

AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 7/13/20

TITLE: American Exchange Development
adjacent to three Designated
Madison Landmarks (1 N
Pinckney St, 21-23 N Pinckney St,
and 117-119 E Mifflin St); 4th Ald.
Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 7/14/20

ID NUMBER: 61120

Members present were: Anna Andrzejewski, Richard Arnesen, Katie Kaliszewski, David McLean, and Maurice Taylor. Excused were: Betty Banks and Arvina Martin.

SUMMARY:

Brad Binkowski, registering in support and wishing to speak
Jose Granados, registering in opposition and wishing to speak
Jeff Lenz, registering in opposition and wishing to speak
Kurt Stege, registering in support and wishing to speak
Joanna Rouse, registering in opposition and wishing to speak
Andrew Inman, registering in opposition and wishing to speak
Mark Binkowski, registering in support and available to answer questions
David Jennerjahn, registering in support and available to answer questions
Tom Daly, registering in support and available to answer questions
Please see attached Public Comment Registration list for an additional 1 registrant in support and 29 registrants in opposition, none of whom wished to speak.

Bailey explained that the Landmarks Commission would be providing an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission and Urban Design Commission, which will also review the proposed development. She noted that they were considering the landmarks that were directly adjacent to the development, with adjacency being defined as sharing a property line. She discussed the applicable standards and showed images of the plans. She said that the tower element is oriented in a way that is well set back from the adjacent landmarks on the northern boundary of the proposed development. She said that the tower does come directly up to the boundary of 1 N Pinckney Street on the rear corner, pointing out that 1 N Pinckney is a very narrow building. She showed various views of the proposed development in relation to the adjacent landmarks and said that one can see a little of the proposed tower behind 117-119 E Mifflin Street, but it is pretty far behind that adjacent landmark. She said that staff recommends that the Landmarks Commission provide their advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission and Urban Design Commission that the proposed new structure is not so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character or integrity of the adjacent landmarks at 1 N Pinckney Street, 21-23 N Pinckney Street, and 117-119 E Mifflin Street.

The applicant, Brad Binkowski, said that they dramatically reduced the height of the upper floors of the building in order to introduce a stronger architectural concept, which is a curve that moves away from the south property line. He said that he believes it is a more elegant tower and is a more appropriate design that

enhances views from Eno Vino, from which one can see the entire Capitol dome. He said that on the view from N Pinckney Street, they stepped the building further away from the American Exchange façade. On the view from E Washington Avenue, he pointed out that the upper floors step back to create more life and air, which he thought was a significantly improved design. He said that they are not done yet and will continue to work on the design, which UDC will have a significant impact on. He said that as staff reviewed the design changes, they felt it was a significant improvement and respected the historic landmark status of the buildings as well as the scale of the façades on N Pinckney Street. He said that in looking at the view from E Mifflin Street, one can see how far back the building is set as they intentionally tried to create a scale as well as light and air that would preserve the character of the landmark buildings. He said that he believes they responded to the standards that the Landmarks Commission has to evaluate alterations adjacent to landmarks and is excited to allow the project to go through the full public approval process where there will be a lot of meetings and discussions for everyone to have an opportunity to be heard. He said that this project is an investment in downtown that will attract employees, add life and vitality, and create business for downtown restaurants.

Kaliszewski referenced page 14 of the applicant's submittal and read the note at the top regarding the Landmarks Commission's approval of the variance request to allow for the demolition of the landmark building at 7-11 N Pinckney Street in order to preserve the historic second floor windows in a reconstructed façade. She said that is not what the Landmarks Commission voted on; they voted that it was no longer a landmark, and she felt that the statement on the submittal misrepresented that vote. Binkowski said they did not intend to misrepresent the action taken by the Landmarks Commission. He said that the reconstruction of the second floor façade was an integral part of their proposal and the statement represents what the applicants committed to do. Kaliszewski said that some commissioners had asked that they not reconstruct the façade because it is not the current preservation standard. She said that the vote did not come down to saving that collection of windows so that they could say it was no longer a landmark. Bailey said that the Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of 7-11 N Pinckney Street included a condition that the applicants would explore careful deconstruction of the façade for potential incorporation into the new construction, though the form of that was not finalized. Andrzejewski said that the approval was not predicated on it either; the Landmarks Commission wanted applicants to look into the potential reconstruction of the façade but were not stipulating that it had to be included.

