

# Appendix

## Central Station Block Design Guidelines



Draft for Public Review  
February 6, 2017

# Background

- 2008: Historic resources identified along the Green Line as part of Section 106 Review:
  - Saint Paul Urban Renewal Historic District
  - First Federal Savings & Loan
- Construction of station required demolition of First Federal Savings & Loan
- Determined to be an “adverse effect” on Urban Renewal Historic District
- Mitigation: Met Council to prepare redevelopment design guidelines for the Central Station Block

# Central Station Design Guidelines

- Being prepared by City for Metropolitan Council
- Purpose: guide future development to be compatible with the defining features of the Urban Renewal Historic District, as well as those of neighboring early-20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings
- Adopted as an amendment to the *Downtown Station Area Plan* (2010)
- Building massing, form, height, materials – not land use

# Appendix

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## 2.2 Design Context

### Key Historic Resources

#### Early 20th-Century Buildings

- 1 Saint Paul Athletic Club
- 2 1st National Bank Building
- 3 Minnesota Building

#### Mid-Century Modern Buildings

- 4 American National Bank Building
- 5 Northwestern National Bank
- 6 Osborn Building and Plaza
- 7 MN Mutual Life Insurance Co. / Pioneer Press
- 8 Degree of Honor Building

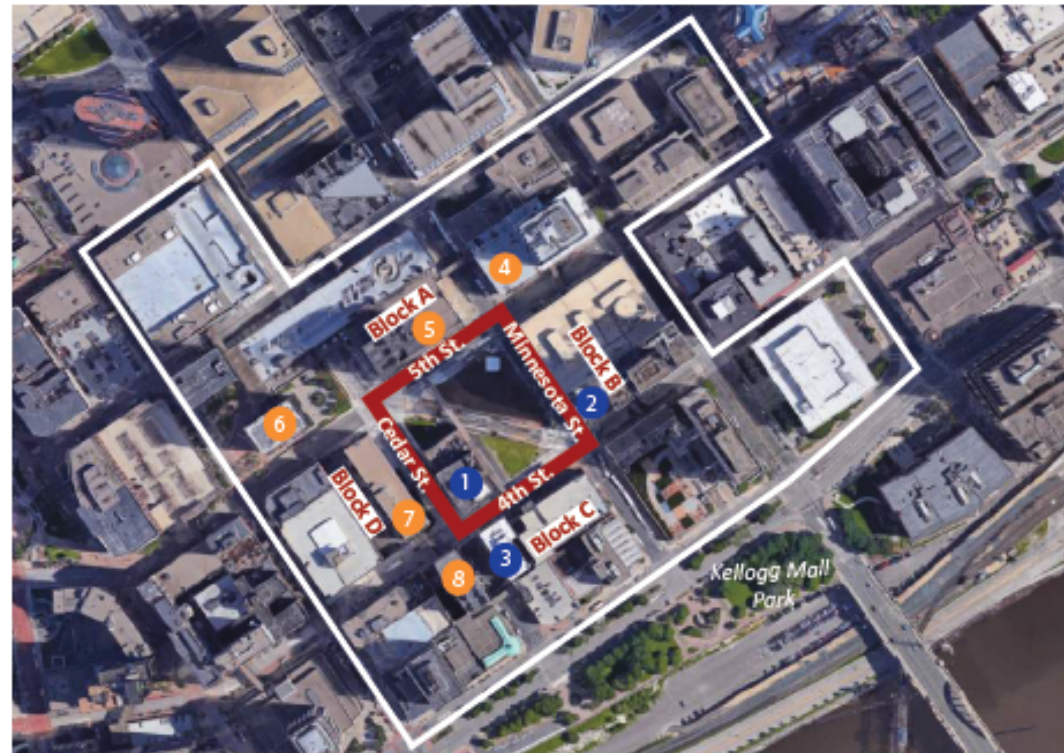


Figure 2.10 A map of the potentially-eligible Urban Renewal Historic District outlines the 12 blocks it would encompass. A smaller red square identifies the Central Station block, which is now home to the Saint Paul Athletic Club and the Green Line LRT station, Google 2018

# Acknowledgments

Many people provided invaluable assistance to this project. The following individuals contributed to the development of these design guidelines:

## **Technical Advisory Committee**

Robert Ferguson, Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC)

Anne Gardner, Saint Paul Dept. of Parks and Recreation

Tim Griffin, Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation

Tracey Kinney, Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation

David Kuebler, Saint Paul Dept. of Public Works

James McClean, Capitol River Council (District 17)

Kathryn O'Brien, Metro Transit

Joe Spartz, Greater Saint Paul Building Owners and Management Association

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## **Landscape Research**

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A note about photographs: Historic photographs are courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society. Contemporary photos of the site context (2016) are by the consultants, or taken from Google maps street view (data provider: Google), where noted. Also, note that some photographs used to illustrate concepts for compatible infill are from other places. These are used to convey a sense of character and quality of design that would generally be appropriate for the site. However, some details of these examples may not meet the design guidelines in this document.



