

Dear Members of the Urban Design Commission,

The First Settlement Neighborhood (FSN) Steering Committee (SC) for the 330 E. Wilson St. proposal has previously raised with you issues that we requested you take into consideration when reviewing this proposal. We wish to reiterate these issues and provide additional information concerning them.

The FSN desires to see this site redeveloped in a manner that contributes to the handsome and distinctive architecture of our neighborhood. We look forward to working with developers on infill and redevelopment projects that enhance our neighborhood and respect its historical context.

Our concerns with the current proposal are:

1. The proportion and relationship of the building in context with surrounding buildings.

Downtown Urban Design Guidelines p. 11: Massing 1a) *"The proportions and relationship of the various architectural components of the building should consider the scale of other buildings in the vicinity"*. The redevelopment site abuts on its north the *First Settlement Local Historic District* having 2 - 2 1/2 story brick/wood buildings, and to the east across S. Hancock St. it neighbors the *East Wilson St. National Register Historic District* having a 3 story brick building at that corner. To the south across E. Wilson St. is the 4 story brick Rubin's building and its adjoining 2 story annex. We do not see this vicinity as having an "evolving context" like other areas of the downtown, which makes the proposed building's compatibility with its surroundings a significant concern.

2. The building's affect on the view shed down S. Hancock St.

Downtown Urban Design Guidelines p. 11: Massing 1c) *"The mass of a building should not negatively impact views identified on the Views and Vistas Map in the Downtown Plan."* The view down S. Hancock St. is identified on this map. The nearby buildings on the block along Hancock have ample front yard setbacks of at least 10' from their eastern property lines. The proposed structure does not have any setback from its eastern property line. The proposed building is also substantially higher than the surrounding buildings. We feel that it is important to understand how the proposed building will affect this view so that any negative impacts can be addressed by the building's design.

3. The building's visual interest and palette of materials given location on a highly visible corner.

Downtown Urban Design Guidelines p. 16: Terminal Views and Highly Visible Corners 6a) *"Corner buildings should define the street intersection with distinctive architecture such as tower elements, rounded walls, recessed entries or other design features."* and 6b) *"Buildings*

located at visual focal points should demonstrate a higher degree of architectural strength to emphasize their location." The proposed building would be the tallest structure at that intersection being 2 - 3 times taller than the surrounding buildings making it highly visible and dominating its corner. Additionally, Hancock St. has the potential to become a major gateway into the downtown based on the South Capitol Transportation Oriented District (SCTOD) recommendations, which propose cul-de-sacking E. Wilson St. and opening a new intersection at S. Hancock St. and John Nolen Dr. This has the potential to make any building on that corner a focal point for those entering into the downtown.

We are concerned about the proposed building's lack of architectural strength and uniqueness as well as the quality, honesty and longevity of the materials being proposed. The proposed design with its standard pattern of small windows and columns of stacked balconies has a generic feel that starkly contrasts with its surroundings. We are further troubled by the predominance of fully-exposed stacked balconies, especially at the predominant south east corner, since such balconies can be particularly unattractive parts of buildings once they're filled with an array of furniture and other varying belongings of residents.

Our SC had a meeting on 3/10 with the development team during which they indicated they'll seek your guidance regarding our issues. We believe it would help if the developer provided:

- Pedestrian level realistic views showing the development *in context with the existing structures* (not just faceless white boxes),
- A view study southward down Hancock St. showing the view *with and without the proposed building*, and
- Shadow studies that illustrate the impact of the new structure on the neighboring Hancock Court Condominium buildings.

We appreciate your assistance to ensure this project is a handsome and compatible redevelopment. We look forward to working together on our mutual mission to "*encourage and promote a high quality in the design of new buildings*" so that this new building will be recognized as an asset of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,
Jim Skrentny, Chair of First Settlement Neighborhood
Richard Engel, President of the Union Transfer Condominiums
Mark Kueppers, President of the Hancock Court Condominiums
Ed Linville
Matt Hildebrandt
Chris Quinn