



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

BUILDING | HISTORIC PRESERVATION | PLANNING & ZONING

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD STAFF REPORT

398 NE 6th Avenue Development

Meeting	File No.	Application Type
June 16, 2025	2025-082-SPR-LV3	Architectural Style
Property Owner	Agent	
Delray 6th Avenue Realty LLC, Salvatore Ditta	Bradley Miller, Urban Design Studio	

Request

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

Project Information

Location: 398 NE 6th Avenue

PCN: 12-43-46-16-05-105-0010

Property Size: 0.3 acres (13,001 sf)

Land Use: Commercial Core (CC)

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

Adjacent Zoning:

- North, South, East, West: CBD

Existing Use: Commercial/Retail

Proposed Use: Mixed-use, 8-unit Multi-family Residential and 1,206 sf commercial

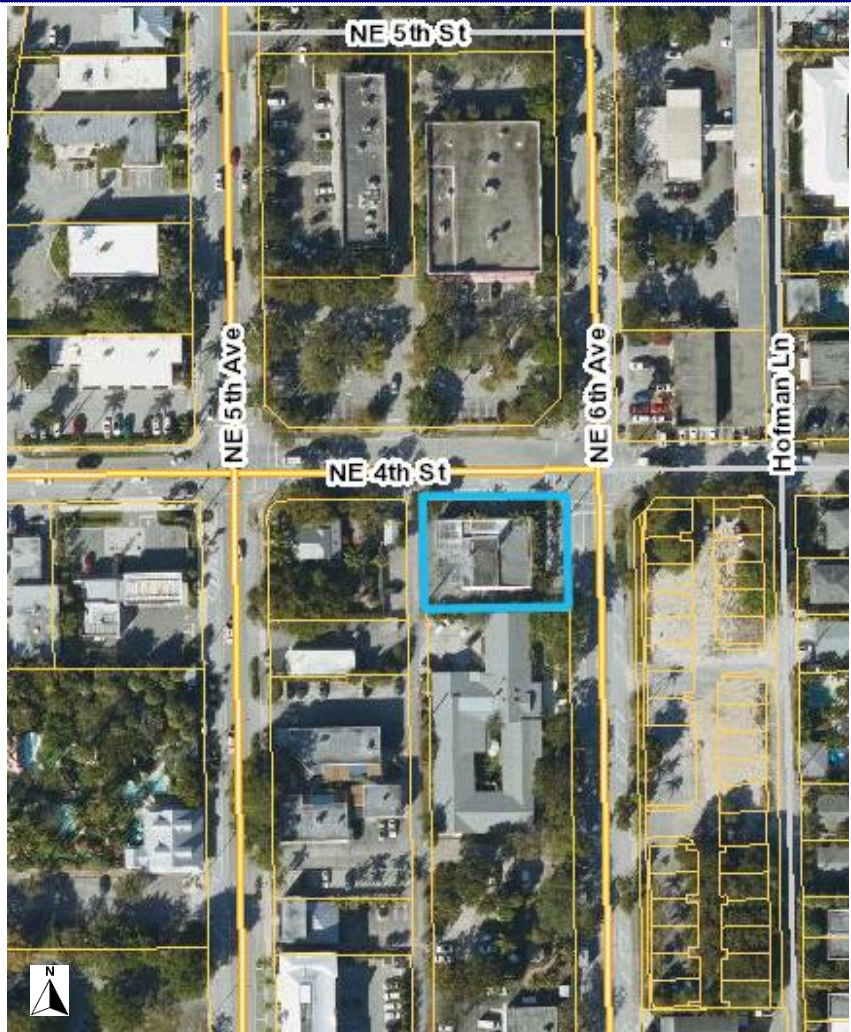
Floor Area Ratio:

- Existing: 0.38
- Proposed: 1.81 (20,460 sf)
- Maximum Allowed: 3.0 (37,654)

Density:

- Proposed: 8 units (du/ac)
- Maximum Allowed: 27 du/ac (30 du/ac)

