



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

BUILDING | HISTORIC PRESERVATION | PLANNING & ZONING

SITE PLAN REVIEW AND APPEARANCE BOARD STAFF REPORT

Fifth Avenue Townhomes

Meeting	File No.	Application Type
July 24, 2024	2024-056-SPR-LV2	Architectural Style
Property Owner		Agent
Fifth Avenue Delray, LLC		Thomas F. Carney, Jr. of Carney Stanton P.L.

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: 142 and 152 SE 5th Avenue

PCN: 12-43-46-16-01-102-0150 and 12-43-46-16-01-102-0140

Property Size: 0.35 acres (15,307 sf)

LUM: Commercial Core (CC)

Zoning: Central Business District – Central Core Sub-district (CBD)

Adjacent Zoning:

- North, South, East, West: CBD

Existing Use: Commercial/Residential

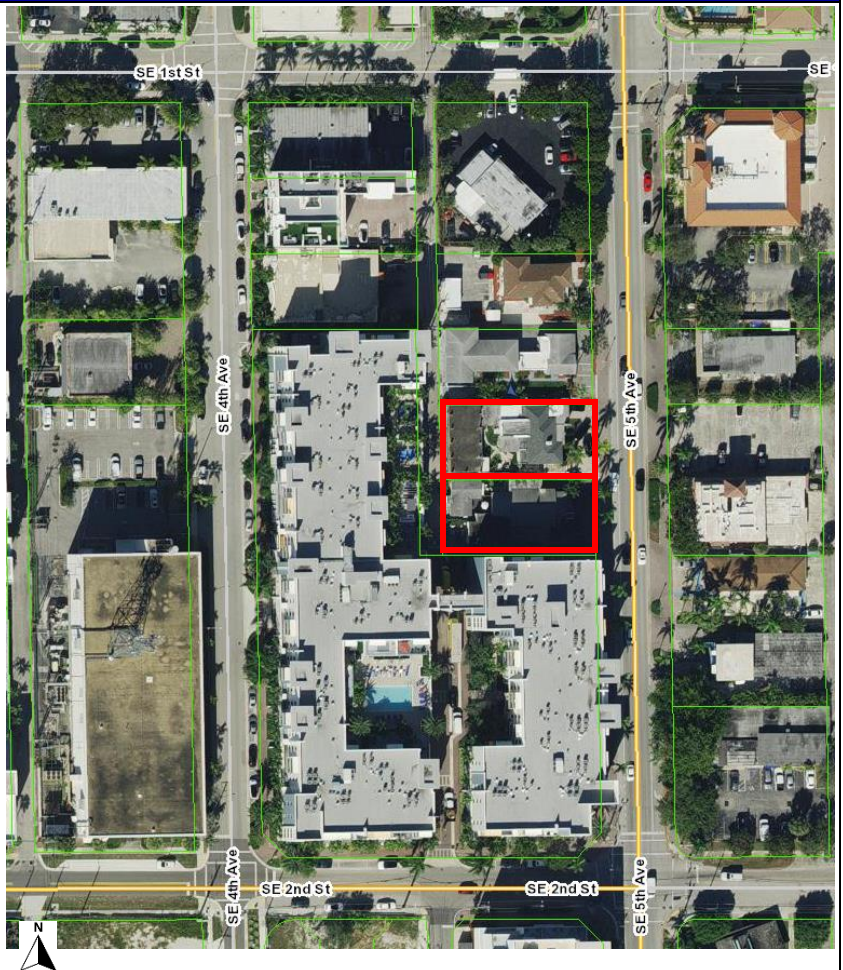
Proposed Use: Residential (Townhomes)

Floor Area Ratio:

- Existing: 0.42
- Proposed: 1.37
- Maximum Allowed: 3.0

Density:

- Existing: 3 du/acre (one unit)
- Proposed: 15 du/acre (five units)
- Maximum Allowed: 30 du/ac



Project Planner:

Alexis Rosenberg, Senior Planner; rosenbergqa@mydelraybeach.com
Susana Rodrigues, Planner; rodrigues@mydelreaybeach.com



Background

The subject property consists of two parcels – 142 and 152 SE 5th Avenue. The property 142 SE 5th Avenue is currently developed with a 2,289 square foot structure, which was originally built as a single-family residence in 1941 and converted to commercial between 1941 and 1990. The building is divided into two units – unit A and unit B. Based on City records, the last active business license on record for this location was for an electrical contractor from 2004 to 2015. Currently, it has been presumed that both units are being utilized as residences.

The property 152 SE 5th Avenue is developed with a 1,200 square foot commercial structure, 687 square foot apartment, and 460 square foot storage/garage space. The original single-family home was built in 1938 and was converted into commercial space with an accessory apartment in 1988. Currently, an active business license for a tarot card reading and astrology gift shop (retail) is associated with the site.

