

The Madison

Design Narrative

The Madison is a 49 Unit **Multifamily Mixed-Use** building with 2,500 SF Ground Floor offices, in the heart of the **Playhouse District of Pasadena**, home of the renowned Pasadena Playhouse and Boston Court Theater. Our Site is located directly up the street from high modernist masterpiece the Pasadena Presbyterian Church and directly across the street from the landmark Scottish Rite Cathedral Building, and directly East of the historic Blinn House. **Complex and Contradictory contextual architectural forces have a strong influence on our site.**

Our philosophical approach to the design of this building is twofold: we strive to **create an architecture that would engage and compliment the context successfully, even dynamically**, as a piece of physical architecture. At the same time, we would like to **embody in the building the architectural idea of shared space and resultant community creation**. We believe Multifamily buildings are not mere receptacles for units but should be designed to enhance even **create opportunities for socialization and ‘community building’**.

Therefore, since day one the architectural idea for this building for us was to **multiply the opportunities for shared common spaces to bring the residents together/create community**.

We began the project with a simple idea of **a contextual ‘C’ shaped courtyard** building around a central garden featuring specimen trees, that would enhance opportunity for socializing and **bringing the residents together and create community**. We wanted this courtyard to be highly visible from the street, to be **engaged with the larger urban realm**.

As the building massing evolved, we introduced **a dramatic live-in bridge that joins the two residential wings**, expands the rooftop shared area and forms **a weather protected Loggia** over a **Passage to** the common Courtyard in the heart of the project.

Our ground floor features residential units in addition to a consolidated office space. All automobile parking is underground.

ATTACHMENT A: NARRATIVE

The Building design is predicated on the **vertical ground to sky stacking of the residential units** with articulated **deep vertical niches** that give the building a **decidedly vertical composition** or one that is a **harmonious integration of vertical** elements. The facades are broken down by a rhythmic interplay and playful articulation of deep-set niches and projecting vertical volumes that reflect the organization of the Residential Units within. While the building is primarily read as a composition of vertical stacks, **a regimen of articulated balconies within the setback niche volumes** with their decorative balustrades **create horizontal broken lines that articulate the façade**. The strong horizontal balustrade of the fourth floor as a strong horizontal line, and the **setback mansard sub-volume on the fifth floor**, clad in a darker standing seam metal material, **create further horizontal regulating lines** that balance the vertical elements.

The vertical stacks are clad in alternating materials: **Terracotta cladding, formed metal in a warm hue, and exterior Stucco Plaster in warm beige colors.**

The strong verticality of the residential stacks is balanced by the strong horizontal lines of the Fourth floor break, where the fifth floor mansard recesses on all sides, the strong third floor horizontal setback on the West side, and the strong horizontal line of the Fourth floor bridge on the East side.

Where the transition is made between concrete construction and wood residential construction in the East side, we have located **one more balancing horizontal line tracked along the entire façade**. We believe this will create a **'base' or wainscoting effect**. The texture of the exterior terracotta cladding below this new wainscot line will be changed to an accent finish to further emphasize the wainscoting. Only formed metal vertical anchoring Fin Walls will pierce through the wainscot band to strengthen the anchoring effect of these walls along the East façade.

The Architectural design language of our building is in a **'Contextual Contemporary' style**: a consistent simple architectural language throughout that is **context sensitive yet contemporary**. The Madison features an architectural style combining **contextual elements in a simple contemporary interpretation**, with **rich materials** and an **attention to detail** combined with a **varying massing that creates a dramatic statement**.

We spent quite a bit of time tinkering with the massing of our building to create an architecture that would engage and **compliment the context successfully, even dynamically**, as a piece of physical architecture.

