AGENDA ITEM 8.B File No. PL16-0124 – FIRST & OXBOw PRELIMINARY REVIEW

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

PROJECT SUMMARY: Preliminary review of the proposed “Foxbow” hotel design

LOCATION OF PROPERTY: 718, 730, 876 Water Street & 711, 731, 743, 803, 819, 823, 825 First Street
APNs 003-235-003, -004, -005, -006, -007 & 003-241-003, -005, -006 & 003-242-001

GENERAL PLAN: OBC, Oxbow Commercial

ZONING: OBC, Oxbow Commercial; BF, Building Form Overlay; FP, Floodplain Management Overlay

APPLICANT: Foxbow Development, LLC
485 Technology Way
Napa, CA 94558

Phone: (415) 812-6188

PROPERTY OWNER:

Foxbow Development, LLC
485 Technology Way
Napa, CA 94558

PT-Five Investments, LP
PMB 7172-208
Stateline, NV 89449

R. Guadagni
1918 Third Street
Napa, CA 94559

Napa County Flood Control & Water Conservation District

City of Napa

STAFF PLANNER: Karlo Felix, Senior Planner
Phone: (707) 257-9530
II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide a preliminary review of the design for the proposed First & Oxbow hotel project. Preliminary Review is a process applied to significant projects which would benefit from early consultation while an application is being processed for formal review. Comments received during this Preliminary Review process are intended to serve as guidance only, and should not be considered as either support or as opposition to the project undergoing review.

FIGURE 1 – SITE PLAN

LOCATION MAP
III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION, CONTEXT, AND BACKGROUND

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Applicant, Foxbow Development, LLC, is requesting approval to construct a new hotel development in two, four-story buildings with two levels of subterranean parking. The development’s program includes:

1. A 66-key hotel with a gym and spa;
2. 4,200 square feet of conference and meeting facilities;
3. 1,200 square feet for a restaurant;
4. 3,300 square feet of retail; and
5. 118 parking stalls.

The hotel is split into two buildings. Each building will have 33-keys and its own reception, valet, and back-of-house facilities. The western building includes the hotel’s gym, spa, and ancillary retail as well as a restaurant and 57 parking spaces. The eastern building includes the hotel’s conference and meeting facilities, multiple retail suites, and 61 parking spaces. Valet drop-off is provided on the south side of First Street in front of each building. The parking garage of the western building is accessed off First Street and the parking garage of the eastern building is accessed off Water Street.

A “sculpture garden” runs along the west side of the western building and wraps around the proposed restaurant on the corner of First Street and Soscol Avenue. The hotel suites in each building are arranged around a central atrium that extends from the second to fourth floors and are configured in a manner that creates an opening on the southern elevation on the second and third floors. A roof-top terrace is located on the northern side of each building on the fourth floor. Each of the suites includes a balcony and most of the suites on the fourth floor include a private terrace.

The base of the building is composed of board-formed concrete utilizing eight-inch boards with the wood grains left exposed and the concrete left unpainted. Vertical wood siding with a natural-colored stain clads the exterior of the building with dark metal utilized as accents on the windows, doors, planter boxes, and chimneys. Trellises are located over the windows on the fourth floor and over the private terraces. The roof is composed of corrugated metal in a weathered zinc color. Yellow fabric awnings are located over the storefronts on the first floor along Soscol Avenue and First Street.

B. PROJECT CONTEXT

The project site is composed of multiple properties which will be consolidated into two 15,500 square foot parcels. The properties are bounded by Soscol Avenue, First Street, McKinstry Street, Water Street, and the Napa River. Portions of the land associated with the development are not under ownership or control by the Applicant such as City of Napa (City) rights-of-ways and Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (Flood Control District) property. The Napa Valley Wine Train railroad tracks generally divide the project site into two areas. The western area is currently vacant. The eastern
area has been developed with multiple historic structures that were originally constructed as residences but have since been converted to commercial uses.

As noted in Section I of this Report, the property is comprised of multiple properties under multiple owners including the City of Napa and the Flood Control District. As shown in Figure 2 below, the project relies on the City of Napa to abandon and quitclaim a public street (Water Street) between the western building and the Napa River east across the railroad tracks to McKinstry Street, and a portion of the former Lawrence Street between the western building and the railroad tracks. The underlying property interests associated with the Applicant’s proposed abandonment are not known at this time, which may affect what entities are entitled to the abandoned right-of-way if the City were to entertain the abandonment. Additionally, the project relies on the Flood Control District providing an access easement over their property between the eastern building and the railroad tracks. The Flood Control District has not fully analyzed the request and has not provided final approvals to grant the easements required for the project. These issues may have a significant impact on the project design, which relies on land not otherwise controlled by the Applicant, and the project may have to change depending on the outcome of these negotiations.

