

From: Jay Ferm [mailto:jayferm@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2009 12:27 AM
To: Martin, Al
Cc: Bruce Woods
Subject: UDC comments for 9/2/09

(Al, please pass on these comments to the rest of the UDC.)

Fellow UDC Commissioners,

I regret that I will be absent for our scheduled meeting on Sept. 2. Given the importance of the Edgewater Hotel proposal, I want to share my thoughts for your consideration. I think the basic concept is excellent but it still has a ways to go before it's fully cooked. I will limit these comments to the most critical for consideration at this point in the process.

This is a large project in a sensitive neighborhood. There are several elements that should be scaled back. First, it is my understanding that the penthouse for the project exceeds the Capitol View Preservation Height limitations. It is very important to avoid setting a precedent that allows the violation of this limit in any way. Second, the overall height of this project is a concern. Third, the NE corner should be pulled back from the shoreline and public path.

Regarding the traffic circle, traffic and parking in front of the main entrance could have a negative impact on the lakeview from Langdon and on the psychological accessibility of the lakeview plaza to citizens. The parked vehicles that will inevitably accumulate here will vary in size from car to mid-sized truck to large busses and trucks. Unless the design accounts for this, the parked vehicles will impede the visual draw and attractiveness of the lakeview plaza. One idea to address this issue would be to sink the traffic circle below the lakeview portion of the plaza. In any event, a more robust design solution to this problem is called for.

The lakeview plaza is too formal and as such is not consistent with the proposal's stated aim to create "The place that is uniquely Madison." A more playful and interesting design is called for.

The entry off Langdon to the public access stairway down to the shore is critical to draw people to it and guide them down the stairway to an inviting destination. It is not clear to me that the current design will accomplish this. Please ask for more illustrations of this element for future consideration.

While the architecture does not need to be dialed-in for initial approval, the problem here is significant enough to warrant discussion now. The tower architecture does not yet rise to the high level of quality we expect from such an important and prominent location in our city. It is my hope that once the massing and site planning issues have been satisfactorily resolved that the applicant will continue to refine the architectural aspects of this proposal to such a level that our breath is taken away when we see it.

Respectfully,
Jay Ferm