

Design Review Board
Public Hearing 5.30.2019

0:00:02 Lori Wendling: Our first order of business is approval of minutes. That will not be happening tonight. [laughter] So we will postpone that and review those next month. Our new order of business this evening is a proposal for 9 Highland Avenue and 3, 15, 19, and 25 North Fort Thomas Avenue. Would the applicant like to come forward and state your name and address for the record, please?

0:00:33 Rick Greiwe: Rick Greiwe, Greiwe Development.

[background conversation]

0:00:48 Rick Greiwe: Rick Greiwe, Greiwe Development, 9355 Holly Hill. And it's good to be back with a new and improved project. We've spent a lot of time getting your input, the Planning Commission's input, and several citizens, and we think we have a better project and we're excited about it. We want to follow up on the specific issues you raised last time. We're going to be talking about a new tower design to the entry to the residential gallery to the building, the roof line, the streetscape experience, and overall, the main, major changes we showed to the Planning Commission last night, which they accepted. So before we get started, I just want to kind of spend a minute on why we're here. Here we go. So anybody who's 60 and over in this room remembers the good old days where we used to get an ice cream cone after dinner by walking down the town, where we bought a special gift for our first girlfriend, where we picked up a quick dinner at the butcher's shop, where we hung out with friends at the soda fountain at the pharmacy. So, I grew up in Mount Lookout Square and I had the same experience.

0:02:09 Rick Greiwe: We had the same mix of retail. And retail has changed, as you know, and it goes through cycles, and luckily, we're in a new cycle. It's now favoring neighborhood centers. Everybody's done the big boxes, and you know when to do that, and now people buy most of their stuff online. So retail is now about experience. It's a one-on-one relationship with a merchant who has one-of-a-kind merchandise we can't find any place else. It's working in an internet cafe all day, [chuckle] socializing with your friends at a corner restaurant, having experiences instead of just buying stuff. And so that's what we want to do here. We think that the combination of work, live, shop and play is going to make this unique. It's what people want. It's what they're flocking to, especially the millennials and my generation. And we think we can work with you to enhance the community.

0:03:06 Rick Greiwe: So we just don't talk about how great a school system you have, what great a park system you have, what great a housing stock, but what a great town center that you might have in the next generation. And we want to enhance the businesses that are here, build critical mass so they succeed, and also introduce some new excitement. So, that's kind of what this is about. Because you have this zoning requirement, they have commercial on the first floor. [chuckle] It's onerous. But luckily, we have a partner who spoke last night, David Birdsall, who knows how to do this. He's doing it in Fort Mitchell right now and other places. And he's going to make sure that this vision of the commercial space occurs. So here are the big subject areas we said we'd look at closely and Sari's going to step you through each of these real quickly.

0:04:00 Sari Lehtinen: So good evening. My name is Sari Lehtinen. I'm with M+A Architects.

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And we've seen the design in its previous form already last time, so forgive me... I'll kind of hit the new topics, but kind of go over it all a little bit, too. But I think the biggest revision that we've done to the design over this last month is to break the building in two, which I feel like has really helped us. So here's kind of the old design and overlay on the existing site plan so you can see the shaded existing houses and in this brick red is our proposed building and the parking lot in the back, and here's our new proposed scheme. So, it's a whole lot more kind of palatable, shorter building and a small freestanding commercial building that's two stories tall.

0:04:53 Sari Lehtinen: We kind of put it together in this elevation diagram, what really happened. So we've reduced the building height by 3.5 feet so that we're in conformance with the zoning. That happened doing two things: We lowered the roof pitch a little bit and we've also adjusted the ceiling heights and the spaces inside, got to that. And so this mixed-use building is obviously the bigger, taller and more massive building. We cut the length of that down by more than 100 feet on Fort Thomas Avenue and by 5 feet on Highland Avenue. And then there's this smaller, a two-story commercial building that is now, I think, slated as something that could have a sit-down restaurant on the first floor. It can have higher ceiling heights on the first floor and an office on the second floor.

0:05:42 Sari Lehtinen: And previously, obviously, we had just one kind of building that stretched all the way from Highland to the north edge of BB&T property. And forgive me for kind of reshuffling the slides. Your handout actually doesn't reflect all of the design expeditions that we're kind of on right now. And also, the order is a little different. I'm realizing I'm speaking to a lot of architects and designers here, so I felt like starting with the floor plans would make sense. I feel like that's how I think, and that's probably how most of you think also. So here's the new first floor plan that shows, again, commercial spaces in yellow and the residential areas in blue.

0:06:26 Sari Lehtinen: We still have this connector, main building entrance here, and we have this public galleria kind of thing that goes through the building, and you can access the commercial spaces from it, and you can also access the residential entrance from there. Our commercial parking lot is the same as before. It circulates, it's a diagonal parking, we have walls, both back and front. And I will show you an enlarged plan of this greenscape, how that feels between... The zone between the building and the street, the curve. And obviously, we'll work with the Fort Thomas streetscape standards, whatever... Whenever we get our hands on those, but it's likely you have a standard that has to do with paving and trees, and all that sort of thing. So, we'll adhere to that. One of the big things that is not different from before is the plaza here at the corner of Fort Thomas Avenue and Highland Avenue, meant to be kind of a gathering place with seating, planting, shade, sun, all that kind of thing.

0:07:31 Sari Lehtinen: And now we have another secondary kinda outdoor seating area here that associates with this restaurant, so we're thinking you could have like an operable window wall system there to kind of connect the restaurant interior completely to the sidewalk and go that way. I guess, I don't really need to talk about setbacks with you guys, right? [chuckle] I'll just kind of move on to the next slide, then. If you have questions, we could come back to this later. So here's the streetscape slide. So if we start from the plaza and the building entrance, so we have this alteration of balconies and gable base that are overhanging the 11th zone here that is kind of a secondary walk. And where we don't have balconies or gables, we are placing a trellis here for some partial shade. So there's a little different options for things. And here we have a corner tower

element that we've also worked on a little bit, which might become a kind of a social hub and hopefully connect to if there's a wine shop or something, a commercial tenant here that might be benefiting from an outdoor terrace, which then can spill onto the completely public terrace.

