

Downtown Specific Plan Implementation Services – Design Review

Livermore, CA



FTS was retained by the City during and after Downtown Specific Plan work to review development submittals and provide design direction for proposals ranging from a cinema and mixed-use developments to shops and townhomes.

BEFORE

- After the 1950's, new uses and development types not part of Livermore's traditional small town urban form and architectural character became increasingly evident in downtown.
- Many newer developments were configured in an auto-oriented and set-back format.
- Builders often used low-grade materials not sympathetic with adjacent brick and wood trimmed historic buildings.



An early challenge was the renovation of an existing First Street 1960's building that housed a thrift store. Its asphalt-shingled mansard and aluminum storefront did not fit the character spelled out in the Specific Plan.

ASSIGNMENT

- Review the designs of "projects in the pipeline" with developers to ensure compliance with plan goals and emerging design controls.
- After Plan adoption, provide on-call design assistance to City Staff to review submittals, provide flexible guidance to achieve plan compliance and ensure the first projects set good examples.

OUTCOMES

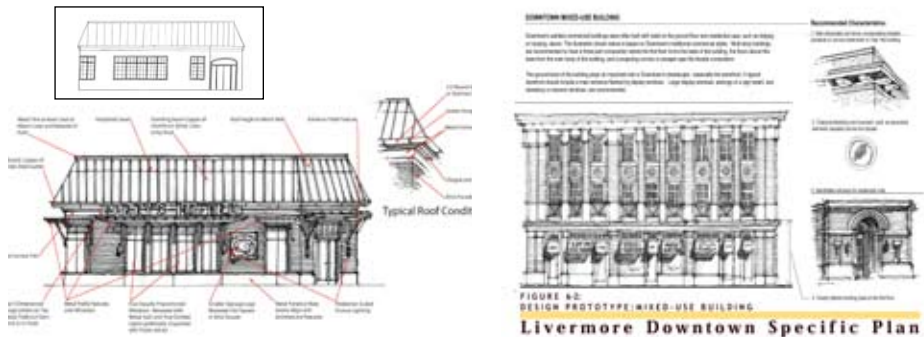
- Review work began during the Specific Plan with new large scale senior housing developments at downtown's edges.
- Following Plan adoption in 2004, FTS was retained for two successive increments of on-call design review services.
- Project types included multifamily housing (townhomes and apartments), mixed-use commercial buildings (offices above shops), a cinema complex, banks, medical buildings, restaurants, and renovations.
- New infill buildings have been well regarded and considered a good fit with historic buildings.
- Downtown Livermore received a 2009 Great American Main Street Award from the National Trust Main Street Center.

CLIENT: City of Livermore Community Development Department

FTB: When this project was begun, the firm name was Freedman Tung & Bottomley (FTB).



A full-block ground floor retail and upper floor office infill project (including a cineplex) along Livermore's main street (First Street). The project was developed under the Downtown Specific Plan's design standards and guidelines to extend the district's traditional scale, massing increment, and facade character. As the architects successfully interpreted the policies using a modern approach, review comments focused on enlarging shop window sizes and thickening cornices were minor.



Left: For the renovation of the former thrift store (photo at far left) into a new restaurant, this FTS design review sketch provided guidance on architectural treatments to the builder (original builder's submitted elevation in inset, upper left). **Right:** A Design Prototype illustration for a downtown mixed use building from the Downtown Specific Plan, based on historic buildings identified by workshop attendees. This prototype guided the design of the retail/office infill shown above.



The former thrift store building's completed conversion to a new downtown restaurant incorporating FTS design review input. While the renovation economically re-used the mansard roof (a feature not in keeping with the Specific Plan's preferred roof types), its detailing, materials and color were tied in with its new brick cladding, inset windows, soffit trim and trellis details to fit well with First Street's mix of historic and renovated shops and streetscaping.