Primary Street: NE 6th Avenue

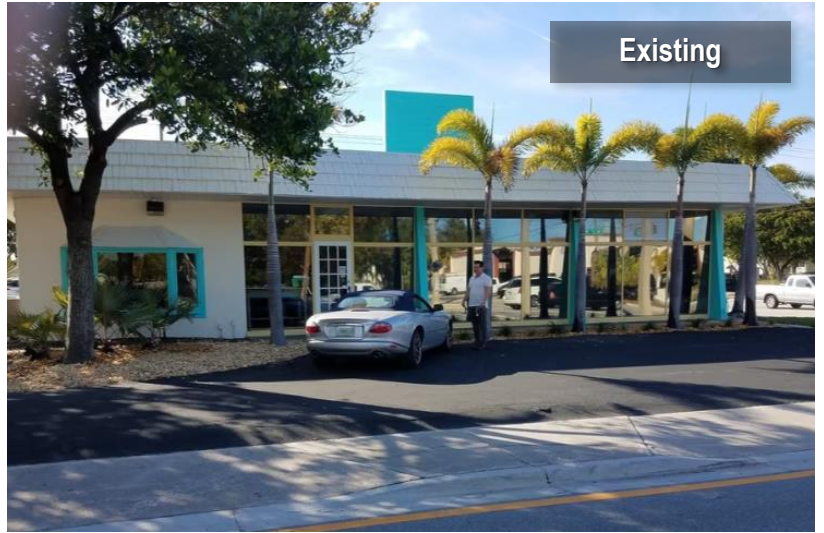


Background

The subject property, located at 398 NE 6th Avenue, occupies a 0.3-acre parcel (approximately 13,001 square feet) at the southwest corner of NE 4th Street and NE 6th Avenue, within the Central Core Sub-district of Delray Beach's Central Business (CBD) District.

The existing structure was constructed in 1946, during an era of early masonry commercial construction in Delray Beach. The building was originally occupied by a retail store and most recently functions as part of a gymnasium.

The existing one-story building remains 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.



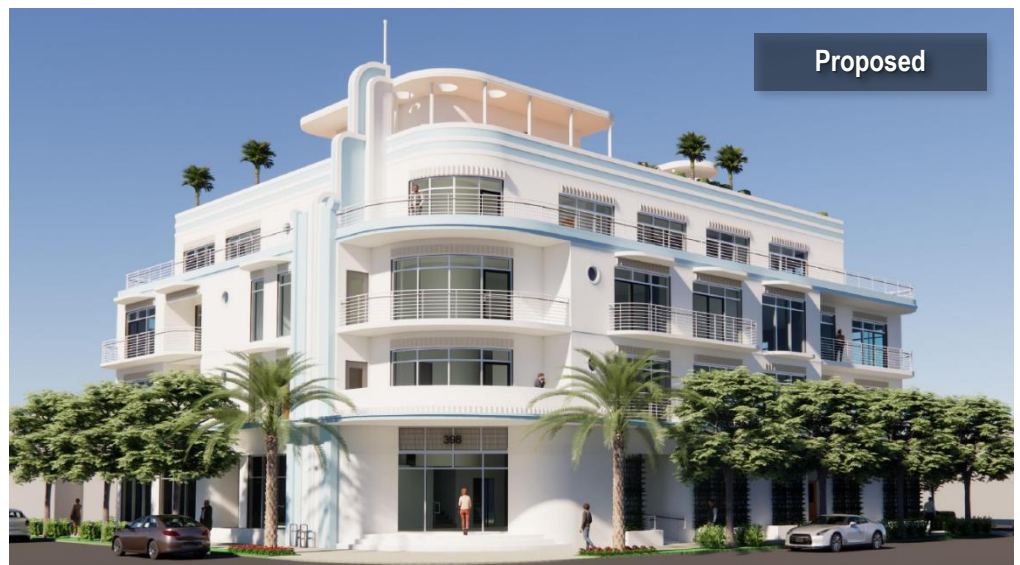
The site occupies a critical position within the CBD's Central Core, which is governed by LDR Section 4.4.13. The Central Core emphasizes pedestrian orientation, active street frontages, vertical integration of uses, and architectural quality. The CBD envisions increased intensity through mixed-use, 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 uses.