**Figure 2.19** Early 20th-century buildings border the Central Station block



**Figure 2.20** The Saint Paul Athletic Club building

## Early 20th-Century Characteristics and Notable Buildings

Three key early 20th-century buildings display important characteristics that should be considered in the development of the Central Station block. At the same time, these elements should not be directly copied, as development should be “of its time.”

## Key Characteristics of Early 20th-Century Buildings

### *Integrated and Related Structures*

Early 20th-century buildings in downtown Saint Paul are built to be integrated and relate to one another, creating “ensemble buildings” that connect to one another, many times creating a full block of development despite distinct parcels and their buildings.

### *Rectilinear Massing*

Early 20th-century buildings in downtown Saint Paul are rectilinear and are built with three distinct features: a base, a middle and a cap. The base generally provides public access, storefronts and other entries; the middle comprises the majority of the structure visually and functionally, and is highly articulated; and the cap encompasses the top one or two stories and provides architectural detailing that visually “finishes” a building. The rectilinear massing of historic structures also helps define the street edge and anchor the corners of lots.

### *Masonry Materials*

In downtown Saint Paul, early 20th-century structures were built of masonry materials. Stone and red brick were the primary building materials used in exterior construction of the First National Bank Building, Minnesota Building and Saint Paul Athletic Club.

### *Ground-Floor Entries*

The main entry to an early 20th-century building is clearly defined along the street wall through architectural detailing, a stepped-back form, or a change in materials or colors. Most structures have one primary entrance, with additional service doors, if available.

### *Transparent Ground Floor*

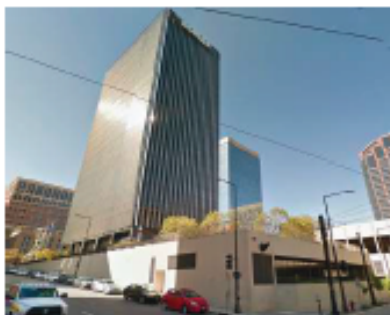
The ground floor on early 20th-century buildings is also notable because, in addition to the primary entrance, the ground floor is primarily transparent. The combination of defined ground-floor entryways and numerous windows, many times accented with awnings, creates a strong connection to the street.

### *Pedestrian-Oriented Signage*

Signage on early 20th-century buildings was designed to be pedestrian-oriented, placed within the first two stories and generally close to the primary entrance of the building. Wall signs, band signs and blade signs were common sign types used on historic buildings.



**Figure 2.23** Mid-century modern buildings around the Central Station block site



**Figure 2.24**  
The Osborn  
Building and  
Plaza; Google,  
2016

## Mid-Century Modern Characteristics and Notable Buildings

Five key mid-century modern buildings surround the Central Station block and provide insight into key features that may be reflected in future development of the block.

### Key Characteristics of Mid-Century Modern Buildings

#### *Free-Standing Structures*

Mid-century modern buildings are most often presented as free-standing, individual objects. In some cases, they relate to other buildings in the context through building components that align or storefronts that are transparent in nature; in other cases, a building does not relate to another building in the context.

#### *Extruded, Tower Forms*

A mid-century modern building typically has a large, rectilinear form on the majority of the block, which rises from a podium. From this form, many times a tower form is extruded. This tower generally rises to 10-20 stories; however, it does not cover more than a third of the full building floor plate.

#### *Concrete, Steel and Glass Materials*

The majority of mid-century modern buildings in downtown Saint Paul are built of concrete, steel and glass with some accent materials.

#### *Single-Entry Structures*

The primary entrance to some mid-century modern buildings is less detailed and harder to find at the pedestrian level. Instead, these single-entry structures are generally oriented towards automobiles, which can drive up to an entrance to drop a passenger off.

