

Grand Place, Saint Paul

TOD Setting: Urban Neighborhood/Corridor

Project Location and Description

- Grand Place is located at the southwest corner of Grand and Victoria, St. Paul.
- The project is an infill commercial development on a former surface parking lot located at a key intersection along an historic commercial/streetcar street, now a Metro Transit local arterial corridor (bus route 63).



Area Features

- The other three quadrants of the Grand and Victoria intersection contain commercial/retail space.
- William Mitchell College of Law is located one block to the north.
- Sidewalks connect Grand Place to the adjacent Summit Hill neighborhoods.

Project features

- Ground floor retail (26,000 square feet) with two floors of structured parking above (208 parking spaces).

- The building architecture is compatible with traditional structures along Grand Avenue. The structure is built to the street with sidewalks; building height blends in; and store fronts are designed to look like an array of small shops.
- A bus stop is located at corner of Grand Avenue and Victoria
- There are street entrances to stores along Grand Avenue, sidewalk connections to adjacent residential neighborhoods, bicycle racks and an entrance to a parking ramp from a side street (Victoria).
- The project includes a mix of retail shops – home furnishings, clothing and a bookstore – that complement adjacent commercial uses (retail and restaurants) and the residential neighborhood.

Developer: Exeter Real Estate

Financing & Sources: Privately financed, no public funds used.



Lessons Learned and Benefits

▪ Infill projects take time and require addressing successfully the issues raised by neighbors and adjacent users.

- ♦ Exeter Realty participated in 100+ public meetings, resulting in an improved building and greater acceptance among neighbors.
- ♦ The project was approved by the city in June 2000. The review process took about 12 months.

▪ Issues and Their Resolution

- ♦ **Parking.** The project provides sufficient spaces to serve the commercial users whose customers used the previous surface lot and to meet city zoning requirements for the projects new businesses. The parking was put above the stores because two levels of underground parking would have been too costly.
- ♦ **Height and mass.** The initial plans were criticized by residential neighbors as being out of scale with the neighborhood.
 - ♦ To break down the scale, the building facade was divided to look like 3 or 4 separate buildings.
 - ♦ The developer was required to lower the building height by 3 feet, which added to construction costs. The approved building looks like a two-story building within the scale of surrounding structures.
 - ♦ Spandrel glass windows were added on the second story to shield the parking ramp.
- ♦ **Deliveries.** Residents across the alley were concerned that delivery trucks would block the alley and that the back area would be an eyesore.
 - ♦ The building footprint was setback from the alley 14 feet.
 - ♦ Landscaping was added in the setback area.



Parking ramp entrance and rear service entry

▪ Traffic. Neighbors were concerned about additional congestion.

- ♦ The developer hired a consultant to do a traffic study, which showed that the project would not have a significant impact. The city's public works department concurred.

The project is located at an intersection with a traffic light; this helped some with traffic concerns.

- ♦ The project helped address an existing traffic problem. Cars would back up on Victoria waiting to turn into the parking lot. The new ramp was designed to have an entry ramp long enough for 8 cars to wait for a space to open up in the ramp, thus avoiding having cars waiting on Victoria to enter the ramp.



For more information, go to: <http://www.ci.stpaul.mn.us>