The building is carefully responsive to the surrounding buildings of different scales. There were **several**

ATTACHMENT A: NARRATIVE

contextual challenges that we believe we have come to harmoniously resolve in the composition of our building: On the West Side, historic **Blinn House** has a discrete low residential scale. On the East Side, the **Scottish Rite Cathedral** with its art deco massing is an imposing civic presence at the scale of the district. To the South the **Olivewood Project** in its varied massing rising toward the back of the Site. We made a concerted effort to **address all the contextual forces acting on our site simultaneously and devise a harmonious solution.**

Our building in its architectural essence is a traditional courtyard scheme, in a 'C' plan formation, with the courtyard opening oriented toward Madison Avenue. Majority of the Units have the ideal North South Solar orientation. We have taken a very sophisticated approach to the vertical location of the building within its sloped site topography, by **nestling the building within the sloped site to reduce the impact of the building's height** to the North and West as well as South to a maximum extent.

A beautiful Courtyard is at the heart of the complex adorned by Acacia trees. This courtyard is surrounded by the glazed volume of the commercial component and courtyard level Residential units on the ground floor, with additional units above. The upper floor residential units are setback from the street and feature open air **recreation spaces shared by the occupants on multiple levels and are oriented to open up to the Mountain and City views.** A **Passage** to the courtyard from the street enlivens the pedestrian experience along Madison. A dramatic **Bridge** joins the two Residential wings of the building on the fourth floor, with an integrated unit with **unsurpassed views.** The Bridge forms an elevated **Loggia** over the Passage to the Courtyard and an opportunity for, **yet another shared public space protected from the elements.** The 5th floor will also feature a **large open rooftop space for residents and guests**, allowing them to take full advantage of Pasadena's incredible weather and stunning natural beauty.

The **Loggia** under the enclosed Bridge opens up the building to the urban realm, the loggia becomes a building scale window **open to the city and the urban realm beyond.**

Our design concept for the Courtyard is the creation of **a space of congregation, assembly interaction and casual performance. To bring the community of the building together to help foster the community** we have integrated into the Courtyard a novel feature, a **Landscaped Amphitheater.** The **Landscaped Amphitheater** offers ample seating to enjoy the courtyard and offers a casual way for the residents to access the second floor directly without the need of using elevators, which is the **sustainable and healthy** thing to do. **A Stage for casual performances** as well as a **Audiovisual Screen to share movies or major sporting events for the entire residential community of the building** enlivens the southern portion of the courtyard, facing the amphitheater directly. The Landscaped Amphitheater will bring the residents together to share impromptu jam sessions or

ATTACHMENT A: NARRATIVE

watch the Super Bowl together!

We have integrated the **stage with a casual seating area** nestled within planters and surrounding a **fire pit**. The stage is thus an area for **casual seating when no performances are ongoing**.

Wherever possible, the walls of the Courtyard planters are inset with **integrated seating benches**, or are interspersed with areas available for moveable seating arrangements to **encourage lounging, relaxation, casual encounters and socializing for the Building's community of good neighbors**.

Our proposed design has been extensively adjusted and refined to specifically address **contextual sensitivity and relationship toward each of the main neighboring structures: The Blinn House to the West, the Scottish Rite Cathedral to the East and the Olivewood Project to the South**. In each case our building design responds with adjustments and refinements in building scale, massing, orientation, setbacks and buffering, the arrangement of shared and private open spaces, visibility, privacy, automobile and truck access, impacts of noise and lighting, landscape quality, infrastructure, and aesthetics.

For example, on the west side of our building facing the **Blinn House**, we have maintained a **10'** setback, the 4th and 5th floors have been setback further generously and incrementally, with the largest setback on the fifth floor to create a cascading stepped massing facing the Blinn House. The **10'** setback on the ground floor features generous deployment of trees in natural soil to create landscape quality and buffering. Landscape is added in the upper floor setbacks in the form of raised planters and extensive landscaped pergolas.

