Certified Recommendation
of the City of Raleigh Planning Commission

City of Raleigh
Development Plans Review Center
One Exchange Plaza
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 516-2626
www.raleighnc.gov

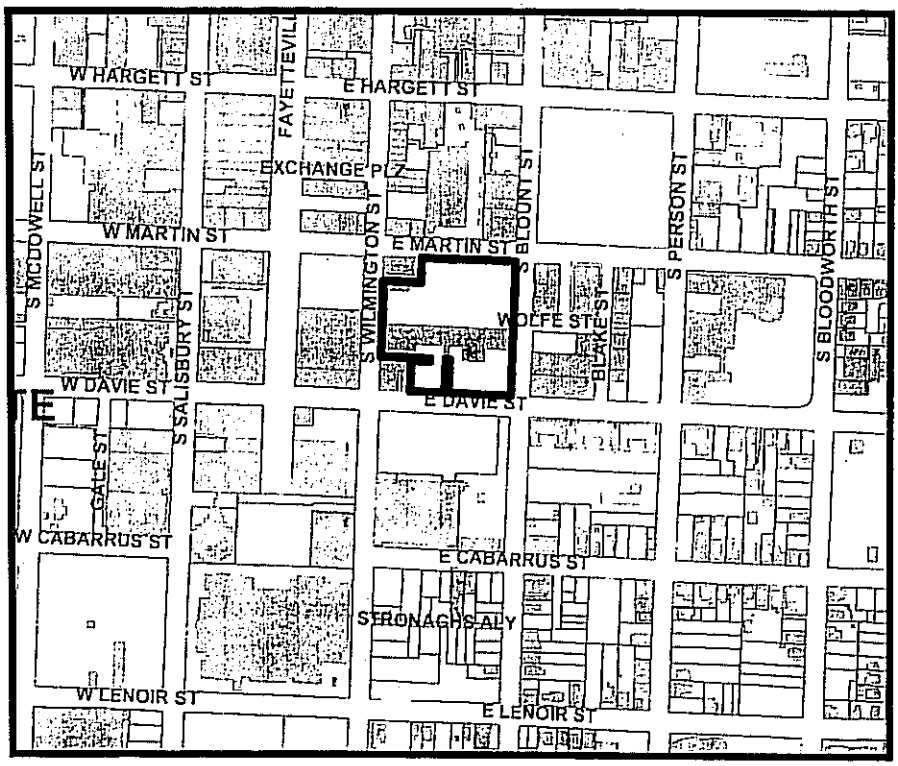
Case File / Name: SP-37-07 / Parking Deck on Blount Street

General Location: Central Portion of the block (running east-west) surrounded by Blount Street to the east, Davie Street to the south, Wilmington Street to the west and Martin Street to the north. The project has street frontage on Blount and Wilmington Streets.

