

Mordecai Historic Park Visitors Center  
Public Comments/Questions  
November 30, 2010

1. Question: How was 5,000 sf determined?  
Response: **Based on programming and park operation.**
2. Question: What does the building include?  
Response: **Exhibit space, multi-purpose room, archives/collection, retail offices, restrooms, mechanical spaces, storage.**
3. Question: Why is the footprint skinny?  
Response: **The goal is to keep the face of the building as far removed from the Mordecai House as possible, thereby preserving the majority of the open lawn.**
4. Question: Why is there a 15-foot setback shown from Wake Forest Road?  
Response: **The NCOD zoning for this site requires a minimum 15-foot setback from any structures in the front yard.**
5. Question: What is the size of the Visitors Center in comparison to the Mordecai House?  
Response: **The Visitors Center is programmed at 5,000 feet; the Mordecai House is approximately 5,400 sq. feet total, comprised of two floors.**
6. Question: Will there be a drive access to the Visitors Center?  
Response: **The goal is to minimize the additional pavement on the Park. Quite possibly, the pedestrian walkways will be reinforced and large enough so that service vehicles could be driven to the building when necessary.**
7. Question: What will be the impact of the view onto the site from Wake Forest Road as you approach the Park from downtown?  
Response: **The footprint is shown held back from the corner in order to not disturb the existing significant trees and to maintain a view to the House from the corner of Wake Forest and Mimosa Street.**
8. Question: Was there consideration to closing Mimosa Street and locating the Visitors Center in the current right of way?  
Response: **This option was discussed with the City's Transportation Office, who felt that maintaining the connectivity of Mimosa Street was important. If the street were closed, half of the existing right of way that currently contains the parking spaces would be given to the property owners on either side, thereby not providing sufficient land area for the Visitors Center in the current right of way area.**

9. Question: Was there consideration given to acquire the funeral home across the street as a potential Visitors Center location?  
**Response: The City did approach the Owners of the funeral home, who were not interested in selling the property. For City acquisition, without a willing seller, it would require condemnation, which the elected officials typically try to avoid.**
10. Question: What would be the access to the Visitors Center for special events?  
**Response: The Visitors Center will be available for rental for special events by citizens of Raleigh, as well as use by the community outside its use for Park activities.**
11. Question: How large is the shaded footprint shown on the site plan?  
**Response: The potential building location area is presently shown at 6,500 sf, while the program of the building is only 5,000 sf. This will allow some flexibility in the final location, once the building is designed.**
12. Question: What will be the view to the Mordecai House from Wake Forest Road when you are traveling inbound to downtown?  
**Response: There will be a view corridor established between the Chapel and the Visitors Center so that the House can be seen from Wake Forest Road by inbound travelers.**
13. Comment: The view into the Park is also important from the pedestrian sidewalk along Wake Forest Road.  
**Response: The Design Team agrees with this comment. The design of the Wake Forest Road elevation of the building provides an opportunity to enhance both the pedestrian experience, as well as the vehicular experience, along this important public corridor.**
14. Question: Does the Design Team have any ideas of what the building will look like?  
**Response: Since this initial study is to locate the new Visitors Center only, the Design Team is trying not to have preconceptions of what the building will look like until a final site is selected by the City Council, simply because the design of the building would be vastly different depending on the final site selected.**
15. Question: Why was the northwest corner of the Park not recommended as the site?  
**Response: There were several factors that made this site problematic. First, it is the most remote location on the park from the Visitors Parking. This would require the visitor to walk past the House to go to the Visitors Center first, for basic orientation – something that most visitors would not do. Secondly, the open area is one of the most important exterior program spaces in the Park, used heavily for park activities, as well as outside groups. Given**

**the topographic change of this site from the adjacent streets, creating required handicap accessibility would be extremely difficult. Lastly, a Visitors Center in this location would have a significant impact on the residences across the street.**

16. How would the NW corner impact the neighbors?

**Response: Contextually, the new building would overpower neighboring houses due to grade change. Operation-wise, it would not be feasible to put the building back there without any parking.**

17. Comment: The open green space view on the east side of the park is extremely important as open space for those traveling on Wake Forest Road.

**Response: The Design Team agrees that public green open space is an important community asset, especially in this neighborhood, and will strive in the design of the new Visitors Center to maintain as much of this as possible. It is felt that the location of the Visitors Center along Wake Forest Road can actually improve the lawn between it and the House because of screening some noise and visual activity of the traffic on Wake Forest.**

18. Question: Which of the two large green open spaces is currently most heavily used?

**Response: Most groups who want to have outdoor activities at the Park choose the northwest corner after walking the site because of the impact on the other green space by the noise and visual activity of the traffic on Wake Forest Road.**

19. Question: Could two buildings be constructed rather than one, locating the public activities in one of them, and the back of the House activities in another?

**Response: The resources allocated for this project would be insufficient to create two buildings and the overall footprint of two combined would be greater than a single building because of code-required restrooms and redundant spaces like electrical and mechanical rooms in each facility. Also, the staffing would be difficult and less efficient.**

20. Question: How much of the current program is public and how much of it is back of the House?

**Response: Approximately 20% of the existing program is back of the House, leaving almost 4,000 sf of public space. The only back of the House spaces programmed are archive storage, small staff offices, and mechanical areas.**

21. Question: Where do people park for large events like weddings? We live on Mordecai Drive, don't have a driveway, and rely on street parking.

**Response: We will be looking at overflow options. We currently have an informal agreement with the funeral home to use their parking lot for occasional overflow.**

22. Question: When there are major events at the Park, the on-street parking is overwhelmed, making it difficult for the residents who live here. Could a residential parking permit be established for the neighborhood as is done in other parts of Raleigh?

**Response: The City can look into this matter.**

23. Questions: What is the projected increase in visitation once the Visitors Center is in place?

**Response: The current visitation is approximately 24,000 per year. It is projected that number will increase to approximately 40,000 per year once the Visitors Center is completed.**

24. Question: Will there be a kitchen in the Visitors Center?

**Response: There is no kitchen planned for the Visitors Center, but making the building "caterer friendly" is important because many events that use the Center will have food associated with them.**

25. Question: When will the building be completed?

**Response: The current schedule calls for the revised master plan to be adopted by the City Council in March or April. The design process of the building will begin shortly thereafter, with the goal of having the design complete and the project ready for construction by the end of 2011. Construction will begin in 2012, with the project finished before the end of that year.**