



SAVANNAH HISTORIC DISTRICT  
BOARD OF REVIEW

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Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room  
October 8, 2014 9:30 a.m.  
Meeting Minutes

**OCTOBER 8, 2014 HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW SPECIAL CALLED MEETING**

**HDRB Members Present:** Keith Howington, Chair  
Ebony Simpson, Vice Chair  
Zena McClain, Esq., Parliamentarian  
Debra Caldwell  
Justin Gunther  
Dr. Nicholas Henry  
Stephen Merriman, Jr.  
Marjorie Weibe-Reed  
Tess Scheer  
Robin Williams, Ph.D

**MPC Staff Present:** Tom Thomson, Executive Director  
Ellen Harris, Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation  
Leah G. Michalak, Historic Preservation Planner  
Sara Farr, Historic Preservation Planner  
Mary E. Mitchell, Administrative Assistant  
Ellie Isaacs, Intern

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

**II. SIGN POSTING**

**III. CONSENT AGENDA**

**IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**VI. ITEM(S) REQUESTED TO BE REMOVED FROM THE FINAL AGENDA**

**VII. CONTINUED AGENDA**

## VIII. REGULAR AGENDA

### 1. [Petition of Christian Sottile for Sottile & Sottile | 14-004597-COA | 200-500 West River Street | New Construction: Demolition, Part 1 Height and Mass, Rehabilitation](#)

Attachment: [Staff Recommendation 14-004597-COA.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [Application - 200 West River Street 14-004597-COA.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [Submittal Packet- Demolition Request Justification.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [Submittal Packet- Sight Line Drawings.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [Submittal Packet- General Development Plan.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [KesslerHDBRPartI\\_Introduction.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [KesslerHDBRPartI\\_UrbanAnalysis02.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [KesslerHDBRPartI\\_RedevelopmentMasterPlan03.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [KesslerHDBRPartI\\_PowerPlant04.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [KesslerHDBRPartI\\_WestHotel05.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [KesslerHDBRPartI\\_EastHotel06.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [KesslerHDBRPartI\\_AccessoryStructures06.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [KesslerHDBRPartI\\_ArchitecturalModel07.pdf](#)

**Mr. Christian Sottile** was present on behalf of the petitioner.

**Mr. Howington** called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. He outlined the role of the Historic District Board of Review and laid out the ground rules for review of the project. He explained that Ms. Harris will give a brief overview of the project and Mr. Sottile will give a presentation of the overall project. He set a 30 minute time limit for the petitioner's presentation and the public will have 30 minutes to make comments.

**Ms. Ellen Harris** stated that the petitioner is requesting approval for the demotion of an existing building: Part I: Height and Mass for a new building to west of the GA Power Plant site; Board feedback on the rehabilitation of Power Plant itself; Part I: Height and Mass for a new building to east of the GA Power Plant site; and Part I: Height an Mass for the six ancillary structures along the River Walk.

#### **PETITIONER OVERVIEW**

**Mr. Sottile** came forward and stated that he is the civic design architect for the Plant Riverside Redevelopment. They are thrilled to be here; this is a landmark moment in the life of the city and a cornerstone moment for the Historic District. He introduced the team members. Present were Mr. Richard Kessler, Mr. Anthony Cissell; Mr. Ryan Smith of Thomas and Hutton Engineering, Mr. John Campo; and Mr. Clarence Vinson. Mr. Sottile thanked the Board for meeting early this morning. He realizes that the Board has a large agenda scheduled for later this afternoon. Mr. Sottile said that Mr. Kessler will make the opening remarks and then he will present the project.

**Mr. Kessler** thanked the Board for the opportunity to present the project to them. They have been working with other agencies in the city and the City of Savannah has been very responsive and helpful in their support of the project and encouraging. He takes a lot of pride in the city. Mr. Kessler said he has been in the hotel business for 44 years and has been developing hotels around the state of Georgia. He is pleased that they were able to acquire this key piece of property. They had some competition, but Georgia Power decided to sell it to them because they were confident of what they would do with the property.

**Mr. Kessler** stated that in 1979, he built the Days Inn on West Bay Street. This was his first hotel on Bay Street. It was very successful and he is hopeful that it set a nice trend for the developments that came along Bay Street. Later he made a garage out of the Bargain Corner that was next door to the Days Inn. He constructed the Mulberry Inn in 1980 and hopefully it had a positive impact on the city on the far end of East Bay Street. They kept the historic part of the building and demolished the Coca-Cola Bottling Plant piece that was added on in the 1950s and 1960s. The Mulberry Inn has been renovated and serves a major purpose in the city. He purchased and totally renovated the Kehoe House. He renovated another house that he uses as his personal home and he built the Mansion at Forsyth Park. This was a turning point for Forsyth Park and hopefully, it contributed significantly to the redevelopments around Forsyth Park. Mr. Kessler said he also constructed the Bohemian Hotel and hopefully the Board has visited the rooftop and has enjoyed it as much as the many citizens and tourists.

**Mr. Kessler** said he takes much pride in what they do in the City of Savannah. It is extremely important and personal to him [it is not a corporate thing] and is a project that he is taking personal interest in everything that is done in Savannah as well as other projects, too. He has done other historic renovations in St. Augustine, Florida; the 1888 Building; Cassa Monica Towers and others. They built the Henry Flager Hotel; they bought this building from the county and rebuilt it as it was in 1888. It has been a great success. This hotel turned around the downtown city.

**Mr. Kessler** said they are very excited about the project they are going to do in Savannah. After he bought the property, he said he wanted the best team to figure this out and do the right thing. The first thing he did was to bring together about 25 people here in Savannah. They were business leaders, government leaders, and people of the music industry. They spent the day together talking about it. They brained storm what can they do to truly add to the quality of life for the citizens as well as the tourists that come here. What does this city need? What can they do to add to the vibrancy, the quality and the preservation of this beautiful place? They talked about this all day long. A lot of ideas came from this meeting. Approximately, 30 days later he organized three architectural firms that the Board will hear from today. One is a specialist in historic renovation; obviously Sottile and Sottile is a team that truly understands the fabric of Savannah and is recognized as one of the top architects in America. Mr. Sottile is in charge of all the exterior design, all the plaza design, and all the model building of what they have today. They have a hospitality firm out of Atlanta, GA that has been very helpful in the architectural part of the interiors of these buildings. Therefore, these three architectural firms and also an outside design consultant have been playing a part in this. Approximately 30 people, including engineers and business people, met in Orlando, Florida for three days focusing on what they learned from the charet they did in Savannah and how to take it to the next level. How does this become some form? What is the form? How do they respect the land? How do they reconnect this property back to the river? For more than 100 years, this property has been fenced off. People have not been able to get to it. As the Board will see today, they now have four entrances from River Street that people can actually access the Savannah River. Therefore, all these things were very important to them. How do they put the property back into the fabric of the City? How do they refurbish the building? How do they save a building that really was designed to be an industrial complex and make it into something habitable, really workable and make sense? Mr. Kessler said this is a challenge and if you have been through that building it is awesome. It is not easy and is not for everybody to do, but given that they are committed to Savannah and to this project, they have taken it on. They are working with the staff to come up with the right plan.

**Mr. Kessler** said if anybody has come to any of their properties, they know that they do high end detailing on everything they do. They try not to overlook anything. Therefore, they put a lot of pride into every piece. This is a complex project, but he is confident that they have an extraordinary plan to

offer to the Board of Review today and he believes the Board will appreciate it. He is hopeful that the Board will appreciate all the work that has gone into this project. Mr. Kessler thanked the staff for their thoughtful questions; obviously, there is a lot to take in. He has gone through every sentence of the staff's report. Yesterday they spent several hours reviewing the report and believe that they have some good and meaningful answers today. They are here to answer any questions that the Board might have and hopefully get the Board's approval and encouragement to move forward. As with anything, timing is important to keep the momentum of the project. They have been working on this project about one and one-half years. A lot of work and thoughts have gone into this project.

**Mr. Kessler** thanked the Board for their attention today; he thanked them for all the questions that he knows they will have. They will do their best to answer all the questions thoroughly.

**Mr. Sottile** stated that he would give the Board an overview of the plan and then they could go building by building with questions and comments. Mr. Sottile said, as Ms. Harris reported, they have divided the project in the way that it is presented; an urban analysis understanding the true context. They believe that this is an urban design project first and foremost. Then it is an historic preservation rescue mission and rehabilitation opportunity. It is also a project that becomes that new construction infill to really reactivate and reenergize the west end of the city. Mr. Sottile said his overview will start with the master plan, and then architecturally they will talk about the power plant which really forms the centerpiece of this project. They will look at the West Hotel/Parking Deck; the East Hotel and lastly the accessory structures that complement the site.

**Mr. Sottile** said the tour begins in the western corner of the National Landmark Historic District. He said truly this is a cornerstone site and is about 1,100 feet of frontage and touches four city blocks stretching from Jefferson Street to Montgomery Street; Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and beyond to the west. This is the geography of the site along the river. Mr. Sottile said they realized from day one that this is what they needed to address as they thought about the master plan; starting with those key connections of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Montgomery Street and Jefferson Street from a north/south standpoint. From an east/west standpoint to really address what's happening on River Street as they move west and as they move from that where the world ends; right now the River Walk comes to an end and connecting the River Walk to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard which has not been an accessible route. This begins first and foremost with the City plan and those connections. The centerpiece of the site is the Landmark structure which is a noble piece of industrial architecture and is also an incredibly challenging building to reuse for human habitation. They also have a site with a lot of different histories. It goes back to the 18th century; it has a 19th century history and a 20th Century history and they are in the process of forging the 21st century. They have endeavored to understand this and the wharf life of the city of the 19th century, the Power Plant and even the remaining portions of it representing many eras, many construction campaigns that took place here; they have seen the site in different forms; it was a fully operation Power Plant and served as the city's main source of power generation and certainly one of the most unique singular histories that this site carries. Mr. Sottile said what was inspiring about this, but also limiting in some ways in terms of public realm and the experience coming west on River Street was not really having sidewalks and having chain link fences and other things that they think they can do better today as they think about taking the past and emerging with the future. Mr. Sottile said the demolition request involves a non-contributing small brick building located west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. They have presented the context photos as submitted in the Board's packet, but they will go back and review these as much as necessary.

