

Marriott plans for hotel



BAR ARCHITECTS

An architectural rendering depicts a five-story AC Hotels by Marriott proposed for a parking lot at 210 Fifth St. in Santa Rosa's Railroad Square. This is the view from Fourth and Davis streets.

Proposed five-story structure would include 142 rooms, restaurant, retail

By **ROBERT DIGITALE**
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Santa Rosa design and cultural heritage officials next week will review plans for a five-story hotel proposed on the eastern edge of Railroad Square.

The proposed 142-room AC Hotels by Marriott would rise on the site of an existing parking lot at Fifth and Davis streets, adjacent to Highway 101. The building's ground floor would include a restaurant and retail space, in keeping with city efforts to encourage pedestrian activity in the historic retail area west of the downtown.

The European-inspired hotel would feature a contemporary décor with wood floors and frosted glass walls between the baths and guest rooms.

The aim is a "boutique-style hotel that really is not offered in the Santa Rosa market today," said Jeff Blackman, presi-

dent of Dallas-based Bedford Lodging, the hotel's developer.

"We think that Santa Rosa is under-hoteled," Blackman said. The occupancy levels of current lodging establishments here "are far in excess of the national average." Moreover, the city draws sizable numbers of both business travelers during the week and leisure visitors on the weekends.

"It really has both components that we look for when we develop our hotels," he said.

The land's zoning allows hotels. But city officials will consider whether the project's height is compatible with the historic surroundings and whether the hotel would provide enough new parking spaces.

The height issue will be reviewed Tuesday when the city Design Review and Cultural Heritage boards hold a joint hearing on the project. The offi-

cial can allow the five-story project as long as it doesn't detract from the area's character, said senior planner Patrick Street.

City planners are recommending the project's approval, he said.

The city Planning Commission later will determine whether to approve a use permit to allow off-site parking. Under city rules, the project needs to provide 154 off-street parking spaces, Streeter said.

Last fall, a review committee composed of Railroad Square merchants urged the city in a letter not to allow the hotel to simply use existing public parking located under the nearby freeway.

Blackman said his company is proposing to put 26 tandem parking spaces at the hotel and to build a 100-space parking lot nearby at Sixth and Davis streets.

Bedford Lodging was formed in 2013 and has developed seven lodging properties, all for Marriott International, he said.