

Attachment E -
Urban Design Consultant Review Memorandum



Winston LLC
Preliminary Review Memorandum

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To: George Ruther

From: Jeff Winston

Project: Hill Building Redevelopment, 4240 Architects, PEC SUBMITTAL #1 2017-04-10

An unusual project for Vail, this application actually proposes to not only to bring the building into higher compliance with the Design Guidelines, but also to do so by reducing the bulk, mass, and footprint of the buildings.

Vail Village Sub-area Concepts

The only Sub-area Concept affecting this building is Gore Creek Drive/Bridge Street #11:

Increase facade transparency on south side to strengthen pedestrian activity, with entry to street. Potential expansion of building to south property line. Additional vertical expansion maybe considered on south end of building to improve street enclosure proportions but must respect designated Hill street - Gore Range view corridors. Potential second level open balcony deck (sun pocket) to restore activity to street lost from ground floor terrace.

These comments identified potential objectives if the Hill Building were to expand, and focus on ways to retain or improve street enclosure, views, and street-level activity. The proposed building design accomplishes all of that.

Urban Design Concepts

In general, we concur with the application narrative, that the proposed changes to the building do not change, and/or continue to be consistent with (and slightly improve) all the Urban Design Concepts (Pedestrianization, Vehicular Penetration, Streetscape Framework, Street Enclosure, Street Edge, Building Height, View Corridors, Sun-Shade, Service/Delivery).

Design Considerations

We strongly agree with the application narrative, that the proposed building improvements **maintain or improve** the existing level of consistency with:

Roof forms, pitch, overhangs, composition
Facades materials, color, transparency
Windows
Doors
Trim
Decks and Patios
Balconies
Lighting/Signage
Service

There are however, several proposed design considerations that deserve further discussion:

1. **Roof materials**—the roof is proposed to be of copper. It will be shiny to begin with, but will eventually weather to a dull green/gray. This sets a relatively new precedent for roofs in the Village. Most of the roofs have maintained the “shake-shingle character, which is composed of two characteristics: black or dark gray color, and a texture articulated by fine-grained shadow lines.

While not opposed to using a new material that will provide fire safety, low maintenance, and durability, we encourage that the roof be designed with a **“thick” appearance** giving it the mass of shake-shingles, and that a **fine-grained texture** pattern be used to help the roof blend in with surrounding roofs as seen from the mountain or other vantage points.

2. **Facade Materials, Windows** (Uniformity)—the proposed ground floor windows on all 4 sides of the building are identical. However, Vail has an interesting “evolved over time” variety, even within some of the larger single buildings. We would support allowing some variety in the design of windows, and wood paneling, on the varies sides of the building.
3. **Materials** (Stone)—we support the conversion of the brick chimneys to stone, and encourage the use of traditional “early Vail” stone work: slightly irregular edges and faces, hidden mortar, and larger stones at the base.

The remaining comments are related to helping the building “heal the site,” a term from Chris Alexander that refers to the role of each new building to fit into, and improve, the function and quality of its urban context.

4. **Facade transparency** on the ground floor—the Hill Building sits in an unusually prominent location: between two major pedestrian streets (Bridge Street and Wall

Street) and fronting on 3 plazas (Seibert Circle to the east, Founders' Plaza to the south, and Concert Hall Plaza to the west). All in all, a major objective of the Urban Design Plan is to give animate and give interest and vitality to Vail's pedestrian streets and plazas.

While the proposed improvements to the Hill Building maintain or increase the transparency of the ground floor commercial facades, there are still several ground floor segments, especially those fronting on Seibert Circle, that are solid blank walls or blocked from the plaza by overgrown trees and landscape features. These critical facades do not interact with, and in fact tend to deaden, one whole side the plaza.

We encourage further study to explore ways of **creating more window and door transparency**, more interior-exterior interaction and animation, for this critical facade.

Since the single garage door doesn't lend itself to increased transparency, it would be highly desirable to relocate it to a less prominent location (west side?). If truly not possible, perhaps replace the rolling overhead door with a type of door that "implies" more transparency, such as a decorative wood, side-hinged "carriage house" door.

5. **Landscape elements**—related to the comment above, fronting on Seibert Circle are 3 very mature Spruce trees that present a solid barrier between the Hill Building and Seibert Circle. We support the removal and replacement of these trees IF more transparency and unifying landscaping can be created.

jtw