



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

BUILDING | HISTORIC PRESERVATION | PLANNING & ZONING

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD STAFF REPORT

The Link

Meeting	File No.	Application Type
May 19, 2025	2024-228-SPR-LV3	Architectural Style
Property Owner		Agent
Downtown Sixth Avenue, LLC		Bonnie Miskel Esq. and Christina Bilenki Esq. of Miskel Backman, LLP

Request

Provide a recommendation to the City Commission regarding the implementation of the Masonry Modern architectural style within the Central Business District (CBD), pursuant to **LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles**.

Project Information

Location: 202 NE 6th Avenue

PCN: 12-43-46-16-01-106-0190

Property Size: 0.36 acres (15,862 sf)

Land Use Designation: Commercial Core (CC)

Zoning District: CBD – Central Core
Sub-district

Adjacent Zoning:

- North, South, East, West: CBD

Existing Use: Commercial/Retail (Cigar Shop)

Proposed Use: Multi-family Residential

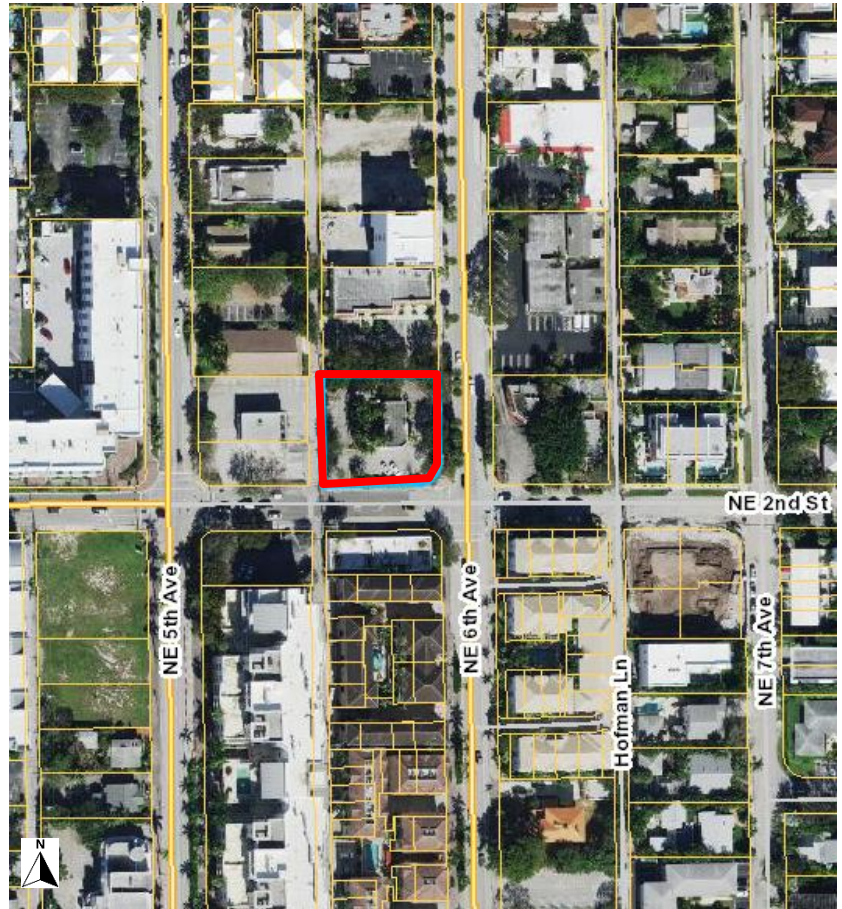
Floor Area Ratio:

- Existing: 0.07
- Proposed: 2.92
- Maximum Allowed: 3.0

Density:

- Existing: 30 du/ac (10 units)
- Proposed: 30 du/ac (10 units)
- Maximum Allowed: 30 du/ac

For Reference: LDR Section 4.4.13, CBD





Background

The subject property, located at 202 NE 6th Avenue, occupies a 0.36-acre parcel (approximately 15,862 square feet) at the northeast corner of NE 2nd Street and NE 6th Avenue, within the Central Core Sub-district of Delray Beach's Central Business District (CBD). The site is within a highly visible urban corridor that serves as a transition zone between the traditional downtown core and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The existing structure was constructed in 1936, during an era of early masonry residential construction in Delray Beach. Historical records indicate that the building was originally developed as a single-family residence. In the decades that followed, the structure underwent adaptive reuse, consistent with broader trends in the CBD, transitioning into a variety of commercial and service-oriented uses. Notably, by the late 20th century, it had been repurposed for use as an electrical contractor's office, and more recently, as a cigar lounge and bar.