Our building's mass toward the Blinn House has been stepped to create a cascading effect with the Fourth floor setback exceeding **31'-5"** to the westerly property line; and a fifth floor setback exceeding **50'-11"** to the westerly property line. Within this cascading scheme, the North and South wings of the building on the fourth floor are setback further allowing for an articulated sub volume on the fourth floor at the center of the building. On the Fifth floor the central portion of the building is a void, turning the North and South wings into separately articulated sub-volumes. These architectural gestures ensure that our building is not a monolithic mass facing the Blinn House, and instead with its **broken-up massing respects the scale and massing of the Blinn House**.

The majority of the West Elevation is clad in exterior Stucco plaster, the same material as the Blinn House and would be painted in a coloration sympathetic to the color of the Blinn House.

ATTACHMENT A: NARRATIVE

Deep niches extending from ground to the fourth floor, break down the building perimeter in respect of the smaller scale of the Blinn House Building. Residential Balconies further enliven and break up the massing of our building.

In addition to ample trees planted in natural soil in the **10'** setback from the westerly property line, landscaping is integrated at the fourth floor veranda balustrades. Additional Landscape is integrated in large trellised pergolas facing the Blinn House above the Fourth floor setback terrace. **The trellises are landscaped with Wisteria to refer to the beautiful trellises at the Blinn House** also covered with Wisteria. The regimen of Trellises will create a veritable floating landscaped plane when the foliage is fully grown hovering above the roof terraces and providing welcome protection from the Sun.

Thus, our building **respects the scale, massing and materials and landscape of the Blinn House.**

On the East side, our building's massing is setback a minimum of **10** feet. On the East Side, our building is designed to become **a contextual and conceptual reading of the Scottish Rite Cathedral** as a building with its two North and South masses connected by its central nave volume. Similarly, our building's North and South wings respond to the Scottish Building's massing **with the opening into the courtyard conceptually functioning as a 'void' facing and responding to the central nave volume of the Scottish Rite Cathedral.** A further conceptual relationship with the Scottish Rite Cathedral building is the fourth floor bridge element in our building. **This bridge element emphasizes the connection between the North and South wings of our building, in the same way as the central nave volume provides for the Scottish Rite Building.** The bridge volume at the fourth floor creates a covered loggia above the passage to and entrance to the Courtyard. Our bridge element is articulated vertically in response to the central band at the Scottish Rite Cathedral also articulated vertically with decorative fins.

The Bridge is conceived as a connective band at the scale of the building connecting the North and South vertical Wings of the Building the same way as the central nave volume with its lower balustrade band joined the two wings of the Scottish Rite Cathedral Building. The essence of the **Bridge** element is to provide, through a dramatic horizontal connection, **a strong visual continuity between the vertical rise of the two building wings.** Similar to the horizontal band of the Scottish Rite Cathedral balustrade element, the Bridge is a strong horizontal band, creating this visual continuity.

Regarding its materiality and detailing, the Bridge features **floor to ceiling glazing** on its east side. This makes sense as behind it is located a special **'loft unit'** with operable walls that can open most of the space of the unit

ATTACHMENT A: NARRATIVE

to unsurpassed views of the Pasadena Mountain and the City. **Note our impetus is connecting the residents with the city at large.**

The East side glazing is also fully operable through the use of sliding glazed panels, allowing for an **indoor-outdoor connection and a sense of liberating openness to the environment.**

Similar to the central Balustrade element of the Scottish Rite Building in its delicate rectangularly coffered articulation, we conceive the Bridge element as **a delicately articulated glass band with divisions in a rectangular rhythm.**

This is a true bridge replete **with wooden Vierendeel truss** spanning between the North and South wings of the building. The truss' vertical posts create the rhythm of the main rectangular divisions of the façade and would be visible behind the glass façade.

The Eastern **floor to ceiling glazing at the Bridge** is made of all sliding floor to ceiling glass panels, further subdividing the rhythm created on the façade with the vertical posts of the bridge truss. A light cable guardrail ensures fall protection when the panels are slid open.

