



Urban Times

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☐ FROM JULY 2006 :

Page 2: Schmidt Associates and partners
plan to build a 10-story structure in 300
block of Mass Ave.

From July 2006:

Developers see project as good fit for Mass Ave

THE DEVELOPERS OF THREE Mass Ave say they didn't rush to get city approval of their 10-story building in order to beat adoption of the Massachusetts Avenue historic preservation plan.

"We sat down with Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission staff and asked them, 'What do you support?'" said Todd Maurer, president of Halakar Properties, Inc., one of the partners in the project approved by the Metropolitan Development Commission in early May.

"We didn't race to beat IHPC," he said. "We

raced because we wanted to start selling it."

In fact, Maurer said, he was surprised to have earlier learned that the 300 block of Massachusetts Avenue wasn't already within IHPC boundaries.

That will probably change this month when the Metropolitan Development Commission votes on final passage of the proposed Chatham Arch & Massachusetts Avenue Area Historic Preservation Plan, following June 7 approval by IHPC.

Wayne Schmidt, another partner in the Three Mass Ave project, said the intent all along was to create a project that IHPC would support. He said

A mixed-use building will be constructed in the 300 block of Massachusetts Avenue between the building housing MacNiven's (left) and the historic Hammond Block flatiron building (right).



Graphic provided by
360 Group

the partners went to IHPC knowing that agency's approval was not needed. "We know we're not under your jurisdiction," he said, "but we're not going to build something you don't like."

To that extent, both Maurer and Schmidt say the building should not be categorized as being "10 stories" – at least not on Mass Ave.

"The top four levels are stepped back," Maurer said, "so on the street it will look like a six-story building for all practical purposes." Those six stories, he added, "are not much taller than the Marott Center across the street."

Schmidt, a long-time Mass Ave stakeholder and former president of Riley Area Development Corp., said that "the building fits perfectly. It was designed to fit in."

The building will house 10,000 to 11,000 square feet of street-level retail space along with about 50 residential condominiums on the third through 10th floors. The basement level and second level will handle parking.

The structure will surround the historic Hammond Block building at the corner of Mass Ave and New York Street, with streetfront commercial space on both of those streets.

Schmidt said the building — designed by his own firm, Schmidt Associates — features significantly different designs facing the two streets. "On Mass Ave it relates to the context, and to the speed of traffic," he said. "On New York, it feels like a taller building. And we are not trying to fit into any historic context, because there isn't any."

Maurer said the building fits his firm's niche, "downtown product within walking distance of amenities." Halakar recently completed the very successful Six Over project on South Meridian Street, but heard comments from prospective buyers that the site was too close to the nightclub atmosphere of that part of Downtown.

He believes Three Mass Ave will attract customers who will want to be part of the more neighborhood feel that project will feature. And although sales efforts weren't scheduled to begin in earnest until this month, Maurer already had several "strong commitments" for the new site.

About 200,000 square feet is available for the "about 50 condos" at Three Mass Ave. The units

will be priced between \$350,000 and \$2 million, Maurer said. The best-case scenario would see people moving in by the end of 2007, but that date is more likely in 2008.

Each residential unit will have a substantial balcony, Maurer added. "I have this belief in Downtown living: that everybody needs a balcony." He said the balconies would be at least 100 square feet in space, while the top floors will have significant terraces "with real views of Downtown."

Approval of the building in May drew some negative response from two neighbors — Henry Price, owner of the Hammond Block building and whose law firm calls that building home; and the owners of the two-story building at 302 N. Alabama St. which houses another law firm.

Those parties, Gil I. Berry Jr. and Preston Breunig, filed an appeal of the Metropolitan Development Commission ruling. Originally set to be heard on June 7, that appeal was continued to the MDC's July 5 meeting.

Price's concern was about the safety of his own building during the construction phase of Three Mass Ave. Maurer said he believes he has alleviated those fears, and indicated he is also working with the other remonstrators to relieve their concerns.

Meanwhile, he is eagerly looking forward to marketing the commercial space. Among his targets are restaurants, especially breakfast-and-lunch places.

"We want the type of businesses that make Mass Ave unique," he said. "We want independents." Maurer said he won't seek out corporate operations — although he can't rule them out, either.

He also said he wants the type of street-level businesses that people who buy the condos will enjoy.

"We are really working hard," Maurer added, "for the building to fit with Mass Ave."

— **Bill Brooks**