Jose Granados said that in full disclosure, around half of the people who registered in opposition to the project were employees of Eno Vino. He said that they were worried about what will happen to their jobs depending on how busy the restaurant is. He said that he and his wife had written a letter to the commission, which she read. Sarah Granados said that Eno Vino is a public restaurant open to everyone to enjoy and serves as a space to experience the incredible view of the State Capitol building, the most iconic landmark in Madison. She said that the Capitol view from Eno Vino creates a more unique, high-priority benefit to the public than a private office building. She said that if the proposed project proceeds as designed, the unique view of the Capitol that is available to the public will be lost, and instead they will be offered a peek at the dome and a view of a large glass office building.

Jeff Lenz reiterated two concerns he noted in his comment on agenda item 4, notice and the impact of the project on public use. In response to the applicant's comments on the adjustments to the plans, he said that given the size, scope, and scale of the project it is up for debate as to whether a roughly 20 foot setback across 200 to 260 feet is significant. He requested the Landmarks Commission deny the proposal or at minimum refer to a future meeting.

Kurt Stege said that the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation supports items 4 and 5 related to this project. He said they appreciated the developer for the positive modifications in the design, which they found to be significant. He also said that the American Exchange building was built with Madison sandstone, and there may be issues with the strength of the sandstone. He said that the Trust requests that the Landmarks Commission be particularly vigilant in terms of how the construction affects the American Exchange building. He said that he spoke to the consulting firm that the applicants have hired to offer expertise on the exterior stonework and they seem well qualified. Binkowski said that they have restored the American Exchange building to the degree they can and are committed to leaving the building intact.

Andrew Inman referenced the standards and said that he was concerned that the proposed modifications to the building do impact the American Exchange building, which will be enveloped above grade as well as with a below grade parking structure. He pointed out that the massive scale of the project is over 300,000 ft² above ground plus 100,000 ft² below grade, which is surrounding the 2700 ft² American Exchange building. He said that by any measure, the project is visually obtrusive and will adversely affect the integrity of the public views of the landmark buildings. He requested the commission refer the item in order to provide more time for them to model the visual impact and provide the commission with a more appropriate visual representation of that impact.

McLean requested confirmation that the Landmarks Commission was only providing an advisory recommendation, not a Certificate of Appropriateness. Bailey confirmed it was strictly an advisory recommendation. McLean asked if the project will come back before the Landmarks Commission, and Bailey responded that it would not, unless the applicants were proposing work to the property at 1 N Pinckney Street.

Bailey read the remaining list of registrants who did not wish to speak.

Andrzejewski said that she appreciated the clarification on the commission's jurisdiction that McLean raised, and she emphasized that they were considering the nature of the new development and its potential visual intrusion on the three adjacent landmarks. She pointed out that view from properties toward the landmarks is not necessarily something they consider directly.

Arnesen said that he thought the developers did a good job with reconfiguring the tower and stepping back on multiple sides. He said that in looking at the perspectives, he thinks the standards have been met. Taylor agreed and said that the developers have done their best to maintain the character of the landmarks.

McLean said that he thinks the building is pretty big, especially the N Pinckney elevation, and said that the glass wall is overwhelming from the Capitol's perspective looking at N Pinckney Street. He said that with regard to the standards, the applicants have done a pretty good job of keeping away from the landmarks and he gives them credit for that. He reiterated that his only discomfort is with the N Pinckney side, which is close to the American Exchange building. He said that it looks like it is overlapping and it would be nice to clear the American Exchange building entirely to let it stand on its footprint by itself; in looking at the plans, he said that it may be a matter of inches or the perspective past the cornice. Arnesen said that he was looking at that as well and said that he doesn't think they overlap. Bailey said that the proposed building intersects with the landmark building at the bottom corner but does not cross, so the tower will be outside of the landmark's designated boundary. She said that in terms of staff feedback on various iterations of the design, it is always staff's recommendation that new development try to step back from the adjacent landmarks, and it is stepped back from the primary façade of the landmarks. She pointed out that 1 N Pinckney Street is a corner property, so while E Washington Avenue is not the primary elevation, the tower is shaped in a way that it comes in closest to 1 N Pinckney Street at the bottom corner but it does not cross into that boundary.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Arnesen, seconded by Taylor, to recommend to the Plan Commission and Urban Design Commission that the proposed new structure is not so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character or integrity of the adjacent landmarks at 1 N Pinckney Street, 21-23 N Pinckney Street, and 117-119 E Mifflin Street. The motion passed by voice vote/other.