To allow for **a special degree of sun protection exactly were desired** within the loft unit by the residents, **two sliding wood screen panels** are located directly in front of the exterior glazing panels, as optimum sun control is provided outside of the glazing. The screen panel features painted steel subframe providing support to a bounding frame made of painted **“L shaped” steel angles**, infilled with vertical wood based Prodema **7/8” thick x 4” wide Slats** with **2”** wide gaps.

We have deliberately incorporated solid panels on the north and south ends of the bridge to reinforce and provide additional visual continuity of the strong vertical elements below. **Punched windows are located within these solid coined edges** to allow for necessary daylighting to the inside spaces at these locations.

We have specified of Prodema wood slats at the Sun protection Panels at the Bridge, as well as at the Bridge Soffit. Prodema is a true wood-based material used for the interior and exterior of buildings. It is made up of natural wood with a Bakelite core. Prodema is a composite panel faced with a natural wood veneer and coated with a proprietary coating based on synthetic resins and PVDF which protect the panel from the effects of sunlight, chemical attack (anti-graffiti) and the damage caused by atmospheric agents.

ATTACHMENT A: NARRATIVE

The Bridge elements is engaged into the building's volumetric composition with **two flanking Vertical Fin Walls** of different height and projection depth, **in a balanced composition, that eschews symmetry but offers harmony and architectural poise.**

The Fin Walls harmoniously frames the Loggia opening and bridge volume and help **anchor the composition of vertical and horizontal volumes along Madison Avenue.**

The passage to the courtyard has been sized to allow for **ample visibility into the Central Courtyard from the Street**, while the deep passage below the bridge Loggia in turn shields the Courtyard from street noise. The change of grade of over **2** feet up from the Street to the Courtyard actually makes the Courtyard **more visible from the Street**. This small elevation transition is handled through the placement of a stepped three level low planter, displaying low lying shrubs and ground covers. The walls of the planters are inset at strategic locations to allow for integrated seating benches.

The fence assembly itself **is highly open** as well, not to mention that a significant portion of it will be kept swung open during the day. Thus, we **maximize visibility into the interior of the courtyard from the public realm.**

Our building concept is to **open up the Building's residential community to the sky above, the gorgeous views and the urban realm.** In order to allow for a connection to the Urban Realm for most residents, our building needed **an opening to the City at the scale of the Building.** We feel the size of the opening of the weather protected Loggia below the bridge, needs to be dramatic to fulfill this function, and to **encourage visibility to the public realm from the units within the complex.**

We feel we have struck the right balance regarding the scale of height of the Loggia above the Passage leading to the Courtyard within the complex.

The Passage, with its dramatic Loggia functions **an Urban Room, or an Anteroom to the Courtyard, creating richness of spaces.** It functions well in **creating scenography at the urban scale,** very much akin to Renaissance urbanism. The Bridge forms **a dramatic conceptual proscenium arch, framing the 'theater of domestic life'** within the complex, **so appropriate for a Building in the Playhouse district!**

ATTACHMENT A: NARRATIVE

The **entrance to the Offices** on the ground floor's North Side has been located to be from the **Passage** and to **be highly visible from the Street**. We believe this configuration appropriately separates the residential vertical stair circulation from the courtyard level from the office circulation, and in particular further activates the Street frontage and allows for **a more urban building**.

We placed **a major rooftop Trellis above the Bridge** on the Fifth floor facing Madison and created a significant shading device to create opportunities for the Residents to come together on the roof at this location to enjoy the mountain and city views while offering a modicum of protection from the sun.

This Trellis **has a symbolic function at the urban scale of the Fuller Seminary District to the West: this trellis will be covered with wisterias to refer to the landscaping of the pergolas of the Blinn House. Thus the Trellis will symbolically 'announce' through reference to this cherished element, the Blinn House itself from Madison Avenue**. The raised planters for the trellis wisterias feature integrated built in seating at the base of the trellis.

