



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 139 W Wilson Street
Application Type: New Residential Building in UMX Zoning – Third Informational Presentation
Legistar File ID # [70108](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: John Seamon, SEA Design

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the demolition of an existing multi-family building and construction of a 16-story, 335-unit building. The proposal includes four onsite vehicle parking stalls as part of an on-demand vehicle-sharing program. Resident vehicle parking will be provided in the Dane County ramp.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on July 27, 2022.
- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on March 9, 2022.
- The applicant anticipates filing a combined Land Use and UDC Final Approval application January 2023.

Approval Standards: The Urban Design Commission (UDC) will be an **advisory** body on this request. Section [28.076\(b\)](#) includes the related design review requirements which state that: “All new buildings that are greater than twenty-thousand (20,000) square feet or that have more than four stories shall obtain Conditional Use approval. In addition, the UDC shall review such projects for conformity to the design standards in [Sec. 28.071\(3\)](#) and the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#) and shall report its findings to the Plan Commission.”

Related Zoning Information: The property is zoned Urban Mixed-Use (UMX). The Planning Division understands that the proposed development is considered a conditional use under the Zoning Code. In addition, the Capital View Preservation Limit will also apply to the proposed development. As noted in the zoning code, the maximum ground story height is 18 feet, minimum 12 feet, and the maximum story height for upper stories is 14 feet.

The UMX zone district also outlines design standards that are applicable to all new buildings. As a reference, the design related zoning standards outlined in the UMX zone district are included as an attachment to this report, including, but not limited to those related to building entrance orientation, façade articulation, height, fenestration, and materials.

Design-Related Plan Recommendations: The project site is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) planning area. As such development on the project site is subject to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines. As noted in the Downtown Plan, the maximum recommended height is up to the Capital View Preservation Limit.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC provide feedback on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards related to the items noted below. As part of this review, staff recommends consideration be given to the following:

- **Building Height.** As noted above, the Capital View Preservation Limits will apply to the project site. Based on the information provided, the proposed building **appears** to meet those requirements. Overall building

height is measured from grade to the top of the parapet wall, which is noted as 164.05 feet in the height exhibit, the maximum height permitted. The Zoning Administrator would ultimately need to confirm the building height measurements are consistent with code requirements.

As shown on the elevations however, there are projections into the Capital View Preservation Limit, just over six feet. Limited projections and elevator overruns above this height limit are only allowable with Conditional Use approval and staff has urged the applicant to explore solutions that eliminate or minimize such projections. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the overall building height, and the rooftop mechanical in excess of the Capital View Preservation Limit.

- **Building Entry Orientation and Street Activation.** As noted on the floor and site plans, the main building entry is recessed. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the building's relationship to the street, including creating more visual interest and architectural detail, and/or incorporating more glazing into the building design, including on upper floors where there are common, shared spaces and in residential units facing W Wilson Street.
- **Building Design and Composition.** The overall proposed building design is relatively simple in nature with minimal articulation and façade modulation. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the overall building composition as it relates to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, including those that speak to size and rhythm of windows, mass and scale, proportions and articulation (vertical/horizontal), cohesive termination at the top of the building, etc. Consideration should be given to the longer east and west elevations, especially as they relate to the surrounding development, proposed at grade open spaces, minimizing blank wall expanses, and creating an enhanced pedestrian environment along W Wilson Street.
- **Long Views.** Due to the prominence of this site from Lake Monona and John Nolen Drive, consideration should be given to the composition of the highly visible rear façade as part of the overall cityscape. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the internally lit wall art component, which occupies a portion of the highly visible John Nolen Drive façade. While staff does not object to the incorporation of an art feature on this facade, staff has concerns with the current configuration believing that careful consideration should be given to how the scale and placement relates to both this building and the overall skyline.
- **Wall Packs.** As noted on the elevations, wall pack units are proposed on all elevations. It has been the current practice to not locate wall packs on street facing facades, though they have been approved in some situations when found to be well integrated into the façade's design. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the integration of the wall packs with the overall building design and materials.
- **Materials.** The building material palette consists of an etched concrete panel system. Staff notes the building material standards per the UMX zone district, footnote C, states that concrete panels (precast or tilt-up): *"Shall incorporate horizontal and vertical articulation and modulation, including but not limited to changes in color and texture, or as part of a palette of materials."* As proposed, while the proposed concrete panels appear to have dimension, the staff **does not** believe that this code requirement is met. In addition, it does not appear that there a secondary façade material proposed. Staff **does not** believe that this development can be found to meet the requirement for a "palette of materials." As such, staff requests the Commission provide general feedback on the material and its detailing.

- **Open Spaces.** As noted on the site plan, the proposed at-grade open space is located on the north side of the building, significantly below the adjacent development. Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the successful planting of the space, as well as softening the west elevation along the ground floor.

