DESIGN REVIEW OFFICER REPORT ON THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION WITHIN THE COURTHOUSE AREA DESIGN OVERLAY ZONE ON THE PROPERTIES BOUNDED BY WEST MAIN STREET, SOUTH UPPER STREET, LIMESTONE STREET AND WEST VINE STREET

Applicant: CentrePointe LLC - Case No. 4-2012

Addresses:

100 W. Main St., 106-122 W. Main St., 126 W. Main St., 136-138 W. Main St. (which includes 137 W. Vine St.), 140 W. Main St. (which includes 141 W. Vine St.), 146-148 W. Main St., 152 W. Main St., 156-160 W. Main St., 164 W. Main St. and 149 W. Vine St.

Scope of Work:

To review a new application for an Authorization Permit to construct a new mixed-use hotel/condominium/office/retail building, with associated parking and site elements.

Background:

- The applicant has completed the work for the consolidation of the parcels on the subject site required for the construction of the project and will submit the consolidation plat at the appropriate time.

- The applicant is working with several committed and perspective tenants regarding locating within the project.

- The applicant has received the approval of the tax increment financing associated with the construction of the project and will update the TIF application as necessary.

- The applicant has a current lane closure permit for the project.

- The Design Review Officer and the applicant had a Pre-Filing Conference on January 23, 2012. The Design Review Officer determined that a Preliminary Board Review was required.

- The applicant received a Preliminary Board Review on February 15, 2012.

- The applicant held a public input meeting on March 1, 2012.

- The applicant submitted an application for Final Board Review on March 7, 2012.

- The applicant submitted a letter withdrawing the pedway from the application on March 15, 2012.

Findings:

There are other buildings adjacent to and in close proximity to the proposed tower within the project that are of similar heights:

- The proposed tower within the proposed project-28 stories
- 120 East Main Street – Park Plaza Apartments c. 1987-21 stories
- 300 West Vine Street - "Kincaid Towers" (the Central Bank building) c. 1979-23 stories
- West Vine Street - c. 1979-23 stories
- 333 West Vine Street-"World Trade Center" c. 1979-20 stories
- 250 West Main Street – located within the Courthouse Area Design Overlay Zone-"Lexington Financial Center" c. 1987-32 stories
- The applicant states that the proposed tower within the project is 345'-10" tall.
- The height of the Lexington Financial Center is approximately 410 feet. The proposed tower is approximately 64 feet lower in height than the Lexington Financial Center, which is also located within the Courthouse Area Design Overlay Zone.
- The other buildings within the proposed project range from 3-10 stories and are in scale with the Central Library and other buildings along Main and Vine Streets.

The proposed construction complies with the following Themes, Goals and Objectives from the Comprehensive Plan for the Design Guidelines:

Theme 1: "Enabling the creation, growth and retention of jobs that promote a strong, progressive economy."

- A key objective is to encourage the creation of jobs within the project area.

Theme 2: "Promoting the downtown as a regional commercial, office, government, residential and cultural center focal point within the Bluegrass region.

- These design guidelines establish a vision for new construction that facilitates the mix of uses desired to make the Courthouse Area the focal point for the region.

Goal II: "Guide the physical development of the community"

- Regulatory tools such as zoning, land use regulations and design guidelines are effective ways to guide the physical changes seen on the Lexington landscape.

Goal IV: "Ensure the vitality of the downtown"

- The objectives listed with Lexington's goal of ensuring vitality in the Downtown are very much the same as the reasons many communities choose to develop design guidelines-to protect investments and to ensure stability and livability.

Objective A: Promote and expand the role of the Downtown area as the logical community location of major regional business, commerce, governmental administration, cultural and recreational activities and entertainment.

Objective D: Formulate a realistic plan for the future of the Downtown, and foster public-private efforts to maintain, rehabilitate and redevelop Downtown.

Objective F: Encourage increased Downtown residential uses through new construction, restoration, and redevelopment which are compatible with surrounding land uses and design.

The proposed construction complies with the following Basic Principles of Design of the Courthouse Area:

Principle 1: Maintain a clear definition of the street edge.

