lieu of developing one large events plaza, the idea emerged to create a variety of distinctive outdoor spaces, each with a different scale and character, with some more active and others more contemplative. The land plan defines five primary outdoor public spaces.

Cascade Park "Cascade Park" is located on the north side of Old Mammoth Place and is envisioned as a landscaped pocket park modeled after the Transamerica's popular Redwood Park located in downtown San Francisco. This park is separated from the rest of

the development to the south. It is a community benefit dedicated to rest and relaxation and the future redevelopment of land parcels to the north.

The project's larger outdoor spaces are integrated within the building development. These are threaded together by the pleasant and animating sounds of cascading water, as a river runs through the heart of the project flowing from its "headwaters" at the hotel in a southeasterly direction toward the corner of Old Mammoth Road and Sierra Nevada Road. This dramatic water element will flow year round.

River Terrace The "headwaters" of the river are located in the "River Terrace" which is dominated by a sculptural water feature and the expansive hotel pool terrace. The pool area, which provides an important hotel amenity, will enjoy outstanding solar orientation given this terrace is framed on its south side by only a two-story restaurant building, which is located in a five-story designated zone pursuant to the CSP.

Market Commons The river flows southerly from the River Terrace toward an iconic one-story restaurant building on the south side of the site adjacent to Sierra Nevada Road. The river runs along and defines the western edge of the "Market Commons", which is the public terrace just outside the enclosed festival marketplace. This plaza would be the venue for the large seasonal Christmas tree and is sized to accommodate a variety of events including farmers' markets and craft fairs.

Grove The river continues on its sculptural course and completes its journey across the site as it flows toward a pond at the Grove located near the southeast corner of the site. Distinct from the hardscaping of the Market Commons, the Grove takes on a much more natural and contemplative character taking its cues from the adjacent stand of mature evergreens.

Old Mammoth Square Across the river from the Market Commons is "Old Mammoth Square", which is the largest of the outdoor public spaces. The model for this large plaza is the renovated Union Square in San Francisco, whose recent "face lift" has reenergized this aging icon and become hugely popular with locals and tourists alike. Located on the southern periphery of the site, Old Mammoth Square enjoys outstanding southern exposure and Sherwin views. Grassy amphitheater style steps will provide abundant outdoor lounging/seating opportunities. The square's prominent location and amenities were designed to be "good neighbors" to the existing residential developments located across Sierra Nevada Road. The project's primary buildings are pushed to the north thereby increasing open space and reducing building mass along Sierra Nevada. As at Union Square, the generous proportions of Old Mammoth Square allow for a number of concurrent activities. This active outdoor space will host a seasonal ice skating rink, classic car shows, and musical and cultural events such as the venerable Mammoth Jazz Jubilee. Another prominent feature on this plaza will be a playful interactive fountain for children. Two restaurants will flank the plaza with their outdoor café style seating defining its edges.

The Festival Marketplace

The enclosed “Festival Marketplace” at Old Mammoth Place will feature a dramatic, skylit central hall that will encompass a variety of unique retail shops as well as themed food and beverage market stalls. This Festival Marketplace model focuses on occupancy by local shop and restaurant owners as opposed to corporate product offerings operated by non-locally owned businesses. This strategy does not eschew national chains because they are incapable of delivering quality products and services, but because they simply do not fit the definition of locally owned business. This local focus and the smaller size of the retail shops will additionally encourage affordable occupancy for local entrepreneurs. The design team envisions retail spaces as small as 200 square feet in order to realize the important objective of delivering economic and social value to the community.

Convenient pedestrian access to the Festival Marketplace is assured as there are north and south entrances off of Old Mammoth Road as well as a mid-block “Paseo.” At the northeast corner of the site, the market steps down in mass toward Old Mammoth Road creating a dramatic focal point for pedestrians and vehicles arriving from the north. The underground parking garage additionally opens directly to the shops and restaurants located along Old Mammoth Road. There are also pedestrian entrances to the market off of the “Market Commons” via “Old Mammoth Square” and from the proposed hotel and the sidewalks along Old Mammoth Place. This pedestrian circulation pattern assures that all retail presentations enjoy good visibility and all commercial shops are easily accessible as there are no pedestrian “dead ends”. Marketplace signage, akin to the Ferry Building and the famed Pike’s Place Market will further animate the market and lend local personality and color to the festival market at Old Mammoth Place.

Old Mammoth Road Streetscape

The revitalization of the Old Mammoth Road commercial corridor is largely dependent on the success by which a vibrant and pedestrian friendly streetscape is developed on the strategically located Property. As such, careful attention has been paid to designing this aspect of the project. The streetscape will be significantly redefined and be appropriately recaptured by the pedestrian realm utilizing several design solutions.

As noted above, the “superblock” that runs between Sierra Nevada Road and Tavern Road will be broken up by the installation of a new east/west public road, Old Mammoth Place, along the north property line. This connector road mitigates the need for any vehicular curb cuts along the entire remaining Old Mammoth Road frontage providing the benefit of convenient and safe pedestrian circulation as all vehicles will enter the property from this new roadway. As previously noted, a dramatic retail component defines the site’s northeast corner and provides a building mass that steps up from two stories toward the market hall.

