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Historical Compatibility Assessment

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Project: Main and Ninth streets, Riverside CA: proposed new mixed-use construction

Subject: Design and Material Compatibility Review Assessment

SUMMARY OF PROJECT DESIGN & CONTEXT COMPATIBILITY

We have been asked by the City of Riverside's Community Development Department to clarify the compatibility of this proposed project with the standards of compatibility in project review. As this proposed project is located within a Historic District, design review and perceptions of compatibility with the specific and overall site context of Main Street and the City of Riverside apply. Riverside's Historic Preservation Program is administered through their Historic Preservation, Neighborhoods and Urban Design Division of the Community Development Department.

Riverside's Downtown Specific Plan covers a wide range of design guidelines for features, materials, details, and relationships of proposed construction within a historic context. While this local Plan successfully creates methodologies for defining and interpreting such new construction projects, there is not as much specific information at the State and the Federal levels of guidelines for compatibility with historic contexts.

Federal language for defining appropriate design recommendations are codified in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, where compatibility of new with existing is addressed in the Rehabilitation standard. This is aimed primarily at defining appropriateness for proposed new construction of additions to historically designated structures. These guidelines may interpretively be applied at a contextual design level of additions of structures to a district, following the logic of additions to a specific structure, but there is no specific language.

There is some direction given at the State level, especially within California's State Historical Building Code (SHBC.) In Section 8-1003, "Site Relations" there is language that states the relevance of a structure with its historical site context. "Associated features" of a district are referenced, as a "critical" component of a criteria that defines a historic district. Effectively, as a Certified Local Government, the City of Riverside establishes specific guidelines contained within Riverside's Downtown Specific Plan and pertaining to the Raincross District to determine the criteria for designation and for appropriate additions to a district, without compromising a district's character. These guidelines reference and support the Secretary's Standards.

- Summary of guidelines for associated historical features of qualified historical building resources in a historic district by the California Historical Building Code (CHBC):

CHAPTER 8-10

QUALIFIED HISTORICAL DISTRICTS, SITES AND OPEN SPACES

SECTION 8-1001 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

8-1001.1 Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to provide regulations for the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of associated historical features of qualified historical buildings, properties or districts (as defined in Chapter 8-2), and for which Chapters 8-3 through 8-9 of the CHBC may not apply.

8-1001.2 Scope. This chapter applies to the associated historical features of qualified historical buildings or properties such as historical districts that are beyond the buildings themselves which include, but are not limited to, natural features and designed site and landscape plans with natural and man-made landscape elements that support their function and aesthetics. This may include, but will not be limited to:

1. Site plan layout configurations and relationships (pedestrian, equestrian and vehicular site circulation, topographical grades and drainage, and use areas).
2. Landscape elements (plant materials, site structures other than the qualified historical building, bridges and their associated structures, lighting, water features, art ornamentation, and pedestrian, equestrian and vehicular surfaces).
3. Functional elements (utility placement, erosion control and environmental mitigation measures).

SECTION 8-1002 APPLICATION

8-1002.1 The CHBC shall apply to all sites and districts and their features associated with qualified historical buildings or qualified historical districts as outlined in 8-1001.2 Scope.

8-1002.2 Where the application of regular code may impact the associated features of qualified historical properties beyond their footprints, by work performed secondarily, those impacts shall also be covered by the CHBC.

8-1002.3 This chapter shall be applied for all issues regarding code compliance or other standard or regulation as they affect the purpose of this chapter.

8-1002.4 The application of any code or building standard shall not unduly restrict the use of a qualified historical building or property that is otherwise permitted pursuant to Chapter 8-3 and the intent of the *State Historical Building Code*, Section 18956.

SECTION 8-1003 SITE RELATIONS

The relationship between a building or property and its site, or the associated features of a district (including qualified historical landscape), site, objects and their features are critical components that may be one of the criteria for these buildings and properties to be qualified under the CHBC. The CHBC recognizes the importance of these relationships. This chapter shall be used to provide context sensitive solutions for treatment of qualified historical buildings, properties, district or their associated historical features, or when work to be performed secondarily impacts the associated historical features of a qualified historical building or property.

It should be noted that the SHBC is a unique code that is performance – oriented, rather than a prescriptive code. Room for interpretation of applications is allowed. There are limited references to specific requirements.