0:08:44 Sari Lehtinen: Here's your sidewalk curve, it's right exactly where it is currently. We'll have to relocate street trees, most likely, a little bit, but we'll stick to the standard. And then we have the 6-foot zone here, between the length of walk and our public sidewalk that we can plant and landscape, and provide walks where they make sense. Here's one suggestion, but I think that's going to be something that we'll have to work with when we know a little more about how the building gets reused on the first floor. And the restaurant... Between the restaurant and our mixed-use building, we have a 30-foot zone of garden. The garage footprint is only under the mixed-use building. So this is on dirt, it's not the deck, and so we can make it a really pleasant place, and then kind of another connector between the sidewalk and the commercial parking lot and the rear of the building, where you also have entrance to the commercial spaces. This is the residential floor, second floor plan, actually also the commercial office space.

0:09:51 Sari Lehtinen: So that office building is about 4,500 square feet first and second floor, so 4,500 of restaurant, 4,500 of office, potentially. Then the residential units, we have reduced the unit count. It's now 18 and they range in size from 1,700 to 2,600 square feet. They all kind of are configured around a projecting gable that is the main living space. Living room with big windows, light on three sides, open to kitchen, connected to a dining room nearby, big master suites, all that kind of stuff. And at the end of the building, Woodland Place end of the building, we're taking off the top floor. This was already in the design last time, but it means that the second floor of residences here are the top floor and they will get to have some volume ceilings, which are something that we utilized in the third floor units a lot, so the main living spaces will have... Will use that roof shape a little bit to get some volume into the units, trying to keep the eave height reasonable.

0:10:58 Sari Lehtinen: And our garage configuration here with fewer units, we obviously need fewer parking spaces, so we have 18 parking spaces and we want to provide two parking spaces per unit. And then we have a guest parking area here. So the garage doors are inbound and the opening to the garage is not where the security is, so there's room to line up inside the garage. And we went through a lot of design iterations to get to this garage entrance. We've considered all kinds of options. We understand this is a key issue to Woodland Place residents and we want to be a good neighbor. And there's been a lot of exploration on this topic.

0:11:45 Rick Greiwe: So, this was approved last night, but some of the issues that were addressed with this particular design was that we reduce the number of units to 18, so the number of cars going in and out of there a day is about 21 round trips. So it's a residential garage and it won't generate the same kind of volume of traffic that individual homes have, with teenagers going back and forth, and everybody going in and out all day. But the main thing we did was move the building back another 5 feet, because the residents didn't want to be blocked by a garbage truck, which they currently get blocked themselves when their trash is picked up. So, if the garbage truck will be the same size, the Rumpke truck that comes in and out, they'll drive in, back into this space, and the whole truck will fit between the curb and the building face. The guy will go to the trash room, roll out the 500-pound dumpster, connect it to the truck, it will lift it up, and because we left this 24-foot wide curb cut, he can make the turn without affecting the parking of the neighbors here.

0:12:54 Rick Greiwe: So we killed three birds with one stone. We got the truck not blocking traffic route, we got a sidewalk that a car can wait in this space, and see the kids coming back and forth to school before they decide to enter this space. And we are going to try to line up the exit drive, so it goes right through the two houses here, and offer landscape materials that could help screen some of those headlights. Again, this side of the hill will be maintained professionally by the association, it'll be an attractive gateway to the neighborhood. We have room for cars to stack, 'cause sometimes a couple of cars stack there in the morning trying to get out to get to school. So, again, we... And again, these people don't have to go out of their garage at 8 o'clock, they can go anytime they want, everybody is working at that age group. So, we've tried to do our best. We looked at other options to try to address the issues, and this is the best option for the project, and we think there's still a few tweaks.

0:13:57 Rick Greiwe: I talked to one of the neighbors across the street who might want us to do coach lamps, and you put the garage doors on the face of the building, rather than having this visitor parking here. And so, we have new garage doors that are double. So, one side opens up when you enter. And so, now, the hole that opens is half the width, the person drives in with headlights, and maybe the lighting in the garage is directed to the floor, so you don't have so much ambient light coming out when the garage door opens. So, we're going to work with the neighbors to get through all the details on how this looks, and how it impacts the neighborhood with light, as well as the parking lot up here as well. So, that will be the fine tuning that will happen between now and the phase 2 submission.

0:14:47 Sari Lehtinen: Here's our revised rendering from looking at the development from north on Fort Thomas Avenue. So that kind of illustrates how we're stepping down the scale of the development with this two-story commercial building, and it kinda starts blending into what's currently the commercial... Like residential neighborhood to the north and kind of connects our mixed-use building to that. So, I have just kind of preliminary elevations here, and these don't reflect now the kinda studies that I've done on the corner tower. I've also looked at the building entrance a little bit. I took, like, three lessons from you guys when I was seeing you last time, one of them was have a... Study the corner tower. I think we can go somewhere good with that. Another one was do something special at the building entrance. I feel like what I did before wasn't quite enough. And then, a third was to kind of think about that roof line, if there's some way to alter that.

0:15:57 Sari Lehtinen: And I think... I'm feeling like the roof issue is something that... Now that the size of the building is a whole lot less. I'll show you some illustration on that. It seems like it really might make sense keeping it the way it is right now. But essentially, the kind of the massing, and the language of the building are still the same that we showed you before. It's a brick building with stone base, and there's that kind of commercial first floor that is kind of... Has this transparent pervious layer of walks that buffers the building to the street. We are locating... Like, every one of those gables is a living room, like I mentioned. There's a projecting window bay that provides light to the living room. The master bedrooms have those dormers, that on the third floor then can use the ceiling height that's available, and get some extra light for those units. Balconies are going to be a different material than... The back of the balconies is probably going to be some kind of a fiber cement board, probably. It's easier and simpler to detail a balcony framing into a non-brick linear wall. So, I think that also gives you kind of a variation on the treatment and color of the building.

