



Agenda Item #: 11

Project Title: 223-225 W Gilman Street - Building Addition in the Urban Mixed-Use (UMX) District. (District 2)

Legistar File ID #: 81421

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Wendy von Below, Marsha Rummel, Shane Bernau, Rafeeq Asad, Jessica Klehr, and Christian Harper

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of January 10, 2024, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a building addition located at 223-225 W Gilman Street. Registered and speaking in support was Hamid Noughani. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Carl Corbett.

The addition will expand the congregation on a very narrow site. Parking will be offered in the basement via an elevator. The intent of the project architecturally is to create a bookend from the lower two-story building to a larger four-story building. The second floor contains offices and bathrooms, with the upper two floors containing four apartments.

The Commission had the following questions for staff and the development team:

- It's a difficult design problem with a tight site, a very old building, an addition you did. Generally speaking, it works well but I would ask for a couple of considerations. What works well are the building material palette and design elements you repeat at the bookends. A couple of concerns, it's lower than what zoning would allow, but what about the context, a bit broader than the building and bookends. When you get more straight on you really see it's quite a different building type than what's on the site. To understand more of what's happening left and right of that. It also looks from an urban design perspective, seems like it's pulled forward a little bit more. Am I reading that correctly?
 - It's as far out as the existing porch and canopy. I don't think it's much further out. It is pulled out. There's a really tall building and church across the street, we should have done a better job of expressing that.
- You might want to consider, we're responsible for speaking to urban design where we get some of those setbacks to align and speak to the street. Just having somewhat of a blank pedestrian experience, again you're trying to squeeze in a lot of programs so I understand, but you're trying to integrate a graphic element into the façade, but we're supposed to be activating our street level, that's one of our tasks so I would ask for that consideration.
 - One of the challenges, there is a garage door setback of 15-feet. If we can somehow adjust that and allow more space for the plaza, is that within your purview?
- (Secretary) That's a zoning requirement and even the Zoning Administrator can't modify that, it's required and shall be met.
- This is a fun project. Could you speak to the existing building that will be in the middle, is that existing building of any historical significance for you, emotional significance, and was it studied to look at adding another floor on top of that building or trying to create this added program you need but on some of the existing footprints of the existing buildings you have?

- Yes, it's a contributing structure beloved by the neighborhood. You don't touch that one, it took literally about a year and a half to get the adjacent building touched and that was deteriorated. One of the challenges is that the existing Chabad will continue to operate while we build this new building. The design of this addition is one of the more complicated ones. He'll continue to live there except for a very short time we're connecting the buildings. We considered touching that building about 10 years ago but at this point in time, I don't think that would be an easy path forward.
- Just wanted to know what considerations there were. I think this is a fun design and there's a lot of really exciting things happening here. One thing that does stick out is the exposure of that stair in the corner on Gilman Street. I don't see where else that could go but it's prominent and I don't know how active that stair would be. I'd ask if that's really the best place for that stair and is the design and experience of that stair really what you want.
 - That's a worthy discussion. We looked at 37 different options for this floor plan. This is the one place that can link three different program requirements together and provide the egress it needs. And the openness of it, we had it more as a more solid element and it was recommended to make it more exposed, which I think is improved.
- The easement along the edge of the park. As we know from the attempts to build something on the other edge of this park, people are pretty sensitive to what goes on in this space. There are some very mature trees along that property line, I'm wondering if there are concerns about that cantilevered overhang on that side of the building stretching out over that easement and its possible effect on those trees. How much modest pruning would be deemed acceptable to allow the building to reach out across the driveway and presumably into the canopy of those trees?
 - We would like to preserve them, they're an incredible amenity to the site. We contacted Forestry and have a plan to prune them, we raised the cantilever to just above the cone of the tree. In our model we don't think we will negatively affect those trees but we will monitor as we go along.
- Regarding the front of the building, staff has concerns about what the face of the building on Gilman Street involves. It seems like there's an office above the garage door, is that an opportunity for a window to active the front of the building? And could you explain more about the signage that's out front? I'm unclear if it's a surface application, is there something behind that, what is the nature of that?
 - The Chabad emblem is a menorah, it was recommended to us to open up the stairs so people can see inside. As a gesture we thought we could introduce a menorah into the mullions where the window can become a symbol, not an exact replica. That is not a make or break kind of situation. Right above the garage door, it sits back 15-feet which is a concern because it creates an opportunity for trash to gather. That space above the door is mechanical space and the office starts on the lower left hand side where the first glazing is. And the mechanical space is just above the elevator shaft. The core elevator is essentially a freight elevator, that's what the Fire Department wants, not just a regular elevator.
- I appreciate that's a window behind the menorah. It's a nice looking project, I think the addition does a pretty nice job of mimicking the earlier addition on the other side even with the rather strange Tudor building in the middle.
 - I think its transparency will contribute to how the park is perceived, as more of a lantern over the park. It's a very prominent building, you can see it from all four sides.
- There was a conversation about the setback. What is the 10'8" at the garage door?
 - That's a zoning requirement. The fact that it needs to be setback from the property line is a requirement, non-negotiable.
- I'm doing a Google street search, 225 W Gilman is in the National Register District. Have you looked at trying to relocate it or some way of saving this building that adds to our cultural heritage? Seeing if there's a viable way to save it by moving it.
 - If you can find somebody who wants it I'm happy to talk the Rabbi into donating it.
- We could ask Planning staff to help you advertise the building is available.
 - If you can find a buyer, I can sweet talk the Rabbi into donating that.
- One of our early agenda items was someone who took two buildings and moved them.

- It's a little tall for that kind of move, mainly if the building is taller than most of the traffic lights it becomes an issue; most of the buildings they move are below that. You can cut it horizontally and move it in two sections, but that is a remarkably difficult task. If you find a buyer willing to move it, I can manage to talk to the Rabbi about that.
- (Secretary) There are a couple of design standards related to garages: shall have a clear maximum height of 16-feet and maximum width of 22-feet, and garage doors or gates shall be located a minimum of 10-feet from the front property line.
- With regard to all the solid masonry, we're really looking at 20-feet from the sidewalk up to where you have windows. I would encourage you to rethink the composition and bring the glassiness of that stair all the way down. Maybe some of that overhang could be pushed back and have that glassy stair come all the way down, that might help the transition between the old house and this new much larger building. With regard to the opening for the garage door, maybe that hole in the wall could be a big opening instead of this little tunnel. A way to lighten up that corner and make the building feel less like it's teetering on the base because it's so huge for the site. It's so big it's almost teetering on its foundation; this gets wider as it goes up. You've got so much program and I wonder if it's too much program for the site, but a glassy stair would help that transition and the requirements for more pedestrian enhancement and experience there.
 - I'm really grateful. Let me ask you a question, I wonder if by making the base a little lighter if it would, that might relieve some concerns about that projection onto the street.
- You don't necessarily need the projection above where the stair tower is. Maybe the part that pushes out over the sidewalk above the garage door entry comes down further and screens that blank brick wall up there. You don't necessarily have to worry about repeating this vertical element in the original addition and then it can be two more slender elements versus one big box teetering on a narrow foundation.

Action

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.