On the South Side, our building is designed to be in parallel orientation facing **the Olivewood project**. The Olivewood project's North façade facing our Building is organized in 3 parts a high volume to the West, an intermediate volume at the East along Madison and a lower connecting volume in between. In contextual response, our building places its lowest massing on the west side, facing the highest massing of the Olivewood project, **creating relief and engagement**. On the East side, our building's articulated corner element clad in metal and glazing, **responds to the intermediate volume element** of the Olivewood project. Our automobile access driveway was moved to the North to a maximum extent to create as much distance as possible from the Olivewood projects' automobile driveway.

To further decrease the building's mass, we have stepped in the fifth floor not just to the West but on the East, as well as North and South Side. The entire fifth floor is stepped in to create a stepped cascading effect with the fifth floor set back as **a Mansard volume, replete with a standing seam cladding**. These architectural gestures break down the vertical mass of the building and refers to traditional urban building's with **Mansards**, albeit in a simple contemporary interpretation. The fifth floor is broken into two separate wings, in a 'Mansard' configuration set back a distance exceeding **18'** from the southernly and northernly property lines and exceeding a distance of **22** feet from the Easterly property line.

We spent quite a bit of time looking at our **Balconies' design. Balconies have been designed in a context-sensitive style**.

ATTACHMENT A: NARRATIVE

Balconies were given a stepped form in plan creating an articulated profile in an effort to avoid brutal projections. This **stepped plan is common to the Art Deco geometries** of the Scottish Rite Cathedral Building, as well as the stepped configuration of the Blinn House Stained Glass Window frames. For example, the top of the nave space at the center of the Scottish Rite Cathedral building rises higher than the volumes of its southern and northern wings. In a similar manner, the outermost edge of our balconies has been stepped in in plan.

Additionally, the Balconies provide **a context-sensitive balustrade** made of a combination of **decorative wrought iron guardrails** and solid guardrails throughout the building. The solid portions of the guardrails are located at the stepped plan profile. **Creating context-sensitive coined transitions.**

The wrought Iron guardrails decorative motif is **a consciously contemporary interpretation of the art deco balustrade** and pilasters found on the Scottish Rite Cathedral West façade. The vertical pilasters and fins were interpreted into a series of dual **1” square posts, 3” apart coined at their top with connecting decorative plates 9” on center.** The connecting decorative plates are stepped in to refer to the top of art deco pilasters. Thus, our guardrail assembly is in a configuration that **alludes to the restrained Art Deco style of the Adjoining Scottish Rite Cathedral building.**

The variegated scale of the balcony spaces as a result of the stepped plan and the variations in the guardrail **creates rich scale which is in tune with traditional architectural elements** found in the surrounding buildings, yet retains **a streamlined continuity and timelessness.**

The entire building composition from materials and volumetric point of view is held together by four **‘Corner Expressions’**, or volumetric treatments featuring a unique bronze hued metal cladding and ample glazing. These corner expressions **book end each façade and anchor the entire building.**

The Exterior materials reinforce the verticality of the design intent on two levels. First, the Building’s exterior facing facades are broken down into a rhythm of vertical volumetric stacks, representing the different functions of the residential unit’s interior rooms. Exterior materials on the different vertical stacks alternate to a significant degree, thus reinforcing the ‘vertical’ reading of the stacks.

Second, the entire plethora of **vertical pattern of window mullions, vertical stone cladding** pattern, **vertically oriented sun protection screen slats**, fence and guardrail **vertical muntins** and down to the vertical grain

ATTACHMENT A: NARRATIVE

direction of the metal cladding, all these elements are predominantly vertically oriented, significantly **reinforcing, in unison, the verticality of the design intent.**

In conclusion, we believe we have achieved our goal of creating a building with **a rich set of common public spaces that encourage socializing and coming together and community building.** We also feel we have been able to resolve the complex contextual forces acting on our site and have created **a truly context compatible building** with an architectural language that is sensitive to all surrounding contextual architectural forces, **in a simple contemporary style, yet with dramatic architectural elements such as the Loggia at the building scale** that effectively and confidently **opens the private community space to the urban realm and engages with the City at large.**

ATTACHMENT A: NARRATIVE