**FIGURE 2 – REQUIRED ABANDONMENTS, QUITCLAIMS, & EASEMENTS**

![Diagram of the required abandonments, quitclaims, and easements]
C. PROJECT BACKGROUND

A conceptual plan for the proposed project was originally submitted in August 2016. The initial submittal was considered a pre-application and a response letter was forwarded to the Applicant in November 2016. After initial dialogue with Staff several modifications were made to establish a clearer development program and more comprehensive plans, which were submitted by the Applicant in September 2017 addressing some of the early issues of concern. The application is currently incomplete with a number of items required for adequate review in preparation of future hearings for final action. While the application is considered to be incomplete, Staff determined that sufficient information has been provided for the Planning Commission to conduct a Preliminary Review of the project design.

FIGURE 3 – SOSCOL AVENUE & FIRST STREET

FIGURE 4 – SOSCOL AVENUE & NAPA RIVER
IV. ANALYSIS

A. GENERAL PLAN, DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN, AND ZONING

The property is located within the OBC, Oxbow Commercial General Plan Designation, Downtown Specific Plan (DTSP) Land Use District, and Zoning District, which applies to the eastern portions of Downtown generally between Soscol Avenue and the Napa River and north to River Terrace Drive. The OBC Designation and District allows for uses oriented to tourists such as hotels and their related uses with the approval of a Use Permit from the City Council. The OBC Designation and District also allows for retail and restaurant uses as permitted land uses.

The property is also located within the BF, Building Form Overlay District, specifically the Downtown II (DT-II) Building Form Zone, which encompasses blocks between the center and edges of Downtown, and which establishes the physical development standards for the project site. The DT-II Form Zone requires compliance with Section 4.7.2 of the DTSP. DT-II establishes the maximum and minimum property development standards, such as development intensity, height, setbacks, and step backs, that may be approved by the City for a development project in the DT-II Form Zone through the Use Permit and Design Review Permit processes when considering the project within the larger context of the surrounding area, existing General Plan policy, the vision provided in the DTSP, and applicable regulations and guidelines.

B. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Although the project is undergoing an assembly of materials and internal staff review to prepare for formal review of the entitlements (e.g. Use Permit and Design Review Permit)
by the Commission, there are several project design features that the Planning Commission may want to discuss as a part of the Preliminary Review. These include:

1. **Land Use Compatibility.**

   The project site is located between several hotel developments located to the west in the Downtown core, to the north along McKinstry Street, and to the east across the Napa River. The Planning Commission has recently approved one hotel (Black Elk Hotel – File No. PL16-0133 – August 17, 2017) and conducted Preliminary Review of a second hotel (Wine Train Hotel – File No. PL17-0133 – January 4, 2018) within the Oxbow District. During the review of the Black Elk Hotel and the subject application, Staff noted concern regarding the potential for hotel uses to disrupt the pedestrian experience along First Street. While a hotel may benefit from the foot traffic, a hotel may not be a street-activating use that contributes to the liveliness in the area driving pedestrians from one end of the downtown to the other. This can be overcome by good land use and design such as narrow lobby areas (e.g., Archer and Andaz Hotels) and fronting the street level with viable retail, restaurant, and service spaces.

   Additionally, Staff has noted concerns regarding an overconcentration of hotel uses. As a result, the City Council has directed City staff to commission a study on hotels that will analyze issues such as the capacity to absorb expansion, the impact on average daily rates, the type of amenities needed to best serve the market, where the City may want to target future growth, and similar issues. This study is anticipated to be completed in the spring and will help the City develop policy direction regarding hotel developments to be considered as a part of the review process. In the meantime, policy direction in the current hotel policy (last updated March 2008) includes requiring that new hotels address guest and employee transportation, job training, green building principles, public art, and employment/housing issues.

2. **Site and Building Design.**

   As noted in Subsection III.A of this Report, the proposed hotel is split into two buildings that have no interior connections. For example, the proposed configuration of the hotel would require a guest checking-in at the incorrect lobby or parked within the incorrect garage to transfer themselves and their belongings along First Street. Staff is concerned that a hotel operator will require modifications to the project in order for it to function to their customer service standards.

   The property development standards for the DT-II Building Form Zone establish maximum/minimum standards that the City may approve for a project within the District rather than standards allowed by right. The standards must be taken into account along with associated goals and guidelines because hotels are discretionary uses subject to City consideration of a Use Permit unlike other uses that are allowed by right such as art galleries, business offices, and food services. A Use Permit is required for land uses that may be suitable only in specific locations or require special consideration in their design, operation, or layout to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses. While Preliminary Reviews do not traditionally reflect on the appropriateness of a specific use (i.e. its operation and
management), in the past the Commission has noted that how a building is designed and integrated into the neighborhood affects how future users of the building interact with the proposed use.

