



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

BUILDING | HISTORIC PRESERVATION | PLANNING & ZONING

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD STAFF REPORT

466 – 506 NE 5th Avenue

Meeting	File No.	Application Type
October 20, 2025	2025-058	Architectural Style
Property Owner	Agent	
Peter Harrigan LANDBIZ, LLC/INTERLOC PROPERTIES LLC	Peter Harrigan, LANDBIZ, LLC/INTERLOC PROPERTIES LLC	

Request

Provide a recommendation to the City Commission regarding the utilization of the Masonry Modern Architectural Style on a proposed four-story mixed-use development within the Central Business District (CBD) at 466-506 NE 5th Avenue, pursuant to Land Development Regulations (**LDR**) **Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles**.

Project Information

Location: 466-506 NE 5th Avenue

PCN: 12-43-46-09-33-001-0020,
12-43-46-09-33-001-0010,
12-43-46-09-24-000-0061, and
12-43-46-09-24-000-0062

Property Size: 0.688 acres (29,963 sf)

Land Use Designation: Commercial Core (CC)

Zoning District: CBD, Central Core Sub-district

Adjacent Zoning:

- **North, South, East:** CBD
- **West:** Residential Office (RO)

Existing Use:

- **466 & 506:** Office Building
- **500:** Offices, Retail
- **506:** Retail

Proposed Use: Mixed-Use

Floor Area Ratio:

- **Existing:** 0.32
- **Proposed:** 1.24
- **Maximum Allowed:** 3.0

Density:

- **Maximum Allowed:** 20.66 du (30 du/ac)
- **Proposed:** 14 du/ac

For Reference: LDR Section 4.4.13, CBD





Background

The subject property located at 466 to 506 NE 5th Avenue consists of four parcels totaling 0.688 acres, equal to 29,963 square feet, within the Central Core Sub-district of the Central Business District (CBD). The site occupies a prominent frontage along NE 5th Avenue between NE 4th Street and NE 6th Street, and functions as a transitional corridor between the traditional downtown core and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The existing development is composed of small mid twentieth century commercial structures dating from the 1950s and 1960s. Over time the buildings have been altered through façade renovations, reroofing, and sign modifications. These changes have produced a fragmented appearance with limited contribution to the architectural quality of the downtown Central Business District Design Guidelines.

The subject property is bordered by CBD zoning on three sides and benefits from access to multiple rights of way. These characteristics make the site a strategic infill location capable of accommodating structured parking, active street frontage, and improved pedestrian connectivity. The subject property is regulated by Section 4.4.13 of the Land Development Regulations. The regulations emphasize pedestrian orientation, active ground floor uses, vertical integration of functions, and architectural quality. The vision for the Central Business District anticipates redevelopment at higher intensities through mixed use, multi-story projects that reinforce a walkable urban fabric.

The applicant submitted a Level 3 Site Plan application to demolish the existing buildings and redevelop the site with a four-story mixed-use project. In conjunction with the site plan, the applicant requests City Commission approval to utilize the Masonry Modern architectural style consistent with **LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e)**. Architectural style approval must occur before the Planning and Zoning Board considers the full site plan.

Description of Proposal

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing commercial buildings and redevelop the site with a four-story mixed-use project. The project contains 4,187 square feet of retail space distributed in three ground floor bays along NE 5th Avenue. Above the ground floor, the plan provides fourteen residential units that consist of four (one) bedroom units, seven (two) bedroom units, and three (three) bedroom units. The residential density is calculated at fourteen dwelling units per acre, which is less than the maximum allowable density in the Central Business District Central Core Subdistrict.

The site plan introduces parking at the rear with access provided from NE 5th Avenue. A total of forty parking spaces are proposed to comply with the minimum parking requirement. The parking spaces consist of standard, compact, and handicap accessible spaces. Three bicycle racks are also provided to meet the requirements of the Land Development Regulations.

