

From: [Donna McDermott](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: Fw: Send this to UDC when you register to speak
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 4:01:14 PM

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Post to legistar
urbandesigncomments@cityofmadison.com

-

To: UDC

From: Donna McDermott

Date: August 19, 2026

Re: Item 4, 94244

Please post to legistar for the Urban Design Commission meeting of August 19,2026 for #4.

Donna McDermott

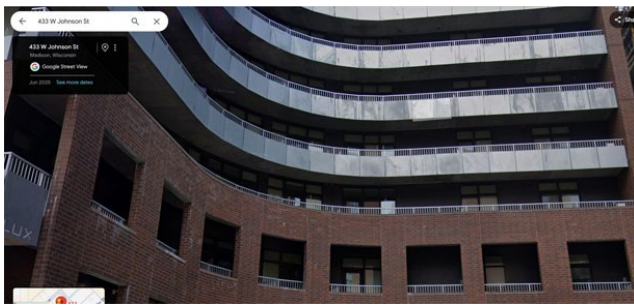
Range Hill Partners proposes to build a large building at 222 and 232 E. Olin Avenue, at least some of which appears to be metal on its exterior. I am concerned that this is not compatible aesthetically or architecturally with either the neighborhood mixed use corridor along John Nolen Drive or the adjacent older neighborhood.

In UDD1, the use of exterior metal cladding, vertical metal panels, and architectural accents is permitted subject to review and approval by the UDC. The developer must provide the UDC with detail about the specific metal material, its finish and color, attachment methods, and generally how it visually integrates with their design's complementary design elements and materials like glass, brick, or stone.

A few related points for the UDC to consider:

1) Metal has generally be viewed as an accent material in UDD1. In 2014, this commission discussed the metal that was proposed as a part of the Holiday Inn design exterior and decided that a small proportion of metal elements only on the building exterior could be fine.

2) Metal corrodes. The shiny metal panels used on The Lux. at 433 W. Johnson developed a mottled and corroded-looking patina within the first year of their installation. I have attached a picture of the Lux to this email and also include it here.



This is the first of many building to come on the Olin Triangle and I think it is very impomrtant for the UDC to consider the sort of precedent this building sets.

Many Madison and nearby residents feel that the design of this building needs to be anchored to the nearby older communities and that it should take its cue from and even integrate with the distinctive Madison icon at 222 E. Olin Avenue, the Wonder Bar. The Wonder Bar has served as one of the anchors of community not just on Olin Avenue but throughout Madison for almost a century. I am the great niece of the women who ran the Wonder Bar beginning in the 1930s. I knew them and I know how important serving good food and serving the community was to them.

I recognize the importance of development but I think development without context and without reference to its neighbors does a disservice to the sort of welcoming community we want to build in Madison.

From: [Janelle Munns](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: Item 4, 94244 August 19th 2026
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 3:26:25 PM

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To: UDC

From: Janelle Munns

Date: August 19, 2026

Re: Item 4, 94244

I understand that it is your job as the Urban Design Commission (UDC) to evaluate projects, such as this one by Range Hill Partners, that are located in one of Madison's special design districts along major corridors.

It is also your job to evaluate the aesthetic, architectural, and neighborhood compatibility of what replaces a demolished structure within an Urban Design District, and although you do not grant or deny the demolition permit, you review demolition proposals when they occur in UDDs, the Downtown Core, in Urban Mixed Use zones, and as part of larger planned developments.

The site for this proposed development is in UDD1 and also in an Urban Mixed Use Zone. In both the Downtown and Mixed-Use zones, the UDC reviews building removal and subsequent design proposals.

This site is home to the Wonder Bar, which the Landmarks Commission has decided has some historic merit, and therefore cannot be demolished as required by the plans before you without prior approval of the Plan Commission. Therefore any recommendations you may offer tonight that take the demolition of the Wonder Bar for granted are premature.

You should note that more than 1,000 people have signed a petition that recently began circulating to prevent demolition of the Wonder Bar. That petition is still gathering signatures. In 2021, in response to McGrath Development's proposal to demolish the Wonder Bar more than 3,000 people signed an earlier petition.

I ask that while you may offer some general recommendations to Range Hill Partners tonight on certain elements of their plan, you refer your information review to a date after Plan has decided on whether or not the Wonder Bar may be demolished.

