

**Historic District Revisions Committee  
Metropolitan Planning Commission  
110 State Street  
Arthur A. Mendonsa Room**

**Meeting 4 Summary  
Height and Lot Coverage  
March 17, 2008  
4:00 p.m.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Michael Brown, Earline Davis, Gwendolyn Fortson-Waring, Vaughnette Goode-Walker, Peter Kusek, Lawrence Lee, Jerry Lominack, Andrew Lynch, W. John Mitchell, Donald Moore, Susan Myers, John Neely, Kenneth Sadler, Richard Shinhoster, Kenneth Sirlin, Swann Seiler, Malik Watkins, and Robin Williams.

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Joe Marinelli

**STAFF PRESENT:** MPC: Thomas Thomson (Facilitator), Charlotte Moore, Beth Reiter, Sarah Ward, Sabrina Thomas; City of Savannah: Chris Morrill, Rochelle Small-Toney; SDRA: Lise Sundrila; Consultant: Christian Sotille.

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Mark McDonald, Elizabeth Sprague, Bill Stuebe, and Mary Zipser.

## **I. WELCOME**

**Lise Sundrila** stated that the Downtown Master Plan is in its final draft stage. It has gone through a comprehensive review process. It will be presented to the Board of Directors and the steering committee, Thursday, March 20, 2008. It is anticipated to be released to the public for review in April 2008. Afterwards, it will be sent to the MPC and then City Council. This will correlate with the results of the HDRC.

Thomas Thomson proposed additional HDRC meetings on the dates of April 8, 9, and 10 (in addition to the meeting on April 7) to focus on the language of the revised ordinance. If all could try to attend at least two of the additional meetings, the goal can be reached.

Sarah Ward stated that after the April 21, 2008 meeting an open blog will be available for public comment.

## **II. FEEDBACK**

Sarah Ward briefly reviewed the March 10, 2008 meeting ([www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org), Historic District Revision Committee, 03/10/08).

- A. Responses to the past meetings comments were given to committee members and posted on the web.
- B. Request for a map showing parcels with potential of redevelopment of 9,000 square feet or greater, or parcels that were contiguous that equal or surpass 9,000 square feet was completed.

- a. Parcels irrelevant to issue were eliminated.
  - b. Sites in orange are 9,000 square feet and could be redeveloped, both historic and non-historic, and vacant.
  - c. Visible on website and at the MPC.
- C. In addition to the illustrations of proposed concepts for using maximum footprints were presented at the 3/10/08 meeting. Two new approved projects illustrating the concepts of accommodating construction greater than 9,000 square feet were presented.
- a. The Residence Inn at Battlefield Park is a combination of five parcels.
    - i. They all have separate entrances and footprints. They are all 15, 000 square foot footprint and each building is separated by a setback.
    - ii. A one story height variance was granted in the three-story height zone. The fourth floor is set back from the edge of the primary building and designed to allude to historic monitor, characteristic of the Central of Georgia Railroad buildings in this area. It does not consume the entire footprint.
  - b. The River Walk Hotel is a single parcel and is consistent with what was originally on the site historically.
    - i. No setbacks or lot coverages were applicable.
    - ii. A portion of Factors Walk was restored.
    - iii. Multiple ground floor uses and entrances were introduced.
    - iv. The height map was three above bay and they went to six; not as visible because the penthouse was setback and used a lot of glass.

### **III. CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF WEEK 3: Lot Coverage and Height**

Sarah Ward reviewed what was discussed last week in regard to lot coverage. Staff presented the following questions for consideration:

- A. In the area where 75% maximum lot coverage applies, do we want to see increased lot coverage in exchange for reduced height?
- B. If yes, where would this apply?
- C. What should be the criteria for approving increased lot coverage within Large-Scale Development projects?

### **IV. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS**

The following lot coverage comments were received:

- A. Lot Coverage
  - Why is it 75% vs 100% ?
  - For increased lot coverage have measurable standards such as affordability or architectural quality.
  - Issue is more important in residential areas.
  - Yes to increased lot coverage, but conditioned by context. There are so many variables, it is hard for just one criteria. Probably need a number of criteria.
  - Since most of the large lots are in the 100% zone, is there really an issue?

- Increase lot coverage will provide loopholes down the road. If developers won't comply with the standards, they should build elsewhere.
- Need to have something hard and fast.
- Keep to the 75%. Don't like grandfathering non-historic existing 100% coverage buildings – should revert back to 75%. (Next person agreed with this.)
- Provide a map showing 75% overlay on 9000 square foot sites.
- In support of not increasing lot coverage in residential areas.
- In certain circumstances it might be justified.
- 75% is a great guideline but need room (flexibility?) for greater design.
- In favor of keeping 75% (Next respondent agreed with this)
- Concerned how to quantify it if lot area is to be increased.
- If it goes to 100% and the building is destroyed does it revert back to 75%?
- Explore overall reduced height option and incorporate incentive to allow increases. Don't convert residential to commercial.
- Link increases to other values and issues, affordable housing for instance. Leave door open for options.
- What and where should the 25% open space be – go?
- Mr. Lee showed three recently built 100% coverage residential uses.
- Make better quality open space.
- Make separate rules for Liberty and Oglethorpe Avenue.

#### B. Step Downs and Floor Area Ratio

- Maximum height on a lane might have to do with the width of the lane. Apply to historic carriage houses.
- Need to study relationships of buildings that face north-south streets.
- Is the step down distance calculated from building itself or the property line?
- Does it make a difference whether you are in a 100% or 75% zone?
- If an existing two story historic building in a four story zone burns down, can you build back a four story building?
- Can you combine Step downs with FAR?
- Question whether the 75% “Savannah math” scenario in calculating FAR gives developer surety.
- Provide FAR case illustrations in 3-4 and 5 story zones.
- Consider green roof one story up.
- The treatment of corner lots may be different from internal lots.

### V. COMMITTEE GROUP BREAK-OUT SESSION

Presentation on Step Down, F. A. R. and Skyline profile was given by Christian Sottile. Thomson directed the committee into three groups for discussion to discuss presentation. Committee feedback to be presented at the March 24, 2008 meeting.

**VI. REVIEW FOR WEEK FIVE MEETING: Entrances, Windows, Materials, and Sample Panel**

Information was given for the March 24, 2008 meeting at 4:00 p.m.

**VII. CLOSING REMARKS**

Thomas Thomson thanked all for participation. He reminded all of the next meeting date, March 24, 2008.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.