The proposal incorporates the required civic open space along the southern portion of the building totaling 788 square feet, exceeding the 498 square feet required by LDR Section 4.4.13(G)(2)(g). The civic area includes decorative pavers, benches, raised planters, shade trees, a public art sculpture, a water feature, and a pet friendly drinking fountain. Seating capacity exceeds the minimum requirement, and it contributes to the pedestrian environment along NE 5th Avenue.

Architecturally, the project seeks approval to utilize Masonry Modern Architectural Style pursuant to LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e). The elevations display rectilinear forms, stucco cladding, stone veneer accents, recessed balconies, and a flat roofline. The ground floor frontage is composed of transparent storefront glazing that supports an active pedestrian realm. While the style is consistent with the criteria for Masonry Modern, staff has identified the need for stronger articulation of the building entry and additional variation of upper story façades to reinforce pedestrian scale.





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

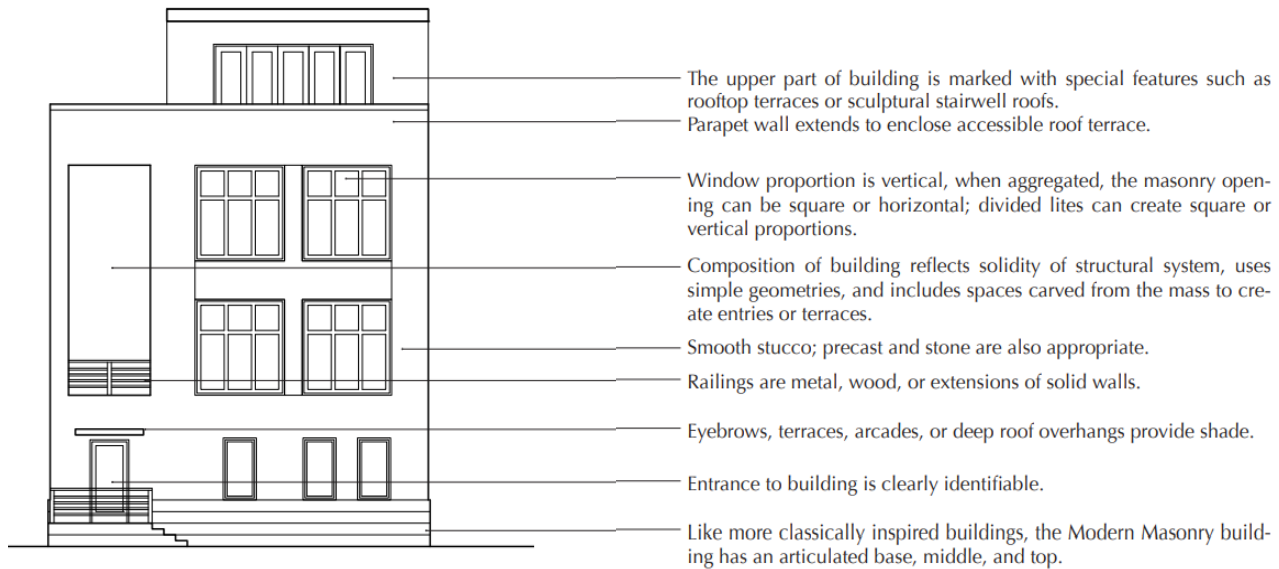
Pursuant to the *Central Business District – Architectural Design Guidelines*, Masonry Modern is a style defined by its rational load bearing construction technique, a system of punched openings, simple geometries, and limited ornament. The style emphasizes the solidity of the mass with carved spaces 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 darker hues to highlight the base and emphasize deep recesses of porches or loggias.

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 that 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.