- There has been additional direction provided at the State level. Tim Brandt, Supervisor and Senior Restoration Architect of the SHPO gave a conference presentation in August 2011 that was memorialized with a power point. The script for this presentation is available at:
<http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1054/files/compiled%20script%20mod%201-3.pdf>

An excerpt from Brandt's presentation text:

1.5 Applying Standards You can apply the Treatment Standards to buildings, historic districts, structures, OHP001 Module 1 - Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties landscape features, sites and environments, objects, and any attached, adjacent, or related new construction. Examples include: individual buildings such as the Biford House, a bed and breakfast, in Napa; a district such as the Sacramento Railyards; a structure such as the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, the gardens and landscape around Wattles Mansion in Hollywood; building settings and environments within the boundaries of the Presidio in San Francisco...."

The treatment standards Brandt referenced would be the Rehabilitation Standards. These Rehabilitation Standards support compatibility with, yet differentiation from, new construction and their interfaces with existing construction.

As these guidelines are interpretive, in our opinion it is allowed to correlate an acceptable compatibility of new construction within a historic district, with the Standards for construction of new construction additions to historical structures.

Thus, the Tim Brandt quote gives direction for how to consider compliance of new construction within historic districts as qualifying with the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The City of Riverside provides more definitive interpretation of the broad outlines that exist within the State level of review.

The City of Riverside establishes specific guidelines to determine the criteria for designation and for appropriate additions to a district, as referenced in the Downtown Specific Plan. These guidelines define more specifically what is outlined in California's State Historical Building Code (SHBC).

- Summary of guidelines for new additions to resource structures in a historic district by the City of Riverside:

Following are some excerpts from the Downtown Specific Plan. Highlighted are the directions and standards that are particularly relevant to the proposed Main & Ninth project:

6.6.1 District Character Defining Statement

The Raincross District is the cultural, entertainment, and retail center of Riverside and the region beyond. Its

significant, signature buildings include the Fox Theater, Stalder Building, Mission Inn, Municipal Museum, Unitarian Church, Congregational Church, Municipal Auditorium, Post Office, Loring Building, and Art Museum. Historic and cultural resource sensitivity are the key concepts in this district. Buildings that contribute to the historic character of this district should be preserved or restored to an authentic historic design. New construction should be in scale and architecturally harmonious with nearby historic buildings. The above listed signature buildings should be used for inspiration regarding design, form, detailing and site layout.... In addition, the design standards and guidelines for the Raincross District are intended to create a vibrant, pedestrian friendly downtown by encouraging pedestrian orientation to the storefronts, human scaled spaces, and pedestrian amenities.

>The proposed Main & Ninth structure provides for commercial/retail, ground floor level café/coffee, creative offices / dining-related spaces, all addressing and enhancing a pedestrian-use scale of the building. All these amenities meet guidelines stated above.

>The ground level "human scaled" pedestrian spaces re-engage a street corner intersection that has long been vacant. A harmonic conversation with the U. C. Riverside Culver Center/ Rouse Building to the north is established by the marquee interpretive references that intend to continue along the Main and the Ninth Street façades.

>Similar "architecturally harmonious" correlation is suggested by the use of brick masonry material and the variations in massing that interpretatively references the City Hall structure context diagonally across Main Street, and the Center for Photography further north on Main Street.

Following are the Specific Plan's stated stylistic guidelines:

6.6.3 Architecture Style (1) Existing buildings should be restored/ maintained in a historic style that reflects the actual, historic appearance of the building at its period of historic significance. (2) The historic fabric in Downtown Riverside is interspersed with "contextual" buildings - buildings that are not historic but contribute to the district character as one traverses the district. Similarly, new buildings should not necessarily be stylistically "historic", but should be compatible with their historic neighbors in terms of massing, modulation, height, and setbacks. New buildings should be contemporary interpretations using the signature buildings as a source of design inspiration. Scale (1) Buildings and improvements should be at a pedestrian scale. To maintain a sense of pedestrian scale, larger buildings should be broken into storefront bays about 25 feet wide.

The proposed Main & Ninth project is not "stylistically historic" - in fact, thus avoiding the false sense of history that would place the structure in non-conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. We assert that the proposed design is a contemporary interpretation of the structures that define the district- whether they be "heroic" in nature such as City Hall, or more background structures such as the parking garage and ground floor retail structures along the west side of Main Street in the same block.

Following the logic of the Architectural Style section, the following Main and Ninth design characteristics should be considered compatible *with their historic neighbors in terms of massing, modulation, height, and setbacks:*

The proposed Main & Ninth project characteristics:

Massing:

>Overall the U-shaped form opened towards the north creates a light courtyard with public/residential space above the parking structure.

>Design details intend to divide the mass of the structure into smaller components, creating storefront

bays that interrelate in surface finish and color.

