



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 121 E Wilson Street  
**Application Type:** New Mixed-Use Residential/Commercial Building in UMX Zoning  
Initial/Final Approval is Requested  
**Legistar File ID #:** [71621](#)  
**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Dan Kennelly, Quad Capital Partners | 121 E. Wilson Investors, LLC

**Project Description:** The applicant is seeking Initial/Final approval for a proposed 14-story mixed-use residential and commercial building comprised of 337 residential units, roughly 19,445 square feet of commercial space, and 345 parking stalls. The project would involve the demolition of the existing 65,000 square-foot Lake Terrace office building, as well as a rezoning from Urban Mixed Use (UMX) to Downtown Core (DC) District.

**Approval Standards:** The Urban Design Commission (UDC) is an **advisory** body on this request. Section [28.074\(4\)\(b\)](#) 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), however the applicant has submitted a request to rezone the property to Downtown Core (DC). 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 proposed building appears to be consistent with these requirements.

Both the UMX and DC zoning districts also outline design standards that are applicable to all new buildings. As a reference, the design related zoning standards outlined in the UMX and DC zone districts 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 review the proposed development proposal and make their findings based on the aforementioned standards related to the items noted below, as well as the design considerations that were part of the Commission’s Informational Presentation comments as noted below:

- **Building Height and Capitol View Height Limits.** As noted above, the Capitol View Preservation Limits will apply to the project site. Based on the information provided, the proposed building **does** appear to meet those limitations. Overall building height is measured from grade to the top of the parapet wall, which

appears to be a few inches shy of the maximum height. Provided the data is correctly represented, the maximum permitted height that would be permitted is shown as CVPH on the building section plan.

Limited projections and elevator overruns above this height limit are only allowed with Conditional Use approval by the Plan Commission and staff has urged the applicant to explore solutions that eliminate or minimize such projections. As noted in Section 28.134, MGO, while projections are permitted, they shall be the "...minimum necessary to provide access." Staff requests the Commission make findings related to the overall building height, and the rooftop mechanical being in excess of the Capital View Preservation Limit.

As part of the Commission's consideration, staff refers the Commission to their comments as part of the Informational Presentation which were generally not supportive of mechanical equipment above the Capital View Preservation Limits. The Commission also noted that consideration should be given to the integration of the rooftop mechanical with the overall building architecture or a design feature.

- **Lakeside Elevation.** Staff refers the Commission to their Informational Presentation comments, in which some members of the Commission spoke to providing more articulation on the lakeside building elevation. Those initial comments included considering adjustments in the building footprint to be more 'H' shaped versus the proposed 'U' shape, as well as giving consideration to incorporating more organically shaped balconies, materials and colors, stepbacks, raising the height of one element, creating a sawtooth effect, etc. Staff requests the Commission make findings related to the design and articulation of the lakeside elevation, especially as it relates to the overall mass and scale, as well as vertical and horizontal articulation.
- **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 make findings on the proposed treatment of the blank wall of the structured parking, especially as it relates to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines that speak to creating four-sided architecture, visual interest, and consistently applying materials across all elevations.
- **Materials.** The building material palette primarily consists of a metal panel system and masonry. Staff notes the building material standards per the UMX and DC zone districts, footnote E, which states that: *"Metal panels shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials; shall be a heavy gauge, non-reflective metal."* As proposed, while the proposed metal panel is part of a palette of materials, additional information will need to be submitted to ensure that it is not reflective and that it will meet the Zoning Code standard. Staff requests the Commission make findings on the proposed material palette, color and composition.
- **Lighting.** the photometric plan appears to have inconsistencies with the City's Outdoor Lighting requirements (Section 29.36, MGO) for medium level activity areas, including light levels in excess of 1.5 footcandles in parking areas and 2.5 footcandles in pedestrian areas. As a potential code compliance issue, the applicant is advised that an updated photometric plan and fixture cutsheets, including those for the under canopy lighting, consistent with MGO Section 29.36, will be required to be submitted for review and approval prior to permitting.
- **Landscape.** As part of the Commission's review, consideration should be given to the overall landscape plan and plant list with regard to creating year-round texture and color, as well as softening hardscape areas, providing shade, screening of blank walls, especially along the John Nolen Drive corridor. Staff requests the Commission review and make findings based on the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, including those that speak to utilizing context appropriate landscape features and plant species.