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 Art Deco 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 demolish the existing commercial building and redevelop the 0.3-acre parcel at 398 NE 6th Avenue with a four-story mixed-use development, consisting of eight unit and commercial retail storefront at the ground level. The project includes partial structured parking with access from the rear alley, lobby entrance fronting the intersection of NE 6th Avenue and NE 4th Street, and a rooftop level containing residential amenities including a pool deck and lounge area.

The building is designed with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.81, consistent with the maximum 3.0 FAR allowed within the Central Core Sub-district. The proposed density of eight dwelling units per acre aligns with the maximum permitted under 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 along both street frontages.



The application includes a formal request to utilize the Art Deco architectural style, a design approach that emphasizes horizontal streamlined ornaments, smooth stucco finishes, cantilevered masonry eyebrows and metal framed ribbon windows accentuating the façade at the corner. Pursuant to **LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e)**, the use of Art Deco 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 a full Planning and Zoning Board review.

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

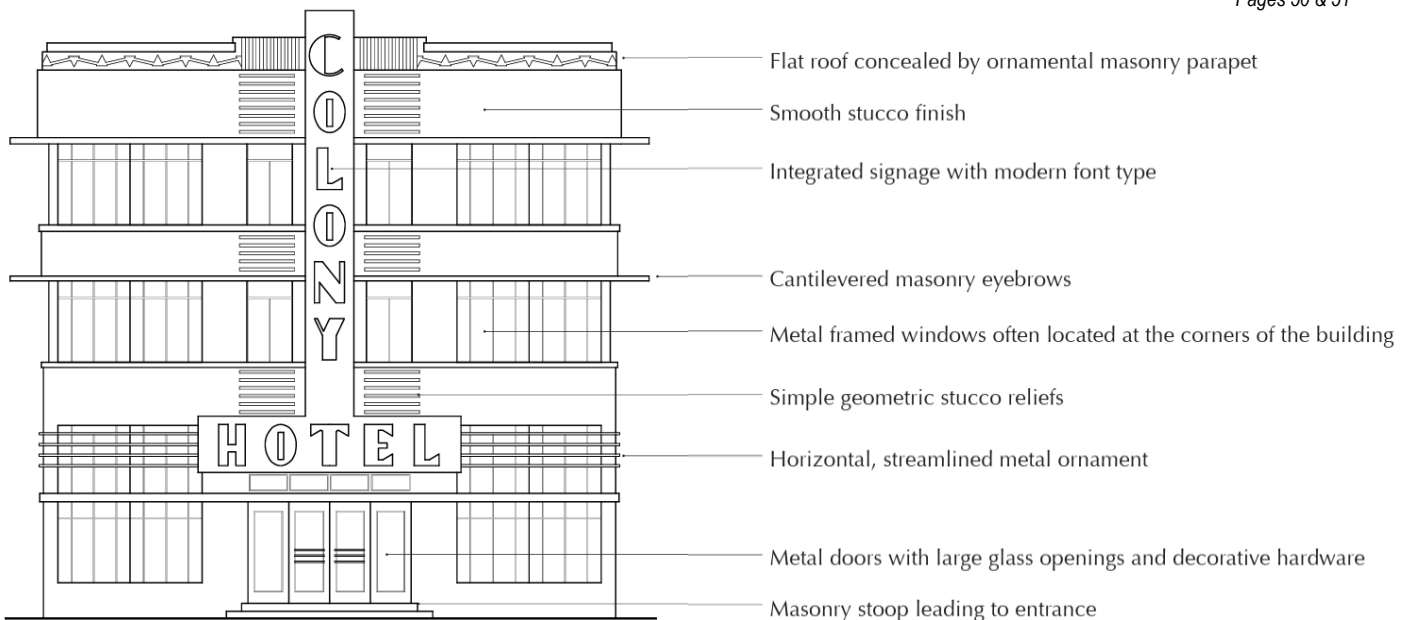
LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles

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 – Art Deco

Pursuant to the *Central Business District – Architectural Design Guidelines*, Art Deco is an influential modern design style that first appeared in France post WWI. It is an eclectic style, borrowing traditional craft details and incorporating influences from the streamlined machine age. The popularity of the Art Deco faded post WWII, although it is often referenced in modern architectural design. While stone typically was used in northern examples of the Art Deco, masonry and stucco with vivid color highlights are common in Florida.

