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Office Use Only:
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569-26-000140-PLNG

Appeal Application

Applicant Information

Applicant is: Property Owner Contract Buyer Option Holder Agent Other local business owner
 Provided testimony prior to this appeal.

Applicant Name Alexa McClain Phone 720-568-0044

Contact Name _____ Phone _____
(If different than above)

Address 605 NE 1st St.

City, State, Zip McMinnville, OR 97128

Contact Email bryceleximclain@gmail.com

Original Application Information

File No.: DDR 1-26 Review Body: Historic Landmarks Committee

Decision: Approved with Conditions Date of Decision: May 28, 2026

Date Decision Mailed: June 3, 2026 Appeal Date Deadline: June 18, 2026 at 5pm

Description of Original Application Request: Downtown Design Review approval for a mixed-use affordable housing development proposed by Bienestar and McMinnville Cooperative Ministries, including associated design adjustments and modifications.

Appeal of a decision made by the following review body is requested:

- PLANNING DIRECTOR (See Section 17.72.170 (Appeal from Ruling of Planning Director) of the Zoning Ordinance for further information.)
- PLANNING COMMISSION (See Section 17.72.180 (Appeal from Ruling of Planning Commission) of the Zoning Ordinance for further information.)

APPEAL OF HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

Docket: DDR 1-26 (Downtown Design Review)

June 18th, 2026

Appellant:

Alexa McClain

605 NE 1st Street

McMinnville, OR 97128

To the McMinnville Planning Director,

I respectfully appeal the Historic Landmarks Committee's approval of DDR 1-26.

I have participated throughout the public process as a nearby property owner, resident, and business owner directly across from the proposed development site. My husband and I have lived in downtown McMinnville for over nine years and have closely followed these proceedings because the project will have a direct impact on our home, business, neighborhood, and the broader downtown district.

I want to state clearly that this appeal is not based on opposition to affordable housing. Affordable housing serves an important need, and I appreciate the work of McMinnville Cooperative Ministries and Bienestar. Rather, this appeal is based on concerns that the findings adopted by the Historic Landmarks Committee do not adequately address several significant issues raised throughout the public process and do not sufficiently explain why this particular project, at this location and scale, satisfies the City's historic preservation and downtown design objectives.

GROUND 1: THE FINDINGS DO NOT ADEQUATELY ADDRESS THE LOSS OF A SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC PARKING RESOURCE

The findings acknowledge that the site has functioned for decades as a public parking resource through an agreement between the City and the church and further acknowledge that public parking will not be retained as part of the redevelopment. The findings describe the history of the public parking lease and state that the applicant is not proposing to retain public parking as part of the redevelopment.

However, despite repeated testimony from residents, business owners, and neighboring property owners regarding parking concerns, the findings contain little meaningful analysis of the consequences of removing this longstanding public parking asset, while adding what will be 70-140+ new residents to the downtown core (assuming all units are rented).

The issue is not simply whether the project satisfies minimum parking requirements under current state law or qualifies for parking-related adjustments. The issue is whether the findings adequately evaluate the

impacts of eliminating a parking resource that has historically served not only the co-op, but downtown businesses, employees, visitors, church attendees, and residents.

Downtown McMinnville functions differently than many other areas of the city. It serves as the economic, cultural, and tourism center of the community. Parking availability directly affects the accessibility and vitality of downtown businesses, particularly during peak tourism season, community events, and weekends. While the findings acknowledge that public parking will be lost and resident traffic may be increased, they do not meaningfully analyze how that loss may affect surrounding properties, businesses, downtown safety, or downtown activity.

Numerous members of the public raised concerns regarding parking impacts throughout the review process. Yet the findings largely treat parking as a code-compliance issue rather than addressing the broader question of how removing an established public parking resource, while also adding a large block of additional residences, will affect the downtown district as a whole.

Given the significance of the site's current parking function and the volume of testimony submitted on this issue, additional review is warranted to determine whether the findings adequately address these impacts and whether sufficient evidence exists in the record to support the conclusions reached.

GROUND 2: THE FINDINGS DO NOT ADEQUATELY ADDRESS THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF THE NUMEROUS ADJUSTMENTS, WAIVERS, AND DESIGN DEPARTURES APPROVED FOR THIS PROJECT

The findings acknowledge that the project relies on numerous mandatory adjustments and design modifications, including adjustments related to parking requirements, façade articulation, building materials, glazing requirements, open space requirements, and balconies and porches.