Characteristics of the Masonry Modern Architectural Style, CBD Design Guidelines



Historical Context and Regional Evolution

Masonry Modern style traces its origins to early twentieth-century Europe, where architects such as **Le Corbusier** advanced a new architectural language of rational forms, exposed structural systems, and masonry as both structure and surface. In France, this movement emphasized the sculptural qualities of concrete and stucco, with buildings conceived as geometric volumes carved to admit light and air. When transplanted to the subtropical conditions of Florida, these principles were adapted by the Sarasota School of Architecture and other regional architects who reinterpreted the modernist vocabulary through local materials, recessed fenestration, and passive environmental responses. This fusion established the foundation for Florida's Masonry Modernism, a style that retained modernism's clarity of form but tempered it with climatic pragmatism and regional identity.

Florida's Masonry Modern movement was advanced by architects such as Ralph Twitchell and Paul Rudolph, who utilized concrete block, cast-in-place masonry, and stucco finishes as both structural and aesthetic components. Their work emphasized clarity of form, layered wall planes, and climatic responsiveness, making the style inherently suited to Florida's heat, light, and weather patterns. Unlike the abstract universalism of International Modernism, Florida's version emphasized pragmatic elegance: deep overhangs, recessed windows, and walls oriented to manage solar gain and ventilation. This made it particularly effective for small to mid-scale multifamily and mixed-use projects where durability and environmental adaptation were architectural priorities.

Within Delray Beach's Central Business District, Masonry Modern was codified as an appropriate typology because of its capacity to balance **urban formality with subtropical adaptability**. Its restrained palette and tripartite composition provided a framework that could accommodate pedestrian-oriented streetscapes while maintaining climatic sensitivity. The style was valued for its ability to produce shadow, depth, and subtle variation without resorting to heavy ornamentation.

Over time, however, the proliferation of Masonry Modern projects has raised significant concerns. Repeated use of the style has sometimes led to formulaic interpretations that dilute its original intent of authenticity and environmental responsiveness. Community feedback highlights the risk of homogenization, with buildings relying on superficial stucco treatments and thin veneer accents rather than the volumetric carving and structural clarity that define true Masonry Modern. In response, the City Commission now requires individual approval of this style, not only to regulate its frequency but to ensure that proposals demonstrate **architectural quality, contextual integration, and authentic material expression**, rather than a generic or minimal compliance with stylistic definitions.