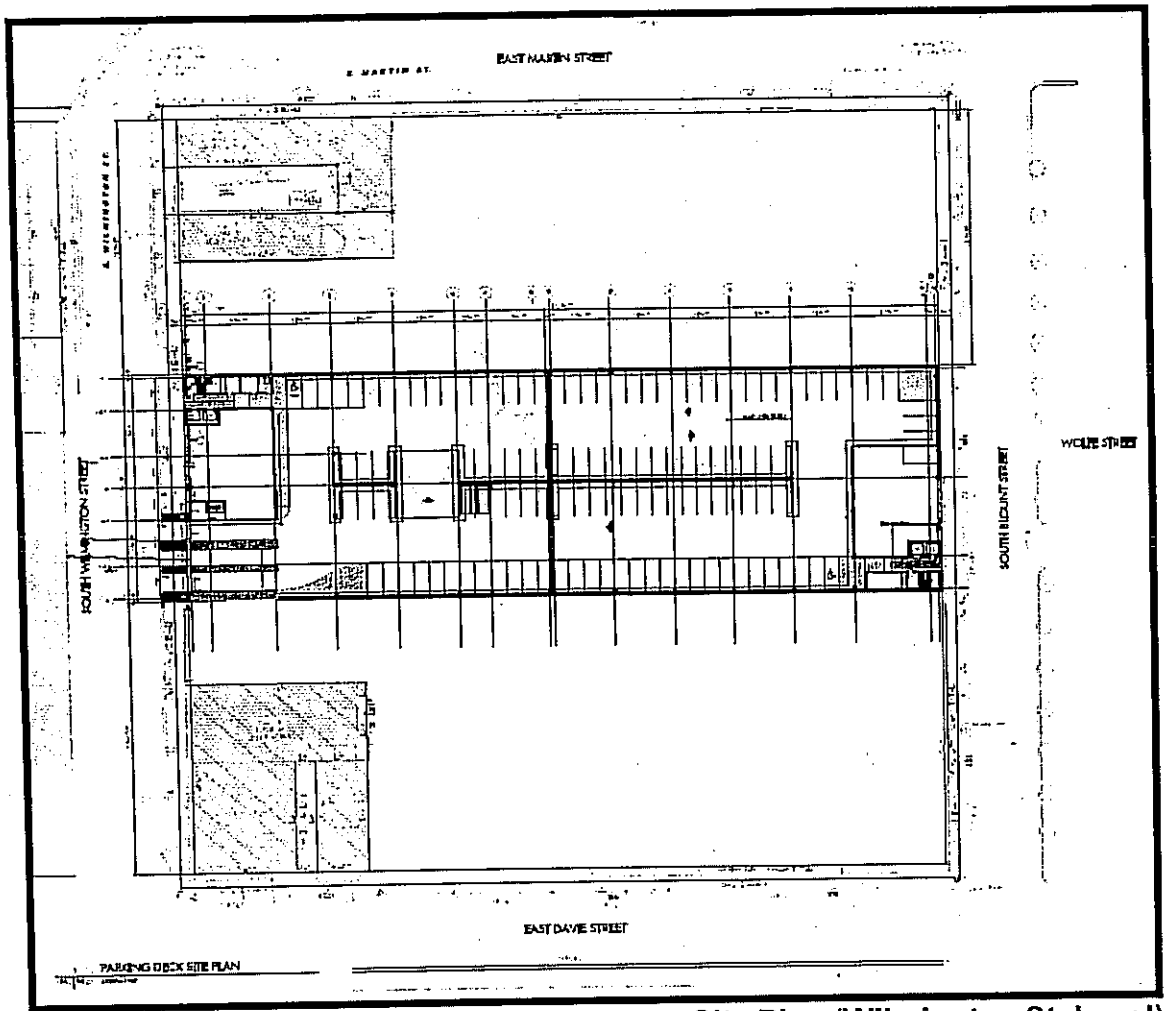
Planning District / CAC: Central/Central

Nature of Case: A 395,158 square foot eight level public/private parking deck containing 1,238 parking spaces and 5,734 square feet of retail space. The retail space will be comprised of two storefronts with one facing Blount Street and one facing Wilmington Street. The deck will have an entrance/exit onto both Blount and Wilmington Streets. An automatic teller machine will also be located on both Blount and Wilmington Streets. The site is the center third of the block, if bisected east to west, and is comprised of 3.59 acres zoned Business Zone and Downtown Overlay District. The proposed height of the tallest portion of the deck (elevator/stair tower) is 108' on Blount Street and 95' on Wilmington Street. This plan requires City Council approval because it is for a structure in excess of 10,000 square feet in the Downtown Overlay District and it is for a building that is 80 feet or more in height.