>The Main Street façade is divided vertically by a projected balcony element that terminates a recessed circulation element beyond at stair and elevator cores. This divides the residential units and their respective balcony elements, reducing apparent mass while modulating the façade design.

>This modulation continues along the northern façade of Ninth Street, where balconies divide the façade elements into smaller portions that modulate the façade into rhythmic bays.

>Height at the ground level interface of building with street is diminished by a projecting horizontal canopy, aligning with the adjacent Rouse Building canopy and referencing City Hall.

Modulation:

>Projecting balconies interrupted by vertical piers rise above a marquee- styled ground level canopy, referencing the similar adjacent Rouse building's detail.

>Use of structural bay dimensions creates a modular background for these projecting trellis elements and balconies.

Height:

>The proposed design at four stories acts to mediate between the two-story Rouses' building to the north, and the eight-story City Hall structure to the south.

Setbacks:

>An interplay of projecting balconies is set within vertical elements of masonry brick-clad piers.

>A recess at the top of the structure modulates the massing of the structure with a setback, interpretively referencing the glazed brick parapet of the Rouse building above the uppermost cornice, as a method of lowering scale.

Relative to Scale and color:

(1) Buildings and improvements should be at a pedestrian scale. To maintain a sense of pedestrian scale, larger buildings should be broken into storefront bays about 25 feet wide. (2) The size and mass of a new building should blend with the surrounding district. Detailing (1) Detailing of existing buildings should be a restoration or replication of historic detailing during the building's period of historic significance. Roof Design (1) Roof design should reflect/complement significant buildings in the area. Colors and Materials (1) Muted earthtones and traditional materials should prevail, with brighter colors limited to trim areas. The Mission Inn is a good example of this type of treatment.

Colors and Materials:

Muted earthtones and traditional materials should prevail, with brighter colors limited to trim areas.

Contemporary applications of brick masonry elements are proposed that relate in a compatible yet differentiated manner to the material characteristics of the proximate City Hall and the historic Rouse Building. The current color scheme presents muted tones of several shades of greys, a subtle gradation of four shades, earthtones, and a warm white accent color. A subtle accent color of a light-blue porcelain tile is shown at the solid balcony elements, and as a part of the window wall assembly at the termination of the balconies.

Color is used in a cautious manner, with a signage element indicated in a red-burnt orange. Should such accent colors be utilized in limited ways of specific façade features, a greater distinction of the façade

may yet be realized. Final color selections have not been made at the time of the issuance of this report.

Relative to Multi-Family Housing:

1) Individual units should be articulated to diminish the massing of large structures and be compatible with the scale of surrounding development. (2) The mass and roof forms of buildings should be varied. In addition to porches, stoops and other entry elements such as bay windows, balconies and trellises are encouraged. (3) The street floor building level should be raised between two and four feet to protect the privacy of ground floor units. (4) Facades of multifamily buildings should be divided into shorter modules a maximum of 30 feet in width, to reflect the volumes of individual units within the building. This objective can be achieved with varied setbacks, vertical modulation, texture changes on the facade, porches and balconies.

The façade design is separated into shorter modules, and by use of non-continuous balconies, reflect the identity of individual units within.

Summary of compatibility:

We recommend considering the proposed design as an acceptable urban infill, conforming to recommendations referenced in the City's Downtown Specific Plan and compatible with the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines. The Main & Ninth design will prove an appropriate companion to the District and the adjacent landmarked and / or contributing structures. As shown previously, Mr. Brandt of the Office of Historic Preservation has correlated the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation for new additions to historic resources, with an ability to apply these guidelines to new building construction in historic districts. We submit that the proposed project conforms with these standards of review.

Following is a summary of the proposed project and its compatibility with the Downtown Specific Plan, as outlined previously in this Historical Compatibility Assessment:

1 Site context plan: historic district compatibility

a.

The property at the northeast corner of Main Street and Ninth Street is located within the Mission Inn Historic District. Architects Design Arc have developed a scheme for the corner of Main and Ninth that appears to meet a precedent idea of compatibility with the intentions of Riverside's Downtown Specific Plan and the client's building design precedent suggestions. This design performs well in the context south of Ninth street- mediating between the local Historic Landmark No. 73 Rouse Building (hereafter, UC Riverside's Culver Center for the Arts) to the north, and the massive City Hall structure to the south. Given the Ninth street corridor is located along the boundary of the Mission Inn Historic District, the proposed design mediates this interface between districts.

This structure is considered an edge structure, connecting differing scales and architectural design emphases.