**Mr. Sottile** said Ms. Harris has already touched on the master plan, but he just wanted to reinforce a few key points on what has generated the plan. It is the connection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to the river as a grand public space; it is a capstone to the 52 block corridor and the redevelopment area. He said likewise Montgomery Street currently ends in a dirt ramp. This is

something that the city has been looking at for some time as an opportunity for a grand public stair. They, obviously, agree completely and see that the master plan responds to that by allowing a connection to the river there as a second connection. Jefferson Street which comes to the site and goes as a narrow passage between the Factors Walk in this area, they responded to that by creating a passage to the river here; and also at the eastern edge of the site, the fourth passage. The four access points to the river are calibrated to the rhythm of the city plan. These were the absolute top concerns.

**Mr. Sottile** explained that when they talk about the east/west connections, building the other side of River Street in this area is critical to the plan and actually setting buildings back and creating sidewalk space so that there is passage along the street. He said also along the waterfront building the opportunity to have a series of public spaces and to allow that public connection that will link for the first time the edge of River Walk as they know it today with the proposed Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Park that is there. These are the primary connections in the plan that is the key. Mr. Sottile pointed out that what this does in terms of the architecture is the footprint of the remaining Power Plant, the West Hotel/Parking Deck, which is a combination of a parking deck concealed within a structure that sits west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard frontage; and the East Hotel which is articulated as three masses. One of the benefits of looking at this at one time and as one plan is that they get to service the whole project from a centralized location. Therefore, from a contextual standpoint, a decision in the master plan was made at the planning level, the urban design level, was to recognize what happens when you come to the end of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard you clearly want to prioritize the connection to the river and want to look at River Street as really a street that has two natures. It has the nature that heads into the core of the city center which certainly is a more formal, public and active nature of River Street. Then it's River Street that heads west which is the River Street that quickly turns into a back of house location for the uses along the river and the south side of the street. This is the fundamental distinction and he wanted to point this out at the planning level because it resulted in architectural decisions, first the opportunity to consolidate services. Therefore, you can think of the west hotel structure as an engine allowing this entire property, a lot of the infrastructure; services; loading; utilities; and mechanicals that this building can absorb allows the other buildings to truly be buildings. No back doors, no service areas, and no loading docks. In fact looking at this as one major project, has allowed them to do this; and because there is no lane on this project, it is not in the Oglethorpe Plan Area, the contextual analysis lead them to recognize that River Street, west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, is the heart of this project and, therefore, will provide the access of their services which is the best place to do it. They will historically, then loading dock and service on the Power Plant for example at the end of Montgomery Street which is the best place for this. Therefore, they had the opportunity to contextually look at West River Street and it is an important idea and they will talk about this more as they look at the rest of the plan and the buildings.

**Mr. Sottile** said they have a lot of different ideas of transition of scales. They are on the river and are working with a scale that they are not familiar of working with in Savannah. Certainly, the Oglethorpe Plan Area is a very particular scale and mass and they are sensitive to this. At the river, they have different scales. The Power Plant is a massive building and as they respect and restore this building and add to it, they are also challenged by this scale to create new architecture that responds to the scale of industry and to the human scale of Savannah. Therefore, a part of this decision results in the West Hotel structure being a larger building, a cousin to the Power Plant in scale and detail. This resulted in them taking the East Hotel, the structure that is east of the Power Plant, and really working architecturally to articulate it as multiple masses to have it appear as multiple structures for the more evolutionary context with the range of Factors Walk. Therefore, they have the larger scale, the next scale is Factors Walk and the third scale is reflected within the accessory structures. The series of pavilions that they have located closer to the River Walk and also a series of retail kiosks and other site elements that are here that tell the whole story from the largest scale to the finest grain of the human

scale, the River Walk.

**Mr. Sottile** said there are some large ideas here and the largest is the 18th century. They have an 18th century history of this working waterfront of wharfs, they have a 19th century history of industry involving industrial waterfronts; they have a 20th century history power production with the Power Plant and a 21st century which helps them solidify the northwest corner of the National Historic Landmark District with an eye towards art, retail, culture, and much more people oriented future.

**Mr. Sottile** stated that as he had said, the Power Plant remains the centerpiece. The key is distinguishing old from new in any work that they do. This is a structure that is guided by the Secretary of Interior's Standards for rehabilitation, which will be how this building is reviewed. As they studied the structure, they realized that there are a number of incompatible additions over the years. He said, therefore, a lot of their attention has gone towards preserving and restoring elements; certainly the upper architecture and working to open up and restore the lower architecture of the building. They have done some studies that help them resolve the grade changes and main entrances of the structure. Mr. Sottile said they developed a language that distinguishes the old from the new. As you see the project, you realize that where windows exist and can be restored is what they will do. Where windows do not exist and need to exist so that the building can convert from being an industrial structure to a habitable structure, they have developed a language that shows that opening in contrast to the openings that are there. There will be a line that is sympathetic in geometry, scale, and be aesthetically pleasing, but clearly distinguishable towards detailing from historic openings. This lead them to look at the structure and really seek to have each of its layers communicate as moments in time. Mr. Sottile said they have the original core of the brick structure that was built in several phases; and then they have later additions that were built in the 1940s and 1950s which they will also retain their central geometry; they need to be re clad because of environmental issues, but they are addressing this building and really reading it as the building that touches on several of these campaigns of construction that took place over the 20th century.

**Mr. Sottile** said the floor plans in the Board's packets; describe the perimeter new openings from historic openings. They move up through the floor plans of the structure and there is a series of additions and one key addition. At the sixth level, there is a roof monitor component and the plan calls for an addition. This is an element that is setback from the façade on River Street and the river. He pointed out that the main façade on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and the element are setback from there as well as the façade on Montgomery Street. Therefore, they sought to find the most appropriate location to make the sixth level functional.

**Mr. Sottile** explained that their elevation shows the building in context. He said they are actually looking at the main façade on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and looking at the hotel that has been approved on William Street that is beyond this context and then beyond to the Hyatt Hotel. He pointed out the River Street elevation and said this is a challenging elevation for them because it was never intended to be an elevation for human habitation. Therefore, it presented a series of blank brick walls to River Street, an area that promises to be an active part of the city. He said they looked at a sensitive way to add windows to that façade and even with the historic rhythm and portions of windows evidences of windows that are in the facade today. They are introducing these on River Street to bring that façade to life on that active part of River Street. He said certainly retaining things such as the smoke stacks have been important. They feel that this is a part of the history of the site. He showed the Montgomery Street passage of the same building; the River Street elevation of the outline.

**Mr. Sottile** said being a large footprint building and being in concept with the Power Plant, they came to the idea that this building being an industrial cousin that is separated by at least 100 years.

Creating architecture with the scale and confidence that the Power Plant presents was what they came to. It houses a parking deck and they have gone through great lengths to absorb that deck into the structure so that it does not read as a parking deck. This is a solid industrial building that is anchoring this corner. It is the most active façade; it has three facades. One faces the river; one faces Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and one faces the service oriented part of River Street. They have chosen to prioritize the river façade and the Martin Luther King Jr. façade and actually wrap that façade with uses absorbing the parking deck and the service functions after they turn the corner with active uses west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The language of the building is a concrete frame that is articulated with brick infill. Therefore, it has two scales. It has a large scale that you can read from across the river and a finer scale that you can read close. He believes the ordinance requires four inches, but there are four feet of depth from the structure back to the glass; so that you get the shadow line. You get the sense that this is a building that plays in this larger industrial context. They are excited about that. They wanted a simple bay rhythm; get it just right and carry it around. Therefore, this is a building that has the confidence and certainly expresses itself differently, but owns its scale next to the Power Plant. This is the view that you see looking down the river. As staff has mentioned, it has two parking levels underground. The main level has services on River Street and actually has a lot of attributes that face the river and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. As they move to the upper floors, they have parking here. At the roof level, the sixth floor, they step back from all sides to keep the scale differential to the Power Plant and at this level the active uses surround a courtyard in the center. The technical elevations show it in context in relationship to the Power Plant.

**Mr. Sottile** showed the west elevation and said it is a party wall adjacent to the substation that Georgia Power has across the street and actually picks up to the Port after that. He said they have provided a detail that has given the "thinking" behind that façade. He said the East Hotel, as they have said, is a single building and they have worked diligently to articulate it as multiple masses. As Ms. Harris mentioned, they refer to those masses as "A, B, and C." This is inspired by the qualities of Factors Walk. They are in the Factors Walk Character Area. The things that are most wonderful about Factors Walk are the qualities that they want to emulate and reference. A story is here about the structures narrating parts of that past, 18th, 19th, and 20th century history all in a contemporary mode. The structures operate with three different heights. As they can see in the model, they begin with a three story mass that has four story additions to it; then it moves up to a six story mass. They are sort of moving that scale up as you approach from the east moving west to the Power Plant always ensuring that the Power Plant remains the dominant site line as they go. They have included some of sketches in the packets to give the Board the inspiration for this building. In its plan and in its articulation by separating them into three buildings, they had to deal with the spaces between those masses and there are two typologies spaced between those masses. There is the one that aligns with the Jefferson Street corridor which is a genuine passage to the river in that location. They prioritized that and made it as wide as possible to align with the narrow part between the buildings and Factors Walk and created a more generous gateway to the water.

**Mr. Sottile** said, pointing to an area, that the other connection is between the two masses that are articulated here; they brought them together and are referring to them as a "gasket." This is a cushion; they could have connected them, but they pulled them a part a little so that there is a soft landing that allows a little light to exist in that space. The three masses serve well to break the scale down, but also create the passage and the gasket. He said these are the upper levels of that structure. He showed the Board this in context and said that each of the elements are articulated differently. There will be details that are shared between them, but each one is articulated slightly different in order to create the variety and diversity. They felt that there was a single monotiness solution for this much architecture if not serviced well on the river front. Therefore, they spent a lot of time thinking about this, especially with that many centuries and history on the site and form language.