*Delray Beach CBD Architectural Design Guidelines,
Pages 50 & 51*



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 glass and a clearly identifiable building entrance and a vertical features and integrated signage; the middle portions are typically more solid detailed by geometric stucco reliefs, horizontal streamlined ornament, metal railings, cantilevered eyebrows and ribbon windows; and the top, often comprised of a flat roof concealed by ornamental masonry parapet, (shown in the image to the right) finished with smooth stucco painted in white or pastel colors all embody a more typical South Florida art deco building, unlike its European and northern America examples of art deco utilizing luxurious finishes, elongated lines and stylized patterns.



Historical Context and Regional Evolution

In the United States, Art Deco emerged as a product of innovative ideas and movements, drawing inspiration from various distinct early 20th-century European design styles. These styles included Cubism, French Art Deco, German Bauhaus and Expressionism.

The term “Art Deco” gained widespread popularity in the 1980s as public interest in the style surged. It is commonly used to encompass several distinct periods. During the mid to late 1920’s, Art Deco became synonymous with the Skyscraper style, characterized by buildings that rose in every major city. This classical Art Deco style was first popularized in Paris in 1925. It featured expensive materials, angular yet voluptuous forms, and intricate motifs.



European and Northern American Art Deco



The second phase of Art Deco, also known as Streamline Moderne, emerged during the second phase of the boom, “streamlining”, a concept first conceived by industrial designers who stripped Art Deco design of its ornament in favor of the aerodynamic pure-line concept of motion and speed developed from scientific thinking. This phase was less decorative, reflecting the somber mood of the Great Depression. It had characteristics common with modern architecture, including horizontal orientation of glass brick walls or porthole windows, flat roofs, chrome-plated hardware, and horizontal grooves or lines in the walls. They were frequently white or in subdued pastel colors. A good example of this streamlined art deco style can be found in the City of Delray Beach located at 840 E. Atlantic Avenue, known as the Boyd Building, built in 1939 and designed by Gustav Maas.

Unlike the European and northern American predecessors, Art Deco’s history in South Florida is primarily centered around Miami Beach, borrowing traditional craft details and incorporating influences from the streamline machine age. Corners are often rounded, and horizontal lines are expressed and cantilevered eyebrows are a defining characteristic of **Florida Art Deco**.



Boyd Building at 840 E. Atlantic Avenue

The strong horizontal lines of an Art Deco building in Florida are typically juxtaposed to **vertical features** such as towers and marquess that mark the building entrances. Abstract figures and **geometries** often adorn the exterior; in Florida, the native flora and fauna are often represented in panels between windows, or in the signage, parapet, and base of the building. Elements include clearly marked entrances, shaded store fronts, **cantilevered eyebrows** for protection from sun and rain. While stone was typically used in northern examples of the Art Deco, masonry and smooth stucco with light, neutral, or **pastel color** highlights are common in Florida. Openings for doors and windows are recessed, casting deep shadows revealing the thickness and solidity of the structure. Windows are commonly located at corners, emphasizing the **horizontal composition** of the building façade and expressing modern building structural advancement.