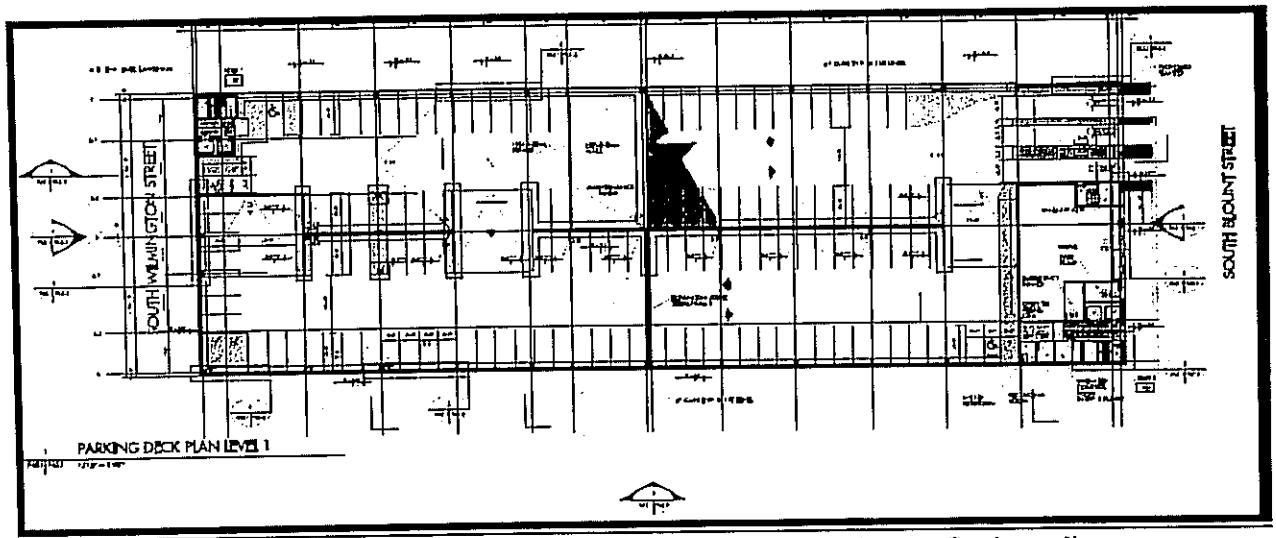
Contact: Michael Allen, Mulkey Engineers & Consultants



SP-37-07 / Parking Deck on Blount Street – Location Map



SP-37-07 / Parking Deck on Blount Street – Site Plan (Wilmington St. Level)



SP-37-07 / Parking Deck on Blount Street – Site Plan (Blount St. Level)

SUBJECT: SP-37-07 / Parking Deck on Blount Street

CROSS-REFERENCE: N/A

LOCATION: This site is located in the block bounded by Blount Street on the east, Davie Street on the South, Wilmington Street on the south and Martin Street on the north, inside the City Limits.

REQUEST: This request is to approve a 395,158 square foot eight level public/private parking deck containing 1,238 parking spaces and 5,734 square feet of retail space on a 3.59 acre site, zoned Business Zone and Downtown Overlay District. The proposed height of the tallest portion of the deck (elevator/stair tower) is 108' feet. This plan requires City Council approval because it is for a structure in excess of 10,000 square feet in the Downtown Overlay District and it is for a building that is 80 feet or more in height.

The parcels to the north and south are slated for future redevelopment as well by another party however no development plans have been formally submitted to the City for review. The developer of this parcel and the adjacent parcels have taken into account future plans to cover this deck with a green roof level that will serve as a roof terrace serving the parcels to the north and south of this proposed deck. The future adjacent development/s may also have parking deck connections tying into this deck if approved. Those projects will require separate approvals.

OFFICIAL ACTION: **Approval with conditions**

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL: **As noted on the Staff Report, attached**

FINDINGS: The Planning Commission finds that, with the conditions of approval below being met, this request conforms to Chapter 2, Part 10, Sections 10-2043, 10-2051, and 10-2132.2, Chapter 3, Part 10, Sections 10-3001-3059. This approval is based on a preliminary plan dated 7/10/07, owned by Highwoods Properties, submitted by Mulkey Engineers & Consultants.