Examples of Masonry Modern Buildings in Delray Beach



Courtyard Marriott, 135 SE 6th Ave

163 SE 1st Ave



Highland Park Townhomes



Valhalla Condominiums

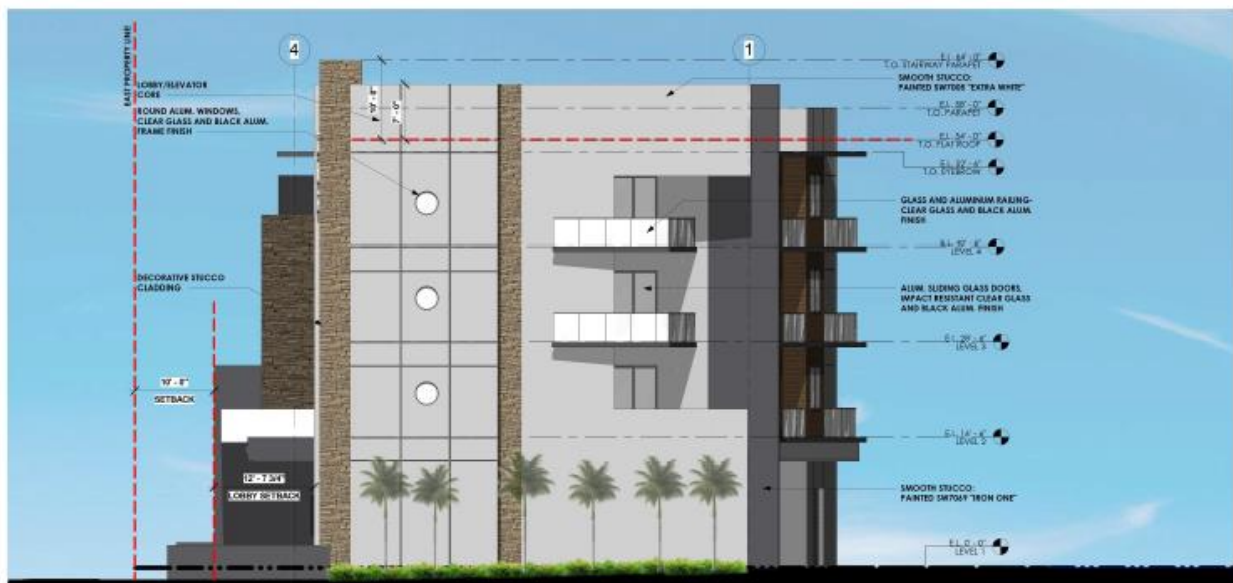


Proposed Design

Pursuant to LDR Section 4.4.13(F) and the Central Business District (CBD) Architectural Design Guidelines, the applicant has submitted an architectural narrative, renderings, and elevations to demonstrate the project's alignment with the Masonry Modern style. The proposal adopts a direct massing strategy, smooth stucco finishes, and decorative stone accents to frame its stylistic intent.

While the submittal references key definitional traits of Masonry Modern such as geometric composition, restrained ornamentation, and masonry expression, the execution presents a surface level application of the style rather than a fully realized interpretation. The elevations rely heavily on flat planes and applied veneers, with limited volumetric carving or climatic responsiveness. This raises questions about whether the design achieves the authenticity, material integrity, and environmental adaptation envisioned by the guidelines.

The building as proposed satisfies the minimum stylistic criteria, but its architectural presence risks being generic rather than distinctive. The lack of strong entry hierarchy, underdeveloped corner treatment, and modest façade relief weaken its contribution to the pedestrian oriented character of the Central Core. A more rigorous application of Masonry Modern principles that emphasizes deeper façade articulation, functional shading devices, and authentic structural expression would be necessary to elevate the design from compliance to true contextual fit.



2 NORTH ELEVATION
VP = 1/8"





Detailed Evaluation

- Massing and Facade Composition.** The Architectural Guidelines call for buildings in the Central Business District to establish a clear base, middle, and top and to create façades with rhythm and proportion through the use of bays, recesses, and varied planes. In the Masonry Modern style, the building should present itself as a solid form that is carved to create terraces and entries rather than as a flat surface with applied finishes. The east elevation demonstrates some success in meeting these expectations. The ground floor glazing establishes transparency and supports an active street edge, while the stacked balconies above provide a sense of order and rhythm. The proportions are balanced and the direct composition is consistent with the Masonry Modern vocabulary. However, the depth of articulation remains limited. Balconies are modest in projection and windows are only slightly recessed, which reduces opportunities for strong shadow and layered depth that are central to the style. The overall impression is competent but restrained, leaving room for greater emphasis on volumetric carving and pedestrian scale.

On the west elevation, the use of alternating wall planes and balconies shows an effort to avoid visual monotony. This approach is sensible given the long exposure to the railway, yet the composition still reads somewhat flat. A bolder treatment with deeper recesses or more pronounced modulation could strengthen the façade and give it greater presence. The north elevation, oriented toward adjacent parcels, is the least articulated and therefore makes only a minor contribution to the overall streetscape.

Given the site's location along NE 5th Avenue, a corridor that carries significant pedestrian and visual importance, stronger definition of massing and more expressive façade depth would help the building better serve as an anchor for this block. While the design reflects thoughtful decisions and maintains consistency with the chosen style, its architectural character would benefit from additional refinement to achieve a richer and more engaging presence.

- Architectural Elements.** The proposal employs a material palette of smooth stucco in light tones, decorative stone veneer at selected wall planes, and dark accent walls paired with aluminum framed glazing. These choices align with a contemporary interpretation of Masonry Modern and reflect an effort to create contrast and visual depth. The color scheme of whites and grays with darker accents is consistent with the palette recommended in the guidelines, and the use of durable stucco as the primary finish is appropriate for the style.