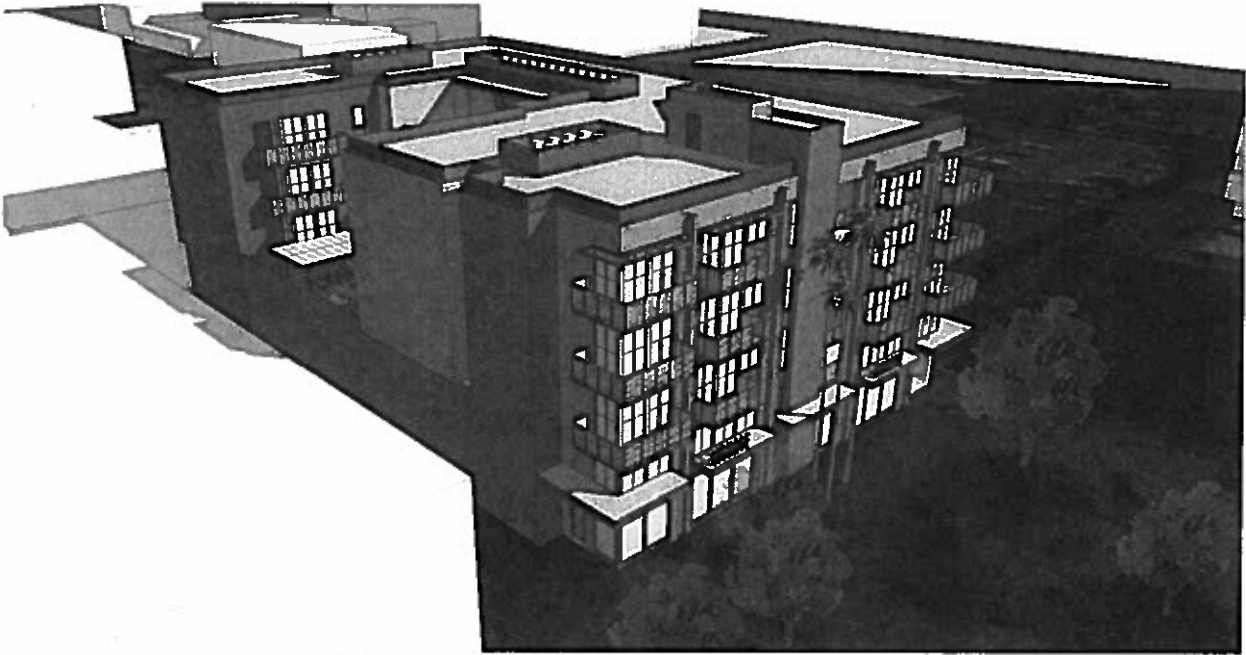
Site Context plan drawing

b.

The nature of the immediate context of Main Street represents a juxtaposition of older and historical elements: the Loring Building at University Avenue, the California Museum of Photography, and the Rouse/ Culver Center for the Arts building along the east side of Main Street. In contrast, the west side of the street has a mix of new structures- two-story parking garages, some with ground floor retail/commercial uses, and to the south of Ninth street, the heroically modern, "brutalist-lite" styled City Hall structure, part of which spans Main Street. Of course, Main Street itself was dramatically changed and altered when it was closed to vehicular traffic and became a pedestrian mall. Within the past decade, a renewal of the mall with new materials and details was commenced and completed.

c.

The site in consideration has served as a parking area most recently; a one-story structure was removed prior to the Adaptive-Reuse project at the Rouse Building. It is located at the intersection of an alley at the southeast corner with Ninth Street, and presents a strong identification for the corner view along Ninth Street in both directions.



Corner view of Ninth & Main streets, view to southeast; DesignArc

2 General design precedent

a.

Reference is made to an “industrial loft” style precedent in a mixed-use vocabulary, where the residential component is placed on top of the ground floor commercial use. While this is not generally a historical precedent in downtown Riverside, it is consistent with the City’s Downtown Specific Plan and multiple recent development projects that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Plan.

b.

The proposed structure’s arrangement is well-considered and will form again an important downtown corner. An existing adjacent open space is placed at the north elevation façade, near the Rouse Building’s secondary southern façade. An alley runs along the east of the property, where a parking ramp accessing the parking garage level above has an entrance and exit. Ninth street to the south presents another contextual response. Several parking garage structures are located on Ninth street in both directions, and one accessed from the alley along the eastern façade.

3 Façade design and material compatibility:

a.