0:17:14 Sari Lehtinen: The north building is intended to be brick with metal accents. So, there's going to be some storefront features. The storefront features that project or open, there's a canopy, there's a projecting window bay upstairs, and the building steps back a little bit to make room for the restaurant terrace. And for comparison, the shown building is the existing building to the north of us, it's shown here as well. So, the scale of everything seems to work together. Also, I've produced quick elevation diagrams of our other two street elevations, Highland Avenue showing how the building steps down with the slope of the street, and on Woodland Place, the scale of the building is less. It's two-stories of residential, over a partially underground garage, and the back and the front of the building will be treated equally with care and attention to detail.

0:18:14 Sari Lehtinen: This is the same enlarged elevation that we showed you last time. The roof pitch is slightly less. We are now 12 over 13.5, but the materials are mainly the same. We will... When we get more into the design, we'll have to update things. I think, in overall, the design is very early on at this point. So, everything that I show you is going to have some development in the future, but I'm kind of indicating a direction that we're going for.

0:18:48 Sari Lehtinen: Here's the same commercial building that we talked about earlier. I think that the storefront right there at Fort Thomas Avenue might be a little projecting bay that kind of sticks out a little bit. And I've always been very fond of these historic transoms that used to be like prismatic glass or something in order to get... Direct the light, and go into the commercial space. And I'd love to use that kind of trick here if we can.

0:19:19 Sari Lehtinen: Okay, so then, the corner tower element, we took that to a direction where it starts to have a little more sculpture to it. There's a little more stone that's associated with it, but it still has this like very glassy top of the two stories of residential above. And so the idea right now is to... We formerly had... The tower was kind of like aligning with the face of the walks and the balconies here. And so we bumped it out 1 foot more in all directions on the first floor and second floor. And I have this thought of like putting these little benches here at the bottom of the columns, which seemed like they might make an interesting place to taste wine or something, [chuckle] but it's a thought that we might have to kind of make sure with our retail tenants that it works for them, but it seemed like kind of a building that becomes furniture, seemed like an interesting approach. And so on the second floor, this is directly above, I'm just kind of showing you how the building works, you go up, it gets thinner and way on top, the masonry goes away altogether. And so this is kind of a quick idea of how it would work. So the idea being... It's kind of tiers and stair steps up and provides these like prongs like a fork. I think I'm like really making references to your tower and tower park. It's got that masonry that steps in and out a little bit and it tapers going up and all that kind of stuff.

0:20:57 Sari Lehtinen: So I think this is kind of gestures in a different language, but still kind of referencing it. And then I think the top part here is some kind of a thinner material if it's a sheet metal panel kind of thing, or how we treat it, and what the detailing is exactly, I think needs to be developed. The same thing with everything here. I feel like there's going to be a little bit of cast stone detailing that is associated with it. And this may not be the best view of the tower itself, but because this was our rendering previously, I thought it's like looking at it face on so it doesn't give you a very three-dimensional feel, but when you Photoshop in it the new scheme, just to illustrate that, we're changing the masonry and the sculpture of the tower a little bit.

0:21:49 Sari Lehtinen: And on the main entrance, the thought is that maybe we would do something similar, like we would get beefier columns, somehow set them up and out and maybe we would have some special cast stone corbels here supporting the trellised canopy that's over the entrance and also doing something that kind of manifests itself for a longer distance. You would see this from further away, maybe extending that window bay all the way up to the roof and maybe providing something where light can come through. So, just kind of one of the gables would have this kind of treatment. So obviously it has to be also worked further, but this is the idea.

0:22:29 Sari Lehtinen: And on the roof line, we gave a ton of serious consideration, and the way these buildings typically are done, their rooftop units need to be located over the corridors, 'cause they do produce some noise. And so that is the best place for them. To screen them, this is our sloped roof and here's a little parapet that we formed with it. How tall this... Where this flat part is that kind of needs to be worked out, but that's kind of the objective screening method. And we were imagining, what if you kind of just skipped the parapet and did a lower roof at that one area between the balconies?

0:23:13 Sari Lehtinen: But it just kind of complicates... I think you need to screen the unit somehow anyway and that leads to all kinds of really complicated details that end up leaking and costing money. And then at the end of the day, I feel like it's probably not quite worth it, because when you look at this, now our building being so much shorter, it ends here and it used to go all the way here. So the ridge line is never really visible as a continuous line. The tower and the gables and all that, they interrupt it and it seems like that might actually be just a very reasonable way to deal with it.

0:24:00 Rick Greiwe: So we've already talked about this before, last time, but we really want to try to figure out a way to make the residential work with 18 units. That was a big struggle to lower the density of the building, but 18 should work. If we can do that, it gives us a chance to do almost three zones of commercial space. You have the plaza zone, the zone next to the gallery, and then you have the new standalone sit-down restaurant. So it's going to make the commercial space more porous a little bit. There'll be a lot more ways to get in and out. And the retail consultant that we're working with likes the direction of it as well. And as you could see from the design, there's lots of new community gathering places that we've created, and I think it's got the right personality to be a real asset for the community. So we're happy to get into more details.

[background conversation]

0:25:05 Lori Wendling: Alright, Kevin, do you have any comments from staff?

0:25:09 Kevin Barbian: Yes, just a few brief comments. As stated by Mr. Greiwe, the stage 1 development plan was passed in this format where there are two separate buildings.

0:25:25 Kevin Barbian: I wanted to read page 3, and beyond, of your document that I have for you. It's just a guideline for tonight. It required board approval ultimately, and then each individual area, I'm not sure how, Ms. Chairman, you want to format that, but each of the individual sections out of our design standards for you to follow. Obviously, for the audience, this is about the aesthetics. The setbacks have already been approved. The size, scale, for the most part, has been approved. So, this is more aesthetic in nature as to what this board is tasked with. Lastly, I just want

to mention, if we could, from a recording standpoint, if you all could speak into your microphones. Last time, we didn't quite catch everything, so if you could speak a little bit more closely in your microphones.

