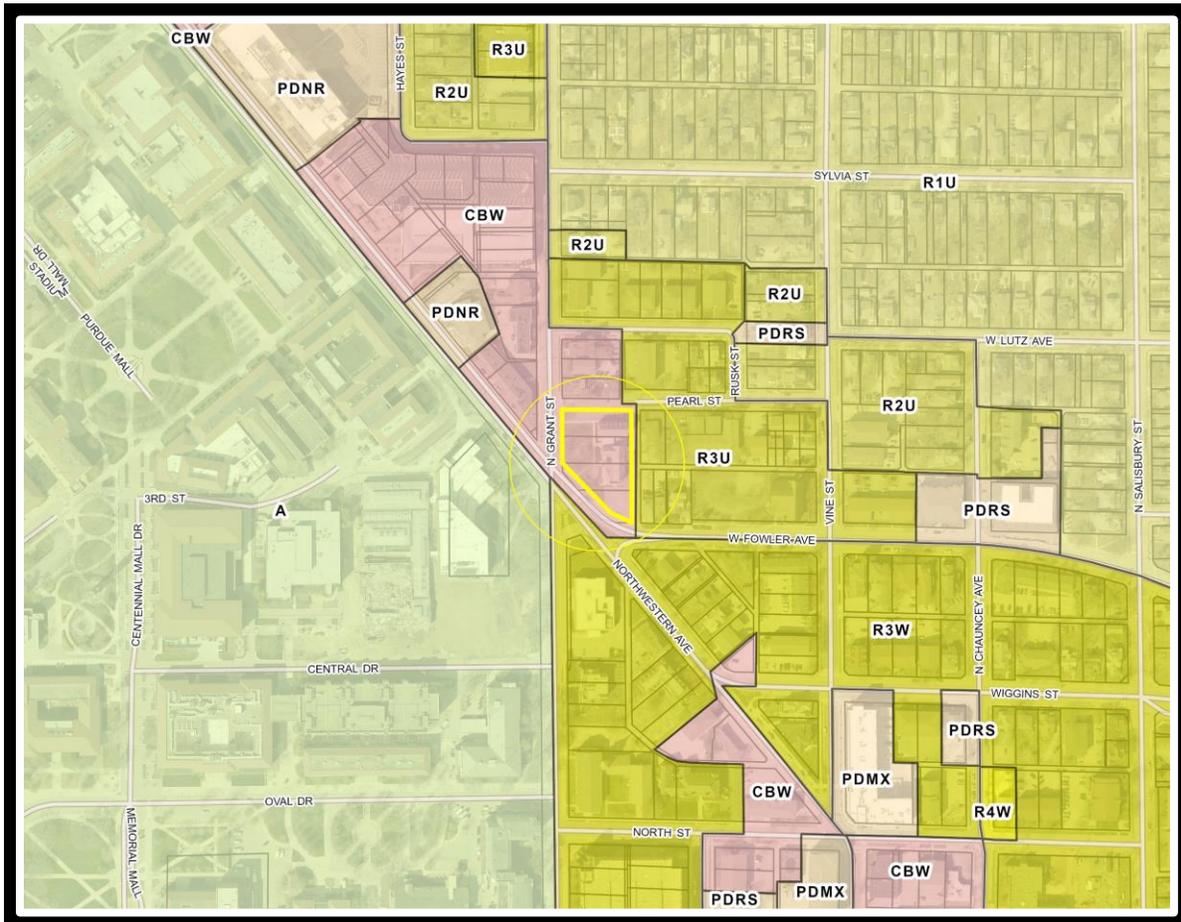

Z-2826
PURDUE DELTA TAU DELTA ASSOCIATION, INC.
(CBW to R3U)

STAFF REPORT
April 15, 2021



REQUEST MADE, PROPOSED USE, LOCATION:

Petitioner, with consent of the owner and represented by attorney Chris Shelmon is requesting R3U zoning of the Purdue Delta Tau Delta property located at 400 Northwestern Avenue, West Lafayette, Wabash 19 (NE) 23-4.

ZONING HISTORY AND AREA ZONING PATTERNS:

A neighborhood-wide rezone action, prompted by the adoption of the *New Chauncey Neighborhood Plan* in 2013, was successfully adopted by the city council in 2015 which rezoned the subject property to CBW from R3W (Z-2619).

The most recent rezone petitions in the area include “443 Vine Street Planned Development” (Z-2771, from 2019) and “460 Northwestern Planned Development” (Z-2675, from 2017). Both rezones were for multi-family student apartments.

AREA LAND USE PATTERNS:

The subject property currently has a building constructed in 1928 that reflects Tudor Revival architectural characteristics; the building has been home to a fraternity for several decades. It is located on the western edge of the New Chauncey Neighborhood, at the intersection of Northwestern Avenue, Grant Street, and Fowler Avenue. The surrounding properties are student apartments except to the southwest, across Northwestern Avenue, where structures associated with Purdue University exist.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION:

Grant Street, Northwestern and Fowler Avenue are classified as primary arterials according to the adopted *Thoroughfare Plan*. A platted Pearl Street appears to end at the northeast corner of the area in the request, where it is reduced in width to a 20 foot wide alley and connects to Grant Street. A north-south alley on the east side of the property connects Fowler Avenue and Pearl Street.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

Public utilities serve the property.

STAFF COMMENTS:

The site is the home of Purdue Delta Tau Delta fraternity, a not-for-profit entity, recognized as a university student living unit. A “Fraternity, Sorority or Student Cooperative” use is categorized in the ordinance as a type of residential use. Consequently, fraternities are permitted by right only in R3, R3U, R3W, R4W and A zones to house high-density residential needs. According to petitioner’s representative, approving the rezone request will legitimize the nonconforming fraternity to allow future building upgrades and reduce insurance costs.

While this site in the past had been home to a conforming fraternity, the New Chauncey Neighborhood supported (and the City of West Lafayette approved) different plans for the future of this prominent corner. The *New Chauncey Neighborhood Plan*, adopted by City Council in 2013, shows a “High Density Mixed Use” future for the subject property. The “High Density Mixed Use” category, as defined in its land use plan promotes: “...a more intense mix of residential and commercial uses, typically not exceeding 5-stories, including ground floor professional/ personal services, shop front retail with restaurants, cafes and gift shops integrated with residential and/or offices on upper levels.” The subject area was rezoned to the current Central Business (CBW) designation to facilitate a mixed-use vision of the adopted land use plan. Moreover, the future land use block description found in the land use plan (Block 22) addresses the urban character of this block explicitly to create: “a lively, urban, mixed-use environment that is pedestrian-oriented and focused on delivering neighborhood retail, restaurant and services designed to better connect the New Chauncey section of the Northwestern Avenue corridor with the Chauncey Village section.”

Staff does not support this rezone request as it would confine redevelopment opportunities only to residential uses, sharply contradicting the *Neighborhood Plan’s* goals and objectives. Adaptive reuse of the historic structure, including mixed use components supported in the CBW zone, in alliance with the plan’s goals and objectives, could be a viable future alternative for the subject property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Denial