



**MILL CITY QUARTER—PHASE 2:
PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**MINNEAPOLIS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
JUNE 3, 2014 MEETING**

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Introduction

The Mill City Quarter (MCQ) development site is bounded by Second Street to the south, Third Avenue to the west, Fifth Avenue to the east, and the River West high-rise complex and the Mill Place office building to the north. The site is currently occupied by a large surface parking lot. The proposed project is an infill, dense urban development that will include mostly residential units, plus a modest amount of commercial/retail space. This use is consistent with the C3A zoning of the site and with the adjacent residential and retail uses. The transit-oriented, mixed-use development will occur in two phases and will greatly enhance the connectivity from the Mill District neighborhood to the Mississippi River.

Third-Party owner Mill Place, Inc. owns the former rail corridor that runs from Second Street to the riverfront on a northwest-southeast diagonal, bisecting the property. Mill Place ownership has been actively engaged in four years of planning for the MCQ project. The development team has reached a Memorandum of Understanding with Mill Place that guides the development of the project to permit a unique pedestrian/bike/river connection through collaboration and easements. Cross-easements between Mill Quarter and Mill Place's properties permit creation of a "Woonerf," a concept pioneered in the Netherlands, where bikes, cars, pedestrians, and public spaces all co-exist, and speeds are reduced for cars. Shared parking is a consideration for Mill Place.

At its meeting on November 19, 2013, the Heritage Preservation Commission approved Certificates of Appropriateness for the design of Phase 1, the Mill City Quarter Apartments and plaza at 300 South Second Street (BZH-27892), and for the site master plan, which included Phase 2 (BZH-27893). Lupe Development Partners is the developer for Phase 1. Another developer, Ecumen, is preparing plans for Phase 2, which is on the other side of the Woonerf. Photographs of the site are appended.

Phase 2 Developer: Ecumen

Ecumen is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation with over 150 years of service. Headquartered in the Minneapolis/Saint Paul area, we are led by a 15-member board of trustees, we are the one of the largest non-profit providers of older-adult services in the state of Minnesota, and one of the top 20 in the nation.

Our roots extend to the early 1860s, when through the Lutheran Church, we provided foster care services to children. In the early 1900s, Ecumen's predecessor organizations began providing senior housing and services. The name Ecumen (since 2004) comes from the Greek word for home: "Oikos." It underscores our mission to "Create home for older adults wherever they choose to live."

Our senior housing and consumer services include independent living communities, assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing care, and at-home care. Additionally, we provide senior housing development, marketing, and senior housing management services for organizations outside of Ecumen.

With annual revenues of approximately \$150 million, Ecumen owns and operates more than 4,000 units of senior housing in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Idaho, Nebraska, and Tennessee. We will soon be expanding into Michigan and Illinois as well.

Ecumen owned and managed communities employ more than 3,500 people with an even more extensive volunteer and customer base. We are a multi-year winner of the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal's* Best Places to Work award, and have been named by the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* as one of the state's top 100 places to work.

The Project

In Minneapolis, Ecumen is proposing approximately 104 apartment homes for individuals over the age of 62. Apartment homes of this nature are built to an Ecumen standard ensuring they are adaptable and accessible to customers over 62 years of age, though equipped to serve one through end of life if they so choose. This includes walk in showers, grab bars, and accessible pulls on finished cabinetry, plumbing fixtures and much more. Other features and services that will be offered within the community include:

- A rich dining program in either a restaurant style dining venue, café, or room service delivered to the home on demand
- Housekeeping services
- 24-hour staff, security and response system
- Scheduled wellness activities
- Interior and exterior apartment maintenance
- Concierge services including transportation arrangement, dry cleaning services, grocery delivery coordination, event ticket procurement, etc.
- Home care services available

A memory care program with approximately 45 homes will offer a secure environment for our customers with licensed staff present and on-call 24-hours day. Staffing ratios in programs like these can vary by time and day, and acuity of the customers, but is traditionally 1:6 or 1:7. This environment is meant to provide total care for individuals with memory loss, Alzheimer's and other related forms of dementia. Generally these customers are represented by a legal guardian or health care proxy that is making decisions on their behalf.

Traditionally this type of program would include (though not limited to):

- Registered nursing oversight and care coordination
- Assistance with hygiene, toileting and grooming
- Medication management and administration
- Escorts to and from meals and activities
- Monitoring of vital signs and weight
- Three meals per day with snacks available
- Scheduled wellness programs

The Design

The Heritage Preservation Commission has previously reviewed and approved the design for Phase 1, which was submitted by Lupe Development Partners. Phase 2, the subject of the current proposal, will consist of a five-story building that will include 104 independent living housing units for seniors and 45 memory-care units for senior residents needing assistance. This will introduce housing choices that are currently needed and underrepresented in this neighborhood. Phase 2 will offer a total of approximately 179 parking stalls below and above ground. Access to the parking facility will be from the access drive on the north side of the property. Bicycle parking will be provided to meet a ratio of 0.5 bike spaces per dwelling unit.