[background conversation]

0:26:44 Kevin Barbian: So if you have any questions for me, certainly, feel free.

0:26:48 Lori Wendling: Okay, well, I'd like to take comments from the board and discussion. We can either go randomly throughout, or we can go through these items that are here for us to review and discuss. Any preferences?

0:27:11 Barry Petracco: One question. The original design, the roof height versus revised drawings, what was the height difference?

0:27:22 Sari Lehtinen: 3.5 feet.

0:27:24 Rick Greiwe: So, we gained that space by lowering the height of the commercial space, 'cause now we have the sit-down restaurant and a new building that can have high ceilings. So now our commercial space in the mixed use building was reduced, and then on the upper floor, we kept the tempered ceilings, but a lot of the rooms have fit into the roof line. They got tucked in deeper into the roof line, so there'll be some dormers in the master bedrooms and so forth. So, we were able to accomplish it that way.

0:27:52 Sari Lehtinen: Roof pitch wasn't reduced, so that's also helped bring the ridge down which is how you measure it for CBD.

0:28:00 Rick Greiwe: And then we have all this flexibility we can have in that second building. We've got to find an operator, work with them to really visualize what they want to do for a sit-down restaurant, and they can determine whether they want 15, 16, 18-foot ceilings because we have all kinds of room to play in that space with just a two-story building.

0:28:25 Jeffrey Sackenheim: I'll go. I think I was one of the most critical people probably last time up here, and also having been on that side of the podium several times professionally, I appreciate the fact that you guys listened to people and made some pretty significant revisions from what we saw a month to go to where we are today. And I think, from my perspective, I think it's improved the quality significantly. I know there's still concerns, and I read the news before I got here, about last night's meeting. So, I appreciate the effort that went into the revisions, and I do think that it's improved. I think when I look at what we could potentially officially review tonight, and I think you made reference to it several times during your presentation about the iterative nature of the design development and refinement, and ultimately down to the level of whatever that operator is and whatever that little canopy... What's that thing that goes on your patio? Little sun shade thing. The umbrella.

[laughter]

0:29:42 Jeffrey Sackenheim: Ultimately you get...

[laughter]

0:29:42 Jeffrey Sackenheim: Sorry.

0:29:42 Jeffrey Sackenheim: The color of the umbrellas.

0:29:43 Jeffrey Sackenheim: Good thing it's Wednesday all day today too. But ultimately, we have control and purview over an element, seemingly that minor. So, when we think about, at least the next step from my perspective relative to this presentation, and even seeing things tonight that weren't part of the package that we had access to. So seeing proposed actual samples of materials, and actual proposed railing sections and light fixtures, and all that ultimately needs to come back through here, and those aren't things that tonight we can take any real consideration on, beyond, I think, the big idea. And again, I think it's improved a lot. I think design clearly is subjective in nature, too. And it might look a whole heck of a lot different if I designed it, or you designed it, or Mark designed it, or if there was a different client, or if it was a different community. So, I feel positive about the improvements that you've made from last time.

0:30:56 Rick Greiwe: Thank you, and we have a whole list of details that we were aware of, Kevin's been very clear about it, a detailed landscape plan, a detailed site plan where all the utilities are going to go. Where's the storm detention? What's the signage system? What's the palette? What's the shape? Where's the fit? Color of the umbrellas. All that stuff. So, yeah, we got some work to do. This is concept level, and we would lack the details. Along the way, I think, rather than doing this all once at the end of the road, would not be good. I'd want to make sure that we touch base along the way so we're on the same page, 'because I don't want to come back and say, "Oh, you really wanted Victorian? Not this." So, yeah, this is going to be an iterative process, if you understand that.

0:31:39 Jeffrey Sackenheim: I have two follow-up comments and then I'll shut up. Is the parking in the back only if I'm a patron of one of those storefronts?

0:31:49 Rick Greiwe: Yeah.

0:31:50 Jeffrey Sackenheim: Yes?

0:31:50 Rick Greiwe: The way the parking was discussed last night, is the 40 spaces that is for the mixed use building will, according to our work on the mix that we're going to attract, because this is going to be a combination of office services and retail. And the time of day when they're coming in and out of these things is going to be different. So, we think the 40 spaces and the 16 street parking spaces will take care of that building. But the sit-down restaurant, it cannot. So, the city made a commitment a couple weeks ago when we came up with this idea of a standalone sit-down restaurant, that was in all your studies, that was the first thing, "Give us a family sit-down restaurant." Well, it's going to have to be parked all over downtown. So they're going to do a study that is going to identify every spot in the downtown district. When it's available, if it can be leased from private parties like banks, and put a whole signage system in place that can accommodate a restaurant that might have valet too, in the front, that can handle this multiple use part of your downtown.

0:32:56 Jeffrey Sackenheim: Let me ask my question differently. If I'm not going to that restaurant, can I park there...

0:33:02 Rick Greiwe: It's a public lot.

0:33:02 Jeffrey Sackenheim: And go to the Quick-E Mart across the street?

0:33:04 Rick Greiwe: Yeah, it's going to be a public parking lot, yes.

0:33:06 Jeffrey Sackenheim: So then where you're going with the second piece is, and I don't know if the city's considered this, 'because I know circulation has been a big topic that I've read about and that I've heard about, if there's a comprehensive strategy in place to identify any and all public parking and then a way-finding strategy that would go along with that to communicate that to the public. I think when we've met before... Most people don't know that they can park behind the city building, or behind the Highland building and accessibility maybe from that lower lot isn't great, but if there are ways to promote that better, that there is stuff outside of parking on Woodland, cutting up that now green space between the two buildings might be worth studying.