I ask, too, that as you consider the aesthetic, architectural, and neighborhood compatibility of this site, you also look at the special potential of this site, in that it

holds an exceedingly rare intact example of a prohibition era roundhouse, and that buildings of this era are rare in South Madison. And consider its history as a gathering place on the former outskirts of Madison, and what that history has contributed to this neighborhood, to South Madison, and to the city as a whole.

Please consider as well the importance of character and of history to the development of new communities and the unique contribution of reuse as part of new development rather than the proposed scrape-and-replace approach.

From: [Carrie Rothburd](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: Please post to Legistar for UDC 8/19/26, Item 4
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 4:29:03 PM

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To: UDC

From: Carrie Rothburd

Re: UDC 8/19/26, Item 4

The plans submitted to you by Range Hill Partners need to be considered in light of the AEC Master Plan and South Madison Plan both of which pertain to development of the Olin Triangle. Of importance to this proposal, the AEC plan projects offices north of Willow Island, across the street from 222 E Olin.

“(North of Willow Island): Located south of E. Olin Avenue, the existing parcel offers a unique redevelopment opportunity located at the north end of campus with potential views of Lake Monona and Downtown Madison. The proposed redevelopment of this site is as a mixed-use office building. A high water table on this portion of the site will limit some of the redevelopment opportunities.

Suggested uses for this site from the plan include: mixed-use office development site, open spaces connected to office development, a mixed office building with shared parking opportunities.

The UDC does not typically question a developer’s proposed use. However, the UDC is charged with evaluating the aesthetic, architectural, and neighborhood compatibility of these plans since they will replace a demolished structure within a UDD. Whether the site should house an apartment building or an office building is a question of compatibility—especially true because the building being replaced has historic value, according to Landmarks.

The UDC is charged with reviewing the demolition proposal for the Wonder Bar, should the Plan Commission issue such in October because 222 E. Olin exists in UDD1 and also in an Urban Mixed Use Zone. The UDC reviews building removal and subsequent design proposals in both these cases. This raises the question as to whether this informational review needs to occur at a later date.

Finally some miscellaneous comments:

About half the bike parking is on the second floor, which is not encouraging to bike use.

One cannot walk around the building. The SE side of the building is on the property line, the NW side has about a 10-foot setback but appears no sidewalk is intended here.

The nearby bike path appears to have a width of about 6 feet only—not enough for 2-way bike traffic.

Page 7 of the presentation reflects a circular entrance which is covered by the upper floors, yet the illustrations do not reflect this entrance.

Nor do the illustrations show the NW façade opposite the point of the Nolen/Olin intersection.

The illustrations do not make clear how much of the exterior is to be made of a metal material, a material that UDD1 says to keep at a minimum.

From: [Alex Saloutos](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: Public comments on Legistar File 94244, 222 East Olin Avenue
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 9:24:19 PM
Attachments: [260819 MEMORANDUM LEGISTAR94244 UDC WONDERBAR.pdf](#)

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Commissioners,

Attached are my public comments on Legistar File 94244, the informational presentation on the redevelopment of 222 East Olin Avenue. The most important request, per my comments during the meeting, is that you direct the applicant to bring back an alternate plan for your consideration that includes the Wonder Bar. The memo also addresses other concerns regarding the relevant standards and provides recommendations to address them.

--

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the letter 'A' with a horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alex Saloutos

Phone: (608) 345-9009

Email: asaloutos@tds.net

M E M O R A N D U M

Date: August 19, 2026
To: Urban Design Commission
From: Alex Saloutos
RE: **Legistar File 94244, 222 East Olin Avenue, Informational Presentation, Urban Design District 1**

These are my public comments on Legistar File 94244, the informational presentation by Dan Kennelly of Range Hill Partners on the redevelopment of 222 East Olin Avenue.¹

THE PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THIS COMMISSION

The staff report cites only MGO 33.24(8), the design standards for this district.² It does not include the Purpose and Intent of the Urban Design Commission, MGO 38.24(2). I include it here so the big picture about the responsibilities the community has entrusted to you stays in view:

It is hereby declared a matter of public policy that the design, appearance, beauty and aesthetics of all public and private buildings, structures, landscaping and open areas are a matter of public concern and as such must be controlled so as to promote the general welfare of the community. The purpose of this section is:

(a) To assure the highest quality of design for all public and private projects in the City.

(b) To protect and to improve the general appearance of all buildings, structures, landscaping and open areas in the City; to encourage the protection of economic values and proper use of properties.

(c) To encourage and promote a high quality in the design of new buildings, developments, remodeling and additions so as to maintain and improve the established standards of property values within the City.