ADDITIONAL NOTES: There are no additional notes for this plan.

To PC: 7/17/07

Case History:
To CC: 7/24/07 **City Council Status:** _____

Staff Coordinator: Eric Hodge

Motion: Anderson
Second: Smith
In Favor: Anderson, Bartholomew, Butler, Chambliss, Davis, Harris Edmisten, Haq, Holt, Mullins, Smith
Opposed:
Excused:

This document is a true and accurate statement of the findings and recommendations of the Planning Commission. Approval of this document incorporates all of the findings of the Staff Report attached.

Signatures: (Planning Dir.) (PC Chair)

_____ _____

date:_____ date: 7/19/07

Staff Report

RECOMMENDED ACTION: **Approval with Conditions**

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

City Council Actions:

(1) That the City Council finds that this site plan meets the standards for approval of a preliminary site plan, Code Section 10-2132(d);

(2) That the City Council finds that increase in building height to 108 feet is in accordance with the general plans for the physical development of the City as embodied in the current Raleigh Downtown Urban Design Guidelines;

(3) That if the construction of buildings wrapping the northern and/or southern sides of the parking deck has not commenced within 2 years of the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the parking deck, that the northern and/or southern facades of the deck shall be painted to match the finished facades of the western and eastern portions of the deck and street protective yard plantings be installed along the remainder of the site's street frontages;

Administrative Actions:

Prior to issuance of a grading permit for the site:

(4) That a final site plan be submitted to the Conservation Engineer in the Public Works Department. That final site plan shall include a final stormwater control plan for stormwater runoff control and nitrogen reduction, including a stormwater operations and maintenance manual and budget, showing compliance with Part 10 chapter 9;

(5) That as the developer is requesting an exemption from the stormwater runoff control provisions under 10-9023(b)(1), detailed engineering studies shall be submitted to the Conservation Engineer in the Public Works Department (before land disturbance or lot recording, whichever comes first) that show the increase in peak stormwater runoff between pre-development and post-development conditions for the two-year storm is ten percent (10%) or less at each point of discharge

Prior to issuance of building permits in the Inspections Department:

(6) That the City Attorney approve a public sidewalk easement for any portion of the proposed pedestrian ways on private property adjacent to public right of way;

(7) That an encroachment agreement for any steps, plantings, planters, awnings, underground stormwater detention piping etc. to be located within the public right-of-way is approved by the City Council by separate action. An application for encroachment into the public right of way for any of the items indicated on the preliminary plan shall be submitted to the City's Encroachment Coordinator in the Inspections Department for review, and

that the City Council approves the encroachment request. Following City Council approval of the encroachment, an encroachment agreement, prepared in accordance with Raleigh City Code Sections 12-1001 and 12-1021(a), shall be filed with the Inspections Department, and that the encroachment agreement is to be recorded with the Wake County Register of Deeds. Maintenance of the encroachment shall be the responsibility of the owner;

(8) That the Planning Director approve revisions to the parking deck's Wilmington and Blount Street facades and drive isles that provide a higher level of detail at the pedestrian level so as to add interest for pedestrians at the street level and increase pedestrian safety.

ZONING:

ZONING DISTRICTS: Business Zone and Downtown Overlay District.

SETBACKS / HEIGHT: This plan conforms to all minimum setback standards. Front yard = 0', rear yard = 0", front / rear aggregate = 0', side yard = 0', side yard aggregate = 0'. Proposed height of the building is 108'

PARKING: This 1,238 space (27 of which are HC) parking deck is being proposed by Highwoods Properties to support the RBC Plaza Tower located across Wilmington Street from this site but it is not exclusively for their use. While 528 spaces on the uppermost levels of the deck will be reserved for Highwoods/RBC, the deck will also provide 714 parking spaces for public parking, though some or all of these spaces may be leased to other users in the future. The proposed retail uses require no parking spaces under the recently adopted text change [TC-2(A)-07] that exempted certain retail uses in the Downtown Overlay District.