0:33:55 Kevin Barbian: So we have started that effort, not necessarily because of this development. As was mentioned last night, there is some... There have been some discussions regarding parking associated with the VA Hospital in Midway. They currently use our parking near the Stables building. We are working on agreements with parking adjacent to the armory, on that same side, that is VA parking. So we are working on agreements in that regard. In this regard here, we have already started that process. There is... Part of the discussion last night, there's currently 31 parking spots behind the Highland building that are city-owned, that are under-utilized. So part of the shared parking requirement talks about within 500 feet of this particular site, there is an access adjacent to the school board building from the rear of the Highland building that is within 500 feet of the site.

0:35:01 Kevin Barbian: So that is just the first step as far as those calculations. But absolutely, our comprehensive plan actually talks about the way-finding of additional parking, and like you said, potentially using maybe Fifth Third Bank, a lease agreement, something like that, behind the city building, things like that, that can add parking to this area.

0:35:29 Lori Wendling: I would think that issue's pretty common throughout when you think of Hyde Park Square in which it's 20 times larger and all they have is street parking in front. And then there is the lot back behind by the old Zino's, which is now public parking, but you kind of have to know your way around.

0:35:47 Kevin Barbian: There's definite provisions...

0:35:48 Lori Wendling: This is similar.

0:35:49 Kevin Barbian: There's significant provisions in not only the zoning code, but it was discussed heavily in our comprehensive plan, recent comprehensive plan update about shared parking. So yes, it's definitely something that we are moving forward on from the city perspective.

0:36:09 Rick Greiwe: And we're also going to get into the fine grain of where the loading zones are. Where does the restaurant truck go? Probably in the front. And what sign... Does it say truck loading only between the hours when they show up? What does it say for valet parking? Where does it... What does that... Should there be residential permit parking on Woodland so people won't think they can go down that street? All this fine grain stuff has to be worked out in the next submission.

0:36:38 Kevin Barbian: And some of that stuff is through ultimately council. If there is parking restrictions in any given spot, that's ultimately a council decision by ordinance. So that is not something under Planning Commission purview.

0:36:51 Lori Wendling: Now, while you're talking about parking lots in the back, I have a question. Is there a sidewalk behind the building to the parking spaces?

0:37:06 Sari Lehtinen: Yes.

0:37:07 Rick Greiwe: Yeah, it's a... It's actually a much better plan, because the buildings are broken in half, because you can walk to get to the parking in several ways. There's a sidewalk along here, which is wide enough to be safe. And then this is a nice wide sidewalk that connects Fort Thomas with the public parking. And then this galleria will be open 'til midnight probably, or 8 o'clock, or 9, 10 o'clock, whatever the retail function is. But residents will have a key fob to get in here after hours and a key fob to get in here after hours, but during the daytime hours, that'll be a public access as well. So it's very porous.

0:37:54 Lori Wendling: Is there any handicap ramping on the back sidewalks somewhere?

0:37:57 Rick Greiwe: This is all... Yeah, so all this... The nice thing about the new requirements is this all has to be handicap-accessible, so the 21 feet from the curb to the front door is all the same level.

0:38:09 Sari Lehtinen: And we're really fortunate that Fort Thomas Avenue there is pretty much level. And so we have to work out the grading in the back a little more. There's a little bit of the top of the hill that we have to take out to get that parking lot level with a walk there. But we will work to get things within 5%...

0:38:27 Lori Wendling: So, the sidewalk will not be a step up?

0:38:29 Sari Lehtinen: Right, right, that's the intent at least. I have to... Once we work out the grading exactly, but there's several places where it should be accessible and that's kind of the idea right now.

0:38:39 Rick Greiwe: But we don't want to put great big ramps going back and forth here. We want everybody to feel like they have access and not a second class citizen 'because there are a bunch of ramps here too. So this is going to be exciting to get into these stores this way, too. So there's... Could be doors here, doors here, doors here. When we start recruiting the tenants, they'll help us decide how this space will be broken up and where they want the doors, and we'll have a

system for signage, so everybody follows the rhythm of how we want this to be signed and promoted on the street. It was fun last night, Jennifer, who bought Ken Bowman's framing shop, she got up out the blue and said, "You know what? Let me put that slide back there. I want this space right here in the gallery, because I want us to have an art gallery and I want to expand that and put the framing shop/art gallery, and make it big enough so we can have community events and cocktail parties in there and exhibits," and she was so enthusiastic about her vision for the... And then a lady, I don't know where she came from, I want to be next to the art gallery! Like I said, it was kind of fun.

0:39:43 Rick Greiwe: Hopefully we can have that flexibility early on and get people signed up so we can almost curate the retail in a way that it works for the resident's upstairs, and also is an attraction for the people living around the town.

0:40:04 Lori Wendling: On your planters out front, I know you need to make those flexible based on where your tenant doors are, so I would suggest that we consider saying that they can be altered. However, you still have the same lineal footage.

0:40:24 Rick Greiwe: The same kind of linear footage?

0:40:25 Lori Wendling: The same lineal footage.

0:40:26 Rick Greiwe: Yeah, I think that's going to be easy to do. That'll be a design we'll do. If we don't want the sidewalk to appear 20 feet wide, we want the promenade to be distinctive with the trellis and the covered area and then a clear break with some kind of plant material, whether it's low bushes or grass, we don't know. That's what the landscape planner, the architect that we'll hire will help us figure that out.

0:40:57 Lori Wendling: How long are those? How long is the longest one? Do you know how off-hand?

0:41:01 Sari Lehtinen: No, I don't, but I think it's about 30 feet, cause that's a gable bay out is 22 feet, so it's a little more than that, so it's like about 30, it doesn't look like 10...

0:41:13 Lori Wendling: It's in front of this planter area, 10 feet?

0:41:16 Sari Lehtinen: Yeah, this short one.

0:41:16 Lori Wendling: A short one.

0:41:17 Sari Lehtinen: Yeah, when you're looking at this enlarged plan, like on the top row, on the left, the two short ones are maybe somewhere in the 10 foot, 8, 10-foot zone and then the big one there, where it's got the pointer on, is somewhere between 25 and 30.