**Mr. Sottile** said the accessory structures are elements that are out on the edge of the site and take them from the scale of habitable architecture to a more transparent and single story scale that punctuates the waterfront and make it a more active and interesting space. They have three pavilions; a trellis; artisan and retail kiosks that are next to the East Hotel. They also have what they are calling "electric moons" which are two featured lighting elements at the terminus of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and the river. The pavilions are inspired by the old wharf sheds that existed on the site over the years and the different histories. They have three of them and two share similar design language as they relate directly to power plant in its quieter language. The third one relates to the East Hotel a little more and is articulated in its roof form. Mr. Sottile said they have a trellis which bares the industrial language of the site. The artisan retail kiosks are intended as a more playful element. As staff mentioned, the adaptive small size shipping containers help activate some of that space in front of the East Hotel on the waterfront. He stated that the electric moons come from Savannah, one of the few cities in the nation to adopt an early street lighting technology in the late 19th century. Before the streets had electric lighting, there were street lamps on every street. This is a small piece of history that they were inspired by. With this in mind and actually with the history of two smoke stacks on the site that were at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, they are proposing a new urban element here that references both of the spaces.

**Mr. Howington** thanked Mr. Sottile for the overview. He asked the staff to make their presentation on the buildings.

**Ms. Harris** asked Mr. Howington if she is to make the presentation on all the buildings and then Mr. Sottile will make his comments or just present one building at a time, then have Mr. Sottile make his comments after each building is presented.

**Mr. Howington** stated that staff will make its presentation on the specific building and then Mr. Sottile could make his comments.

**Ms. Harris** explained that along the river walk, several ancillary structures are proposed which include three pavilions, three adapted shipping containers serving as "micro retail installations," a trellis, and a lighting element. While these structures may be approvable in one review, the applicant is requesting Part 1: Height and Mass only.

**Ms. Harris** explained that the demolition request involves a non-contributing small brick building located to the west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. She explained that before a building can be demolished, whether it is contributing or non-contributing, it has to be evaluated. Staff feels that the building does not meet the criteria to be considered historic.

**Dr. Williams** asked are there any plans to document this as it is a part of the history.

**Ms. Harris** answered that documentation was done on the entire site when it was decommissioned by Georgia Power.

**Ms. Harris** stated that the west hotel and parking deck, to the west of the power plant and MLK Jr. Blvd., consists of a six story building with a 40,000 square foot footprint. The sixth story is recessed nine feet from the parapet. There will be two floors of parking below ground. Hotel rooms will wrap the north and east facades. A vehicular entrance to the parking garage will be from River Street. This entrance will serve as the entrance for all "back of house" functions of the entire site. Valet parking will be from Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

**Ms. Harris** stated that as the Board is aware, there is a parking standard that requires that parking be set back 30 feet from public streets, not including lanes. There is a question regarding whether the ramps here are providing access to the parking would apply to this standard. Staff consulted with the



Zoning Administrator and was told that the petitioner would be subject to this standard, not just the parking spaces, but also all the access to the parking, all the ramps would need to be set back. Consequently, there is a potential that a variance will be needed.

**Ms. Harris** explained that the large scale development standards apply to this project. It is approximately 40,000 square feet; it is outside of the Oglethorpe Plan Area; therefore, there is no maximum footprint, necessarily. As the Board recalls that with the large scale development standards, petitioners are required to chose two standards to break up the mass. The petitioner has chosen to divide the building horizontally into a base, middle and top. The first story is separated by a significant horizontal band. Therefore, massing is met. There is also a standard that requires roofline variation and as the Board sees, the sixth story of the building is setback approximately 9 feet. Within the large scale development, there is also a requirement that there is a maximum of 120 linear feet of continuous height before a half-story height variation is required. The standard is not met along river street which has 182 linear feet of continuous height, along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard which has 200 linear feet and along River Walk which has 165 linear feet.

**Ms. Harris** stated that that rehabilitation of the power plant project proposes to rehabilitate the existing 1912 original building and the 1940s addition into hotel rooms, retail, and other functions. The project is seeking state and federal historic preservation tax incentives. The project includes several additions to the roof top. The information provided for the rehabilitation is not necessarily complete and the petitioner is seeking feedback and recommendations for a more thorough, future submittal. The west façade which faces Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard will be retained as a primary entrance. The south façade which faces River Street proposes the most significant alterations. The east façade which faces Montgomery Street will have additional window and door openings added and new canopies. The existing windows will be restored. The north façade on the addition, the existing Transite cladding will be replaced with corrugated fiber cement cladding on the upper floors, with channel glass below. Multiple rooftop additions are proposed which have varying degrees of visibility from the public right-of-way.

**Ms. Harris** said the east hotel is comprised of three architecturally distinct sections, which make up one building. They are broken down into A, B, and C for design review. **Building A** is the easternmost structure, three stories tall with a partial fourth floor and rooftop trellis. The second and third floors are connected to Building B by a glass hyphen. The footprint of the building is 7,556 square feet. **Building B**, the middle building, is four stories tall with a footprint of 6,827 square feet. It is connected to Building A on the second and third floors. It is connected to Building C on all four floors. The River Street entrance on this building serves as the vehicular drop-off point for the hotel guests; and **Building C**, the westernmost building, is six stories tall with an additional sixth story mezzanine. The footprint is 9796 square feet. There is a pedestrian walkway approximately 25 feet wide between this building and the Power Plant. This building is on the footprint of the 1954 Turbine Room and Boiler House (also called the Generator Structure).

**Ms. Harris** reported that staff recommends to continue Part 1: Height and Mass for the pavilions, shipping containers, trellis and light fixtures to address the following:

1. Reduce the overall height of the pavilions.
2. Add additional voids in the pavilions.
3. Restudy the inclusion of the adapted shipping containers.
4. Reduce the height of the light fixtures substantially.

ALL STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

- I. Demolition: Approval to demolish the oil building.
- II. West Hotel/Parking Garage: Continue Part I: Height and Mass of the West Hotel/Parking Garage in order for the petitioner to address the following:
  1. Restudy the west façade to incorporate additional articulation, perhaps through green screening, recesses or louvered panels.
  2. Restudy the south, River Street façade to include additional voids and/or architectural articulation; provide an additional entrance or otherwise address the street, particularly near the intersection of MLK Jr. Blvd; meet the distance between windows standard; meet the standard for architecturally distinct sections that are taller than wide; and meet the standard for 35% windows and doors on the ground floor.
  3. Restudy the corner, at the intersection of MLK and River Street to better address both streets.
  4. Ensure that all windows facing a street are double or triple hung, awning, casement or Palladian.

Conceptually, staff is supportive of a variance from the continuous height standard and the height of the second story which is 11'6" (12' is required), but feels that the other concerns should be resolved before a formal variance analysis and recommendation be forwarded to the Zoning Board of Appeals as other variances may be required.

#### **PETITIONER COMMENTS - WEST HOTEL**

**Mr. Sottile** stated that he believes a lot of what has been discussed is context driven. Therefore, he wanted to discuss what was their thought process and why they approached the project the way they did, recognizing that some of the standards are deviated. However, he said a lot of these are folded around the project contextually about what is happening on West River Street. He said as he has mentioned, looking at the site, the Power Plant turns its corner as you come down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard actually folds into one bay with an arch. They felt the bookend for this project should be the same thing. Turn that bay in a more articulate way and create a frame for the passage through to the river; definitely prioritizing the façade that faces the river. Mr. Sottile said that the balance of the façade on West River Street, the service end of River Street, they treated-very intentionally-to be honest and clear of the street in this area and to the use of this building, it is a portion that is concealing in a parking deck level beyond. The 4th façade on the adjacent property line is a party wall which is adjacent to the industrial substation. Contextually, when they talk about the number of issues related to West River Street façades, they want this to be in mind as they recognize that it will pick up some parts and variations from the standards.

**Mr. Sottile** showed the Board some photographs showing what will happen west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. He pointed out that what the Board is looking at is the substation. He said that this is an area of River Street that has a very different character and does not have the ability to transform from this character. He said that Indian Street becomes the primary façade. Consequently, uses along this block between West River Street and Indian Street prioritizes Indian Street and are really the back doors of the other structures. They felt the façade should not present a false vision. They have maintained a level of detail and articulation at the street level, the pedestrian level. The sixth level is setback and they created an end bay that will help the bay with some clarity. They brought that language to the end and left the surface in-between, the part that conceals the ramp with the idea that they could articulate it with a beautiful surface. They want the surface to be

beautiful and well designed.

**Mr. Sottile** said the west façade is actually the party wall to the adjacent site and by building code it is the façade that needs to be a solid surface. It cannot have openings to the adjacent site. They are providing some compositional openings to lighten a part of the surface to the river,

which will be a part of the fire stair, but they are still concealing equipment. The cooling tower for the project is a part of this façade and they have developed louvers that conceal the larger mechanical equipment and service bays that are here. Therefore, there will be a level of composure, but will be a simple façade. In this case they express the concrete frame of the core façade strategically and have simple infill panels. They believe with this, it makes it a handsome façade. As he stated, it is a party wall and is conceivable that something can be built up against it at some point in the future. He said that staff commented if something could be done to this to address it. One suggestion was to grow greenery on the façade. Mr. Sottile said they believe this is a nice idea and from a landscaping standpoint, they will look into possibly putting ivy and other greenery here to fill those spaces and those voids.

**Mr. Sottile** said the façade on West River Street- the idea is of hierarchy, honesty and keeping focus. He believes that when the Board looks at the model, they will see that down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, the plan is to keep the focus on the gateway to the river and the movement to the right. Therefore, it is important to see that gateway and the movement and have a quieter façade to the west. Of course out of this entire project, five major masses are on the site, they needed one service façade.

