

# LOHAN ANDERSON

## MEMORANDUM

ATTN:	Craig M. Failor – Oak Park Village Planner
FROM:	Floyd D. Anderson
DATE:	6 July 2015
REGARDING:	<b>Oak Park Station Development – Architectural Review</b>
DISTRIBUTION:	Bill Boznos – LA; File

I have reviewed the architectural information available for the Oak Park Station Development proposed by Clark Street Development and Lennar and designed by FitzGerald Associates Architects. I looked at the Resubmitted Planned Development Application (December 2014) and also recently met with the architects.

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall the style of architecture for the development is moderately modern.

The north parcel with the 5 story building is a bit more traditional yet does not attempt to mimic an historical style – an approach which I think is good. It's height and massing and material choices fit in well with the existing buildings along Lake Street.

The south parcel includes a parking structure and a 20 story component and it demonstrates a more modern aesthetic, primarily with the use of more glass and the perforated metal panels on the garage. I find no fault with the slightly different approach to the design of the two parcels and they share enough common design features to make them compatible buildings.

In summary, the overall design of the project is generally compatible with this key area of Oak Park. The design is not making a dramatic design statement or trying to “push the envelope” on design but has rather taken on the approach of fitting into the existing neighborhood. While I personally think that Oak Park needs some world class cutting edge architectural projects, this location and this use may not be the right venue for that goal. I think the overall design concept proposed, if executed well, will make a good addition to the Village and has the potential to upgrade the retail vitality of the Lake Street downtown.

Following are some specific comments that need addressing.

**COMMENT 1 – East Garage Façade of the South Building**

Beginning at the public alley that is adjacent to east side of this block, and continuing along the 15 foot wide alley on this block, there is an open garage. **The materials are exposed structural concrete and block in-fill.** This portion of the development will be visible along the Elevated tracks and somewhat visible from North Boulevard. The building to the east of this south block is lower than the garage plinth and does not have views oriented toward the garage but any future development on the adjacent property could choose to have views toward this garage. The parking plinth also terminates at two different heights due to the internal layout and therefore does not have a consistent horizontal termination (top). **This openness and stepped top gives this façade a raw and unfinished appearance that is inconsistent with the rest of the development’s design and finishes.** Reference Attachment A and the items listed below.

- Reference the “*Looking Southwest*” perspective drawing on Exhibit 17.A of the PD Resubmittal (page 314 of the PDF).
- Reference the “*East Elevation – South Building*” elevation drawing on Exhibit 23.H of the PD Resubmittal (page 349 of the PDF).
- Reference Image below.

Recommendation 1 – This façade (along both alleys) should be clad with materials and a design that is compatible with the rest of the development.

A revised elevation should be submitted for review.



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### **COMMENT 2 – New Facades Adjacent to Existing Buildings**

There are three locations where the new construction immediately abuts existing buildings; 1) Lake Street, 2) North side of Westgate St. and 3) South side of Westgate St. In all locations there is not enough information to judge how well the façade design of the new construction is coordinated with the existing. In all locations the existing buildings have some strong architectural features and styles that should be considered and coordinated with any new design. Reference Attachment A and the items listed below.

- Reference the “*North Elevation – South Building*” elevation drawing on Exhibit 23.I of the PD Resubmittal (page 350 of the PDF).
- Reference the “*North Elevation – North Building*” elevation drawing on Exhibit 23.B of the PD Resubmittal (page 343 of the PDF).
- Reference the “*South Elevation – North Building*” elevation drawing on Exhibit 23.D of the PD Resubmittal (page 345 of the PDF).

Recommendation 2 – These three areas should be studied relative to the existing context and the design adjusted as is appropriate. Revised elevation drawings and/or other exhibits should be submitted for review.



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2) View looking north along Westgate St.



3) View looking south along Westgate St.



### **COMMENT 3 – Garage Cladding**

In the July 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan Commission meeting one of the Commissioners expressed concern over the look of the painted metal panels proposed for the garage façade. I think that the three tones of grey suggested for the coloring, and as shown in the most recent rendering (see below), do not suggest a very interesting or inspired façade. However, **I do not have any objection with the use of this panel** nor the idea of coloring. The animation of the development depicted a palette of blues and more correctly depicted the mosaic of individual panels that will have open shadows between the panels. So, the use of color and the dual patterns of the perforated holes plus the panels themselves, I think can create a perfectly acceptable and interesting façade. Reference Attachment A and the items listed below.

- Reference the “*West Elevation – South Building*” elevation drawing on Exhibit 23.F of the PD Resubmittal (page 347 of the PDF).
- Reference the “*South Elevation – South Building*” elevation drawing on Exhibit 23.G of the PD Resubmittal (page 348 of the PDF).

Recommendation 3 – I would encourage the architect’s to refine this cladding proposal, perhaps with more colors and to submit revised drawings and renderings. Secondly I question the use of the brick band along the top of the garage. While the architect’s may have been using it to visually separate the garage from the tower, I think the metal panels and the mass of the garage itself do that quite well. I would also suggest that the Village require that these panels be aluminum. The architect’s have indicated that the intent is to use aluminum but it would be most unfortunate if they were later value engineered to ferrous metal which no matter how well coated will probably start to rust.