On the south end of the site the Grove, which is dominated by the stand of mature trees and the pond provides a welcoming pedestrian portal into and through the Property. In between the Grove and new east/west connector road, the Old Mammoth Road streetscape is defined by expansive sidewalks and a three-story mixed-use building. This building is sensitively modulated and articulated to provide the necessary visual variety so as to avoid bland repetition of form. The ground floor of the building will contain a mix of themed retail and food & beverage establishments.

The extra wide sidewalks (i.e. up to 32 feet) and arcades in front of these shops and restaurants will provide ample room for outdoor café seating, planting areas, casual window shopping, signage, and other pedestrian scaled elements. Behind the ground floor commercial space is the parking garage, which will provide at-grade access directly to Old Mammoth Road. Two floors of lodging units and workforce housing located above the active sidewalk will serve to better define the Old Mammoth Road corridor. In recognition of the importance of the resort employee population, workforce housing is integrated across the entire project rather than being relegated to one discrete portion.

The Hotel

Located in the center of the site is the five-story hotel, out from which emanates a three-story wing that defines the Laurel Mountain Road streetscape. Consistent with the overall traffic circulation strategy for the project, the hotel's welcoming porte-cochere utilizes the new east/west connector roadway as the primary vehicular access point into the project. The hotel entry will be located mid-block on Old Mammoth Place, directly across from Cascade Park. Access to the underground parking for both hotel guests and the general public is also located in this general location. Both will enter Old Mammoth Place with a right-hand turning movement as they proceed south on Old Mammoth Road away from Main Street.

Entering Mammoth's first full service four star branded hotel, the dramatic and contemporary character of this five story building is quickly revealed. Unlike the typical lodging property in Mammoth, this hotel features an atrium lobby that soars four stories and is capped by a large skylight that floods the space with natural light. The dramatic views of the sky overhead are complimented by those through the lobby across River Terrace south to the Sherwin Mountains beyond. In addition to the signature lobby and expansive pool terrace, this full service hotel provides a high quality spa and wellness center approximating 5,000 square feet. Further, the hotel/public amenity offering includes a state-of-the-art conference and banquet facility that approximates 9,000 square feet. The 2-story volume ballroom totals about 7,000 square feet and is divisible into three separate event rooms to provide the utmost in market flexibility. Further, there is over 2,000 square feet of pre-function space to assure the utility of this conference component.

The quality of the spa and other public amenities within the hotel, coupled with its immediate adjacency to the lively Festival Marketplace, Old Mammoth Road streetscape, and animated public plazas and associated amenities combine to render the hotel at Old Mammoth Place as the lodging destination of choice in this eastern Sierra resort community.

ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT and VERNACULAR

Discussions with the Town of Mammoth Lakes and the ADP have confirmed several fundamental design tenets that are deemed important to the community that have guided the project team's development of an architectural vernacular for Old Mammoth Place. The Town has expressed a strong desire for a signature building architecture that is authentic and appropriate to the rugged character of this eastern Sierra resort community. Strong and durable are words used to reinforce this objective of buildings that are rooted in the hardscrabble mountain environment of Mammoth.

The building colors and textures should reflect the local mountain environment. Further, the Town has expressed a clear desire for the ensemble of buildings at Old Mammoth Place to be compositionally strong.

In considering its architectural options in this context, the project team focused on creating an architecture that was firmly rooted in the character and traditions of Mammoth which led to the foundational questions, “What really defines Mammoth?” and “What do people think of when Mammoth is mentioned?” Heavy timber, snow and the majestic pine covered granite peaks. This image of the mountain peaks, at a global scale, and of the pine cone at a more detailed level became the catalyst for developing a compelling contemporary mountain architecture grounded in the natural history of Mammoth, as well as a signature architecture that “belongs no place else.”

Holding a pine cone in our hands, we all know that it has a rough outer skin which is very articulated with its scalloped projections revealing a smoother inner core. The architecture at Old Mammoth Place is modeled on the simple beauty of the pine cone in conjunction with heavy timber and glass accents. The abstraction of these elemental objects underpins the design approach. In looking at the composition of the site plan, the notion evolved to have buildings recall the architecture of the mountains. Specifically, the buildings on the periphery of the site would have very articulated and faceted facades sheathed in a natural color palette of shingles, heavy timber, and rusticated metal. This scalloped effect on the exterior walls would introduce much visual interest as reinforced by the more pronounced shadow pattern on the wall plane. As with the pine cone and its internal “nut,” the center of the site would have an architecture that is more smooth and refined. With its granite, timber and channel glass accents, the hotel architecture draws on recent advances in architectural design where translucency and energy efficiency can work together with traditional rustic elements. Framed in granite and timber, we envision that the hotel’s exterior will echo the mountain environment.

In combination, the metaphors of pine cones and the surrounding granite mountain peaks have guided the architecture of Old Mammoth Place. The development team believes deeply that a unique and inspired architectural solution will further define the success of Old Mammoth Place and reinforce its importance in creating a compelling and memorable sense of place within Mammoth Lakes.

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