At the same time, the reliance on thin stone cladding and painted accent planes raises concerns about authenticity. Masonry Modern emphasizes structural clarity and the sense of mass carved from solid form, yet here the stone treatment reads as a surface application rather than an integral element of construction. The limited depth of balconies and window recesses further reduces the opportunity for shadow and texture, which are essential to the expression of masonry mass. The glazing system provides transparency at the ground level and supports the pedestrian orientation of NE 5th Avenue. Above the base, however,



the window design is simple and repetitive. While this approach creates order, it also risks appearing generic and does not take full advantage of the style's potential for variation in masonry openings. Additional refinement, such as deeper window recesses, more pronounced frames, or subtle modulation in balcony design, could enhance both authenticity and visual richness.

Overall, the materials and detailing demonstrate an effort to be consistent with the Masonry Modern vocabulary, but the design would benefit from greater depth and more integrated use of stone and shading devices. Without these refinements, the building risks appearing flat and decorative rather than expressive of true masonry construction.

- **Roofline and Corner Treatment.** The building employs a flat roof concealed by a parapet, which is consistent with the Masonry Modern style. The horizontal line of the parapet provides a clean profile, but it remains uniform and lacks variation. The guidelines encourage the upper portions of buildings to create visual relief through terraces, deep overhangs, or sculptural elements that provide both shade and identity. In this proposal, the roofline is restrained and does not introduce features that could enrich the composition or improve climatic response.

Because the project is located mid-block, the so-called corner element does not function as an urban marker at a street intersection. Instead, it serves as a vertical accent within a continuous frontage. While the attempt to introduce variation is noted, the treatment is modest and does not create a strong hierarchy within the overall massing. In this context, greater benefit could be achieved through enhanced articulation of the mid-block façade, stronger definition of the main entry sequence, or more expressive vertical breaks that provide rhythm between adjoining properties.

The approach reflects thoughtful intent but remains cautious. With additional refinement to the roofline and mid-block articulation, the building could achieve a clearer presence within the streetscape and contribute more actively to the character of NE 5th Avenue.

- **Ground-Level Design and Entry Definition.** The ground floor along NE 5th Avenue incorporates recessed storefront glazing, which is effective in creating transparency and supporting pedestrian activity. This treatment allows views into the retail bays and establishes an active relationship between the public realm and the building interior. The consistent rhythm of storefronts also provides order and continuity along the block. Planters, paved surfaces, and the inclusion of civic space elements such as seating and landscaping further soften the interface between sidewalk and building, which contributes positively to the pedestrian environment. This shows clear intent by the architect to prioritize walkability and urban activation.

Despite these strengths, the ground floor lacks a clearly identifiable main entrance. The entry is designed as part of the storefront system and is therefore visually understated. In the context of the Central Core Sub-district, where guidelines call for entries to be prominent and legible, the absence of a distinctive threshold weakens the building's presence on NE 5th Avenue. A stronger gesture through a canopy, taller glazing, or differentiated framing would create a hierarchy that signals arrival and reinforces the base of the building. The civic open space proposed along the southern frontage demonstrates thoughtful design by including raised planters, benches, a water feature, and a pet-friendly fountain. These elements create an amenity for both residents and the public, and they exceed the minimum open space requirement. However, the placement of this space away from the primary entrance reduces its ability to reinforce the identity of the building. If the civic space were better connected to the entry sequence, it could act as a forecourt that announces the building and strengthens its urban presence.

In summary, the ground floor demonstrates a sincere effort to activate the street and provide public amenity, but it stops short of creating a fully engaging pedestrian edge. The design would be strengthened by a more prominent and identifiable entry, better integration of the civic space with the arrival sequence, and a lively corner treatment. These refinements would reinforce the intent of the guidelines and elevate the project's contribution to the Central Core.

- **Environmental Considerations.** The Masonry Modern style evolved in Florida with a strong emphasis on climatic adaptation. Deep overhangs, recessed openings, and layered wall planes were integral to controlling heat and glare while allowing natural ventilation. The CBD Architectural Design Guidelines reinforce this tradition by encouraging shading devices, terraces, and other architectural responses that reduce energy demand and improve comfort in the public realm.