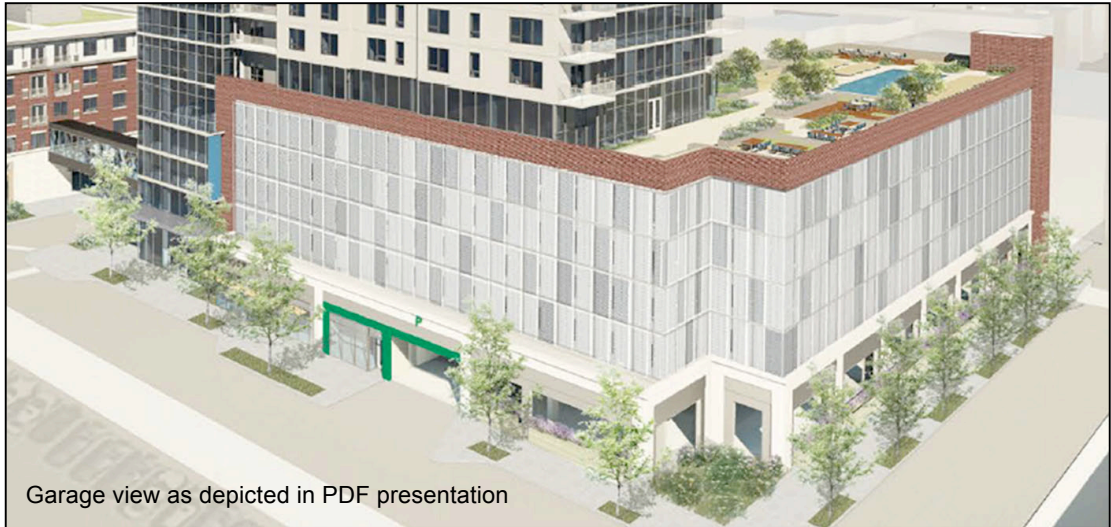
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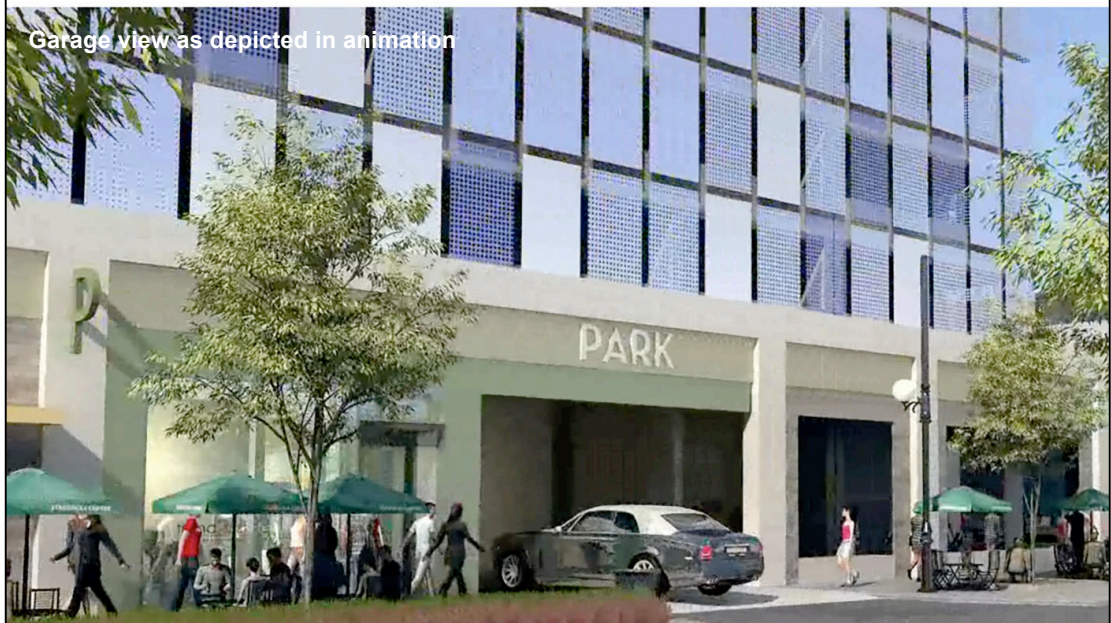
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Garage view as depicted in PDF presentation