0:41:33 Rick Greiwe: So these are the... These aren't planters, they're grass or bushes, and then these are planters over here.

0:41:42 Lori Wendling: Planting beds. From a retail standpoint, there's a huge... You'll need about

five stepping stones for each one of those, because people will just walk through them.

0:41:54 Rick Greiwe: They'll go through.

0:41:54 Sari Lehtinen: So maybe the lineal footage is too much right now, maybe we need a little less, like when we work out like that everyone get a straight access, so if that's the requirement, I don't know what they mean by that.

0:42:08 Lori Wendling: Yeah. I didn't realize they were that large. That is huge.

0:42:10 Sari Lehtinen: Yeah, yeah.

0:42:12 Lori Wendling: I mean, just from my own personal experience in retail development, it'll be a nightmare.

0:42:19 Sari Lehtinen: Yeah. Well, we'll have to probably then chop them up a little bit and maybe even kind of put a more lenient sentence in there that lets us take some out, but just kind of the idea that there's this green zone that we coordinate with retail tenants.

0:42:37 Lori Wendling: I would rather them look nice than...

0:42:40 Sari Lehtinen: Oh, yeah, yeah.

0:42:41 Sari Lehtinen: 'Because people will walk through in the area.

0:42:43 Sari Lehtinen: Yeah, exactly, no, no. And I think that's kind of like when we have an actual landscape architect that we're working with, we can kind of really hone in on it. I think this is kind of the idea that there's a zone, there's access through it, doesn't sound like I have enough, but you know, we'll do that.

0:43:00 Lori Wendling: You'll probably put in plans and cut-through anyway, because they will have that. People hate doubling back, no matter what.

0:43:07 Rick Greiwe: Of course, we'll have those bushes with thorns on them.

[laughter]

[background conversation]

0:43:18 Lori Wendling: Mark, how about you start down there too and work round this way.

0:43:26 Mark Thurnauer: Well, I've looked at the list of the kind of criteria, the things which we are here to review and approve, and I think a lot of it, as you brought up, is yet to come. I think that the overall massing and the concept is handsome and I think that the proportions and scale of it seem reasonable. I don't really have any particular items of contention. When we get into more of the weeds of these things, then I can get to some specifics, like I can see discussions that we'll have when it comes to the decks and what are those, and you're going to be in a public place and looking

up at them, so undersides of them and what those details are all things that we'll get into at some point.

0:44:23 Lori Wendling: Barb?

0:44:26 Barb Thomas: I like it. I think you guys have done a good job coming back and I appreciate you listening to the board last month and taking everything into consideration, I love the fact that you have the... You broke up the lower building and you have sidewalks leading into three different directions to the back of the building, I think that'll be a better access for consumers. I like the strong foundation pillars, that you come in and you have on the building, I think that really adds to the detail and the texture of the design. And I like the direction that you're going into with the tower. The tower is a big part of the town's history. I like the fact that you are trying to implement a little bit of that. Good job. Thank you.

0:45:22 Lori Wendling: Chris, you're up.

0:45:25 Chris Manning: Similarly, I'd like to thank you for your efforts to make refinements and listen. I think you've been very responsive. I agree with the opening statement that it is a stronger project because of that. So I know a lot of effort and thought went into that and we really appreciate that. It's definitely a stronger project. I'm trying to resist the temptation of getting into the details, because that's not really, probably what we need to do right now.

0:45:58 Lori Wendling: Unless it's something that will guide them, as Rick said, they don't want to come back, and be like, "Ohhhh..." you know.

0:46:04 Chris Manning: Right, right. I would agree with what Mark said that with these revisions and Jeff, it's a strong, it's a strong concept and I think working with you in an iterative process on the details will be very important. Probably several iterations. So I look forward to that, but I think conceptually it's much stronger than it was and the scale is better, and all of that. So, we should thank...

0:46:41 Barry Petracco: I agree with them. I like this design better than the first one, but I'm still concerned about the height of the main building. Just looking at that view, this view... The pitch of the roof. Is there any option to bring that down a little more?

0:46:58 Rick Greiwe: Well, if we want to try to sell condos, no. We always talk about the commercial space because this is, this is more fun to talk about, but the marketplace I'm in right now has really changed. Before all of us used to live in...

[background conversation]

0:47:19 Rick Greiwe: Before we all used to live in 8-foot ceilings, my house has 8-foot ceilings. Then we saw condos with 9. Now everyone is doing 10-foot ceilings in condos. It's just like... Even apartments, even the new apartments downtown. So I really want to try to keep the 10-foot ceilings, it makes these, especially these smaller units, the 1,700 foot ones really look a lot bigger with the 10-foot ceilings. So we tried to lower the commercial space as much as we could, we went from, what, 16, 15, or...

0:47:47 Sari Lehtinen: Yeah, 14 to 13.

0:47:48 Rick Greiwe: I think it's 13 and 12.5, so I think we can get away with that. But these are 10-foot ceilings on the second floor, and then on the third floor, it's 10-foot except in the areas where you start to get these little hipped roofs in certain rooms where there's not a gable. So the gables were part of the living spaces, but the bedrooms and studies will start getting these little hipped roofs in those rooms. Which are okay, they don't encroach too much.

0:48:16 Rick Greiwe: So if we start lowering the roof then we lower the quality and the saleability of these condos today. But let's look at what's going on across the street. So here's your bank building, the West Banco next to the clock tower, and the main bulk of this building is about the same height, it's just the dormers which break up the roof line will make this, I think, a nice neighbor. And like Laurie said at the last meeting, this road is about the width of Monmouth Street. So this is...

0:48:50 Lori Wendling: Actually, this is like 20 feet wider.

0:48:51 Rick Greiwe: Right, 20 feet wider. So you're creating a town center now, you have an edge on this side. And instead of houses on a hill you have another edge to create a place, a gathering place. And the sequence from the 11-foot, private walkway, the green planting and the public sidewalk will read as one space but will have different uses.