**Mr. Sottile** said in response to the question regarding windows on the façade, double hung casement, awnings and Palladian windows are allowed in the ordinance. He said at this point, they are showing the façade in void and are anticipating fixed panels in a lot of cases in response to the industrial character of the area. They recognize that this is something that they will look at in a more detailed fashion as they move forward with the project. They also note that in the ordinance curtain walls are identified as well. Therefore, there are some inconsistencies in the ordinance. But, they will continue to look at this and work with staff.

**Mr. Sottile** said regarding the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, staff brought this up as being important and they are in agreement at the detail level. They will look at further enlivening this corner. It has an entrance to the parking level and because of the limited nature of the façade - actually where they have brought parking below the building and above - there are just so many places where the ramps can be without being impossible to construct as there is no lane and no service side. The need for the entry is absolutely essential in this location. They went back and reduced a number of service bays and loading docks because of the centralized use of the overall project. Therefore, they have compacted everything as much as conceivably and physically possible. The need for the entrance is here; they agree with the importance of the corner and are committed to working on strategies to further enhance detailing of this corner as they move into the next phase of design.

**Mr. Sottile** stated that a couple of the items that they have been discussing over the last weeks, since dialoging with staff and receiving the report, first of all the upper levels of the structure are fully active. A frame is concealed behind the façade at the first level, but they

believe that they can look at activating the storefront window and create a show window exhibit as was used on the Cay Building that is located on Whitaker and Bryan Streets. There are two bays at this façade that conceal services, but they become visually a part of the storefront system. This is something that they are committed to looking at here at the design detail level. Along the façade, as it steps down approximately five feet to the river, the upper most part right at the entrance of the service side of West River Street, they think there are also elements and details that they can bring to the valet parking entrance area in terms of framing and steel work.

**Mr. Sottile** said regarding the variances and the expressed levels of the second floor being 11'-6" rather than 12', they propose that with this context in mind specially with the industrial precedent adjacent to them to have uniform floor-to-floor heights on the upper levels above the foundations just as many of the buildings have on Factors Walk. He said that staff mentioned the roofline. He stated that they have a continuous roofline of 165, 182 feet and contextually they are adjacent to the power plant which has 248 foot continuous roofline. Mr. Sottile entertained questions from the Board.

**Ms. Weibe-Reed** stated thus far, she believes the petitioners are doing a great job.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS - WEST HOTEL**

**Ms. Danielle Meunier of the Historic Savannah Foundation (HSF)** stated that the magnitude and complexity of this project is obviously evident. Ms. Meunier thanked the petitioner and team for working to meet with the HSF. The petitioner and team had a one-on-meeting with Mr. Carey and spent approximately two hours going through this project. Additionally, Mr. Sottile and the team met with them at the MPC where they reviewed and discussed the model. Therefore, a considerable amount of time has been spent looking at and discussing the project. Ms. Meunier said at this point, they believe that they are almost there. They will just say that some of details need to be pinned down and refine some of the things that are a little more conceptual. She said in particular with the West Hotel. They agree with staff that the River Street façade need to have some exploration of adding architectural articulation. There will be some pedestrian access along this street. So, they believe that this could be broken up a little on this façade. Ms. Meunier stated that Mr. Sottile showed a photograph of the SCAD museum and some of the scoring and different articulation that was done there. They think this is an interesting concept, but they are also wondering if this would be evident at that scale that is on floors four through five. To a pedestrian, how will this read? Ms. Meunier said based on this, the HSF is interested in seeing some more exploration in this regard.

**Ms. Meunier** said in terms of the west façade, on the back face of the building, they think that this could be left sort of raw and very industrial. They do not know if it necessarily needs to be landscaped. They believe that it needs to just be an honest representation of what it is. These are the HSF's comments about the West Hotel. However, they really like the depths that are being created in the bays. They believe this is the key to such a big building of this scale; the inset of the windows and the articulation on the façade.

#### **BOARD DISCUSSION - WEST HOTEL**

**Dr. Williams** apologized that he would be leaving the meeting at 11:00 a.m. as he has a

class that meets at this time. Hopefully, he will be able to return at 1:00 p.m. and maybe Mr. Sottile and the team will be here at that time. He has written some notes that he will give to Chair Howington and as each building is presented, he will read the comments to be recorded in this proceeding.

**Dr. Williams** said his biggest concern is the corner. He loves the design. Depending on design details, the idea of the blank area is compelling and he supports the entrance on the corner. He believes that the day will come when they will have to imagine that this end of River Street as active as it is on east end of the Hyatt of having loading and valet parking.

**Mr. Gunther** said he understood that there has to be a turnaround area valet parking drop off.

**Dr. Williams** said on the northeast corner of the building perhaps the big "X" is rather unique on that corner.

**Dr. Henry** said he shares the concerns of the Board members that overall this is overwhelming.

**Mr. Merriman** said this is a good project and is well presented. He is in agreement with staff about rethinking the shipping containers.

**Ms. Weibe-Reed** said they talk a lot about the gateway and the buildings. She said visually to her, she does not see a gateway. Now, she realizes that the building on the left should have something similar in scale to the building on the right. Ms. Weibe-Reed said if the steps stepped down on the corner, she believes would read as a gateway.

**Mr. Sottile** stated that Mr. John Campo is present and has been working with this. Mr. Sottile said he wanted to reiterate that there is no other place for the entry than this corner. But their commitment is to work to further enhance that corner. He said in reference to the question of scale and the surface above, every surface has a different goal in the way it is read. He was thinking about how they pattern that surface and articulation is definitely on their minds. Mr. Sottile said that the Savannah Theatre on McDonough Street has a similar wall. However, this is a great opportunity and they are looking forward to doing this.

**Mr. Howington** stated that since there were no more comments from the Board regarding the West Building, staff will now make its presentation on the Power Plant.

**Ms. Harris** said she will now move into the rehabilitation of the existing Power Plant. This is the building that currently exists on the site. The west façade will be retained as the primary entrance as it is now. A large metal canopy will be added to the main doors and a ramp to provide addition access will be incorporated. A new door opening will be added north of the main entrance and new window openings added above. Ms. Harris explained that, as Mr. Sottile mentioned, a lot of good thoughts have gone into how to distinguish the new from the old. Therefore, whenever new entrances are proposed to be added, they will include a steel sleeve to distinguish the new from the old. Obviously where window openings exist, they will be rehabilitated to match the existing, but were there are new windows, they will be encased in the sleeve to distinguish them.

**Ms. Harris** stated that the south façade faces River Street. As she has stated, because it will serve as the back of the Power Plant, most of the chances at this point will be to make it usable and have it address River Street. She said there are existing window openings here. As you turn the corner, there is an arched window. In the first three bays, there are double window openings above and single window openings below. Double windows are being proposed to be added to bays above and the bays below. Additionally, on the later portion of the Transite addition [this is an asbestos cement material] it is being proposed to be re-clad in vertical channel glass with new entrances on the ground floor. The taller portion of the addition will be re-clad in corrugated fiber cement cladding with channel glass on only a portion of the building, at ground level and along the southeast corner of the building. She explained that normally they would review a rehabilitation proposal in one review and not in Parts I and II. The Board is not being asked to vote on the rehabilitation portion today, but just for the Board to provide general feedback and comments so the project can move forward simultaneously with the other projects. Consequently, things such as materials samples and the corrugated fiber cement cladding will be provided at a later date.

**Ms. Harris** explained that other than the cladding alterations mentioned for the south façade, the east façade - facing Montgomery Street - will receive new window and door openings and new canopies.

**Ms. Harris** stated that on the north façade, the existing Transite cladding will be replaced with corrugated fiber cement cladding on the upper floor, with channel glass below. A new steel canopy will be added and new window and door openings added at the ground level. Existing bricked-in openings will be reopened and new windows and doors installed. A projecting balcony will be added. Multiple roof additions are proposed. A sixth floor will provide additional rooms.

**Ms. Harris** explained that the Secretary of Interior's Standards apply to this project and that the project will seek state and federal rehabilitation tax credits. Therefore, it will be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for compliance.

**Ms. Harris** reported that for the rehabilitation of the Power Plant staff recommends the following comments for consideration:

1. Restudy the new fenestration on the River Street façade to be the minimum necessary. The petitioner should consider repeating the existing fenestration pattern.
2. Ensure the new windows are double or triple hung, awning, casement or Palladian.
3. Recess the sixth floor addition from MLK Jr. Blvd., as the front of the structure.
4. Consider other locations for the transformers which are less visible and more easily screened.

**Ms. Weibe-Reed** asked, regarding the window openings on River Street, she understood that it is the staff's desire to keep them in the existing pattern; they are a reflection of the function that it once held. Now, that the function is changing, how does staff take this into consideration?

**Ms. Harris** answered that staff is supportive of adding additional windows. She explained that her comment was to have the minimum that is necessary for the new use. Therefore, there are double windows in three bays and single windows below. Ms. Harris said staff is supportive of adding windows in the other bays where none exist. But, perhaps, keeping the single window pattern on that floor could be the solution.

**Mr. Howington** asked Ms. Harris if staff was recommending single windows all the way across the bottom.

**Ms. Harris** answered yes; this is what staff means by the minimum necessary and repeat the existing pattern. The double windows are recommended for the floor above to repeat the existing pattern.

#### **PETITIONER COMMENTS - POWER PLANT**

**Mr. Sottile** said that a lot of work has already gone into studying various scenarios for these facades, recognizing the sensitivity of the use and its relationship to, not just the Secretary of Interior's Standards, but also dialog with SHPO and the National Park Service. Mr. Campo has been working with this building. Mr. Sottile asked Mr. Campo to make remarks.

**Mr. Campo** came forward and stated that their company practices in more than 26 states. He wanted to compliment the staff. They see a lot of reports, but he is impressed by the report of this staff. The report is on-point, it is detailed and is not exaggerated. Mr. Campo explained that his role is twofold in this project. They are the architects for the west hotel and power plant; they are also the tax credit consultant on this project.

**Mr. Campo** explained that the goals on the tax credit side, is to create alignment. He said a question was raised about what point do they go to SHPO. He said the answer to this question is that it is concurrent. They have to create an alignment in order to get a approval for the tax credits at the state and federal level. The alignment includes a lot of stakeholders. These stakeholders are authorities having jurisdiction at the local level, state level, federal level, NFPA, IBC, the client, Mr. Sottile and Campo Technology.