The proposed façade has distinctive layout configurations on each of four orientations in support of a U-shape structure in plan. The open end of the courtyard U shape faces north to the secondary façade of the Rouse Building. Vertical and horizontal themes are balanced between balconies interrupted by

masonry pier elements which terminate at the cornice level. In this revised scheme, the cornice line is held back from the façade, slightly stepped back in a reference to an Art-Deco-Moderne stylistic influence present elsewhere in Riverside.

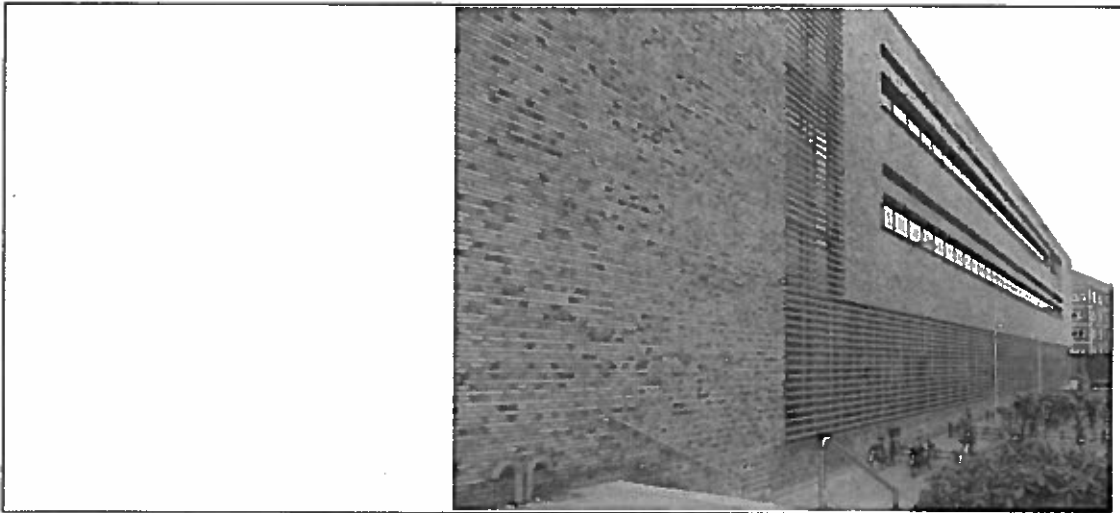
b.

An emphasis on the verticality of the brick masonry clad- piers, where the balcony horizontals defer in the composition to the modular piers, is confirmed as a recommended approach. The height and verticality of the metal balcony grilles act as a significant “screen” layered element for the building. These railing elements are interrupted by the thin, attenuated verticality of the masonry clad piers and form a contrast in material and detail. While the decorative detail of these railings is wholly within a modern- styled vocabulary, a reference is made to the simpler decoration of the wrought-iron balcony elements present at the adjacent Rouse building behind its French doors.

c.

Material selection process is not understood to be final.

The expanse of brick masonry at the north façade and at the defined piers along the Main Street /west façade and the Ninth Street south façade is rendered to reflect this precedent image as forwarded:



This image was selected by the Design Arc architects to show the mottled, mixed color characteristic of the masonry façades and vertical fin walls.

d.

A reference is made to a marquee present at the Rouse Building. This is a modern-styled, intermittent element that references a similar façade structure present at the Main Street façade as a part of the G. Stanley Wilson design modifications made in 1926. An opportunity to reinforce a pedestrian commercial corner where these two structures align is recommended, and has been incorporated in the design. The responsive nature of the proposed ground floor

canopy with a similar appearance to the Rouse's projecting canopy at their corner is a positive unifying reference. (Originally the corner space now used in the Rouse building as a museum shop was programmed for a potential coffee shop.) A corner-café opening at the building corner would reinforce this definition as well.

e.

A recommendation is made that there be more use of color identification in the proposed façade design. Equally, a signage program is suggested to be developed that defines limits of the area, size, graphics and location of signage design panels.

f.

Selection of a glazed brick mix of cool gray and white colors on the brick masonry piers and arcade return make the pedestrian spaces appear inviting and fitting with the adjacent site context. Repetition of existing color values reflecting the adjacent tangerine/orange color of the Rouse's cornice (based on our previous historical color chronology research analysis,) appearing elsewhere in the Main & Ninth project, including entrance doors. This dialogue is appropriate, handled with subtlety.

Review comment and confirmation of approach regarding these scope elements will assist the project team in the construction development of the project. A timely response is requested due to the construction schedule and project requirements.

End of Historical Review Memo Notes

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