LANDSCAPING: Street yard landscaping in conformity with the streetscape plans for downtown is shown on the plans. This is a high impact use under Section 10-2082.9. Transitional protective yards are not required or provided because Section 10-2082.9 doesn't require transitional protective yards when the developing property and the property to be screened are both located in the Business Zone District, which is the case here.

TREE CONSERVATION: No tree conservation areas are required because no stands of trees on the site meet the requisite standards of code section 10-2082.14.

DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY: There are no F.A.R. and building lot coverage regulations applicable to the zoning districts found on the site.

PHASING: This is the first phase of the redevelopment of the majority of this block. Another developer is planning the projects on the north and south sides of this property. That developer is working with the applicants of this project and has future plans for a green roof level that will span this proposed deck and serve as an outdoor roof garden for the adjacent projects. Those subsequent projects will require their own approvals. To date, nothing has been formally submitted for those projects.

UNITY OF DEVELOPMENT: Unity of development and sign criteria are not required in this development.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

GREENWAY: There is no greenway on this site.

THOROUGHFARE / COLLECTOR PLAN: No right-of-way dedication or construction of any streets is required by the Thoroughfare and Collector Street Plan.

TRANSIT: No transit-oriented features are incorporated into the proposed plan. The City's Transit Technician determined there was not a need for any improvements at this location given its proximity to the Moore Square Transit Station.

URBAN FORM: The site is located in the Central District and is covered by the Downtown Small Area Plan and the Raleigh Downtown Urban Design Guidelines. The Raleigh Downtown Urban Design Guide offers development guidance for projects in the downtown. The site is located in both the Fayetteville Street and Moore Square design districts as designated in the Raleigh Downtown Urban Design Guide and referenced in the redevelopment plan for block A-39. The district guidelines call for a higher level of detail at the pedestrian level so as to add interest for pedestrians at the street level and increase pedestrian amenities, particularly along Blount Street. The guidelines also call for construction that is responsive to the area's architectural context, for facades of parking structures to blend into the streetwall and transition in scale as from the core (Fayetteville St) to the East, and the preservation of granite curbs where they exist. The Raleigh Downtown Urban Design Guide states that building heights along the block face of both Blount and Wilmington Streets should to be limited to 60' in height and that any floors above this height should be stepped back at least 25'. The Guide also states that buildings may be built up to as high as twice the width of the adjoining right-of-way. The right of way along both Wilmington and Blount Streets is 66'. The proposed height of the tower element is 108'. While not in keeping with the guidelines, the proposal is in accordance with the City's redevelopment plans for this block. The proposed deck will serve to support additional parking needs for the RBC Plaza tower which is under construction across Wilmington Street from the site as well as other downtown businesses. The Raleigh Downtown Urban Design Guidelines also encourages the use of structured parking.

APPEARANCE COMMISSION: The Appearance Commission has made the following comments on this preliminary plan. Shown below are comments and applicant responses:

Comment	Response
Despite its fundamental use, the deck interior is also a pedestrian environment. Lighting should be consistent with that fact: transition interior light levels within the first 40 feet of entrances from outside to inside consistent with time of day (i.e., avoid "cave" feel); minimize visibility of	Perimeter lighting has been enhanced by adding sconce light fixtures at each pedestrian level vertical column. See drawing P-A 4.01. The deck interior lighting design will provide for a 'transition interior light level within the first 40 feet ofentrances from outside to