**Mr. Campo** said another party he wants to talk about are the guests. This will be a luxury project. He stated now he wanted to get to the specifics about the windows on River Street. The guests will be paying premium dollars for a guest experience for a premium hotel. The first pass at the River Street façade separation in terms of historical timeframe, they are pushing this team to create large expanses of class and differentiate the timeframe from what is now versus the past. Mr. Campo said in his meetings at SHPO, the representatives were not happy and objected to the large expanses and did not buy into the concept that they are creating a lot of de-markation here, but crossed the line in their opinion. Therefore, revisions were made and this is a part of the dynamics of the teams that they are going back and forth concurrently.

**Mr. Campo** said if the Board looks at the plan, there is a guest room at each pair of windows. The guest experience is the primary reason that this is happening. He said it was mentioned that there is give and take. In order for this to work, all of the stakeholders have to have some give and take. Mr. Campo said he believes the consideration of the guest

experience is just as important as any other authorities having jurisdiction on the project. He explained that during his second meeting with SHPO they were supportive of what is presented now. There was a question asked if there could be paired windows at the top and one at the bottom. Mr. Campo said while this is a possibility, he thinks that it creates a detriment to the economics of the project. Therefore, there is some give and take that they are asking for here. They are presenting the two-over-two and going beyond where there was a solid mass or masonry, they are creating new fenestration. After today's meeting, they will take their notes and will go back to Atlanta as they have not had this presentation. Atlanta has had working progress, but he believes that in terms of alignment after this meeting with the Board's comments, knowing that there is still work to do on the detailing. Therefore, they will go back to SHPO and then to Washington, DC in advance of a formal Part II application to ensure that there are no deal breakers.

**Mr. Campo** said their goal is to create an approval process that minimizes conditions. An approval is not worthwhile if it is littered with conditions that they have to come many times. The process, therefore, is to work through it so by the time they get to the Part II application that it is approved at the Savannah level, state and federal level with minimal conditions.

**Mr. Howington** asked Mr. Campo if there was any discussion with SHPO regarding leaving the three single windows on the bottom of the first three bays as a historic element and that the remaining be double windows on the second floor. He realizes this is a minor detail.

**Mr. Campo** stated that what they are doing is they wanted to get feedback from today's meeting and make some adjustments, if necessary. He said yes, there was conversation about this. He pointed out also that a lengthy conversation was held about the sixth floor addition. There was no push back from SHPO on this. Mr. Campo said if they look at the model and imagine that you are walking down or up River Street, buildings A, B, and C will obstruct your view from the sixth floor additions, plus the setback is so far that they were in full agreement with it.

**Mr. Sottile** pointing to the model, said the main façade of the building is this and the addition is actually setback 29'-11" from the main façade of the building. They understand the site line question, but the addition is actually setback on all four sides. It is in the right location. The only place you will see the sixth floor is if you are at the very end of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

**Mr. Campo** said the response from SHPO pertaining to viewing platforms is that their bias was not positive, but on the riverside it was positive.

**Mr. Sottile** said that Mr. Campo mentioned the guest experience; certainly adding natural light into the interior is important. He said this is an outward benefit to the City because this is a façade that is being reactivated. This façade was not originally designed to be habitable. A number of options were absolutely a good compromise position to have it come from an historic form of rhythm. They think this is a good solution.

**Mr. Campo** stated, the same comment was made regarding ensuring that windows are double hung, triple hung, casement, or Palladian as required by the ordinance. He wanted to point out that they have almost all those types in this project and others.



**Mr. Sottile** said a comment was made about the transformers on River Street. He explained that the transformers are located on the right-of-way of River Street. They have been meeting extensively with Georgia Power. They have located them there as they must be accessible from a public right-of-way. There is no interior lane to the site. He said, pointing to an area, that they must be in this general area. This was studied in detail and it was determined that they made more sense to be where they are currently shown in alignment with the bays of the buildings. They have a primary entrance to the structure at the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and they have a second entrance at the end of Montgomery Street where there was once old loading docks. It needs to be embraced that this is a power plant. Therefore, the modern transformers speak to the initial use and language of the building. So, they have confidentially located them in alignment with the bays of the building above. This is actually how it used to be distributed out of the building when it was generated in the building. They are also in the widest portion of their sidewalk. This is another contextual decision to have the transformers there at the 20 foot wide sidewalk. They have the ability to do some landscaping and screening, but they really think that they are a benefit to the project and speak to the industrial character.

**Ms. Simpson** asked that the transformer plan be shown to the Board as it relates to the building.

**Mr. Sottile** pointed out that the master plan shows the primary entrance to the building and the transformers are located midway on the quieter part of the façade. The portion of the site that has the largest width of sidewalk area is where the transformers will be located. Therefore, they will have the ability to integrate them with landscaping to some extent. Nevertheless, they believe the transformers form and feature complement the industrial environment. He said this is really a municipal service to the project. They have some latitude about where the transformers can be located, but they must be located on this right-of-way. Therefore, architecturally, they are working with them to locate the transformers in the place that they think will make the most sense. This is an ongoing dialog, but they are confident that this location works.

**Mr. Gunther** asked about the modifications to the openings on the river side.

**Mr. Sottile** explained that he would talk about the concept elevation. He stated that he could assure the Board that anytime this was worked on, it was done with the care that they all are taking with it now. He said holes were previously punched into it. At one time a building was built in front of it where they shaved off a lot of the details. The additions have come down, but the scars remain on the building. They are looking to restore the original period for each component of the what remains on site. Therefore, above the belt course of the foundation, they have clear instructions of how to do that. The large windows that were compromised, where they have evidence of the ones that were not original they can restore them accordingly. Below the line they also have evidence that there were segmented arches below every bay. This will provide them with clues on how to reopen the façade to the river. As the building changes use to be more active, it allows them to have a greater rhythm of retail, gallery, restaurant and main access. Actually, there is a central gable that provides the main entry into the Atrium along the river as well. Therefore, their mission is to restore each of the openings. A lot of work has to happen on that ground level to do it, but they have the clues on how to do it. He explained that they

are also adding canopies along the façade to protect the openings and provide shade.

**Mr. Howington** asked if it would be a continuous canopy.

**Mr. Sottile** answered that it would be a continuous canopy and will be raised slightly at the main bay and then it returns again; its detailed language corresponds and there will be a canopy that continues over the modern addition. The detailing of the canopy would alter slightly as it moves across the building. Therefore, it is a little more streamlined as it relates to the 1940s and 1950s additions. This will be more detailed at a future meeting. But what they see now is a canopy that is more inspired by the structural steel language of the earlier parts of the buildings rendered in a contemporary way. This is one of the ways that the building goes from being industrial to encouraging and creating an active pedestrian environment on the water.

**Mr. Gunther** asked about the new openings in the corrugated panels of the 1940s and 1950s additions.

**Mr. Sottile** explained that the corrugated panels have amazing collective bays of glass. They have designed interior spaces to respond to these. They want to preserve the strong reading and where additional glass has to be added, they are doing so in concert with the language of what is here. He explained that one example is the fifth floor. They can see that a stack of glass is here now; and they are adding a component above that as there are no windows on the fifth level, but they are doing so in concert with the geometry of the window bank below, but the glass and the system will be rendered slightly different. However, they will be able to differentiate the old from the new. Mr. Sottile said that the integrity of the building, as a whole, stays together. They are not showing windows randomly on the building, they are done with a great deal of intent. This will be shown in the detailing portion.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

#### **BOARD DISCUSSION**

**Ms. Simpson** stated that she likes the concept study. She said in order to remain true to the building she believes that minimum impact needs to be done.

**Mr. Howington** read into the records that Dr. Williams supports the staff's recommendations. He then asked the staff to make their presentation on the East Hotel.

#### **EAST HOTEL**

**Ms. Harris** explained that the East Hotel is comprised of three architecturally distinct sections, which make up one building. They are broken down into A, B, and C for design review. She said that the building is located within two sections of the Historic Height Map. Building C is in the section which allows for three stories or 45 feet above Bay Street, which is effectively six stories or 79 feet. The proposed building is six stories tall, 68-75 feet. The proposed height is visually compatible. Buildings B and A are in the section which allows for one story above Bay Street, which is effectively four stories.

Building B is four stories and A is three stories tall with a partial fourth story and a trellis above. The height is visually compatible. Staff feels that the openings are compatible.

**Ms. Harris** reported that staff recommends to continue Part I: Height and Mass for the East Hotel to address the following:

1. Restudy the four story glass connector between Building B and C to allow pedestrian access from River Street to the River Walk.
2. Restudy the south, River Street elevation, to have a more prominent entrance and increased fenestration on Building C.
3. Increase the height of the second story to 12 feet to meet the standard.
4. Restudy the bay widths on the south and west elevations of Building C to meet the 20 foot maximum bay width.
5. Restudy the north, River Walk façade of Building A to add an additional entrance to meet the entrance standard.

**Dr. Henry** stated that the Board was told earlier that there are four views of the river and four points of access to the river. He said there are four views, but he does not see the four points of access.

**Ms. Harris** used the model to show the points of access. She explained that one point is from MLK to the river, the second access is Montgomery Street as it comes to the river; third is the Jefferson connector and fourth point of access is a walkway.

#### **PETITIONER COMMENTS**

**Mr. Sottile** said they worked carefully to articulate the building. As the Board looks at the footprint of the structure, it had a memory. One component was the former "Generator #8." He said, in the nature of the different types of connectors, he wanted to point out what they call Building A is on the footprint of a former substation. As they went back to the plan, knowing that this was a part of the elevation, but now they were looking more specifically at the actual disposition of those forms and what it means today for them as an urban design strategy. Mr. Sottile said he mentioned it before, but he wanted to revisit the massing of the structure. There are two natures here. They talked about the four passages to the river. The passages are the MLK passage, Montgomery Street passage, and the Jefferson Street passage. They set the easternmost edge of the East Hotel back 20 feet from the eastern property line so that they would have a full passage at the eastern edge of the property as well. Therefore, there are four passages facing the river and they align with the city plan. The space that they have created between A and B is a passage to the river. It is an urban throughway.

