

# BUILDING SALT LAKE

## **SOUTH DOWNTOWN TO GET 345 NEW HOMES DESPITE GROUND-FLOOR ACTIVE-USE CONCERNS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION**

By Luke Garrott

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The Salt Lake City Planning Commission approved a two-building project just east of the Central 9th district at its meeting last night despite commissioners' concerns about the buildings' design.

The Boyer Company had asked for nine exceptions to D-2 zoning requirements that required both a planned development and a design review process for both buildings.

Of the adjustment requests, planning commissioners were most concerned with Boyer's failure to meet ground-floor active use requirements and provide relief for the long facade length of the north building.

Elliott North at 29 W. 800 S. (283 units, predominantly studios and 1-bedrooms) and Elliott South at 846-850 S. Richards St. (62 units, equally split between 1- and 2-bedrooms) were

originally designed with zero street-front presence on Richards street, in clear violation of zoning rules.

In their revisions, locals the Boyer Company convinced planning staff and the commission that eight artists' apartments plus studios on Richards comply with the code's active use requirement, as well as a shared leasing office and art gallery on 800 South.

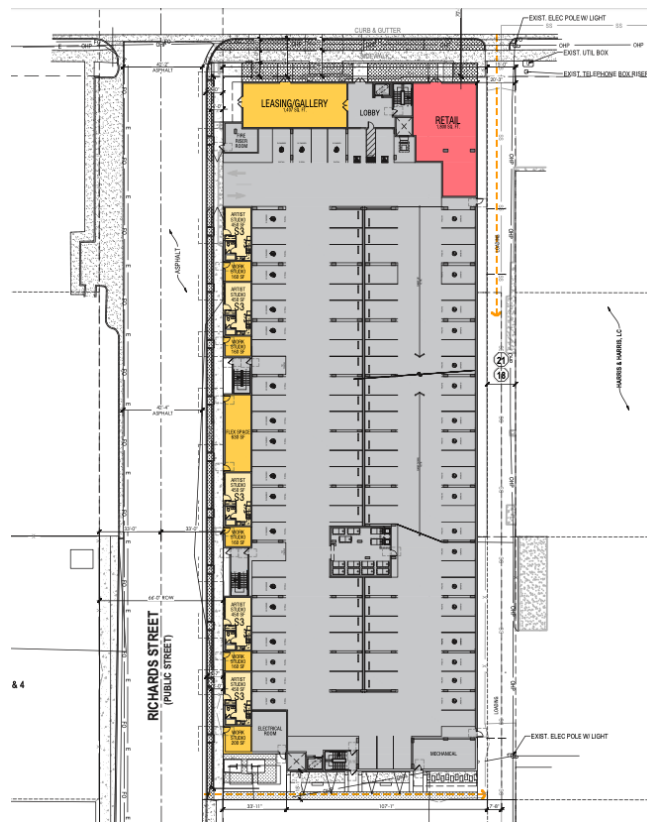
### Approval Despite Doubts

Developers promise to provide eight apartments at ground level on Richards Street to artists vetted by the city's Arts Council at \$1,000/month. It will include a studio apartment of 450 square feet, along with adjoining studio space varying from 160-200 square feet.

The studio space will have transparent garage doors, "facilitating interaction with the street," according to planners.

In addition, those artists will have access to the north building's art gallery fronting 800 South.

That 1,400 square feet space—to be shared with the project's leasing office—will complement the retail pad of 1,800 square feet planned for the north building's northeast corner.



Elliott North site plan street level. Image courtesy AO.

Commissioners expressed doubt whether the gallery space would eventually be sacrificed to office space for leasing and management functions.

Boyer representative Nikolai Lazarev told the Commission that “we are in stone committed to the gallery,” which will be staffed by “trained sales people at our expense” and will show work from the artists who live in the Elliott.

The Commission approved the Design Review 6-1 with the condition, proposed by Commissioner Amy Barry, that “the gallery space along 800 South be as retail to comply with ground floor uses under the zone and if the gallery use changes it should continue to be retail in focus.”

Her use of the term “should” instead of “shall” may give Boyer wiggle-room to exit this portion of the agreement in the future.



Rendering of Richards Street frontage of Elliott north. Image by AO.

In addition, Barry expressed concerns regarding the artist live-work spaces along Richards Street.

“In my neighborhood [Sugar House], they frequently become only living space and the blinds are drawn on the rest of the unit,” she said.

Commissioner and architect Brian Scott pushed back on Planning staff's categorization of the live-work units as "active uses." He cited the conditions for allowing facade lengths over the zone's 200-foot maximum: that "a min of 80 percent of the ground must be used for active, publicly accessible uses."

Planner Amanda Roman reminded him that dwelling units are considered active uses in the city's zoning code.

The Planned Development proposal for Elliott north passed with a 6-1 vote, and both petitions for the south building sailed through the Commission unanimously.