



Agenda Item #: 5

Project Title: 535 W Johnson Street - Planned Development (PD) Alteration for Exterior Modifications to the Existing Building. 4th Ald. Dist.

Legistar File ID #: 74228

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Shane Bernau, Russell Knudson, Jessica Klehr, Christian Harper, Rafeeq Asad* and Amanda Arnold

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

*Asad recused himself on this item.

Summary

At its meeting of December 14, 2022, the Urban Design Commission made an **ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION to the Planning Division Director to approve** the proposed alteration to a Planned Development (PD) located at 535 W Johnson Street. Registered and speaking in support were Chris Houden, Daniel Zutter and Joe Lee. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Patrick Terry, representing JLA Architects; and Carole Schaeffer.

The revised plans show design changes to address the Commission's previous comments, playing up the Art Deco and keeping the building form as it is today. The larger heavier frame has been changed to glass railings, the decorative fin element has been refined to be more of an Art Deco aesthetic cascading downward and the entry element has been modified. Horizontal fins at the top will be lit with a vertical LED light in a teal color that will meet City light ordinances. The teal elements are proposed to be maintained, and the ground level garden walls will be refurbished. Four planters will be added on the inside corners of the penthouse level. The material palette remains the same.

The Commission discussed the following:

- It might be a better design if that beam slab were removed for just the vertical elements without that connection in between them.
- I was really surprised when this came back with these changes, in a good way. We were nudging the team to embrace the Art Deco elements, they ran with it. I have a feeling this is probably a bit much for people, I like it. This is a huge improvement from what we saw before. The concerns about how the downward pieces terminated in an abrupt random way have been addressed. I'm fine with the lighting elements, if they pass muster with the City.
- The upper portion is probably somehow tied to being a structural issue with the pool. I always thought the triangular balconies were an interesting architectural feature and I'm happy to see those come back. If the owner is trying to keep up with the Joneses, from a student perspective this new building front is probably going to make this place pop and feel like a nicer, newer version of what was there before.
- Are there any issues with the bird safety glass? From the standpoint of people looking up it's nice to not have anything obtrusive and will be a nice view from up there.
- You really embraced the Art Deco. Explain the thick structural element at the top.
 - That horizontal element is the structure for the pool. We've minimized the depth of that as much as we can but it has to cantilever like that.
- I'm talking about the one at the very top. I just suggested to the Commissioners that I think it would look more elegant with two spires and not a horizontal thing connecting them.

- I have no problem with the Art Deco. When you get to the top of the vertical element at the front, you have the thin band around one balcony, one lone balcony, the really thick structural bar element and the cap. In quick succession they don't work well together, it feels very heavy. Maybe that top element becomes a much lighter piece, a thin arc with the roof material, or else maybe it can go away entirely. The element at the roofline could somehow visually get lighter feeling, maybe more definition in the horizontal vs. the steps in the vertical.
- At the top piece I think you'll have a lot of bird mitigation to deal with (nesting).
- Thank you for taking our comments to heart, I'm always a big fan of color. It still feels a little heavy handed compared to the existing details on the building. I agree, maybe the top piece could be taken off for two spires on either side rather than a closed opening at the top. It might look better with those cascading pieces coming down not being so heavy, the rest of the building has much finer proportions. Maybe that could be revisited and refined more, but I thank you for the color. Question being on top of the roof with six-foot glass walls that you would lose any breeze around the pool on a hot day, something to think about.
 - There's an existing parapet wall around the roof, you'd be surprised how windy it actually is up there. We were actually concerned about it, so we wanted to have that wall as tall as we could without it being a visual impairment.
- It's very windy on the top of these 10-12-13 story buildings.

Action

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Klehr, the Urban Design Commission made an **ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION to the Planning Division Director to approve** the proposed alteration to the Planned Development (PD) with the recommendation that the uppermost horizontal beam connecting the spires be lightened or removed.

The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (6-0).