**Mr. Sottile** pointed out that the other connection is on B and C and they came together. But they detached them and called that a gasket. This is one building. They are treating it as large scale development. A question was raised about primary entrances. The solids and voids language for each of these buildings have strong lines and a level of consistency. Many of the openings have the ability to serve as either a window or a door.

**Mr. Sottile** said the third comment related to the second story height. He said the second floor is the same height as the upper architecture. They recognize that this is a variation from the standards, but this is more of what they see on the Broughton Street context

where they have a major first level, then a second level and then the levels get smaller. On Factors Walk and in the industrial context, the main level is the first level and then the upper levels have a consistent height.

**Mr. Sottile** stated that the fourth item dealt with the height of the trellis on the easternmost mass. He said for clarification this is identified in the elevation but not identified in the sections. The trellis will conform to the ordinance. The bay width was brought up. Mr. Sottile thanked the staff for measuring the bays to see how they relate to the ordinance.

**Mr. Sottile** said a question was raised about the entrances along the river. They agree with staff's comments and they can accommodate this.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Ms. Danielle Meunier of the Historic Savannah Foundation (HSF)** said they appreciate the design and inspiration of how the buildings are evolving. They do not have any concerns with the buildings themselves, but they do have some questions about the massing between A, B, and C. She said that some of the concerns could be discussed when the design detail portion is reviewed. However, they do share staff's concern about the fourth story connection between B and C.

**Mr. Bob Jepson** stated that he is a citizen of Savannah. He has lived here for 25 years. Mr. Jepson encouraged the Board to accept this project.

**Mr. Stratton Leopold** said he, too, is a citizen of Savannah. He thinks back to River Street during the time when the Port Royal café was establishment open. However, the evolution of River Street has been phenomenal. He encouraged everyone to support this project.

**Mr. Ramsey Khalidi** stated that he has watched the project evolve. The west end of this part of the river has been ignored too long. When you take on a project such as this, it will tell the story. He believes Mr. Kessler has a good idea that this is going to be the crossroads of the past and into the future. When people visit Savannah, they will see a connection in a lot of ways. Mr. Kessler is an involved person and works with everybody.

**Mr. Howington** invited Mr. Sottile to comment on the public comments, if he so desired.

**Mr. Sottile** did not wish to comment.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION**

**Dr. Henry** asked staff to explain how Mr. Sottile arrived at 36% clear fenestration for the ground floor.

**Ms. Harris** explained that it was the difference in the way it was calculated. Her calculation was based on one building, but Mr. Sottile applied it to each of the three buildings.

**Mr. Howington** said it was reported as one building. He believes it is a valid argument.

**Mr. Gunther** stated that he believes the gasket is a nice way to break up the mass between the two buildings.

**Mr. Howington** concurred with Mr. Gunther. But, he wishes the two corners were a little further away.

**Mr. Howington** read into the records Dr. Williams comments regarding this building. Dr. Williams comments were: he is supportive of staff's recommendations one and five. There should be flexibility for Building C's design, allowing for reference to its predecessor. However, the gap between the Power Plant and Building "C" should be wider to relate more to an urban plan. The finishes proposed for Building "A," with the use of salvaged elements, he is concerned about creating a false sense of history. However, he knows that this is a Part II concern. In the 18th century, this part of the waterfront did not have warehouses.

**Mr. Howington** stated that his thoughts on this are that it doesn't create a false sense of history because the salvaged materials are mixed with modern materials and he does not know if this was clearly expressed to Dr. Williams before he left.

**The Board broke for lunch at 12:25 p.m.**

**Mr. Howington reconvened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.**

#### **ANCILLARY STRUCTURES**

**Ms. Harris** reported that along the River Walk, several ancillary structures are proposed including three pavilions, three adapted shipping containers serving as "micro retail installations," a trellis, and a lighting element. While these structures may be approvable in one review, the applicant is requesting Part I: Height and Mass only.

**Ms. Harris** stated that the proposed height of the pavilions are one story. Pavilion 1 is a total of 22 feet high. Pavilions 2 and 3 are 18 feet tall. As accessory structures within the River Walk, staff recommends that the overall height be reduced.

**Ms. Harris** stated that three adapted shipping containers are proposed on the site. Minimal information was provide other than basic dimensions that they are nine feet tall, 16 feet wide and 9 feet deep. The petitioner has stated that these reference the City's port roots. However, staff feels that not enough information was provided to complete a full assessment of visual compatibility standards, however, as general feedback, staff does not feel that the shipping containers are visually compatible. While certainly a novel concept, they do not relate architecturally to the historic context.

**Ms. Harris** said that the proposed trellis is 14 feet tall. Staff feels, however, that given the public nature of the trellis, a variance from this standard would be appropriate.

**Ms. Harris** stated that two "electric moons" or light fixtures are proposed at the River Walk on either side of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The proposed lights resemble historic lighting for the City, although no original fixtures exist in Savannah. The proposed design features a 95 foot tall pole embedded in a masonry seating area. The proposed light

fixtures are not replicas of the historic, but adaptations. Staff feels 95 feet tall, which is as tall as the tallest portion of the power plant (besides the smoke stacks), is too tall and recommends that the height be reduced substantially.

**Ms. Harris** reported that for the ancillary structures staff recommends to continue Part 1: Height and Mass for the pavilions, shipping containers, trellis and light fixtures to address the following:

1. Reduce the overall height of the pavilions.
2. Add additional voids in the pavilions.
3. Restudy the inclusion of the adapted shipping containers.
4. Reduce the height of the light fixtures substantially.

### **PETITIONER COMMENTS**

**Mr. Sottile** said he would put into context the series of items that are being considered now. They have looked at the majority of the site and recognize the role of the Power Plant as the centerpiece of the site. The West Hotel acts as an industrial cousin 100 years later and the East Hotel is articulated to scale. This brings them to the accessory structures. The idea is that all of them, in a collaborative, bring the scale of the architecture to the scale of the pedestrian on the waterfront. The design master plan on the site is 65,000 square feet of open space. These elements help them to activate that space in a more complete way.

**Mr. Sottile** said that Pavilions 2 and 3 are centered on the Power Plant and share that similar design language. Pavilion 1 is related to the façade of the West Hotel and the trellis helps to filter the lowest part. The electric moon helps mark the terminus of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and the small retail shop helps to activate and liven the space in the front of the two easternmost facets of the East Hotel. He said conceptually this is the role of each of these. Mr. Sottile asked the Board to consider this.

**Mr. Sottile** said in the case of the first pavilion, staff noted that this one has a slightly more expressive form. They feel, however, that this is more appropriate in the context of the hotel and the structure beyond it. They have a parapet on the two flanking wings and a slightly raised section in the middle. They felt it was important to keep them at 22 feet wide. The internal bays are intended to have thick masonry expression with their piers and then have the material where necessary for the infill. However, they will look at this more in detail at their second review.

**Mr. Sottile** said in the case of the two pavilions that flank the main entry in this elevation as it relates to Pavilion 2 and 3 how, they are centered over the main gable of the primary entrance to the river from the Power Plant at the end of the turbine deck. Their height is calibrated and does not compete with the foundation level of the structure. They kept in mind the idea of keeping vertical proportions between the bays. They feel they have the right scale. Mr. Sottile said they studied this and reviewed the staff's comments. In looking at this, they believe that they could reduce the height of Pavilions 2 and 3. They are open to doing so as they progress to the design details.

**Mr. Sottile** said the trellis is inspired by the industrial character of the Power Plant and the structural character. The height is 14 feet and they recognize that this is a variation

from the ordinance of 11 feet. In this case, the element is in front of the addition, one of older additions of the Power Plant. He said that with regard to the retail kiosks, the concept here - and as they talked about the evolutionary character of this site, he thinks the accessory structures are really one of their opportunities of the 21st century to look bolder and the time to be more playful. They felt that the easternmost part of the site is the opportunity to play off the contemporary theme of what to do with the remnants of the industry is something to bring to Savannah in this area. He said there is room for a lot of things to happen. On the River Walk as the ships come in, they see the containers. However, the reality is a lot of them are not going anywhere. They want to bring them into the area on the River Walk in a more contemporary and playful way. At this time, they are only proposing the height and mass. They are proposing to have three of these for the project.

**Mr. Sottile** said the electric moons are 95 feet tall. They have already talked about the context that they are borne from and their industrial path. In fact two historic stacks were located on this site in the same location at the end of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. They felt that the combination would allow them to get a new layer inspired by both in a contemporary industrial language. There is science and thought behind the height of the electric moons. They are simple elements. They will be articulated in a brick foundation. This will be a landmark in a way as they will bring Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to the river and bringing the River Walk here.

**Mr. Sottile** said one of the things that they are reminded of are the formal layers and complexity of the environment and how it connects to the buildings and the intended elements of the environment. A lot of the buildings have lost their accessories. The loss of the smoke stacks, the loss of the trusses and trellises along with other things that made the environment so pleasing. The height of the electric moons as shown on the model speak to the character of the smoke stack that rises about 170 feet over the Power Plant. They break the roofline of the West Hotel. If they were lower, they really would not serve that purpose of creating a proper gateway space.

**Dr. Williams** said that he made a note about the flagpoles in San Marcos earlier, as the Chair mentioned them, this is what he thought of. He wonders why not flagpoles? Why moon towers? He said there is a bump-out on the River Walk, but it could make an even grander gesture of the view up from River Street if they were pulled out onto that platform and maybe anchored at the corner. Is this something you considered?

**Mr. Sottile** answered that they are located on Power Plant parcel. They are positioned in the River Walk relative to the plan as being located onto the property. They are entirely visible from that sweep because of the bend and the fold in the river. The inspiration for the electric moons actually goes back to Savannah's history. They believe this is an opportunity for them to tell the story.