The design will include landscaped open spaces to foster gathering of people and to facilitate pedestrian traffic and enhance the pedestrian experience around the building and on adjacent properties and the public right-of-way.

Using historical site photos as inspiration, the design concept is based on the rails that once occupied the site, employing paving materials and potentially railroad artifacts to abstract the pattern of a rail yard. Within this framework we intend to create plaza spaces that bridge the two parcels and surround the historic spur location. This woonerf concept will be a curbsless environment, defining vehicular travel lanes via bollards and changes in paving surface type/color. Designed for very slow speeds (<10 mph), similar to those typically found in parking lots, it allows the pedestrian to become the focus of the space and the vehicle is seen as the “visitor.”

The design is also intended to provide a much-needed and very direct physical connection between the greater downtown area and the Mississippi River. Together with Phase 1, this development will be a strong link between the future Water Works Park on West River Parkway and the Mill District Neighborhood along Second Street. The open space of this project will enhance recreational and cultural opportunities for residents of the neighborhood and visitors to the park, providing an important link in the City’s transportation network, joining the extensive off-street bike trails of the Parkway with multiple bus lines and nearby light rail transit.

A large landscaped plaza adjacent to the “swoop” of the woonerf provides safe and inviting outdoor spaces for relaxing and socializing, for residents and visitors of the project as well as patrons at the small café space. Trees and native perennials and grasses line the woonerf, randomly spaced within a continuous band of pervious pavers. The band of pervious pavers will simultaneously provide natural irrigation for the plants while infiltrating stormwater and will allow for a subtle randomization of plantings that recalls the wild river banks nearby.

This project team is committed to demonstrating a number of best management practices (BMP) for stormwater management and Low-Impact Development (LID). Some of the concepts and techniques being proposed include rainwater harvesting, vegetated walls, pervious paving, pixilated parking, green roofs and underground detention.

Site connections for the Phase 2 project units will focus on protected and flexible outdoor space. We envision exploring a three-season space that connects directly to the woonerf/river

connection path. Both indoor and outdoor plants will be chosen to enhance the care of those residents in assisted living and memory care, as there are particular plants that can trigger memory and bring pleasure.

Individual units will have direct, walk-up access along Fifth Avenue, providing additional life at street level and opportunities to create individual, micro-landscapes that serves as “front yards” for those units. Walk-up units facing Second Street will open onto a landscaped courtyard that will have direct access to the public right-of-way, adding additional visual interest to the neighborhood streetscape and providing additional eyes on the street.

The building placement addresses the primary street intersection, with minimal to no building setbacks along Fifth Avenue and Second Street. On the north property line, the building setback ranges from 20-30 feet. Along the woonerf edge, the building setback ranges from 0 to 30+ feet, with recessed courtyards provided for outdoor seating and recreation.

The building massing and material selection works to maintain the traditional building width and scale seen along 2nd Street within the West Side Milling Area. Although the overall building length is longer than traditionally seen, the massing and the materials break down the overall feel and shape of the building into something more traditional to the district. The variation from the rectilinear massing occurs at the recessed exterior courtyards and at the angular cut of the woonerf. The building features a taller first level with strong masonry base creating a strong street presence. The architecture of the upper levels is organized by gridded facades of a single material, accented with windows and recessed balconies. The design and character of these facades creates a complementary architectural language to the rest of the district.

Primary building materials consist of brick, metal panels, cement board siding and glass. The materials are distributed in a way to break the scale of the building down to more traditional widths within the character area. The primary brick will be a buff color, recalling the historic tones of the district. Gray and charcoal brick will be used at level 1, reinforcing a strong base. The brick placement is focused to anchor the building edges and accentuate the primary facades along Fifth Avenue, Second Street, and the woonerf.

Modern materials of gray metal panel and dark brown cement board are used as compliments to the masonry. The use of cement board is limited in scope and used as a secondary material. Glazing locations are an important piece of the design. The majority of the locations have a very traditional gridded layout seen throughout the district. This building incorporates a corner window detail into the larger gridded building masses to add interest and differentiate the building. This detail came out of numerous meetings with potential senior residents that expressed the desire for great views and large areas of glazing.

Details of projecting canopies and openings reflect a more ‘industrial’ character compatible to the district. Balconies along the primary street facades will be recessed so that the railing is in line with the elevation while projected balconies will be incorporated on the non-primary building walls. Through wall mechanical unit grills will be located in these recessed areas on the primary facades. The grills will be flush with the façade on non-primary elevations.