#### *"Blank" Public Realm*

While some mid-century modern buildings utilize windows along the ground-floor, many have a blank street-wall, void of windows, entrances or architectural details that add to the the pedestrian experience.

#### *Auto-Oriented Signage*

While the main signs for these structures are generally placed near the primary entrance, many times these are larger and oriented towards vehicles traveling from further distances, rather than for pedestrians that are walking next to the structure.



# Central Station Design Framework

## Map Key

### Early 20th Century Buildings

- 1 Saint Paul Athletic Club
- 2 1st National Bank Building
- 3 Minnesota Building

### Mid-Century Modern Buildings

- 4 American National Bank Building
- 5 Northwestern National Bank
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### Existing Conditions

- Topographical Change
- Green Line
- Transit Queuing
- Bus transfer station
- Views to Mississippi River and Minnesota State Capitol

### Suggested Features

- Tower Location
- Pedestrian-friendly Street Edge (first floor transparent)
- Public Plaza (Access to Station Platform)
- Parking Access from Minnesota St.
- Retain Service Access
- Pedestrian-Activated Walkway

Scale: NTS North

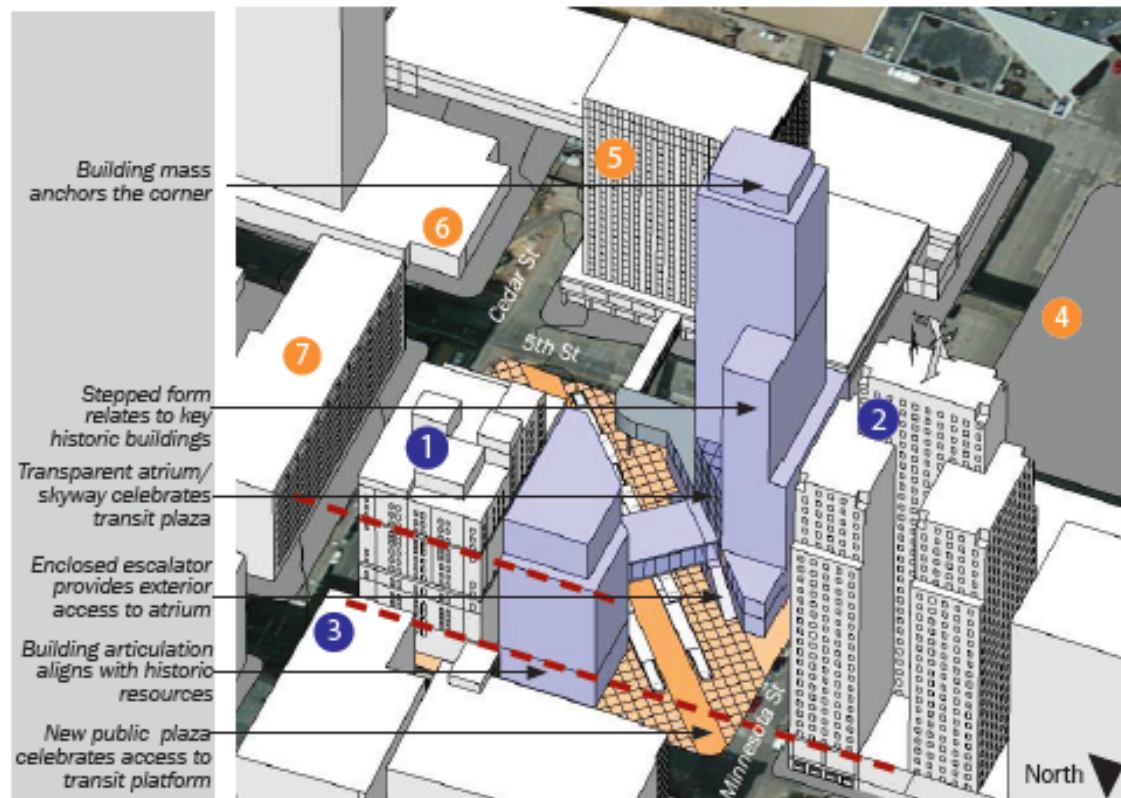
# Central Station Block Design Guidelines

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- **Historic context**
- **Design framework and principles**
- **Guidelines for new development**
- **Infill development scenarios**
- **Circulation**
- **Open space**
- **Public art**