Operating under the name "Smoke In," the existing cigar bar is a one-story masonry structure, modest in scale and design, and lacks significant architectural detailing. While it has served as a low-intensity commercial use, its configuration is no longer consistent with the City's goals for activating key downtown corners or reinforcing a cohesive urban design character.

The site occupies a critical position within the CBD's Central Core, which is governed by LDR Section 4.4.13. The Central Core emphasizes pedestrian orientation, active street frontages, vertical integration of uses, and architectural quality. The CBD envisions increased intensity through mixed-use, multi-story developments that contribute to a vibrant and walkable downtown fabric. The property's adjacency to CBD-zoned parcels on all sides further reinforces its strategic redevelopment potential. With access to multiple rights-of-way, including a rear alley for service access, the site is well-positioned to accommodate structured parking, and active ground-floor frontage.

In this context, the applicant has submitted a Level 3 Site Plan application to demolish the current building and redevelop the parcel with a four-story multifamily residential structure. Associated with the site plan, the applicant is seeking City Commission approval to utilize the Masonry Modern architectural style, as required under LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e). Approval of the architectural style is a prerequisite for Planning and Zoning Board review of the full site plan.

Description of Proposal

The applicant is proposing to redevelop the 0.36-acre parcel at 202 NE 6th Avenue with a four-story multifamily residential building, consisting of 10 for-sale condominium units. The project includes structured parking on the ground and mezzanine level with access from the rear alley, lobby and amenity areas fronting NE 6th Avenue and NE 2nd Street, and a rooftop level containing residential amenities including a pool deck, lounge area, and recreational space.

The building is designed with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 2.92, consistent with the maximum 3.0 FAR allowed within the Central Core sub-district. The proposed density of 30 dwelling units per acre aligns with the maximum permitted by the site's Commercial Core (CC) Future Land Use designation. Vehicular access is consolidated along the alleyway to minimize curb cuts and maintain an active pedestrian realm on both street frontages.



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The application includes a formal request to implement the Masonry Modern architectural style, a design approach that emphasizes minimalist form, smooth stucco finishes, and a tripartite building composition of base, middle, and top. Pursuant to LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), the use of Masonry Modern within the CBD requires City Commission approval, following a recommendation by the Site Plan Review and Appearance Board (SPRAB). Approval of the architectural style is required before the project may proceed to



full Planning and Zoning Board review.

The proposed design is organized with a clearly defined ground-floor base, primarily composed of recessed entries, storefront windows, and planters; a middle facade featuring vertically oriented fenestration and punctuated balconies; and a top level with a flat roof and expansive terrace areas. Exterior materials include Sherwin Williams Pure White stucco, wood accents at balcony ceilings and garage doors, and stone Grigio cladding to articulate vertical bays. The applicant has provided a detailed architectural narrative, rendered facades, and material schedules in support of the style request.

While the architectural style is the subject of consideration, the overall site plan remains under Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) review and may be subject to further refinement prior to subsequent board consideration.