The design has been developed in consultation with CPED staff and the project's historical consultant, with guidance from the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines and, specifically, the Water Power Character Area. The architects have made modifications in response to comments, including:

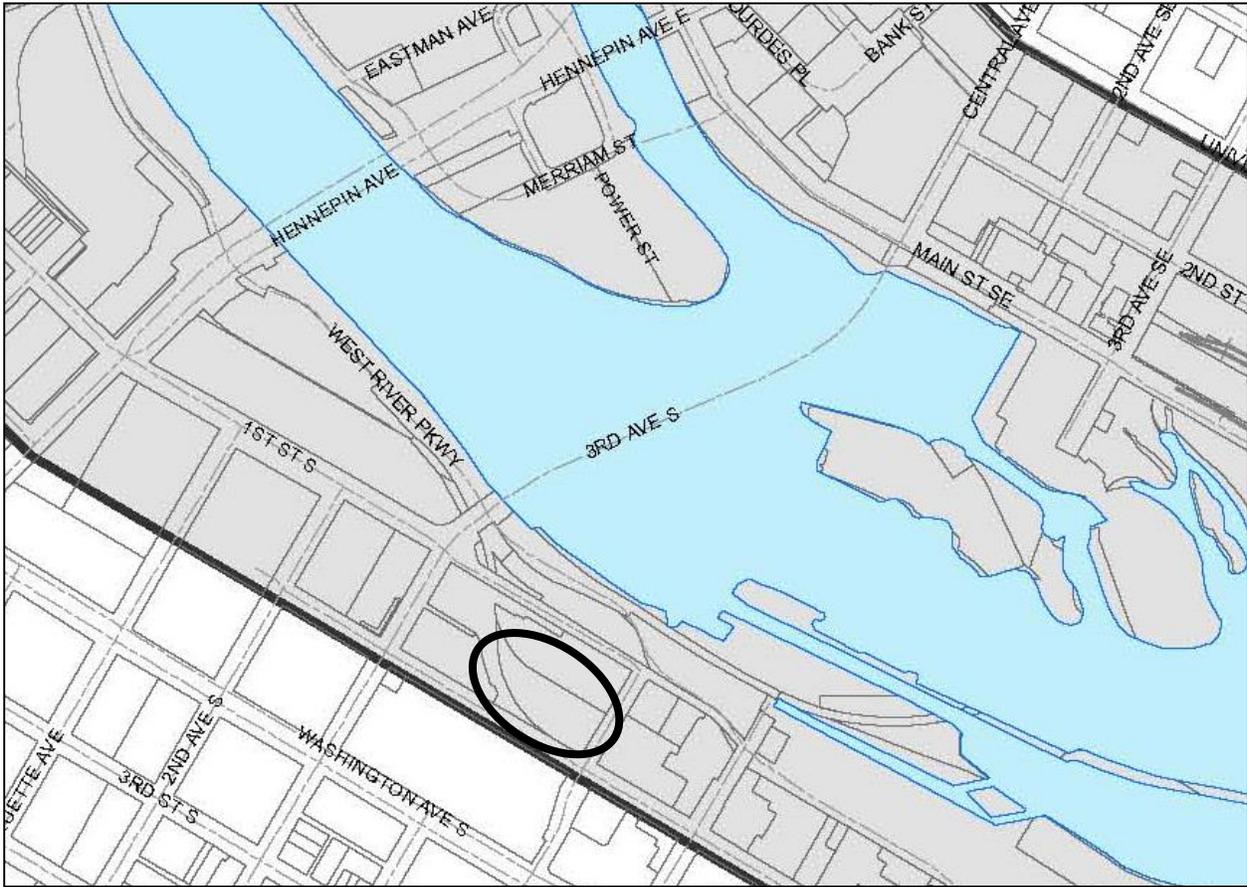
- *Phases 1 and 2 are too similar in height (both 6 stories).* Design response: The massing of Phase 2 has been rearranged, creating a 5 story building.
- *The building entry is not clearly identifiable from Second Street.* Design response: The building entry has been relocated just off of the Woonerf very near 2nd Street.
- *The base of the building needs to be more solid to fit the district.* Design response: Early iterations featured metal panel at the base. The current design now features 2 styles of brick at the base.
- *Materials selection needs to be limited.* Design response: Early iterations featured additional materials. The current design minimizes material selection and uses similar tones to compliment materials (Gray Brick to Gray Metal, Dark Brick to Dark Brown Cement board).

Review Item Requests

In addition to general feedback on the project's design, we would appreciate knowing if the HPC has any preferences as we consider final color selections for the upper material tones (see sample boards):

- Upper Materials
 - Buff Brick – Primary material, Selection tonal range to compliment historic buildings along 2nd Street
 - Gray Metal – Light or Mid gray to compliment the brick
 - Dark Cement Board – Secondary material, darker tone to contrast and compliment the brick and metal
- Upper Color Schemes
 - Brick - Buff 1, Metal - Light gray, Cement Board – Dark Brown tone
 - Brick – Buff 2, Metal – Mid gray, Cement Board – Espresso tone
 - Brick – Buff 1, Metal – Light Gray, Cement Board – Dark Gray
- Base Materials
 - Dark Brick
 - Dark Burnished Block (used on alley)
 - Gray Brick

Photographs/Map



Detail of Saint Anthony Falls Historic District.

Location of MCQ Phase 2 is circled.

*(Map from Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission website:
http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/hpc/docs/St_Anthony_Falls_HD.pdf)*



Top: Looking northwest from Second Street along the approximate alignment of the woonerf in the former rail corridor.

Bottom: Looking southeast along the former railroad corridor from the First Street Bridge.



Top: Looking northwest at the east end of the site from the corner of First Street and Fifth Avenue.

Bottom: Looking west from Fifth Avenue.