

From: Keith Weber [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 9, 2022 3:21 PM
To: Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: 31-57 B. St. Pre-Application (PA2021-082)

I would like to respond to the following Question/Comment raised during the April 11, 2022 pre-application community meeting. Please include in the 5/10/22 Planning Commission Study Session Packet:

Question/Comment: When you go down B Street, there is a lot of brick and masonry type of structures. Is it the intention to tie into the historical feel of Downtown San Mateo?

Harvest Response: Yes, this is an important concept in our design. We have the 2-story brick volume which relates closely to the majority of the buildings along B Street both in terms of height and materiality. Same concept goes for the 3-story brick volume along 1st Ave matching the 3-story buildings across the street. The brick base of the building ties in the materiality of the surrounding neighborhood with detailing and features reminiscent of some of the earlier architecture in the surrounding neighborhood. The curtain walls on level 4-5 fades into the sky, reduces visual impact while showcasing the beautiful natural material of mass timber. We also soften the building with lush landscape design both on the ground plane and terraces on every level of the building. Walking down the street in real life (as opposed to looking at a rendering), what you are really going to feel is the lower 2 – 3 story condition.

My Response to Harvest: I'm very glad to know that relating the proposed building to the Downtown Historic District is important to you and your architects. Building a 2-3 story brick volume that "matches" the buildings across the street is a good start. However, plunking a modern glass structure on top undercuts the entire concept and creates a confusing mass rather than a cohesive design. Instead of designing two buildings, one on top of the other, I think a more successful approach would be to design a single building of unified design, such as these recent buildings in Redwood City (photos below). Clearly contemporary office structures, these two successful new buildings use a traditional architectural vocabulary while meeting current client needs.

I look forward to a revised and more unified design that can be a successful addition to downtown San Mateo.

Thank you,
Keith Weber,
San Mateo