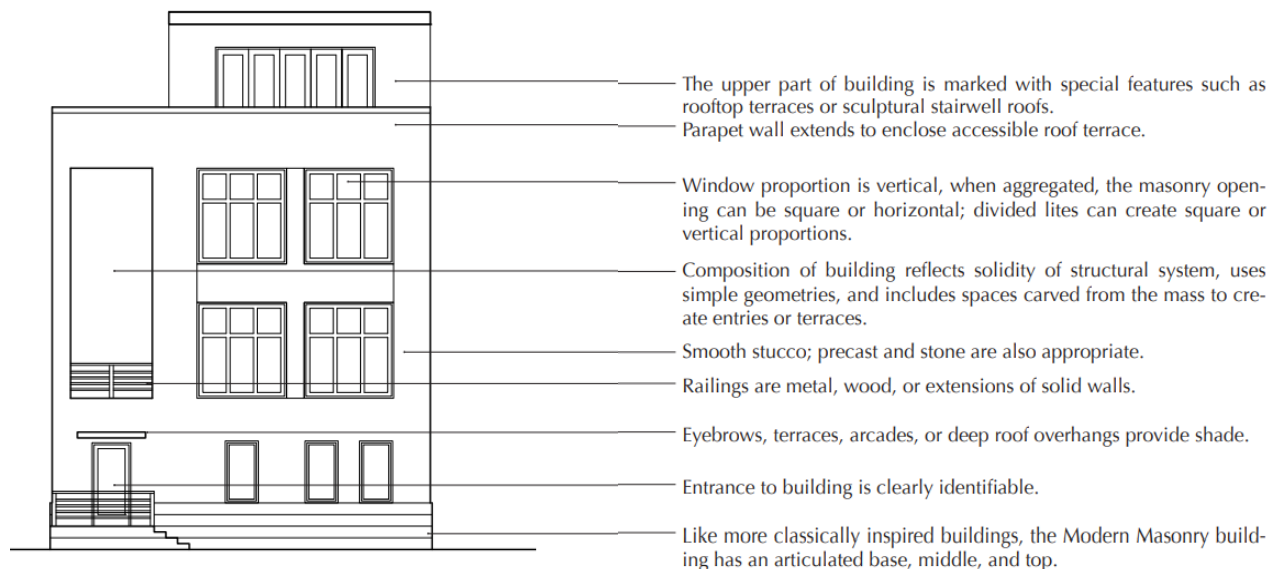
Review & Analysis: Architectural Style

LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles

The use of Masonry Modern or Art Deco architectural styles requires City Commission approval, via recommendation by SPRAB or HBP, as applicable, City Commission approval is required prior to consideration of the site plan by SPRAB or HBP. Applicants shall provide an explanation, including graphics, demonstrating how the proposed building design implements the selected style.

CBD Architectural Design Guidelines – Masonry Modern

Pursuant to the *Central Business District – Architectural Design Guidelines*, Masonry Modern is a style defined by its rational load bearing construction technique, a system of punched openings, simple geometries, and limited ornament. The style emphasizes the solidity of the mass with carved spaces to create entries and terraces. Stucco is the prevalent building finish, and stone and wood details are used to soften the stark modern forms of the building mass. The color palette is comprised primarily of whites and creams, with greens and blues to highlight details and darker hues to highlight the base or emphasize deep recesses of porches or loggias.



Delray Beach CBD Architectural Design Guidelines, Pages 60 & 61

The style has an organized framework of a base, middle and top, the tripartite composition. The base, when comprised of commercial use, is emphasized with more glass and a clearly identifiable building entrance; the middle portions are typically more solid; and the top, often comprised of a flat roof, incorporates usable exterior spaces utilized for terraces. The terraces, eyebrows, arcade, louvers, vertical sunshades, or deep roof overhangs provide shade.

Windows are often recessed from the exterior face of the building, producing deep shadows, and exposing the thickness of the walls. The window proportions are typically vertical; however, the overall masonry openings can be either vertical, horizontal, or square.

Historical Context and Regional Evolution

The Masonry Modern style roots from the mid-20th-century Florida modernist movement, with strong influences from the Sarasota



School of Architecture and the broader Florida regionalist tradition. Architects such as Ralph Twitchell and Paul Rudolph advanced the use of concrete block, cast-in-place masonry, and stucco-clad walls as both structural and aesthetic components. Their work emphasized clarity of form, recessed fenestration, and passive environmental responses, making the style inherently well-suited to Florida's climate.

Unlike the abstract formalism of International Modernism, Florida's Masonry Modernism emphasized pragmatic elegance: deep eaves, layered wall planes, and walls designed to respond to solar orientation and weather. The style became particularly appropriate for small to mid-scale multifamily and mixed-use developments, where durability, restraint, and climatic responsiveness were architectural priorities.

Within the context of Delray Beach's CBD, Masonry Modern was originally established as an appropriate and enduring typology. Its balance of urban formality and subtropical adaptability supports the city's goal of fostering a built environment that is contextually integrated, climatically appropriate, and aesthetically restrained, while still offering visual richness through depth and shadow. However, due to community concerns regarding the proliferation of Masonry Modern, the use of this style currently requires City Commission approval, with further direction to evaluate its potential removal from the CBD Architectural Design Guidelines.

Examples of Masonry Modern buildings in Delray Beach





Proposed Design

In accordance with LDR Section 4.4.13(F) and the Central Business District (CBD) Architectural Design Guidelines, the applicant submitted an architectural narrative and supporting renderings to substantiate compliance with the defining characteristics of the chosen style.

Masonry Modern architecture is typically characterized by clean geometric composition, minimal ornamentation, and the expressive use of masonry materials. The proposed structure incorporates several of these defining features, particularly on the east and south façades, where structural clarity and substantial glazing contribute to a modern, ordered aesthetic. However, certain aspects of the design vary in their expression of the style, presenting opportunities for further alignment and execution of the Masonry Modern style.

The proposed design is shown on the following pages and attached as full-size documents.