UDC Informational Presentation Comments

As a reference, the Commission's comments from the July 27, 2022, Informational Presentation are provided below:

- What is the sequence for loading/unloading, guest parking, service vehicles? How does this site work with relation to those things? This type of population will probably be getting a lot of deliveries.
 - We see deliveries as an example not occurring on the street but pulling into the private drive parking and then going back out. We see loading and unloading in a very similar way. We don't want loading trucks bringing residents goods from the street. We are considering provisions for access directly into the elevator lobby. Same for trash removal and move-in/move-out, that would be scheduled appropriately so there's not an overlap. We do have a dedicated secured room for packages.
- Do you have a built example of that proposed paneling system?
 - There's no precedent for this yet, it's a custom form of that facet on 10' x 40' panels with punched openings for fenestration. We don't have a mock up for that yet, and a smaller scale mock-up will be about 8'x10' with different paints to get a much better sense of how this will work, and whether or not it will gather dirt.
- I would highly encourage a large scale mock-up tested in weather and light conditions. There's a lot of unknown and a lot of surface area on that building.
- I share the same concerns Mr. Evans brought up. We were excited about the color shifting material.
 - It came down to a cost issue.
- I don't find the new material to not be interesting but I share the concerns with seeing a more hands-on version. I'd encourage shifts in the widths and angles of those facet panels, maybe three different versions would be enough to dramatically change as the light shifts during the day. Given the size of the building it would be monotonous to have it all be the same.
- As a Commission we're all on-board with the idea of having housing not tied into the car culture, but this is a big mass of units and providing six Zipcars, that's a little naïve. Even if only 10% of residents have cars, that's 30 cars in an already scarce parking area. For workforce type housing, where are these cars going to go? It's idealistic to think this will all work out and I have issues with that aspect of it.
- You have the right idea with the limited landscaping available on the site, utilizing columnars and plants that are happy in low light.
- I also have concern with the parking, the view may not be realistic. What is the plan for those that have cars?
 - We are in talks with a nearby garage for some off-site tenant parking.
- The texture is a bit monotonous. It's a very striking entrance, is there any way to give that nod on the Monona side of the building? There might be opportunity to add interest on that side as well. It will take finesse in how you align those fenestrations with that panel size, how you break it up and make it interesting all the way around the building.
 - Efficiency is driving a lot of the cost in a project like this. We're trying to minimize the amount of openings on each panel, but do like the idea of variation. The Monona side will pretty much only be experienced from a textural standpoint.
- There's something elegant about it, it's a little austere. I do wonder the appetite for more depth of those façade elements and whether more depth gives you the ability to have some variation. Maybe

introduce different colors on different facets of the panels? I hope the art installation lighting is subtle, the rendering is pretty eerie. Neat idea for that portal.

- Are there any other opportunities or program elements that could take the place of the fitness center? Is that really the best program to put there?
 - We think the 16th floor facing the lake is best for the community room and this facing the sidewalk for the fitness, to activate at the street level.
- I'm not sure it's the best to present publicly, or that people really want to be seen working out in a public way.
- The shade and shadow on this building will be quite beautiful, and the addition of snow will make these facades pretty interesting. You mentioned the lakeside as a priority, the common spaces might be portrayed differently. This is prime real estate, with Monona Terrace parking directly across, it's really visible from the lake. As part of the Madison skyline you could add interest there.
- Everything is really clean but the human scale of that giant corner pillar may need some detailing or a base. It's a little intimidating looking and brutal along the streetscape. I'm also curious about what the wallpaks look like.
 - It's a louver, the size and shape will be driven by the window frame.
- You have a great opportunity to do something different there with colors. I'd encourage you to introduce some visual interest with color, but more importantly the building is a little too rusticated. If you were to play with the balance of flat and rusticated you might find a little bit more support with some of the Commissioners who raised concern about the texture.
- It's really good that the wallpaks are well integrated.
- Can you describe the construction of that backlit panel?
 - The backlit area is a typical metal frame scenario, the panel is printed and put on top of something similar to Masonite, with a polycarbonate panel in front of that air space, lit with an LED system. We are still working through all those details.
- It will be important for us to understand because it is such a large feature.
- (Secretary) In regards to the Capitol View Height limit and how it relates to rooftop mechanicals, the parapet is just over and will have to come down, with the mechanicals above that height limit. Ultimately the Plan Commission will make that determination.
- It should come down, I'm not sure if that means you lose a floor but you could do something more with the thru-wall units and go wider.
- There will be elevator overruns, no matter how many stories it is.
 - We have an elevator overrun with one fire access stair housed in one enclosure.
- Does it somehow impede the long views? As long as the elevator overrun or the stair tower isn't right on the lakeside facing view, recessed back toward the middle of the building it may not be an issue.
- The column in the corner, p. 203, there was this patterning of the way the windows come down and where that opening is. It feels like if you centered that opening you wouldn't have to have that column. A center alcove with the two sides of the building bearing down.
- Take that all the way to the ground and shift your opening. It feels off balance, the pattern of the windows changes, it feels like this very strong vertical element, maybe it just needs to be brought all the way to the ground.
- That column seems out of place.
- It would help solve the street presence issue. Having a fitness room on the street isn't really activating the street as much as perhaps a leasing office.

ATTACHMENT:
28.071 (3) DESIGN STANDARDS FROM ZONING CODE

(3) Design Standards.