**Mr. Merriman** asked Mr. Sottile if the proper name for these lights are electric moons or moon towers?

**Mr. Sottile** answered that they are called electric moons.

**Mr. Howington** asked, how close are the lights to the west building? He sees each bay

almost lit up as a destination to the west. He loves the idea of the towers, but is afraid that it might take away from that corner with them competing with the light in each bay.

**Mr. Sottile** answered that the lights create a soft level of illumination. The lights have the ability to be calibrated. This will be soft lighting in this space.

**Dr. Williams** stated that his fear is the lights will be like those super tall lights that are on highways. How will they flatten out? He said that this could be a Part II comment, but he asked Mr. Sottile that when he returns to please provide information on the lights. How will they be angled?

**Mr. Sottile** said they would be happy to provide the light information to the Board.

**Ms. Weibe-Reed** said she was looking at a photograph of the River Street Marketplace on the east end. She is aware that staff has a concern about the height of the pavilion. Ms. Reed asked Mr. Sottile if he studied this pavilion in regards to portion of height for his pavilions.

**Mr. Sottile** answered no. They focused on the local context of the Power Plant.

**Mr. Gunther** asked Mr. Sottile to discuss staff's recommendation about adding additional voids to the pavilions and their concerns about the enclosures.

**Mr. Sottile** answered that, as he has mentioned, the pavilions have a structural rhythm to them that is expressed as heavy masonry piers and the inner service of that where it is necessary for the pavilions to agree to have enclosures for the kitchen. They are shown as timber gates so that they do not read as a primary surface. The depth of the piers capture most of the view. The pavilion operates first as a structure.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Mr. Khalidi** said he would address a few points and then their designer would probably address the shipping containers. He said pertaining to the pavilion sheds, Mr. Lee Meyer designed them and they made them out of reclaimed materials. They were inspired by a 1895 postcard.

**Mr. Howington** asked him if he was talking about the pavilions on the east end.

**Mr. Khalidi** answered yes.

**Mr. Dartar** came forward and addressed the shipping containers. He explained that the containers are like big boxes. They are working on other projects in Savannah. Presently, he is working on a project on Habersham Street. The containers will be good for this project.

**Ms. Danielle Meunier of the Historic Savannah Foundation (HSF)** said they concur that the pavilion appears to have a more traditional refined appearance. They, too, would like to see a little more industrial nature relating to the other buildings. Some of the other elements such as the electric moons, they thought it would be beneficial to have educational panels on the River Walk that explains some of the new concepts. Ms.



Meunier said documenting the oil building that was talked about earlier would give the opportunity to talk about what was there.

**BOARD DISCUSSION:**

**Mr. Howington** said although they have gone through each building individually, he now wants to wrap up the Board's discussion by going through the staff's report and summarize their understandings for all the buildings before the Board take action.

**Demolition of non-contributing oil building:**

**Mr. Howington** said that staff recommends that this building be demolished. He said that the Board understood the nature of this building and grants approval for it to be demolished.

**West Hotel/Parking Garage:**

**Mr. Howington** said that staff recommended continuing Part I Height and Mass in order for the petitioner to: 1. Restudy the west façade to incorporate additional articulation, perhaps through green screening, recesses or louvered panels. (After the Board heard the presentation, they felt that they would leave it as presented.)

2. Restudy the south, River Street façade to include additional voids and/or architectural articulation; provide an additional entrance or otherwise address the street, particularly near the intersection of MLK Jr. Blvd; meet the distance between windows standard; meet the standard for architecturally distinct sections that are taller than wide; and meet the standard for 35% windows and doors on the ground floor. (The Board was generally in consensus with that. However, they talked about the MLK Jr. Blvd entrance into the garage and also meeting the 35% windows and doors standard on the ground floor. He believes that Mr. Sottile said that they will look into this some more for interaction on the ground floor on the River Street façade.)

**Mr. Merriman** asked if the petitioner cannot meet the standard, will he need to seek a variance?

**Mr. Howington** answered that the petitioner would need to seek a variance.

3. Restudy the corner, at the intersection of MLK and River Street to better address both streets.

**Mr. Howington** said he believes that Mr. Sottile said that they will restudy the MLK Jr. Blvd entrance to the garage to possibly give a more pronounced entrance. They will look at this in Design Details.

4. Ensure that all windows facing a street are double or triple hung, awning, casement, or Palladian. Staff reported that conceptually, they are supportive of a variance for the second story which is 11'6, but 12' is required. However, staff feels that the other concerns should be resolved before a formal variance analysis and recommendation be forward to ZBA as other variances may be required.

**Mr. Howington** said the petitioner stated that they may not be able to meet this. They will work to ensure that they perfect the windows for the building (such as what was used on the Cay Building). They will seek a variance from ZBA for the second story.

**Mr. Howington** asked Mr. Sottile, as he believes he mentioned to the staff, that he would like to either move forward with the entire project or continuation of the entire project. He asked Mr. Sottile to give the Board clarification on this. Does he want the Board to take action on the individual buildings or on the project as a whole?

**Mr. Sottile** said he would like for the Board to take action on the project as a whole.

**Rehabilitation of the Power Plant:**

**Mr. Howington** stated that staff recommended the following for consideration: 1. Restudy the new fenestration on the River Street façade to be the minimum necessary. The petitioner should consider repeating the existing fenestration pattern.

**Mr. Howington** said the Board looked at the fenestration on the River Street façade and there was discussion that the project was finally reviewed by the Staff Historic Preservation Office. Mr. Howington said generally the Board liked the conceptual drawings better than the two-over-two consistently throughout the façade. It was discussed how the tax credits are related to this project as a whole. He believes they need some leeway on how this will be done and they could continue this in the design details.

2. Ensure the new windows are double or triple hung, awning, casement or Palladian.

**Mr. Howington** said this has already been discussed.

3. Recess the sixth floor addition from MLK Jr. Blvd., as the front of the structure.

**Mr. Howington** said Mr. Sottile said the addition is on the back side of the sixth floor. It was determined that the most visible point is from the MLK ramp at the river. It is setback from River Street, from Montgomery Street side, and the left side portion of MLK as well.

4. Consider other locations for the transformers which are less visible and more easily screened.

**Mr. Howington** said in their discussions, it was determined that this is one of the only places that the transformers could go. He said that Mr. Sottile reiterated that this being a power plant this is the only part of the architecture that they will see and will be celebrated as such. It will line up with the bays on the rear façade.

**East Hotel:**

**Mr. Howington** stated that staff recommends to continue Part I: Height and Mass for the East Hotel in order to address the following:

1. Restudy the four story glass connector between Building B and C to allow pedestrian access from River Street to the River Walk.

**Mr. Howington** said during the discussion Dr. Henry mentioned that as presented in earlier meetings that four access points to the river. During the discussion and presentations, the reason the buildings have become compressed is because the access to the river as moved to the east which would still make the access points between Buildings A and B, and Buildings B and C act like a gasket with a glass connector and then an access point to the river between the Power Plant and Building C. They do not provide pedestrian access to the river there as it has been shifted east.

**Dr. Williams** asked if there was any discussion about the gap that theoretically aligns with Montgomery Street between Building C and the Power Plant.

**Mr. Howington** answered no. Discussion was held about the gap between Buildings C and B being compressed. Some of the Board members felt this was the only pertinent way. They can have Mr. Sottile come now and reiterate this as it is a specific question between the Power Plant and Building C.

**Dr. Williams** said aside from MLK, this will be the most critical access point to the river. It is more important than the two access points on the east end because it terminates the flow off of Montgomery Street.

**Mr. Howington** asked Mr. Sottile what is the width here.

**Mr. Sottile** answered that it is more than 20 feet.

**Dr. Williams** asked in the scale of the project, how big is the MLK opening by comparison. Is it 100 feet?

**Mr. Sottile** answered that right off hand he was unsure, but that the narrowest point is in the neighborhood of about 60 feet.

**Dr. Williams** stated that he was not saying that it needs to be 60 feet, but that it needs to be wider here. For example, if B and C could slide over a little. There is a narrow staircase that goes up to Williamson Street and a grander space coming off of Montgomery Street. He said that Mr. Sottile used the phrase "calibrated gaps to the driven plan." He said there should be a way to recalibrate the access points to the river.

**Mr. Howington** said he respects the fact that it is on the old footprint. He also notes that the passages to the River Street buildings as well and realizes that they are not as tall, but coming from Bay Street down to the river some of the passages are narrow. He would like to see this wider as well.

**Mr. Sottile** said he understood the comment, but respectfully disagrees as they believe that they have located the buildings in the appropriate sequence.

2. Restudy the south, River Street elevation, to have a more prominent entrance and increased fenestration on Building C.

**Mr. Howington** said there was a discussion on the amount of openings. This was presented as one continuous building and the amount of openings across the three masses meet the standards.

**Mr. Gunther** said they discussed the possibility of another entry point.

3. Increase the height of the second story to 12 feet to meet the standard.

**Mr. Howington** said as described, the floors above the first floors on River Street are consistently the same. Mr. Sottile wants to keep it as 10 feet; and the staff is generally supportive of this.

4. Restudy the bay widths on the south and west elevations of Building C to meet the 20 foot maximum bay width.

**Mr. Howington** stated that he believes that Mr. Sottile wants to leave this as is and staff is generally in support of this.

5. Restudy the north, River Walk façade of Building A to add an additional entrance to meet the entrance standard.

**Mr. Howington** said that Mr. Sottile is in agreement with this.

**Dr. Williams** asked if there was a discussion on Building A regarding using recyclable materials, curbstones and block masonry.

**Mr. Howington** answered that a discussion was held regarding this. A series of items and presentations were presented that those designs are going to be used in context with contemporary materials to help avoid the idea of a false sense of history.

**Mr. Howington** asked Mr. Sottile to show the Board the exact detail.

**Mr. Sottile** answered that is the detail. They brought this up in their conversation to show the Board where they were going with this. He looks forward to presenting this to the Board in Part II.