2
A-200
EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



2
A-201
WEST ELEVATION - ALLEY
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"





Detailed Evaluation

- **Massing and Facade Composition:** The **east and south facades** benefit from modulation in depth and rhythm. Window recesses, vertical alignment, and framed balcony openings contribute to a dynamic expression of mass. These features reflect the Masonry Modern aesthetic, which relies on light and shadow interplay rather than applied ornament. Conversely, the **north facade is notably unarticulated**, with an expansive stucco plane devoid of fenestration or material relief. This facade lacks both functional and visual permeability. Staff acknowledges the applicant's response regarding privacy and internal design needs but notes that other projects have achieved more thoughtful architectural resolution of these constraints, including the use of vertical scoring, or screened openings.

- Architectural Elements:** Masonry Modern design often incorporates balconies, cantilevers, eyebrows, or structural overhangs to animate the form and provide practical environmental benefits such as shading and passive cooling. These are largely absent in the proposed design, weakening the architectural rhythm and limiting opportunities for indoor-outdoor living typically sought in the urban fabric of Delray Beach.
- Materials and Detail:** The material palette includes predominantly stucco finishes with wood accents but lacks the textured or patterned masonry and layered material treatment typically expected of Masonry Modern architecture. The absence of contrasting elements or subtle ornamentation makes several facades feel flat and uniform. This is especially notable on the north facade, which appears as an impenetrable mass rather than an integrated part of a vibrant, pedestrian oriented downtown.
- Roofline:** The parapet treatment is minimal, and while this may align with the style restraint of Masonry Modern, it contributes to a static roofline that lacks visual interest. Similarly, the corners of the building, critical areas for articulation, are treated as abrupt terminations rather than opportunities for design expression or relief.
- Corner Treatment and Urban Identity:** At the intersection of NE 6th Avenue and NE 2nd Street, the building occupies a prominent corner within the CBD. While the massing turns the corner, the treatment remains plain, lacking the architectural punctuation often associated with signature corners in urban contexts. Introducing angled volumes, projecting balconies, or material wraps at this junction may yield a more expressive presence and frame the building's civic role more clearly.
- Ground-Level Design and Entry Definition:** Ground-level design features, such as planter integration, recessed entrances, and storefront-type glazing, introduce a soft threshold between public and private realms. The main pedestrian entry along NE 6th Avenue, however, is only modestly marked. More pronounced spatial or material transitions could help emphasize the building's point of arrival and reinforce its role in defining the urban edge.
- Environmental Considerations:** From a sustainability standpoint, the north facade presents an "environmental irony." By eliminating glazing on the cooler side of the building, the design increases reliance on artificial lighting, undermining potential daylighting benefits and creating functional imbalance. A more even distribution of openings would better align with both environmental performance and aesthetic coherence.
- CBD Contextual Fit:** The Central Core Sub-district aims to foster a walkable, mixed-use downtown that respects Delray Beach's historic moderate scale. While the project's massing is generally compatible with adjacent structures, the rigidity of certain facades and limited articulation may limit its ability to reinforce the desired "Village by the Sea" character. A more nuanced treatment of detailing, particularly along pedestrian edges, would enhance the building's contribution to the district's identity.



Conclusion

The proposal exhibits many of the defining features of the Masonry Modern architectural style, including simplicity of form, rational massing, and a restrained material palette. The primary facades are more resolved, with an articulated base and vertically proportioned openings. Yet, the secondary facades lack the same depth and continuity, and key architectural opportunities, such as the urban corner and pedestrian entry, are underplayed.

Given the building's location within a highly visible part of the Central Core sub-district, greater consistency and completeness across all facades could strengthen the overall architectural expression. The style, as proposed, may be viewed as a partial realization of the Masonry Modern architectural style. Further refinement in select areas could enhance the clarity, cohesion, and contextual responsiveness of the design.



Board Considerations

The Board should consider the following when evaluating the proposed style:

- Is the Masonry Modern style appropriate for both the regional and site-specific context, such that it fits well within the general downtown Delray Beach urban fabric?
- Is the proposed design a well-executed example of a Masonry Modern, such that the design elements from the Masonry Modern style – including material, form, and proportion - are clearly represented?

Options for Board Action

- A. Recommendation of **approval** to allow the use of a Masonry Modern architectural style, pursuant to **LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles**, for The Link, located at 202 NE 6th Avenue, by finding that the request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and meets criteria set forth in the Land Development Regulations.
- B. Recommendation of **denial** to allow the use of a Masonry Modern architectural style, pursuant to **LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles**, for The Link, located at 202 NE 6th Avenue, by finding that the request is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and does not meet criteria set forth in the Land Development Regulations.
- C. Move to **continue with direction**.