The following standards are applicable to all new buildings and additions, within any ten- (10) year period, exceeding fifty percent (50%) of existing building's floor area for non-residential buildings, mixed-use buildings, lodging houses, and residential buildings with 8 or more dwelling units.

(a) Parking.

1. Parking shall be located in parking structures, underground, or in surface parking lots behind principal buildings. Parking structures shall be designed with liner buildings or with ground floor office or retail uses along all street-facing facades.
2. For corner lots or through lots, rear yard surface parking areas abutting any street frontage are limited to fifty percent (50%) of that frontage, and shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the street property line.
3. Parking garage openings visible from the sidewalk shall have a clear maximum height of sixteen (16) feet and a maximum width of twenty-two (22) feet. Garage doors or gates shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the front property line. Doors to freight loading bays are exempt from this requirement.
4. No doors or building openings providing motor vehicle access to structured parking or loading facilities shall face State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

(b) Entrance Orientation.

1. Primary building entrances on all new buildings shall be oriented to the primary abutting public street and have a functional door.
2. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area.
3. Entries shall be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with elements such as roof overhangs, recessed entries, landscaping, or similar design features.
4. Within ten (10) feet of a block corner, the facade may be set back to form a corner entry.

(c) Facade Articulation.

1. The facades of new buildings more than forty (40) feet in width shall be divided into smaller vertical intervals through techniques including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Facade modulation, step backs, or extending forward of a portion of the facade.
 - b. Vertical divisions using different textures, materials, or colors of materials.
 - c. Division into multiple storefronts, with separate display windows and entrances.
 - d. Variation in roof lines to reinforce the modulation or vertical intervals.
 - e. Arcades, awnings, window bays, arched windows, and balconies to reinforce the vertical intervals.

(d) Story Heights and Treatment.

1. For all buildings, the maximum ground story height is eighteen (18) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor. An atrium that exceeds eighteen (18) feet will be considered more than one (1) story.
2. Upper stories shall not exceed fourteen (14) feet floor to floor.

3. For all buildings, the minimum ground story height is twelve (12) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor.
4. For non-residential uses, the average ground story floor elevation shall not be lower than the front sidewalk elevation nor higher than eighteen (18) inches above the sidewalk elevation.
5. For ground-story residential uses, landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls or similar treatments shall be located between the sidewalk and the front door to create a private yard area.

(e) Door and Window Openings.

1. For street-facing facades with ground story non-residential uses, the ground story door and window openings shall comprise a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the facade area.
2. For street-facing facades with ground story residential uses, ground story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area.
3. For all buildings, upper story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area per story.
4. Garage doors and opaque service doors shall not count toward the above requirements.
5. Glass on all windows and doors shall be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior. Spandrel glass may be used on service areas on the building.

(f) Building Materials.

1. Buildings shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials. Table 28 E-1 below lists allowable building materials.
2. All building facades visible from a public street or public walkway shall use materials and design features similar to or complementary to those of the front facade.

Table 28E-1: Building Materials in Downtown and Urban Districts.

| Building Materials | Trim/Accent Material | Top of Building | Middle of Building | Base/Bottom of Building | Standards (see footnotes) |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Brick (Face/Veneer) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Smooth-Face/Split-Face Block | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | A |
| Wood/Wood Composite | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B |
| Fiber-Cement Siding/Panels | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | B |
| Concrete Panels (Tilt-up or Precast) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | C |
| EIFS/Synthetic Stucco | ✓ | ✓ | | | D |
| Stone/Stone Veneer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Metal Panels | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | E |
| Hand-Laid Stucco | ✓ | ✓ | | | D |
| Reflective Glass/Spandrel | ✓ | | | | F |
| Glass (Transparent) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

A - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials and shall not comprise more than thirty-three percent (33%) of any building.

B - Wood and fiber cement panels shall not be used on the ground story except between the sidewalk and the bottom of storefront windows or as an accent material.

C - Shall incorporate horizontal and vertical articulation and modulation, including but not limited to changes in color and texture, or as part of a palette of materials.

D - Shall not be within three feet of the ground or used on building facades facing State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

E - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials; shall be a heavy gauge, non-reflective metal

F - Shall be used in limited quantities as an accent material.

(g) Equipment and Service Area Screening.

1. Outdoor loading areas or mechanical equipment are not permitted in the front yard. When visible from an abutting public street or walkway, they shall be screened by a decorative fence, wall, or screen of plant material.
2. No doors or openings providing access to parking or loading facilities shall about the Capitol Square, State Street or King Street.
3. Fences and walls shall be architecturally compatible with the principal structure.

(h) Screening of Rooftop Equipment.

1. All rooftop equipment, with the exception of solar and wind equipment, shall be screened from view from adjacent streets and public rights-of-way. Rooftop equipment shall be screened from view from adjacent buildings to the extent possible.
2. The equipment shall be within an enclosure. This structure shall be set back a distance of one and one-half (1½) times its height from any primary facade fronting a public street. Screens shall be of durable, permanent materials (not including wood) that are compatible with the primary building materials. (Am. by ORD-15-00104, 10-15-15)