Garage view as depicted in animation

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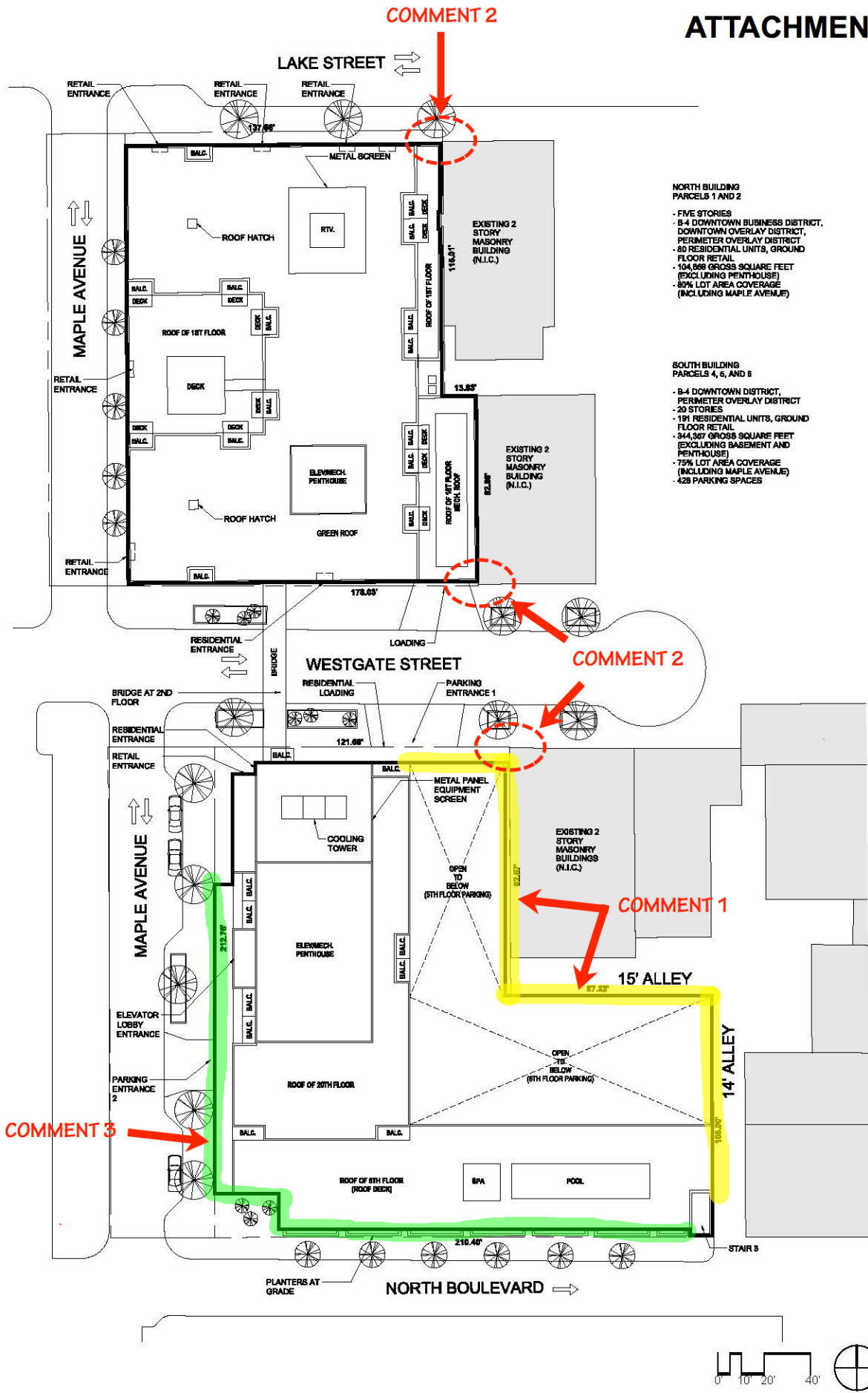
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#### **COMMENT 4 – Materials & Detailing**

Since this is a Conceptual Design with materials shown, details have not yet been developed. While the overall design aesthetic may be acceptable, **if the project is not designed well, if good materials are not used and/or if the construction is not executed well, any building can start to show defects or wear that detracts from it's appearance and the neighborhood.** For example can Fiber Cement board (used on the North Building) have an acceptable appearance or will it start to weather and deteriorate faster than other materials such as cement plaster or brick? How do the materials such as the metal cladding meet the ground? Will they deteriorate faster because of our winters or will there be some base such as stone at the pavement?

Recommendation 4 – It may be in the Village's interest to require some periodic review(s) as the design is detailed to help insure a level of quality consistent with the goals of the Village. I also suggest that more detailed drawings of the retail base for all of the project be submitted to allow an evaluation of the quality and details proposed.

# ATTACHMENT A



- NORTH BUILDING  
PARCELS 1 AND 2**
- FIVE STORIES
  - S-4 DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT, DOWNTOWN OVERLAY DISTRICT, PERIMETER OVERLAY DISTRICT
  - 80 RESIDENTIAL UNITS, GROUND FLOOR RETAIL
  - 104,889 GROSS SQUARE FEET (EXCLUDING PENTHOUSE)
  - 80% LOT AREA COVERAGE (INCLUDING MAPLE AVENUE)

- SOUTH BUILDING  
PARCELS 4, 6, AND 8**
- S-4 DOWNTOWN DISTRICT, PERIMETER OVERLAY DISTRICT
  - 20 STORIES
  - 191 RESIDENTIAL UNITS, GROUND FLOOR RETAIL
  - 344,327 GROSS SQUARE FEET (EXCLUDING BASEMENT AND PENTHOUSE)
  - 75% LOT AREA COVERAGE (INCLUDING MAPLE AVENUE)
  - 428 PARKING SPACES