(d) To foster civic pride in the beauty and nobler assets of the City, and in all other ways possible assure a functionally efficient and visually attractive City in the future.

Urban Design District 1 states its own purpose in the same terms. MGO 33.24(8)(a) reads:

Urban Design District No. 1 is hereby established to make John Nolen Drive and the South Beltline Highway and adjacent properties, a most visually attractive approach to the City of Madison, to establish requirements and guidelines for aesthetically pleasing future development, and to assure that future development in the district will preserve and enhance the property values in the district and not

¹ Legistar File 94244, Urban Design Commission, August 19, 2026.
<https://madison.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=8159531&GUID=D45EAFD8-7533-46B2-8994-C65F0E8B0DDB&Options=ID|Text|&Search=94244>.

² Planning Division Staff Report, August 19, 2026, prepared for the Urban Design Commission by Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary, Legistar File ID #94244, page 1, Approval Standards.

cause a substantial depreciation in the property values within the district. Design requirements and guidelines are therefore hereby established to assist property owners in the district and the State of Wisconsin, City of Madison, and Dane County in improving and developing all properties within the district. In addition, the district is designed to foster a sense of personal and civic pride among the property owners, particularly as it relates to the appearance of their area, and the corresponding promotion of the commercial enterprises therein.

MGO 33.24(8)(c) directs this Commission to apply those requirements and guidelines in MGO 33.24(8) that are appropriate in each case, and states that the overall design of each development shall be of high quality. Judging what is appropriate and what counts as high quality takes the stated purposes into account. They come first in this memo for that reason. Every comment below cites a requirement or a guideline in MGO 33.24(8).

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ask for a design that incorporates the Wonder Bar

I am one of four community members who nominated the Wonder Bar for designation as a city landmark. We have significant experience in rehabilitating distressed historic properties like the Wonder Bar into successful investments and community assets.

MGO 33.24(8)(c)1.c.i reads:

New development shall consider activities on adjacent properties with relation to access from abutting streets, parking areas, service areas, building setbacks, height of structures, and color and materials of adjacent or nearby buildings.

Site planning and building relationships are within this Commission's purview.

MGO 33.24(8)(c) also reads:

The overall design of each development shall be of high quality.

Your job is to assure the highest quality of design for this site, and you cannot know you have it when you have been shown one option.

In 2021, the Plan Commission objected to the demolition of the Wonder Bar and placed the application, which included demolition of the Wonder Bar, on file. In 2022, the City approved redevelopment of the site, which kept the Wonder Bar on its own lot—less than 12% of the site—and included 192 apartments.

At its August 3 meeting, the Landmarks Commission determined the Wonder Bar has historic value.³

The Urban Design Commission ordinance declares that the design and appearance of buildings are matters of public concern, that this Commission exists to assure the highest quality of design for all projects in the City, and that it exists to foster civic pride in the beauty and nobler assets of the City. A 1932 building that the Landmarks Commission has found to have historic value is the kind of asset the applicable ordinances are intended to cover.

³ Landmarks Commission, August 3, 2026. Legistar File 93894 is the landmark nomination for 222 East Olin Avenue. Legistar Files 93871 and 93872 are the demolition historic value reviews for 222 and 232 East Olin Avenue.

In 2021, nearly 3,000 people signed a petition to save the Wonder Bar. In just a few weeks, more than 1,000 have signed a new petition, with more than 80 from the immediate neighborhood, including several members of the Bay Creek Neighborhood Association board.

We have attempted multiple times to discuss purchasing the Wonder Bar with the applicant and the owner to save it, but have been rebuffed.

Recommendation: Direct the applicant to bring back an alternate plan for your consideration that includes the Wonder Bar. I expect the developer will object due to cost or profit concerns. Neither is within your purview, and neither should keep you from asking to see an alternative plan that includes the Wonder Bar.

2. Metal panel requires a finding of exceptional merit

MGO 33.24(8)(c)6.a.v reads:

Metal shall not be used as an exterior material for building, except as an integral part of a design of exceptional merit.

The Letter of Intent states that the exterior is composed of high-quality, durable materials, including masonry, fiber-cement panels, and metal panels. It does not say the design is of exceptional merit. Staff has asked this Commission to make specific findings on the use of metal panels.⁴

Recommendation: Tell the applicant now that high quality and durability are not the tests the ordinance sets. Metal panels cannot be approved unless this Commission finds the design to be of exceptional merit, and that finding has to be stated in the motion.