While the findings evaluate these adjustments individually, they do not meaningfully analyze the cumulative effect of granting so many departures from the City's standard downtown design requirements.

The Downtown Design Standards were adopted to preserve and reinforce the character, pedestrian experience, and visual cohesion of the downtown core. In this case, many of the standards intended to shape the character and appearance of downtown development have been reduced, adjusted, or waived. The findings repeatedly conclude that individual adjustments are allowed under state law or satisfy waiver criteria, but provide little analysis regarding whether the final project, when viewed as a whole, remains consistent with the overall purpose and intent of the Downtown Design Standards.

This concern is particularly important because the project occupies a full downtown block, involves demolition of a designated historic resource, and will become one of the most visually prominent structures in this portion of downtown. The findings should demonstrate not only that each adjustment may be permissible individually, but also that the combined effect of those adjustments still results in a project that advances the City's adopted goals for downtown design and historic character.

These standards are regularly applied to property owners throughout downtown in order to preserve the character and sense of place that define McMinnville. Yet the findings do not adequately explain why the

numerous adjustments approved for this project remain consistent with those same design objectives when considered together.

For these reasons, additional review is warranted to determine whether the findings adequately address the cumulative effect of the numerous adjustments, waivers, and design departures approved as part of this project.

GROUND 3: THE FINDINGS DO NOT ADEQUATELY DEMONSTRATE COMPATIBILITY WITH THE HISTORIC CHARACTER, SCALE, AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERN OF DOWNTOWN MCMINNVILLE

One of the primary purposes of Downtown Design Review is to ensure that new development contributes positively to the historic character and unique sense of place that define downtown McMinnville.

The findings conclude that the project is compatible with the surrounding area because “other multi-story buildings exist elsewhere within downtown” and because the project generally reflects nearby buildings.

However, the existence of other multi-story buildings does not, by itself, establish compatibility with the character, scale, and development pattern of this particular location.

Throughout the public process, residents and neighboring property owners repeatedly expressed concerns regarding the overall scale of the proposed building, its visual prominence, its relationship to surrounding historic resources, and whether a four-story, 72-unit apartment building occupying nearly an entire block is consistent with the character of this portion of downtown McMinnville.

The approved project represents a substantial change to the surrounding environment, replacing a designated historic resource with a significantly larger building. While the findings reference design elements intended to reflect historic storefront patterns and materials, they do not sufficiently explain how the overall scale, massing, and visual impact of the project support the City's stated goals of preserving and enhancing downtown's historic character and unique sense of place.

The project approval also relies upon multiple adjustments and waivers related to articulation, materials, glazing, parking standards, and other design elements. The findings do not adequately explain how the resulting project, viewed as a whole, remains compatible with the historic downtown environment that the City's design standards were created to protect.

ADDITIONAL CONCERN: INSUFFICIENT RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIAL PUBLIC TESTIMONY

The public record contains extensive testimony and a petition from nearby residents, business owners, and community members regarding downtown vitality, parking, safety, infrastructure, historic character, and compatibility concerns. The findings acknowledge the existence of public testimony but do not meaningfully engage with many of the concerns raised or explain why those concerns were outweighed by the benefits identified in support of the project.

Given the scale of the project, the demolition of a historic resource, the elimination of a longstanding public parking asset, and the extensive public participation in this matter, additional review by the Planning Commission and Planning Director is warranted.

REQUEST FOR RELIEF

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request that the Planning Director reverse the Historic Landmarks Committee's approval of DDR 1-26 or, alternatively, remand the application for further review and additional findings.

The record contains substantial concerns regarding the loss of a significant public parking resource, the cumulative effect of numerous adjustments and design departures, compatibility with the historic character and development pattern of downtown McMinnville, and the adequacy of the response to public testimony. These concerns were repeatedly raised by nearby residents, business owners, and community members throughout the review process.

While the benefits of affordable housing are important and acknowledged, the findings do not adequately demonstrate why this particular project, at this particular location, and at this scale is consistent with the City's adopted downtown design objectives and historic preservation goals.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Planning Director reverse the approval or remand the application for additional review, findings, and analysis before any further approvals are granted.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexa McClain - Downtown Resident and Business Owner
605 NE 1st Street
McMinnville, Oregon

Signature:



Co-Appellant:

Bryce McClain - Downtown Resident and Business Owner

Signature:


