**TAKING**

Review preliminary sketches from the designer with the following questions in mind.

- Is the building too large or too small to fit in with surrounding buildings without compelling reasons?
- Could the building be configured in some way that makes it look smaller or larger to fit in better?
- Is the proposed style attractive? Does the building remind you of surrounding architecture? Or a big, boring box? Or an amusement park version of a historic building? Does it have unique characteristics which lend it distinction?
- Do the proposed materials for the building blend with the materials of neighboring buildings or do they clash in a jarring way? Ask to see sample building materials displayed as a mock-up on the site to decide on their attractiveness, appropriateness, and suitability to the surroundings.
- Ask if the materials are durable and of good quality. If you have doubts, ask for examples of local buildings where the same material was used.
- Ask to see a model of the building and its surroundings.
- When looking at early plans and sketches for a given development, ask the designer how the plan takes advantage of light, views, and circulation patterns.
- See if the designer has considered privacy within the building or the privacy of neighbors to the building.
- When buildings are constructed close together, remember that the upper floors can be stepped back, away from each other, to allow light into both buildings.
- See if pedestrian entrances have been placed conveniently.
- Ask the designer about activity on the ground floor. Does the proposed building include shops, banks, exhibit areas, or display windows?
- Review the proposed signs and graphics for the building. Are they clear? Does their style and placement complement the architecture?

**ACTION**

- See that shops, arcades, lobbies, elevators, and escalators inside a proposed building are planned in conjunction with the entrances—to create a clear path for pedestrians trying to use the building.
- Ask the designer or developer to place service access underground or behind buildings at mid-block to avoid blank walls and vacant streets.
- Insist, through building codes, that runoff from storms be taken care of on-site as much as possible. This is to ensure that a new development does not increase drainage problems for surrounding areas or overtax municipal storm drains and cause flash floods.
- Accommodate pedestrians with landscaping such as street trees to provide shade and beauty, and street furnishings such as benches and trash containers for convenience and comfort.
- Ask the architect for elevations of the building, and review them to see if the base, middle, and roofline of the building respond to their particular purposes.
- A pedestrian’s experience is enriched by detail—sometimes hard to find in the modern world where craftsmanship is no longer commonly found. Paving patterns with interesting materials (instead of concrete or asphalt) ornament surrounding an entrance or major windows, plaques that name a building or discuss a historic event, all enrich the texture of our world.
- Let the architect know that you would like an appropriately distinctive roofline for the building. The use of the building or the history of the site sometimes suggests a particular treatment.
- Look for a different treatment of windows at the base, middle, and upper sections of the building. Use historic buildings, or any successful existing buildings, as guides to appropriate or attractive window composition.
- Ask for windows that can be opened wherever possible.
- Finally, few rules always apply. Buildings should be a source of delight, not merely the product of a formula. Allow your intuition and instincts into the decision-making process.