

May 30, 2023 (Updated August 22, 2023)

Plan Commission and Urban Design Commission

Re: Conditional Use Application Letter of Intent – New Building Construction

To Whom It May Concern:

The State of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Historical Society are proposing to replace the current Wisconsin Historical Museum at 30 North Carroll Street on the Capitol Square with a new 116,097 square foot Wisconsin History Center. The History Center will be a flagship venue for the Society and a center for American history and community engagement. The current museum and the adjoining properties at 20 and 22 North Carroll Street will be demolished for the new facility. Construction is slated to commence in early 2024 with completion in 2026. Below is a description of how WHC complies with Downtown Urban Design Guidelines and Zoning Requirements.

### **URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES | SITE DESIGN + BUILDING PLACEMENT**

#### **Orientation**

The History Center sits at the prominent intersection of Carroll, Mifflin, and State Street. The conceptual building mass has taken this into consideration and intentionally shifts the volume to offer a **strong corner presence** and **respects vistas identified in the Downtown Plan**. The base of the History Center aligns to the urban context, while the rotated upper volume effectively helps the building mass visually turn the corner, opening up views from the capitol towards the Northwest as well as from the State Street pedestrian arrival towards the Capitol. This shift in plan intentionally preserves, for the public, into the future, opportunities to appreciate these planned vistas from a series of exterior building terraces. At grade, the building arrival is on Carroll Street, intentionally aligned with the Mifflin Plaza which will strengthen a currently underutilized space. The building mass holds the corner at Carroll and Mifflin, with a tall glazed interior lobby volume intentionally placed here to maximize Capitol sightlines.. The lobby façade will also offer significant transparency from Carroll to maximize pedestrians' opportunity to visually engage with the Wisconsin Historical Society's collection presented within this public lobby.

The project will pursue a reduced loading requirement for its limited back of house service requirements, and the single loading dock door along Mifflin is intended to be integrated into the building façade as to not be highly visible.

#### **Access + Circulation**

Access to the loading dock will be provided via the Mifflin Street cul-de-sac.

#### **Landscaping**

The Mifflin Plaza will be used during construction as the construction staging space. The plaza will be re-constructed following the building completion in its current configuration with changes only on the south end to accommodate the loading dock turning radii. The proposed plan for restoring the plaza is included for informational purposes.

#### **Lighting**

The design team has integrated lighting to **reinforce key architectural and site elements** while creating a unique and appropriate nighttime identity. Overall project light levels are being wholistically considered to ensure positive contribution to the urban **ambiance**, while considering the latest research in safety perception, control technology, and integration with smart systems.

### **URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES | ARCHITECTURE**

## **Massing**

The Wisconsin History Center building mass responds to numerous contextual cues, **articulating the building in plan and profile** to best **respond to the scale within the vicinity**. Its base sits aligned to its urban context and keeps the volume down towards the scale and datum set by the existing architecture along State Street. At its top, the project aligns with the cornice of the adjacent Churchill building while incorporating an intentional reveal where the two structures meet, celebrating the Churchill Building's verticality and resolving the dynamic moves within the History Center volume. Each of these moves considers the building's contribution and impact toward important **viewsheds**, as discussed within "orientation."

## **Building Components**

The project has considered arrival and **vantage points** from all directions. The materiality and façade details create a dynamic, engaging, and inviting experience. A lenticular façade allows a thoughtful cladding strategy that is dynamic from all perspectives. An enclosed penthouse will be provided at the roof level, below the Capitol View Preservation Limit, to **screen MEP equipment** not able to be located within the lower level.

## **Visual Interest**

The Wisconsin History Center has been designed from an interior experience expressed outward. Significant transparency within the façade is utilized pointedly to express key public spaces within the building program while exhibit spaces are clad to ensure controlled light levels to protect the collection on display. A lenticulated façade composed of **quality materials** adds visual interest from multiple vantage points within the **urban environment**. All four sides of the building volume will share similar approach.

## **Building Materials**

The project uses a **simple palette of durable materials of glass, zinc and steel**. These materials enrich **the pedestrian environment through use of scale, color texture, + details**. The design intends to respect the surrounding material context of the Capitol Square while ensuring the History Center as a uniquely identifiable landmark.

## **Terminal Views and Highly Visible Corners**

The Wisconsin History Center sits at a prime location to be bold and achieve this guideline. The building parti distinctly **emphasizes** its unique **location** in the urban context while respecting its context.

## **Signage**

The project is using a **simple and clear** exterior signage approach for an **architecturally compatible** and **integrated** solution.

## **PROJECT SPECIFIC ZONING CONSIDERATIONS + APPROACHES**

**Zoning District** : *DC Downtown Core*

**Capitol View Preservation Limit:** *The building sits below the Capitol View Preservation Limit.*

**Setback Requirements** : *No setback requirements on either street.*

**Loading** : *WHC is in compliance as their loading is off Mifflin Street.*

**Entrance Orientation:** Primary building entrances on all new buildings shall be oriented to the primary abutting public street and have a functional door. The History Center's primary entrance is on North Carroll Street.