The applicant has submitted a Level 2 Site Plan application to demolish the existing development and construct a three-story, five-unit townhouse development. The applicant is concurrently seeking approval to utilize the Masonry Modern architectural style within the CBD, which is the subject request. The architectural style request requires approval by the City Commission, via recommendation by SPRAB, prior to the Level II Site Plan moving forward for administrative approval.

The applicant has also applied for a landscape waiver and an internal adjustment for the pool setback. The requested internal adjustment and waivers will be reviewed concurrently with the Site Plan.

Note: The project is still under TAC review, and modifications may be made to the elevations to address TAC comments. However, the overall architectural style shall remain the same. If the Masonry Modern style is approved, the Site Plan will be reviewed by SPRAB at a later date.

Description of Proposal

The development proposal is to establish a three-story, five-unit townhouse development with rear garage parking. As an aspect of the site plan application, the applicant is seeking approval to utilize the Masonry Modern architectural style in the CBD, whereas pursuant to **LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles**, the Masonry Modern style requires approval by the City Commission via recommendation from SPRAB. The applicant has provided an architectural style justification (attached) for the proposed Masonry Modern style.



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.





Guidelines:

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.



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.

Proposed Design:

The proposed Masonry Modern design features five 3-bedroom townhouses with the main entrance on SE 5th Avenue and a detached garage with an above flex space and vehicular access from the rear alley. The project aims to adhere to the Masonry Modern style, characterized by clear surfaces, balanced vertical and horizontal elements, and functional openings, using stucco, stone, and wood details. However, the execution falls short in achieving the intended visual impact. The pattern of openings appears imbalanced, detracting from the aesthetic harmony crucial in Masonry Modern architecture. The windows and doors should create a rhythm and order that enhances the façade. Additionally, the entrance lacks emphasis. It should be a prominent feature that invites and guides occupants and visitors, but it is almost flush with the surface, with a minor stoop, blending into the façade rather than standing out. This diminishes the sense of arrival and hierarchical progression from public to private spaces.



1 FRONT ELEVATION (EAST)



3 REAR ELEVATION (WEST)



While the design attempts to adhere to the tripartite composition, the execution can be improved. The base lacks sufficient prominence, failing to establish a strong foundation for the building, and the recessed top section misses opportunities to assert a strong architectural presence and convey the essence of Masonry Modern.

The materials consist of stucco walls painted Sherwin Williams Pure White, wood on the garage doors and ceilings, and an Opustone Grigio wall cladding on units 2 and 4. The use of Pure White stucco combined with Grigio Opustone cladding on the front elevation successfully represents the intended architectural style. The reserved white in accent walls and columns enhances the vertical form, creating a visually comfortable and harmonious color scheme. However, the insufficient incorporation of these materials on the rear and side elevations results in an overall form that lacks the necessary richness and depth. Adding these elements would create a more cohesive design across all elevations and reinforce the sense of modernity and solidity associated with Masonry Modern.

The design features a variety of window shapes and sizes, consistent with Masonry Modern principles. However, the placement and proportions of the windows lack coherence and visual harmony. The two square windows of the second-story bathroom on the front elevation disrupt the overall harmonious appearance and fail to integrate into a holistic, intentional pattern. The side and rear elevations are less successful, with an imbalance of solid and void spaces and insufficient use of scoring, colors, and materials.

The design incorporates horizontal terraces and eyebrows that break the monotony of plain surfaces. However, the treatment of corners and other architectural elements prioritizes simplicity over detail, resulting in a lack of visual interest. The absence of intricate detailing at corners or the main door fails to capture the richness and depth expected in Masonry Modern architecture. More attention to these areas could create a more cohesive and engaging aesthetic. While the front elevation balconies and overhangs contribute to a smooth and modern appearance, the overall lack of elements throughout the building is evident. Integrating more materials and decorative elements could enhance the building's visual appeal and better align with the Masonry Modern guidelines.

Analysis:

The proposal for the 5-unit townhome project strives to embrace the Masonry Modern style, however, there are opportunities to better enhance the integral elements of Masonry Modern throughout the entire design of the structure. The use of simple geometries, functional openings, and a balanced mix of materials creates a foundation that is visually appealing and harmonizes with the surrounding environment. However, true Masonry Modern and the timelessness of the style arise from attention to detail, coherence, and the seamless integration of form and function. To fully realize the potential of Masonry Modern, the design must transcend its current state by enhancing its skyline, refining its façades, and embracing a richer palette of materials, colors and details. Only then can it transform from a mere structure into a living part of the community, resonating with the essence of good architecture.



While the design meets some of the elements typically used in the Masonry Modern Architectural Style, staff encourages the applicant to use the elements found on the front façade facing SE 5th Avenue on the rear and side facades, as these facades do not use similar elements expressed on the front façade.



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?

Optional Board Motions

- 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 property located at 142 and 152 SE 5th 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 property located at 142 and 152 SE 5th 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**.