Previous iterations of the proposed project proposed a building that was essentially built to the edges of the building envelope. The Applicant has proposed modifications that added both horizontal and vertical articulation, moving the building away from Soscol Avenue, and opening the southern elevation to an atrium. However, Staff is concerned that the design does not go far enough in respecting the smaller-scaled buildings in the Oxbow District. This is especially true for the narrow lot to the east where a single-story historic structure is located, and where softening the proposed building mass with reduced stories and upper-story stepbacks to reduce overshadowing the neighborhood should be considered.

The area is under a process of potential significant change with the Black Elk project across the street, Wine Train and Westin Verasa projects, sale of South Copia and County Corporation Yard, and Ritz Project. This was not fully envisioned by the 2012 Downtown Napa Specific Plan (DTSP), which identified the Copia property as a focus or study area. Consideration of this larger area may warrant some master planning. Currently, the majority of the Oxbow District along First Street to the former Copia property is composed of small-scale structures which provide pedestrian scale and context in the District and variety which makes the experience, both from the road and sidewalk, interesting. The project proposes retail along Soscol Avenue and First Street which will help to activate the sidewalk and bring down the scale of the buildings. The viability of this space will require further consideration, however, as its success is vital to the project. Further development of plans that show how this is carried through on all four elevations is needed to ensure that grade differences do not expose long lengths and tall heights of bare concrete walls and that a rhythm found in the neighborhood that is created by storefront openings and detached structures is emulated.

As the primary gateway to both the Oxbow District and the Downtown core, the mass and intensity of the buildings as proposed was not envisioned by the DTSP. Although the DTSP contains maximum property development standards (e.g., height, FAR, etc.), these are to be considered within the context of design guidelines that also shape an area and other similar factors. The site is separate from the Downtown core by the open space created by the Napa River, China Point Park, and Soscol Avenue. The Napa River also separates the project from the south. As proposed, the buildings provide an abrupt transition from this open space. While the sloped roofs, balconies, terraces, open atrium, and setback from Soscol Avenue assist with reducing the apparent bulk of the building, the design presents a development wall when viewed from the west and the south. A stronger emphasis in blending public, private, and semi-private open spaces, especially at the corner of Soscol Avenue and First Street which will define the visual character of the neighborhood from its westerly entrance, should be considered. The design should acknowledge an intent to transition from the urban and fine-grained character of the Downtown core to the low-height and free-standing character of the Oxbow District.
3. **Gateway & Public Art.**

The DTSP identifies a “gateway identifier” at First Street and Soscol Avenue (DTSP Chapter 5). The development of the project will also require compliance with the Public Art Ordinance (Napa Municipal Code [NMC] Chapter 15.108). The Applicant proposes to satisfy this requirement through the creation of a sculpture garden that runs along Soscol Avenue and partially wraps around the building on First Street. A specific art contribution piece that satisfies this requirement has not yet been proposed, but feedback on the adequacy of a sculpture garden as a gateway identifier will assist with identifying the elements required for final review when the project is forwarded to the Commission.

V. **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The Preliminary Review is not subject to a formal California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) determination as the preliminary review does not constitute a “project.” Formal consideration of the project will be subject to environmental review in accordance with CEQA at the “earliest feasible time” prior to “approval” consistent with Sections 15004 and 15352 of the CEQA Guidelines. Staff will conduct a CEQA analysis of the project prior to formal review and consideration of the required entitlements.

VI. **REQUIRED ACTIONS**

No formal action is required by the Planning Commission as the Preliminary Review is a study session for comments only. Other issues such as environmental impacts, General Plan, DTSP, and Zoning consistency will be addressed in more detail at the time the application is deemed complete and scheduled for a public hearing.

VII. **DOCUMENTS ATTACHED**

1. Project Plans
First and Oxbow Gateway Project
711 FIRST ST. & 731 WATER ST.
NAPA, CA 94558
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711 First St. & 731 Water St.
Napa, CA 94558
VIEW @ GATEWAY CAFE & SCULPTURE GARDEN

**CORRUGATED METAL ROOFING**
- Color: Weathered Zinc
- Location: Roofing

**WOOD SIDING**
- Color: Natural Stain
- Location: Siding

**FABRIC AWNING**
- Color: Pale Yellow
- Location: Awning

**ACCENT MATERIAL**
- Color: Worn Steel
- Location: Windows, Doors, Planters, & Chimney

**BOARD FORMED CONCRETE @ BUILDING BASE**
- Color: Gray or as reviewed with Town to match similar structures nearby
- 8” boards with wood grain exposed
- Location: Building Base

**MATERIAL PALETTE**
**First and Oxbow Gateway Project**

711 First St. & 731 Water St.
NAPA, CA  94558