

Historic District Revisions Committee Comments

Jerry Lominack – February 28, 2008

I'm still working on some thoughts about the height/lot coverage/sustainability thing. Here are some general thoughts in no particular order of importance:

- As a proponent of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in determining site density requirements, I think the height map should use average heights with certain special requirements. Example: Let's use three-fifths of a tithings block - say 90x180+16,200 SF x.75 (lot coverage)= 12,159 SF allowable per floor per floor with a 5-story **average** ht. limit. Also set some other parameters such as: not higher than one story taller than an adjacent historic building (or maybe a building within X # of feet) or some other ratio or criteria. Some version of this could also apply to across lane, across street, etc. The developer would then be allowed to build the lost floor area by additional floors in the un-restricted area only.
- This is, at this point, only a germ of an idea and would need a lot of work to be sure it works, is understandable, and be interpreted easily by the designer.
- This approach may elevate a fear of mine that the current wording or any absolute maximum over an entire building site will lead to a very un-interesting skyline.
- On the lot coverage issue, coupled with some sustainable features, we might consider something along the lines of allowing for a reduction in open space of 1/3 if two or three times that reduced was developed as a functioning "green roof." (My thinking now is that the green roof should equal the lost lot coverage x number of stories plus one.)

Like I wrote earlier, these are very preliminary thoughts. I think the bulk of the "sustainability" issues should go in the "big ordinance" but the historic district one needs to make sure its requirements are not in conflict or don't work against sustainability in design requirements. In a meeting with the City Manager on another issue yesterday, he made a statement along the lines that within the next few years, Savannah would have a lot of "green" requirements in place for developments. That seemed like a good sign to me. It was unsolicited by me.

I'm going to keep thinking about it.

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I guess I really didn't think through the reduction in open space as it would relate to density or the FAR. A reduction in open area at grade could be construed to mean an increase in density per floor times - let's say five floors - and get to be way too much. Mine may be a bad idea there.

Jerry