## 4.8 Infill Examples

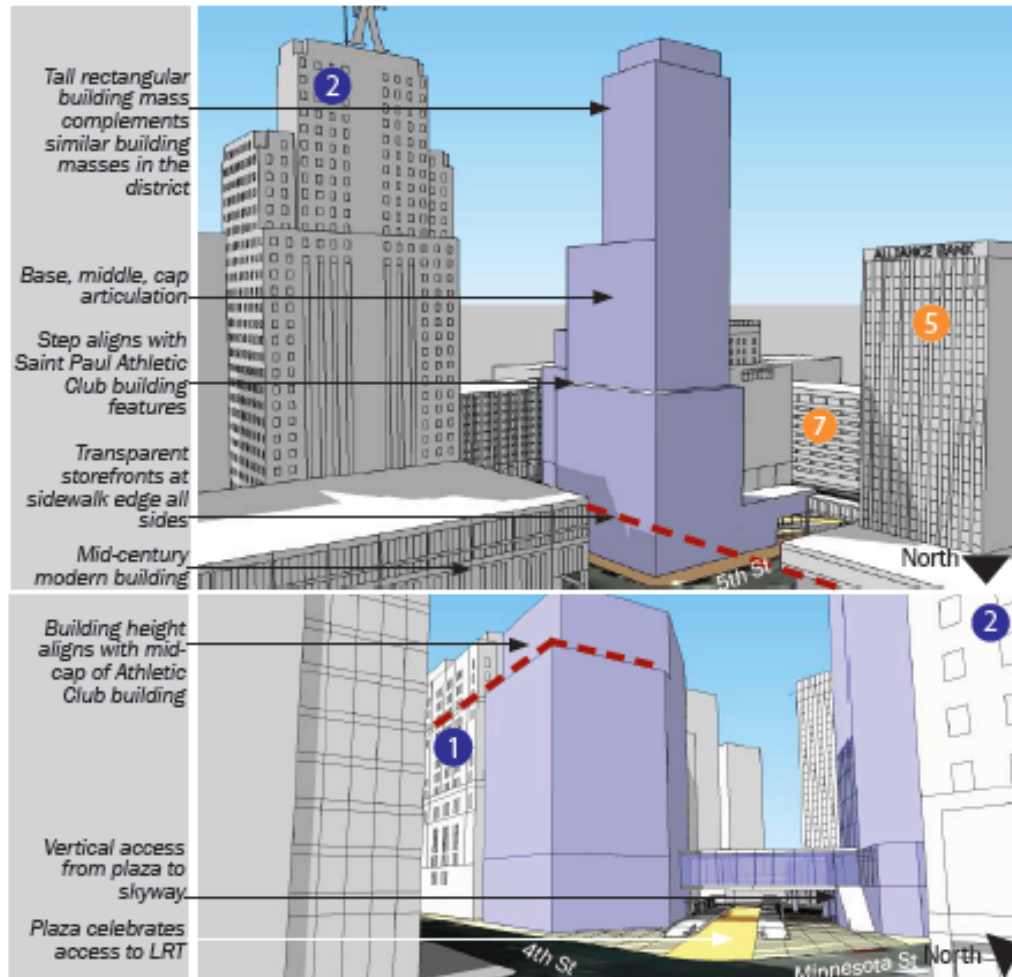
### Scenario 1, View 1



#### Key features:

- » Two towers are connected by a large transparent skyway/public atrium spanning the LRT tracks.
- » The towers provide an opportunity for screened parking above a minimum of two levels of active use.
- » The articulation of the new building mass on the southern corner aligns with the Athletic Club (1) and the First National Bank (2) buildings.
- » The height of the first massing form on the north tower aligns with the Athletic Club (1).
- » Active and celebrated public pedestrian plazas provide access to the transit platform at the eastern and western corners. The design integrates with the interior of the building, providing eyes on the platform and circulation through the block that is parallel to and distinguished from the transit platform.
- » Large public pedestrian plazas provide opportunities for public art and wayfinding.
- » Enclosed escalators from the pedestrian plazas connect to the upper skyway/enclosed atrium, replacing the previous vertical tower at the western plaza that held stairs and an elevator.
- » Skyways connect each new tower to the existing skyway system and downtown buildings, providing access to existing parking, offices and many services.

## Scenario 1, Views 2 & 3



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# Planning Commission Action

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- **Release Central Station Block Design Guidelines for public review**
- **Set public hearing for April 21, 2017**