Examples of South Florida Art Deco Architectural Style



Colony Hotel – 736 Ocean Drive (1935)



McApIn – 1430 Ocean Drive (1940)

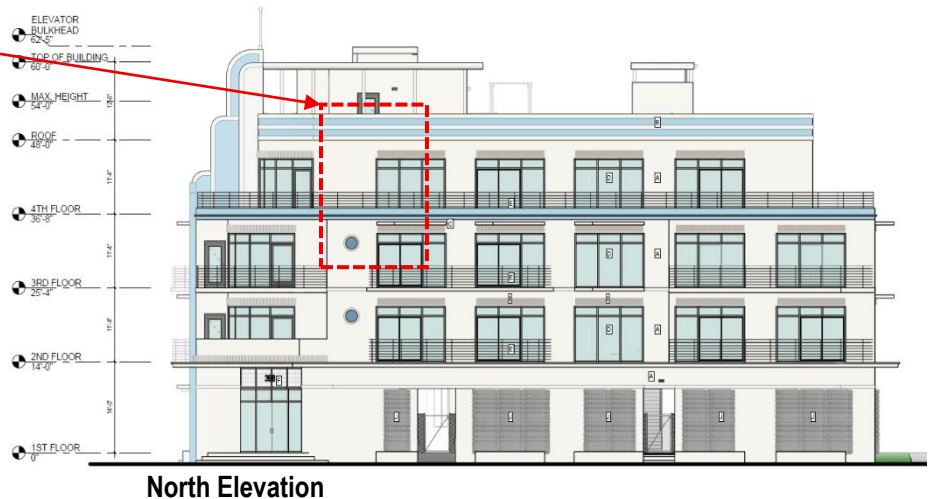
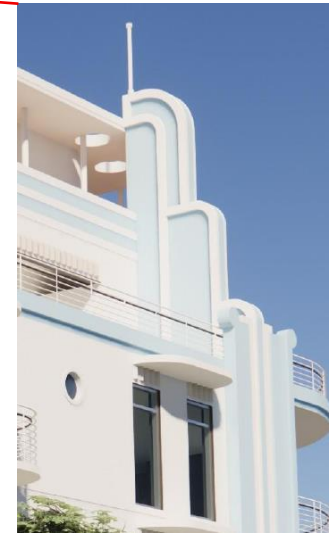
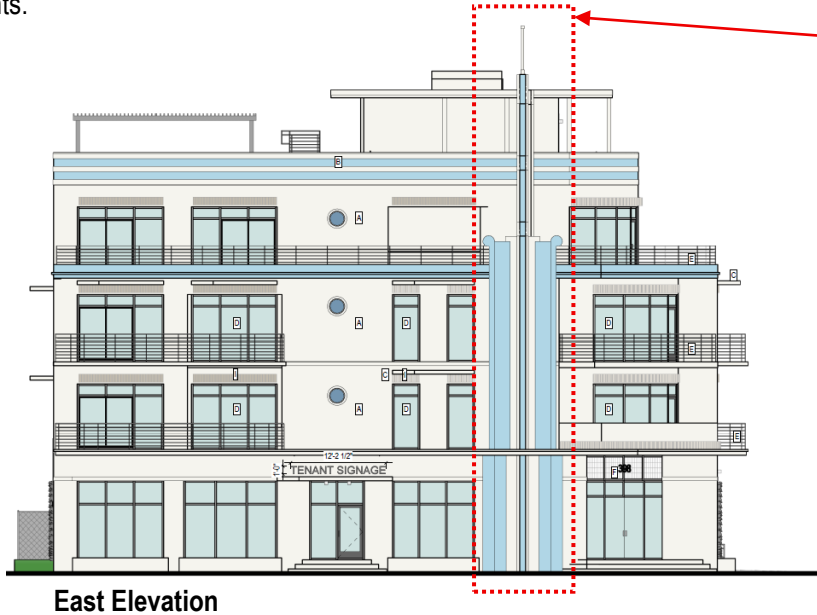


Essex House – 1001 Collins Avenue (1938)

Proposed Design

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

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 horizontal metal framed windows, rounded corners, stucco banding, cantilevered eyebrows, and railings, and a top level with a flat roof and expansive terrace juxtaposed to a vertical oriented marquee element creating a visual anchor and the focal point marking the lobby entrance to the building. Exterior materials include Sherwin Williams "White Snow" stucco, a Sherwin Williams "Drift of Mist" geometric stucco relief, recessed entry and balconies with light, smooth stucco finish creating a clean, simple yet inviting design. The applicant has provided a detailed architectural narrative, rendered facades, and material schedules in support of the style request. The proposed design is shown on the following pages and attached as full-size documents.