In the current proposal, the applicant identifies the use of reflective roofing, light-colored exterior finishes, cross ventilation, and energy efficient systems. These strategies demonstrate an awareness of sustainability, yet they represent only a modest application of environmental design. The elevations show recessed balconies and some variation in wall planes, but the lack of deep overhangs, louvers, or projecting eyebrows limits the building's ability to provide shading and reduce solar gain. The design also misses an opportunity to integrate additional canopy coverage within the civic open space. While the planters and water



feature contribute to pedestrian comfort, they do not serve as functional environmental systems. The guidelines encourage multi-functional design elements that combine visual appeal with ecological performance, which would further align the project with the City's sustainability goals.

Overall, the proposal addresses environmental performance at a basic level but does not fully embrace the principles that define Masonry Modern as a climate responsive style. With more intentional shading devices, deeper recesses, and integrated green infrastructure, the project could achieve stronger alignment with both the guidelines and the City's green initiatives.

- **CBD Contextual Fit.** The site lies within the Central Core subdistrict of the CBD, a key zone intended to consolidate density, pedestrian activity, and architectural quality. The CBD is regulated to preserve the cultural and historic character of downtown while supporting growth and vitality. The City designates several architectural styles as appropriate downtown, including Masonry Modern, while discouraging stylistic hybrids or generic forms that do not reflect local identity.

NE 5th Avenue is a transitional corridor between the historic downtown core and surrounding residential neighborhoods. It extends the growth pattern outward from Atlantic Avenue and supports mixed use infill as the city expands its walkable urban fabric. The block scale, proximity to adjacent CBD parcels, and exposure to both pedestrian and vehicular traffic all create strong expectations for buildings on this frontage to contribute to the street edge and reinforce the public realm. In this context, the proposed design is restrained. The east elevation offers balance and rhythm but the north and west façades remain under articulated. The corner treatment, while present, does not provide the strong identity expected for a site of such prominence. These choices risk the building being read as a neutral infill piece rather than a defining anchor on this portion of NE 5th Avenue.

Because this corridor is visible from multiple vantage points intersecting streets, and the Florida East Coast railway, the building should serve as both a connector and a visual marker. Its massing and material transitions should reinforce rhythm, align with nearby cornice lines, and modulate scale to build continuity within the district.

The proposed design demonstrates a basic understanding of Masonry Modern and meets the minimum requirements of the guidelines, yet it does so with restraint. The building succeeds in establishing rhythm on the east elevation and providing transparency at the ground level, but the limited façade depth, modest corner treatment, and reliance on applied materials weaken its overall presence. With refinements to articulation, entry hierarchy, and environmental response, the project could achieve stronger authenticity and a more meaningful contribution to the Central Core.

Board Considerations

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

- Whether the Masonry Modern style is appropriate for this location and whether it fits within the broader urban fabric of downtown Delray Beach.
- Whether the proposal demonstrates the defining elements of Masonry Modern, including massing, recessed fenestration, limited ornament, and authentic material use.
- Whether the building establishes a clear base, middle, and top, with sufficient articulation to support pedestrian scale and create a strong presence along NE 5th Avenue.

Options for Board Action

- A. Recommendation of **approval** to allow the utilization of a Masonry Modern Architectural Style on a proposed four-story mixed-use development within the Central Business District (CBD) at 466-506 NE 5th Avenue, pursuant to Land Development Regulations (**LDR**) **Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles**, 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 the utilization of a Masonry Modern Architectural Style on a proposed four-story mixed-use development within the Central Business District (CBD) at 466-506 NE 5th Avenue, pursuant to Land Development Regulations (**LDR**) **Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles**, 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**.



Review No.	Submittal Date	TAC Comments Transmitted
1	06/12/2025	07/03/2025
2	09/02/2025	09/29/2025