fixtures (glare) from the street, including pursuing opportunities for increased indirect lighting near the perimeter of the interior.	inside consistent with time of day'. Glare and light spill to the street will be considered with the selection of fixture type and light source.
Explore options for increasing the level of design detail on the ground floor to improve visual interest to pedestrians.	Design detail on the ground floor and visual interest for pedestrians have been enhanced. Note additional light fixtures referenced in item 1 above. Awning heights on both Blount and Wilmington have been lowered, additional ground level canopy added at stair/elevator entry on both facades, ATM's recessed, street planters added at drive aisles, paving pattern to announce drive lanes, architectural detailing at stair towers added to enhance the pedestrian zone and reduce vertical appearance. Please note the awnings, stair entry canopy and planters are proposed for Blount Street pending approval from NC DOT.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION: The site is located within the Moore Square National Register Historic District, and is adjacent to the locally-designated Moore Square Historic District, which includes the blocks east and north of the site. The Historic Districts Commission has made the following comments on this preliminary plan as part of a courtesy review. Shown below are comments and applicant responses:

Comment	Response
Both the Blount St. and Wilmington St. facades should exhibit a strong pedestrian scale, similar to the storefront scale of older neighboring structures.	Scale, massing, fenestration, material palette and detailing of both the Blount Street and Wilmington Street elevations take their cue from the adjacent older neighboring structures. In order to enhance the pedestrian zone, awnings are proposed for both Blount and Wilmington Street retail facades and set at a height consistent with adjacent properties. A ground level canopy has been added at each stair/elevator entry, the ATM machines recessed, street planters added at drive aisles, paving pattern added to announce drive lanes, architectural detailing at stair towers added to enhance the pedestrian zone and reduce vertical appearance. Please note the

	Blount Street awnings, stair canopy and planters are proposed pending NC DOT approval.
Fenestration of both facades should be as similar as possible in scale to that of the City Market buildings across Blount St. so the new structure can blend with older structures along Blount St. and Wilmington St.	Fenestration both at the pedestrian/retail level and in the façade above has been oriented vertically and detailed with pattern and material consistent with older structures along Blount and Wilmington Streets. The colors, textures, and materials will echo existing historic structure elements.
With the deck reading architecturally as three separate structures, the center portion should have a structural member at each end to prevent it from appearing suspended from its flanking "buildings."	The stair/elevator massing and the drive/entry pavilion massing anchor the center retail section. Stronger end columns are omitted from the center retail section in order to maximize storefront streetscape dimension.
The verticality of the elevator shaft's façades should be broken up so they more closely relate to the low, 1- and 2-story character typical of historic commercial buildings in this area.	Architectural detailing at the stair towers has been modified to enhance the pedestrian zone and reduce vertical appearance. Please see attached drawing P-A4.01.

SUBDIVISION STANDARDS:

BLOCK LAYOUT: No new streets are proposed with this development.

PUBLIC UTILITIES: City water and sewer services are available. The developer is responsible for installation of all lines necessary to provide service to this site.

SOLID WASTE: Refuse collection shall meet the standards of the Solid Waste Collection Manual.

CIRCULATION: Proposed street improvements shall conform to normal City construction standards.

PEDESTRIAN: Proposed sidewalk locations conform to City regulations. A sidewalk is required along both sides of Wilmington and Blount Streets and is shown on the plans with a width of 13' each.

FLOOD HAZARD: There are no flood hazard areas on this site.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT: The preliminary site plan meets the provisions of Part 10, Chapter 9 of the Raleigh City Code. Stormwater quality control will comply with nitrogen requirements under 10-9022. The site is exempt from stormwater quantity control provisions under 10-9023(b)(1) because the increase in peak stormwater runoff between pre-development and post-development conditions for the two and ten-year storm is ten percent (10%) or less at each point of discharge.

WETLANDS / RIPARIAN BUFFERS: No wetland areas or Neuse River riparian buffers are required on this site.

OTHER REGULATIONS: Developer shall meet all City requirements, including underground utility service (§10-3059), flood protection measures (Part 10, Chapter 4), and the soil erosion ordinance (Part 10, Chapter 5), unless specifically varied by this approval.