It is important to note that the tower element encroaches into the required 20-foot front setback above the third story. The LDR requires that an additional setback be applied for portions of the building extending above the third story, however, if encroachments are utilized in the composition as a defined tower element that is well-integrated into the design and consistent with the CBD design guidelines, then an encroachment into the setback above third story may be granted by the approving board.



Rear View – West Elevation



Side View – South Elevation



NE Corner Elevation



NW Corner Elevation



SW Elevation



SE Elevation



Detailed Evaluation

- **Massing and Facade Composition:** The **north and south facades** benefit from modulation in depth and rhythm. Horizontal orientation, cantilevered eyebrows, ribbon windows, vertical alignment and curved corners creating a balanced and visually appealing look. These features reflect the art deco aesthetic, which relies on symmetrical low horizontal lines and curved edges elements rather than. Conversely, the **south facade is notably unarticulated**, with an expansive stucco plane devoid of fenestration or material relief. This facade lacks both functional and visual permeability. Staff acknowledge the applicant's response regarding privacy and internal design needs but note that other projects have achieved more thoughtful architectural resolution of these constraints, including the use of vertical scoring, or screened openings.
- **Architectural Elements:** Art Deco design often incorporates horizontal streamlined ornaments, eyebrows; cantilevered projections jutting out over windows to provide shade from the sun, curved edges and aerodynamic forms, features of symmetrical facades with groupings of three, large windows and nautical elements such as porthole windows, and metal railings are frequently used. These are largely infused into the proposed design, creating an architectural rhythm and promoting distinct elements that are typically sought in the art deco style. Similarly, these elements are less noticeable on the south elevation and opportunities to incorporate larger windows, ornamental banding and interest from the east elevation to continue the design.
- **Materials and Detail:** The material palette includes predominantly smooth white stucco finish with horizontal colored banding and simple decorative ornament above the windows and cantilevered eyebrows which is appropriate for art deco but lacks the same pattern along the south and west elevation.
- **Roofline:** The parapet treatment is expressive horizontal double banding with subdued blue pastel capturing some visual interest along the roofline as the banding meets the vertical element tying these elements creating a juxtaposing that align with the prominent style element of Art Deco.
- **Corner Treatment and Urban Identity:** At the intersection of NE 6th Avenue and NE 4th 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 elegant material variations or detail 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. A grand corner entrance integrated into the corner structure, a strategically placed, well-designed steps that are built into a corner area, contributing to the overall sense of space and grandeur within the building, along NE 6th Avenue, however, is only modestly marked retail entrance. Likewise, along NE 2nd Street, lacks variation and interest on the ground level, while this may be due to the choice of not integrating an active use, the lack of detail is compromised, missing the mark to create interest at the ground level.
- **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 lack of elements of certain facades and limited articulation may limit its ability to encompass a full execution of art deco elements. A more nuanced treatment of detailing, particularly along pedestrian edges, would enhance the building's contribution to the district's identity and the south elevation from view at NE 6th Avenue.

Conclusion

The proposal exhibits many of the defining features of the Art Deco architectural style, featuring a streamline appearance, curved edges, symmetrical massing, and a neutral material palette. The primary facades are more resolved, with an articulated parapet 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 well realization of the Art Deco architectural style. Further refinement in selected 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 Art Deco style appropriate for both the regional and site-specific context, and does it contribute to the architectural character of downtown Delray Beach within the Central Core sub-district?
- Is the proposed design a well-executed example of the Art Deco style with defining elements such as streamlined form, horizontal emphasis, stucco surfaces, and decorative detailing clearly and consistently represented across the building?

Options for Board Action

- A. Recommendation of **approval** to allow the use of an Art Deco architectural style, pursuant to **LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles**, for the development located at 398 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 an Art Deco architectural style, pursuant to **LDR Section 4.4.13(F)(3)(e), Appropriate Architectural Styles**, for the development located at 398 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**.