3. Blank walls

MGO 33.24(8)(c)6.b.ii reads:

Large unbroken exterior facades should be avoided.

MGO 33.24(8)(c)6.b.iii reads:

All building elevations are of importance and should be carefully designed.
Buildings should avoid blank facades.

Staff report significant blank walls along the east elevation, which faces the future bike path, and note that the entrances on that side appear to be ancillary back doors leading to internal hallways and parking.⁵ On Olin Avenue, the first two floors are structured parking, garage doors, and 1,600 square feet of commercial space.⁶

The submittal contains no building elevations, so no one at the meeting can measure how much of any wall is blank.

Recommendation: For each wall that faces a street or the bike path, require the applicant to give the length of the wall and the share of it that is door, window, or active ground-floor use.

⁴ Letter of Intent, 222 E. Olin Avenue, Dan Kennelly, Range Hill Partners, August 3, 2026, page 2; Staff Report, page 2.

⁵ Staff Report, page 2.

⁶ Staff Report, page 1.

4. The garage doors on Olin Avenue

Staff asks this Commission for feedback on the design and detailing of the garage doors along Olin Avenue, where the building is closest to the street, including the scale and height of the doors, their transparency, and their integration into the overall design.⁷

The submittal contains no drawing of the garage doors.

Recommendation: Require a drawing of the garage doors before this Commission takes up initial approval, rather than leaving them to be worked out with staff at the end.

5. Where trucks load and unload

MGO 33.24(8)(c)5.a.iv reads:

Off-Street Parking and Loading Areas. All open off-street parking areas containing more than three (3) spaces, and all open off-street loading, shall have effective screening on each side adjoining or fronting on any residential property or any public or private street.

MGO 33.24(8)(c)5.a.ii also requires service areas to be screened from views from John Nolen Drive.

No sheet in the submittal labels a loading area.⁸ The building will hold 191 apartments and a commercial tenant.⁹

Recommendation: Ask the applicant where moving trucks, delivery vehicles, and refuse trucks will pull in. Require that the loading area be shown and screened on the plans he brings back.

6. Rooftop equipment and roof surfaces

MGO 33.24(8)(c)6.a.ii reads: "Mechanical elements mounted on the roof or ground shall be screened from the view of adjacent properties and roadways." MGO 33.24(8)(c)6.b.iii reads: "When visible from roadways or adjoining properties, roof surfaces should be considered as part of the overall design."

The plans show a green roof and a green roof commons atop the two-story parking structure.¹⁰ The submittal contains no roof plan and no drawing of the mechanical equipment that will sit on the roof of the seven-story portion.

Recommendation: Require a roof plan and a drawing showing the rooftop mechanical equipment and its screening.

7. Drawings the Commission does not have

The submittal includes a site locator, existing-context photographs, a concept site plan, floor plans, and perspective renderings. It contains no building elevations, no material board, no landscape plan, no grading plan, no lighting plan, no roof plan, no loading plan, and no sign plan.¹¹

Urban Design District 1 calls for each of these:

⁷ Staff Report, page 2.

⁸ 222 East Olin Ave UDC Informational Submittal, Potter Lawson, August 3, 2026. The submittal contains a site locator, existing context photographs, a concept site plan, floor plans for the first, second, third, and fourth through seventh floors, and nine perspective renderings.

⁹ Staff Report, page 1.

¹⁰ 222 East Olin Ave UDC Informational Submittal, Potter Lawson, August 3, 2026, Third Floor Plan and Concept Site Plan.

¹¹ 222 East Olin Ave UDC Informational Submittal, Potter Lawson, August 3, 2026.

Grading, MGO 33.24(8)(c)1.a.

Landscaping, MGO 33.24(8)(c)1.b. The Letter of Intent says landscape details are still being designed.¹²

Exterior lighting, MGO 33.24(8)(c)2.

Parking area lighting. MGO 33.24(8)(c)5.a.iii reads: "Parking areas shall be illuminated using attractive low-profile standards and fixtures. Drawings of these standards and fixtures shall be a part of plans submitted to the Urban Design Commission for review and approval."

Utility service. MGO 33.24(8)(c)3 requires that when service cannot be placed underground, a certification signed by representatives of each utility company appear on the plans submitted to this Commission.

Signs, MGO 33.24(8)(c)4.

Recommendation: State which of these drawings the Commission expects to see in the initial approval submittal.

¹² Letter of Intent, page 2.