**Story Heights + Treatments** : *The City of Madison has recently amended the story height requirements portion of the Zoning Ordinance. The new WHC complies with the updated ordinance.*

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. *Project Approach: Due to the slope on the site, there will be portions of Level 01 that will be both below the sidewalk elevation and more than 18" above the sidewalk elevation. By increasing the ground floor glazing, WHC activates the façade to views in to the 3-level lobby space, even if its floor elevation is offset from the sidewalk.*

**Door and Window Openings** .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. *Project Approach: WHC's street-facing ground floor façades of Carroll and Mifflin Streets are ~58% glazing.*

For all buildings, upper story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area per story. *Project Approach: The upper stories are 15.6% glazing when including the 3 visible facades. Due to the possible future development along the private alley as well as code required fire ratings due to being adjacent to the property line, WHC focuses its glazing on the two street-facing facades – when only considering street-facing facades our glazing percentage is 23%. For this calculation, we are considering Mifflin Plaza a street-facing façade. The exterior wall adjacent to Churchill Building is not included in the calculation as it will be hidden. The design team is also meeting requirements set by the DFD design standards.*

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. *Project Approach: WHC complies.*

**Equipment and Service Area Screening:** Outdoor loading areas or mechanical equipment are not permitted in the front yard. When visible from an abutting public street or walkway, they shall be screened by a decorative fence, wall, or screen of plant material. *Project Approach: All equipment and screening will occur within the building or on the roof.*

**Screening of Rooftop Equipment:** All rooftop equipment, with the exception of solar and wind equipment, shall be screened from view from adjacent streets and public rights-of-way. Rooftop equipment shall be screened from view from adjacent buildings to the extent possible. *Project Approach: Screening provided at rooftop equipment.*

The equipment shall be within an enclosure. This structure shall be set back a distance of one and one-half (1½) times its height from any primary facade fronting a public street. Screens shall be of durable, permanent materials (not including wood) that are compatible with the primary building materials. (Am. by ORD-15-00104, 10-15-15) *Project Approach: Screening will be held off of Carroll Street and Mifflin plaza by a*

*minimum of 27'-0" as this is 1½ times the height.*

**Bird Safe Glass Requirements:** (4) Glass areas on the following buildings or structures shall be treated to reduce the risk of bird collisions by incorporating a pattern of visual markers that are either: a) dots or other isolated shapes that are ¼" in diameter or larger and spaced at no more than a two-inch (2") by two-inch (2") pattern; or b) lines that are ⅛" in width or greater and spaced no more than 2" apart; low reflectance opaque materials; building-integrated structures like non-glass double-skin facades, metal screens, fixed solar shading, exterior insect screens, and other features that cover the glass surface; or other similar mitigation treatments approved by the Zoning Administrator. *WHC will utilize option A for the bird safe requirements*

- (a) Buildings or structures over 10,000 square feet . For any building or structure over 10,000 square feet in size (floor area of above-grade stories), bird-safe glass treatment is required as follows:
1. For building façades where the first sixty (60) feet (see REVISED Figure 2) from grade are comprised of greater than or equal to fifty percent (50%) glass:
    - a. At least eighty-five percent (85%) of the glass must be treated - *WHC will comply, currently showing 85% in elevation.*
    - b. All glass within fifteen (15) feet of a building corner must be treated when see through or fly through conditions exist. See Figure 3. - *WHC will comply*
  2. For building façades where the first sixty (60) feet from grade are comprised of less than fifty percent (50%) glass: - *Not applicable*
    - a. At least eighty-five percent (85%) of the glass on glass areas fifty (50) square feet or over must be treated; and
    - b. Of all glass areas over fifty (50) square feet, any glass within fifteen (15) feet of a building corner must be treated.
  3. All glass railings must be treated. - *WHC will comply*
  4. All glass on enclosed building connections shall be treated up to sixty (60) feet above-grade.
    - (b) Sky-bridges . For buildings and structures of any size, all glass on above-ground bridges must be treated. - *Not applicable*
    - (c) At-grade glass . For buildings and structures of any size, all at-grade glass features such as sound walls or glass screens must be treated." - *Not applicable*

**Parking Requirements:** *Project Approach: No automobile parking is required and WHC is not providing any. Bicycle parking is required at 1 per 2,000 SF. WHC is ~110,000 GSF and so requires 55 bicycle parking spots. WHC will provide 6 bicycle stalls in inside the building, and the WHC will pursue working with the City of Madison to locate the remainder of these bicycle parking spots within the Mifflin Plaza.*

**Off-Street Loading Requirements:** *Project Approach: Based on the loading requirements table and GSF of the building, 3 loading spaces should be provided. Due to the infrequency of deliveries because of the use of the building, only 1 interior, conditioned loading space will be provided. This loading space meets the loading size requirements.*

**Landscape Requirements:** *Project Approach: The building will be built to the lot line on all four sides.*

**Screening of Other Site Elements:** *Project Approach: None of the items listed in this section are positioned on grade.*

**Development Adjacent to a Landmark or Landmark Site:** *Project Approach: The building isn't adjacent to a City landmarked property.*

**Encroachments :** *Project Approach: Soil retention systems and MG&E Electrical vault and Main Electrical Room along Carroll/Mifflin Street. WHC will work with the City to determine an appropriate agreement.*

Thank you for your consideration,  
George E. Austin, Agency Representative

Wisconsin History Center Project  
Wisconsin Historical Society