0:49:25 Barry Petracco: The majority of the second floor or third floor condos are flat ceilings, except in areas of vaulted and...

0:49:34 Rick Greiwe: Yes.

0:49:36 Sari Lehtinen: But I would also argue that when you start lowering that pitch you're going to get closer to the ranch house look. And I don't think we want to go there. So I personally took a little bit of hang here to... Where does it... I don't think I want to go any lower without it starting to look somehow really mundane or like a different thing. It's not... It's just very different. So we took it down. I feel like the important thing is where the eave height is. It keeps up the gables... Are just very kind of every now and then, they're not relentlessly, constantly there.

0:50:12 Rick Greiwe: So the bank, the bank's this side right here. The bank across the street is right there, so it's the gables that stick up.

0:50:18 Barry Petracco: So it's all roof above?

0:50:21 Sari Lehtinen: Right, and you will not... The view of it is going to be more like that... So, it's like they're not constantly looking at the roof.

0:50:35 Mark Thurnauer: And also, this is the view of intentionally taking a step back to gazing. And the reality is of how we experience any of the buildings, the ones that there now, the ones that may be there in the future is, when you're up close to it. And frankly, what is really going on much higher than part way up the next level is not really part of that experience unless you're gazing.

0:51:03 Lori Wendling: Because you're either driving or you're walking right next to the building.

0:51:08 Mark Thurnauer: I visited your Hampstead project recently and found that with the relationship with the residential on one side, the single family residential on one side and that project on the other side, that they felt fairly harmonious and really are really a much different scale, but it isn't something that you kinda look at and think, "That doesn't work with each other." So...

0:51:40 Lori Wendling: I also want to commend you; I think the changes you came back with were dramatic. The reduction in size of the project, scale of the buildings. I love the commercial building, what it looks like, not feeling the yellow brick, but it looks perfect with the darker tones of the building to the left, it feels very separate, like it could be a free-standing building that was done at a different time, not increasing the whole length that people were concerned with. The detailing on the front of it, I think, feels really good, I look at that rendering and I'm like, "Is that an existing building?" I think that comes across nicely. I agree with everyone else, I can't, actually I can't wait to see the details on phase 2. I love details, which is good and bad, that you can tell I'm already like, "What about this?"

0:52:43 Lori Wendling: Let's see, what else? I also like how you step the building back further on Woodland. I think that will give a little more relief on that corner. And I appreciate how you're trying to accommodate the neighbors with the exiting. They probably have more of it now because of the dance studio being open in the evenings, especially during the fall and winter. They probably have a lot more lights now and I'm not sure who's affected at that point, but my feeling is that this is probably going to be a lot less than that, so that hopefully it will be beneficial for them. The plant row, well, I do have another detailed question. The planters that are outside of your property line, I'm assuming that is something that will be, something that you will maintain as the building owners.

0:53:41 Rick Greiwe: Right, we'll maintain the planters on that plaza area, but we'll also maintain the buffer zone in the back, the buffer zone is 25 feet but the city owns a 10 feet easement, that will expand the buffer zone to 35 feet. So.

0:53:57 Lori Wendling: Do they own that easement or is that just they have an easement?

0:54:01 Rick Greiwe: They have an easement.

0:54:02 Lori Wendling: So who owns the property?

0:54:04 Rick Greiwe: The city owns it, it's a vacated street. Right, Kevin? You own that little tenanted...

0:54:09 Kevin: I believe it's a paper street of some sort.

0:54:11 Rick Greiwe: So we're going to plant it just like it was our property, we're going to maintain it, same thing with the trees. I don't know who maintains the street trees, but we're going to put in nice street trees that will match the variety that you currently use, and use the same

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pavement material for the sidewalk here. And the yellow brick means yellow, but how about the women's...

0:54:38 Lori Wendling: I'm just saying I like the way it's separate.

0:54:41 Rick Greiwe: The women's art club, that's kind of a yellowy beige.

0:54:45 Lori Wendling: Exactly, that's the nicest building that's been there.

0:54:47 Rick Greiwe: Yeah, so is it beige like that, is it something else, we'll bring in brick samples.

0:54:50 Sari Lehtinen: It seems to me that it needs to be a lighter building. I feel like, like a lot of the old, historic good ones that you have downtown have some kind of a lighter tone to them and I feel like it might be part of that gang, but we can go down that road a little more in detail, kind of first step.

0:55:07 Chris Manning: It fits into that eclectic nature that we talked about at the last meeting.

0:55:11 Lori Wendling: Yeah, and it takes away from every, that long lane, even though it's two buildings, if they are all the same color, then they're going to still be perceived as a long structure.

0:55:20 Sari Lehtinen: Yeah, I think they need to be completely different, and I think because they so fundamentally are functionally too, it's somehow natural, it seems like that's how it should go.

0:55:31 Lori Wendling: Even on your gable towers, because you have such large fenestrations and the pop-outs there, but we had it out. I think that it's good in that it doesn't come off like a big, you know, mass here. I like that area right there. I think that helps break up the brick and brings those details further up the building and creates some verticalness instead of a long horizontal stretch.

0:56:04 Barb Thomas: I think it also is a nice transition from the retail up to the residential when you have the bump outs.

0:56:15 Lori Wendling: I know we're not at this point, but I will say I do like perpendicular signage, that way people can actually see it as they're driving. And on your office I would suggest you think of a way to identify it, either a contemporary number or something so that someone can say, "I'm in building 20, or my address is 25," and they can find 25 versus saying, "We're above the restaurant or we're above," whatever.

0:56:47 Rick Greiwe: Or a company name, it regulates the whole floor, that would be nice.

0:56:51 Chris Manning: The way the guidelines were written; they were intended to be more about positive reinforcement than about being regulatory. So we tried to show some examples, good examples. And so, if that's at any point not clear what the primary intent is or what the options are, we'd like this to be interactive and you can ask question just to get clarification before you go down the path. It's okay to do that. I think the more interactive we are, the better the results are.