## Summary of UDC Informational Presentation Comments

As a reference, the Commission's comments from the June 1, 2022, Informational Presentation are provided below:

- Is there less gradation on the lake side elevation?
  - The idea is to take advantage of the lake views for all those units. We didn't want to start closing up those views, while on the Wilson Street façade, we consider it more the 'city' side. It is also in response to the bird glass ordinance.
- I really like this, I can't see anything wrong with the concept. My only initial concern was how it feels to be on that John Nolen Drive patio with that much traffic going by, but maybe it's far enough above. This is a really good project, I like everything about it. The gradation, the enhancement with the lights at night. Good job, keep going.
- Very striking and exciting project, great use of this property. I had a similar question about the changing pattern of this Wilson façade. Understanding the lake view is a key amenity, I feel that this design is providing quite good access to that view, with or without this choice of elements. I would nudge the team toward applying it consistently around the building. The views to the lake are important but so is the view of this building from John Nolen Drive.
- The larger opaque elements being at the human level, is that notion of human scale important to these larger elements being lower?
  - The human scale is more as a pedestrian experiencing the building at the ground level where we have textured brick. There's a bit more detailing on those first two floors to respond to people being at that level.
- It's so wonderful to have such nice renderings and such a nice detailed Informational Presentation. My reaction to this design was to flip the building upside down. I read those larger opaque elements lower; the glass at the top gives me an elitist feeling.
- Why not place the lighting elements at the top pointed down?
  - Having lights up high you end up seeing the fixture and getting the glare of the fixture. Uplighting is so much nicer on buildings. It's almost like candle light with the gradation, this idea of a glowing edge with the recessed metal panels.
- Is there an opportunity for visual barrier between the dog run and John Nolen Drive? Consider the advantages or possibilities of some plantings as almost an acoustical barrier for that patio experience, balanced with views to the lake.
  - We do have a little wall at the dog run so it's not just exposed to John Nolen.
- The gradation going upward is more appropriate. The daytime rendering starts looking a little flat, maybe more texture on the inset metal panels would help. The gradation going up is more successful with the light. Be careful with your glass facing the lake, all of those blinds/curtains get pulled down and really changes that experience. You'll want high performance glass there.
- Maybe a mullion instead of recessed panels on the lake side, it looks too random now.
- Your renderings are very nice, I enjoy seeing a building that looks like what it will when built.
- What a project, it's really fun to be able to engage in a design conversation on projects like this one. On the Wilson side, I love the overall concept and prioritized activation of that streetscape. Some push and pull in the building massing, the way it enlivens that side would definitely not happen if the full building mass was brought out to the sidewalk. The concept of drawing people through this space, giving the public access is awesome, a huge amenity to the community. Love the lighting of the inset panels, the candle effect, would love to see that develop.
- The lake side is more flat and less interesting. The importance of these buildings flanking the civic spine, part of the beauty of that view is this diversity of buildings. I see what is almost like three buildings mashed into one, all at the same plane without that depth. I'm not advocating that these should have a

separate identity, what if it was less of a 'U' and more of an 'H'? Not to take away from the courtyard but to give it a bit of space between.

- This is the harder façade to design. We have looked at different forms, and like the idea of some additional shadow and breaking up of the façade, but this is the way to get the most units with lake views that are unobstructed. We tried to break it up with the balconies and stepped them as much as we can in order to get the number of units we need.
- The intent of the comment is still there for you to consider.
- Staff comments pointed out the mechanical overrun issue and Capitol View Height Preservation limit. I would fully support elimination of that overrun. If anywhere in the downtown and cityscape it was important to minimize any overrun, this would be that kind of project. I stand behind some of the staff comments regarding that upper floor.
- There are going to be some Marina condo residents with new views who may struggle with that change. The materials facing those is a light brick so it will throw any light around. Are any of the windows operable?
  - Yes.
- The fenestration where you have metal panels, there's so much interest in the windows and panels it gets lost in the punched windows. Is that curved under the windows in the masonry?
  - Yes, we're showing a curved brick element in a curved metal element.
- Costs are always a consideration, but on details like that go bigger so we can really see that shadow, it might help it look less flat too.
- Curious how confident you are about that brown color.
  - It's supposed to be bronze. We wanted something that contrasted the silver Marina on one side and the light brick of the State Administration building on the other side. A metal that blends more with the glass, because the glass is always dark during the day.
- Many of the rooflines in Madison are flat already, if you do end up with an overrun, I'd encourage a design feature, something slightly different that adds to the skyline.
- Very exciting project, lots of wonderful elements. Is there an opportunity of coordinating this project with the Monona waterfront design challenge? That big blank wall is going to be a backdrop.
- (Secretary) That is something I'd have to look into.
- I share the idea of an 'H' shape along John Nolen Drive. They will read as one big building form John Nolen Drive and the water. Anything to increase the push/pull or articulation, making the sawtooth more dramatic, raising the height of one component.
  - We're keenly aware of the Monona waterfront project, as that process evolves we will certainly be in touch with the City. Hopefully it will work out that we can coordinate somehow.
- I read these as glass balconies, I hope you stick with them. The glass balcony is so elegant.
  - We're still studying that, we're in a cost phase and will probably look at some different options for that.

**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.