#### **Ancillary Structures:**

**Mr. Howington** explained that the ancillary structures are proposed to include pavilions, adapted shipping containers to serve as "micro retail installations," a trellis, and a lighting element.

**Mr. Howington** said staff recommends to continue Part I: Height and Mass for the pavilions, shipping containers, trellis and light fixtures to address the following:

1. Reduce the overall height of the pavilions.

**Ms. Weibe-Reed** stated that she is concern about the industrial detailing for the pavilions.

**Mr. Howington** said a part of the industrial detailing will be included in Part II – Design Details.

2. Add additional voids in the pavilions.

**Mr. Merriman** stated that he is in favor of adding additional voids in the pavilions.

3. Restudy the inclusion of the adapted shipping containers.

**Dr. Williams** asked if this is precisely where the shipping containers will be located.

**Mr. Sottile** said the containers are indicated in the general building plan. They are proposed at these locations. They will occupy the plaza area in front of the East Hotel.

**Ms. McClain** asked Mr. Sottile if they would consider more pavilions as opposed to the containers. Is the thought here to provide places for small businesses like at the opposite end of River Street?

**Mr. Sottile** said these provide an opportunity for small galleried space.

**Ms. McClain** stated that she does not see these on River Street. They appear to be out of place.

**Ms. Sheer** said she loves the idea of having a space for vendors, street performers and so forth, if it

continues River Street, but the containers are such a distraction. It really breaks up the play here. There needs to be some elegance to it.

**Dr. Henry** was unsure about the containers. They may need to be looked at this a little more.

**Mr. Merriman** agreed with what was said about the containers. They are distracting.

**Ms. Weibe-Reed** said she likes the containers.

**Mr. Howington** said he understood the continuity that the river lends to the containers. However, he appreciates the thought of them and the opportunity to provide some vendor opportunities on a real human scale with this particular item.

**Ms. Scheer** said maybe they will leave the containers to be covered in the Design Details and maybe by then the Board would have changed their minds about the containers.

**Ms. Weibe-Reed** said if the containers are maintained properly and not just left to sit out. They could be painted in bright colors. She believes that the containers are definitely a contrast here.

**Mr. Howington** said he could also see the containers being stacked or becoming more central in some ways as the scale is so small. It would be better if they were playful, stacked and used in a different way such as a sculpture on that end with the low portion being retail.

**Mr. Gunther** said stacks of containers or bails of cotton would be perfect in context in this environment. This would create creativity and serve as temporary/permanent structures. Fifty years from now shipping would be different. He believes this a wonderful idea.

**Dr. Williams** stated that he would rather see another location for the containers. Building C is a corrugated exterior modern aspect of these spaces. He asked Mr. Sottile if he would consider placing the containers near Pavilion One. This appears to be a great location for them near Building C.

**Mr. Sottile** said where they are placed has to do with calibration. It has to do with contrast and what they relate to.

**Ms. Scheer** stated that her concern is if they are done in an artistical way, she would be fine with that; as long as they do not look like vending machines or something that is left over from a construction zone, is her concern.

**Ms. Caldwell** said she likes them. They are spaced out so that it does not appear that all the people will be in one little area. This would justify the crowd and for some reason it all would point to the project.

**Mr. Sottile** thanked the Board for their comments, he said, but today they are generally asking approval for Part I Height and Mass.

4. Reduce the height of the light fixtures substantially.

**Dr. Henry** said staff stated that the 95 feet tall light fixtures are too tall.

**Dr. Williams** said he is not sure whether the project needs these tall light fixtures, especially on the entrance where they are proposed to be located. He would like to see this restudied.

**Mr. Howington** said they have reviewed all the buildings and looked at the project as a whole. He believes that in order to make the motion, they should make the motion regarding each building. He

said that Mr. Sottile said he wanted to call for a vote on the entire project. Mr. Howington said that the Board would do the variances separately.

**Mr. Gunther and Dr. Williams** acknowledged that Mr. Sottile is an employee of SCAD just as they are. But what is being done today is not in conflict.

**Mr. Howington** said the two Board members (Dr. Williams and Mr. Gunther) are SCAD employees, but Mr. Sottile is not representing SCAD. He is representing Sottile & Sottile.

**Board Decision:**

**Mr. Howington** stated that before the vote is made, he would recap what he believes is the Board's decision.

**All Staff Recommendation:**

**I.** Demolition of non-contributing building

**Action:** Approved the demolition of the non-contributing building.

**II.** The West Hotel/Parking Garage Height and Mass – items number 1, 2 and 4 are no longer relevant. Mr. Howington said that with item 3, they would want to state in the motion to restudy the corner at the intersection of MLK and River Street to better address both streets.

**Action:** The Board approved the West Hotel/Parking Garage Part I Height and Mass with the following condition: Restudy the corner, at the intersection of MLK and River Street to better address both streets.

**III. Rehabilitation of the Power Plant**

**Mr. Howington** explained that they understand that the Power Plant is just on here for discussion as they do not have to take action on this today. However, he believes that generally the motion could read that they all favor the rehabilitation of the Power Plant with the understanding that flexibility depends on the comments of the Department of Interior and SHPO.

**Dr. Williams** said the motion could be stated that the Board is in favor of the staff's recommendations.

**Mr. Howington** said the motion could say that the Board is in favor of the staff's recommendation with the exception of item 1 that they are still looking at restudying the new fenestration on the River Street façade to be the minimum necessary. Therefore, 2, 3, and 4 are no longer relevant.

**Action:** Continue the rehabilitation of the Power Plant to provide the following: Restudy the new fenestration on the River Street façade to be the minimum necessary.

**IV. East Hotel:**

**Mr. Howington** said that Mr. Sottile agreed to look at items 2 and 5. Numbers 3 and 4 are no longer relevant because the staff is in favor of what is presented.

**Action:** The Board approved the East Hotel Part I Height and Mass with the following condition: Restudy the south, River Street elevation, to have a more prominent entrance and increased fenestration on Building C. Restudy the north, River Walk façade of Building A to add an additional entrance to meet the entrance standard.

#### **V. The Ancillary Structures**

**Action:** Restudy the character of the pavilions.

#### **Variances**

The Board supports the variances from the following standards:

##### **West Hotel/Park Deck:**

- 1. The exterior expression of the height of the second story shall not be less than 12 feet.*
- 2. The distance between the windows shall be not less than for adjacent historic building, nor more than two times the width of the windows. Paired or grouped windows are permitted, provided the individual sashes have a vertical to horizontal ratio of not less than 5:3.*
- 3. Structured parking within the first story of a building shall be setback a minimum of 30 feet from property lines along all public rights-of-way (not including lanes).*
- 4. Maximum frontage of 120 linear feet of continuous height shall be permitted before a minimum one-half story variation is required. This variation shall be expressed in the roofline [see Definitions (a)].*
- 5. The frontage of buildings shall be divided into architecturally distinct sections no more than 60 feet in width with each section taller than it is wide.*
- 6. Exterior building walls shall use window groupings (including curtain walls), columns, and/or pilasters to create multiple bays not less than 15 feet nor more than 20 feet in width.*
- 7. A minimum of one primary entrance shall be provided for every 60 feet of street frontage, excluding lanes. Intervals between entrances shall not be less than 15 feet nor exceed 90 feet.*
- 8. Buildings greater than 60 feet in width shall have an entrance located on the east-west street regardless of the location of any other entrances. See Section (n) (5) Entrances, for location of building entrances on Trust Lots and Tithing Lots.*
- 9. Facades fronting streets shall incorporate windows and doors over the following minimum percentage of surface area: Ground level all other uses - 35 percent*

##### **Rehabilitation of the Power Plant**

- 10. Electrical vaults, meter boxes, and communication devices shall be located on secondary and rear facades and shall be minimally visible from view.*

##### **East Hotel**

- 11. The exterior expression of the height of the second story shall be not less*

*than 12 feet.*

12. *Exterior building walls shall use window groupings (including curtain walls), columns, and/or pilasters to create multiple bays not less than 15 feet nor more than 20 feet in width.*

**Ancillary Structures:12.**

13. *Gable roof pitches shall be between 4:12 and 8:12.*
14. *The height of any fence, trellis, or wall shall not exceed 11 feet or the maximum permitted in Section 8-3051.*

**Board Action:**

The Savannah Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve the petition for:

1. Demolition of the non-contributing oil building;
2. Part 1 Height and Mass for the West Hotel/Parking Deck with the following conditions to be submitted with Part 2 Design Details:
  - a. Restudy the corner, at the intersection of MLK and River Street to better address both streets.
3. Continue the rehabilitation of the Power Plant and address the following:
  - a. Restudy the new fenestration on the River Street façade to be the minimum necessary.
4. Part 1 Height and Mass for the East Hotel with the following conditions to be submitted with Part 2 Design Details: - PASS
  - a. Restudy the south, River Street elevation, to have a more prominent entrance
  - b. Restudy the north, River Walk façade of Building A to add an additional entrance to meet the entrance standard.
5. Part 1 Height and Mass for the Ancillary Structures:
  - a. Restudy the character of the pavilions.

Because the project is otherwise visually compatible and meets the design standards.

The Savannah Historic District Board of Review



does hereby recommend approval to the Zoning Board of Appeals from the variances listed above because the project meets the variance criteria.

**Vote Results**

Motion: Justin Gunther

Second: Marjorie W Reed

Debra Caldwell - Aye

Justin Gunther - Aye

Nicholas Henry - Aye

Keith Howington - Abstain

Zena McClain, Esq. - Aye

Stephen Glenn Merriman, Jr. - Aye

Marjorie W Reed - Aye

Tess Scheer - Aye

Ebony Simpson - Aye

Robin Williams - Aye

**IX. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION**

**X. APPROVED STAFF REVIEWS**

**XI. WORK PERFORMED WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

**XII. REPORT ON ITEMS DEFERRED TO STAFF**

**XIII. NOTICES, PROCLAMATIONS, and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**XIV. OTHER BUSINESS**

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

2. [Adjourned](#)

There being no further business to come before the Board for the Special Called Meeting, Chair Howington adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris  
Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation

EIH:mem