0:57:23 Rick Greiwe: Okay, we'll go on a field trip one day with some brick samples, out there with the light and look at these things.

0:57:31 Lori Wendling: Alright, your turn.

0:57:32 Pat Hagerty: I'm the last? Okay. Just say I like it, I think you have done a great job and I look forward to working with you on all the details.

0:57:47 Rick Greiwe: Me too.

0:57:47 Lor Wendling: Any other formal comments?

0:57:48 Jeffrey Sackenheim: Yeah.

[laughter]

0:57:51 Jeffrey Sackenheim: Yeah.

0:57:51 Lori Wendling: We knew.

0:57:54 Jeffrey Sackenheim: Refine will be important. I think the tower improved. I don't think it's all the way there yet, and I have an appreciation for the hand-rendered quality of these images. But I think now that it's settled down a little bit and the concept has been refined, I would encourage you to develop it further in the computer, because then you can also study real sun and shadow. And I think that was one of the earlier comments about the original height of the building, and what it does to the street after a certain time of day, given the height and the businesses on the opposite side. I think even if you go back to the black and white little hand sketch, which looks like it was done with sketch up as a background or something, but you start to... That amount of perspective is not going to exist in the real world, so the way that that is shot and the way that it's rendered by hand definitely makes it feel softer and a little bit more intimate than probably what the actual reality will be. And so I think the visualization capabilities in the computer have clearly advanced significantly over the last even 24 months, and I think presenting it at the next iteration that way will be very important.

0:59:29 Sari Lehtinen: Yes, we are definitely modeling this in Revit, and it's going to get designed and everything. We're really, really early in the process right now.

0:59:36 Rick Greiwe: I haven't released her for any more fees.

0:59:38 Jeffrey Sackenheim: That's fine.

0:59:39 Sari Lehtinen: He's holding me back.

0:59:40 Rick Greiwe: We want to get it approved first and then we'll start spending some, even more money, but this is a concept development phase.

0:59:48 Jeffrey Sackenheim: Yeah, yeah.

0:59:50 Rick Greiwe: You'll have those details.

0:59:51 Chris Manning: Good point, though.

0:59:54 Lori Wendling: Would anyone like to make a motion? Move this to phase 1 with any additions or not?

1:00:00 Kevin Barbian: If I may, just one comment, I'm not sure... Mr. Greiwe, have we answered everything that you need up to this point? I'm just wondering if there's something that the board, you might like to have some additional insight from on a specific feature or a specific aspect before we do leave.

1:00:23 Rick Greiwe: Well, we took good notes last night on all the things we had to come back with. Your phase 2 guidelines are very specific. And I think the interaction we've had the first time and this one, this has been encouraging, cause there's some gut reaction, you like this direction, this concept, and that's all we need. If you like this direction we're going to bring it back with all the details you expect, and that's when it'll even get more fun because we can visualize this in 3D, like we're there, instead of cartoons. So yeah, I understand what you're looking for, I've been through this process before and I'm excited to get there too. And I want to learn from you, I mean, at Mariemont, we had a group that picked out the brick colors, okay, because that was a scary move for Hampstead Park to be off-white brick.

1:01:11 Rick Greiwe: Had a big debate about it, should it be white, should we paint it... Let's get common brick and paint it white. And we, luckily, made the right decision, it would have been a monster if it was white. So again, we like to use landscape architects, architects, people that care about the community and this process. So it's not a camel designed by a committee. It's a thoughtful process that is intentional, where we all can reach consensus in a way that works out, so that we get the process, and we appreciate the quality of people on this board. So thank you.

1:01:41 Pat Hagerty: Do we need to make a motion?

1:01:46 Lori Wendling: Phase 1 approval.

1:01:51 Kevin Barbian: Yes, I think at this point, I don't know that we need a formal motion if you care not to, but I think that's... The developer's probably heard what he wants to hear, to be quite honest, as to our response at this point. But certainly, if you want a form it with the matter of a motion that we're on the right track and to come back with more details, is great.

1:02:16 Chris Manning: I'll make a motion that we approve it in concept, with the understanding that there will be more interaction on the detail, streetscape planting, building material details.

1:02:29 Lori Wendling: Is there a second?

1:02:33 Pat Hagerty: I'll second it.

1:02:36 Lori Wendling: All in favor?

1:02:38 All members: Aye.

1:02:40 Lori Wendling: Motion carries. Thank you. I appreciate you coming.

1:02:43 Rick Greiwe: Thank you. We'll see you soon.

1:02:48 Pat Hagerty: Move to adjourn?

1:02:51 Lori Wendling: No, I have to ask, is there any other new business or any things that you would like to discuss?

1:02:58 Kevin Barbian: Real quick, if I could have one just one comment. Obviously, in referencing page 3, it talks about... This is the language directly, all this is language directly out of there, the last item on the upper portion where it says required board approval, it talks about other improvements specifically identified by staff. It's going to incorporate a lot of things in the second portion. I'm not going to make those decisions down here, I just wanted to let you know that providing the language... But, yeah, a lot of those things are going to be coming before this board and you're going to have that latitude on most of this stuff.

1:03:38 Chris Manning: Yeah, I think the process that we went through on Alexander Circle is a really good example of the iterative process that we go through. And that took, what, three, four visits?

1:03:52 Kevin Barbian: Right.

1:03:54 Chris Manning: Site time. So I think it's worth it to invest that level of interaction.

1:03:57 Kevin Barbian: Yeah, for this instrumental decide, absolutely.

1:04:04 Lori Wendling: Okay, do we have a motion to adjourn?

1:04:06 Pat Hagerty: I'll move to adjourn.

1:04:09 Lori Wendling: Adjourn second?

1:04:10 Barry Petracco: I'll second.

1:04:12 Lori Wendling: All in favor?

1:04:13 All members: Aye.

[background conversation]