Principle 2: Enhance the street level as an inviting place for pedestrians.

Principle 3: Relate to traditional buildings in the area.

The proposed construction complies with the following Design Guidelines:

2.1 Maintain the alignment of buildings at the sidewalk edge.

2.2 Orient the primary entrance of a building toward the street.

2.3 New interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged.

2.4 A new building should incorporate a base, a middle and a cap.

2.5 A new building should maintain the alignment of horizontal elements along the block.

2.6 Floor-to-floor heights should appear to be similar to those seen historically.

2.7 Consider dividing a larger building into “modules” that are similar in scale to buildings seen historically.

2.9 Materials should appear similar to those used historically.

2.10 A simple material finish is encouraged for a large expanse of wall plane.

2.11 Upper-story windows with vertical emphasis are encouraged.

2.12 Windows should align with others in a block.

2.13 Building entrances should appear similar to those used historically.

2.14 Locate the primary building entrance to face the street.

2.15 Develop the ground floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity.

2.16 A fabric awning is encouraged.

2.17 A fixed metal canopy may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.19 Use lighting for the following:

- To accent architectural details
- To accent building entrances
- To accent signs
- To illuminate sidewalks

2.20 Minimize the visual impacts of site and architectural lighting.

2.21 Prevent glare by using shielded and focused light sources.

2.22 Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment on the public way.

2.23 Minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes.

2.25 Minimize the visual impacts of trash storage and service areas.

4.1 Locate a parking facility, particularly a surface lot, in the interior of the block, whenever possible.

4.7 Design a parking facility so that pedestrian access is easy and clearly defined.

5.3 Provide expanded sidewalk areas, or “plazas,” where conditions permit.

5.4 Coordinate private open space development with that of streetscape design of sidewalks, when conditions permit.

5.5 Open spaces should read as “accents” in the street wall of building fronts.

5.6 Define the edges of the open space along the sidewalk.

5.7 Frame public open space activities that will be in use year round.

- Locate open space such that pedestrian circulation routes to major buildings cross it in order to help animate the space.
- Orient major entrances onto the open space and design circulation routes to facilitate movement through it.

5.8 Site open space to maximize opportunities for sun and shade.

5.10 Street furniture should be located in areas of high pedestrian activity.

5.11 Street furnishings should be clustered in "groupings," when feasible.

5.12 Public seating should be provided to enhance the pedestrian experience.

5.18 Install new street trees to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Recommendation:

- The applicant has completed substantial work leading up to the commencement of construction of the project.

- The applicant is working toward obtaining the necessary permits in order to proceed with construction of the project.

- The proposed construction complies with 34 of the 40 applicable General Design, Parking Facilities Design, Public Streetscapes and Open Spaces Guidelines for the Courthouse Area Design Overlay Zone.

- Approval of an Authorization Permit for construction.

Condition:

- Under Basic Principles of the Design in the Courthouse Area, the pedway element does not comply with the following Principle:

Principle 2: Enhance the ***street level*** as an inviting place for pedestrians.

- In Chapter 2, the General Design Guidelines state that "the Courthouse Area should continue to develop as a pedestrian-oriented environment. Streets, sidewalks and pathways should encourage walking, sitting and other ***outdoor*** activities…***Existing*** pedestrian routes should be enhanced."

- The pedway element does not comply with the following General Design Guideline:

2.15 Develop the ***ground*** floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity.

- In Chapter 5, the pedway element does not comply with the policy for Public Streetscapes & Open Space in the Courthouse Area. "Lexington has the opportunity to reinforce downtown as a distinct pedestrian precinct, one in which people walking ***share*** downtown with buses, automobiles and bicycles. This mix of traffic can provide a sense of excitement and can actually enhance the pedestrian experience if these other elements are kept in balance….This includes ensuring that the ***sidewalks*** are designed to facilitate walking and that public spaces are created which are lively and inviting.

- The applicant shall submit revised drawings and renderings that reflect the elimination of the pedway from the project prior to issuance of the Authorization Permit.