



<b>Agenda Item #:</b>	5
<b>Project Title:</b>	139 W. Wilson Street - New Residential Building in UMX Zoning. 4th Ald. Dist.
<b>Legistar File ID #:</b>	70108
<b>Members Present:</b>	Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Shane Bernau, Wendy Von Below, Christian Harper, Marsha Rummel, and Rafeeq Asad
<b>Prepared By:</b>	Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Summary

At its meeting of September 20, 2023, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a new residential building located at 139 W Wilson Street. Registered and speaking in support were John Seamon and Michael Siniscalchi. Registered and speaking in opposition were Randy Christianson, Cole Jordee, and Jonathan Cooper.

Updates to the project include removal of the large column at the front corner, incorporated the internally-lit art wall to face the lake. The polycarbonate panels are now glass curtain wall with a neon LED tube, running vertically, to make it glow. With regard to parking, they believe that there is a need for housing downtown and that not all people require or need an automobile. From an ordinance standpoint there is no parking required, which is why this is an ideal site to bring more housing and affordable housing. They continue to study the Commission's previous comments on monotony. The simple material and its texture; the facets make a clean, modern façade that will always change. The team believes they can limit move-in/move-out times, and put restrictions on when loading and package deliveries can come to that particular address. It's a dense urban environment, and with these being micro-units, the residents will not have a lot of "stuff". An XL van would be the maximum vehicle size accessing the site.

The Commission had the following questions for staff and the development team:

- I got so excited to see a purple building.
- This is the third iteration.
- Can we not design anymore gray, beige or monochromatic buildings? This building has such a unique texture in the precast, the color kills the design. There is a great artistic end with the forest lit thing, then this concrete color. The purple was unique. It does look prison-like because of the color. A sliver of a building calls for a unique design.
- (Secretary) The issue with the previous (purple) building material palette was that it did not meet the Zoning Code.
- There's so much potential here, because it is such a narrow building. You can still bring some voids in there and play with the way those two adjacent facades are articulated, it's a missed opportunity. We don't need more grey, tan or beige; we have enough.
- The back of the building needs work. I am not opposed to it [proposed wall art] being green and lit, but I like the art better on the front side.
- Can you explain how the deliveries would work, bike parking and MG&E vault location?
  - The driveway area is 21 feet wide, and can accommodate deliveries. We have four guest parking stalls that could be used for delivery vehicles, car share spots and bike parking (shown on site plan).

- You said you would schedule Amazon, but what about people ordering dinner? If people don't have a car they will be ordering stuff. How are you going to serve those that are relying on others to bring things to them? How will that work for the people who rely on others to bring stuff directly to their apartment?
  - They could walk, there is some bike delivery. We see a need for this type of housing in downtown Madison where they're not necessarily ordering food in, they're going out to dinner to a plethora of fantastic options in downtown Madison.
- I'm not arguing for cars, I'm wondering how the building will facilitate what is getting delivered to them.
  - Those services can all come, we have a dedicated, secure, separate area for those boxes, and we feel we can schedule those delivery times.
- Where will a UPS/Fed Ex/food delivery guy park?
  - Right in this line here (shown on site plan).
- And the four cars are for who? So those spots are not available for deliveries?
  - Residents. No.
- Basically there is a limited area to pull in and back out. Do you anticipate a loading zone on the street?
  - We do not.
- Not to belabor this point, the more we talk, the more questions arise. Has Traffic Engineering looked at this?
- (Secretary) Traffic Engineering has looked at it, this is slated to go to the Plan Commission on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the staff report with conditions will be solidified then.
- I think there are some other site circulation concerns. There is not a turn-around. People will have to back out into the street and do a "T."
  - That is correct.
- Ok, if you think that works; I don't buy it, but I guess I am ok.
- There's an exit stair, how will you ensure that will not be blocked by vehicles?
  - It will be signed and the pavement will be marked.
- I'm struggling to find a unit that is accessible. These are all non-ADA accessible. Your door clearances, bathrooms, you cannot fit a wheelchair in any of the units.
  - That won't necessarily be the case as we move forward. It is tight, they're very small. We will make the required number of units that will be accessible.
- (Secretary) I'm looking at the draft preliminary staff comments/conditions, and the only major non-standard comments from Traffic Engineering are related to a public dedication on Wilson, they have asked for further information with regard to circulation especially as it relates to refuse, as well as concerns with constructability.
- Most of the Commission was excited at that first Informational Presentation with those color changing metal panels. You pivoted in a good way with these faceted concrete panels; did you consider instead of them all being the same facet pattern having three different ones. I think you missed an opportunity to have some of that light bouncing by having multiple different shapes. You went with pearl white, nothing wrong with that, but if its cast concrete there was an opportunity to get a much more dynamic look to the exterior. Not so much the two long sides, but the sides that face John Nolen Drive and Wilson Street, it seems like there is a missed opportunity to incorporate some color. Was it a cost issue, a design aesthetic?
  - We definitely did. That south façade was a major player. When we gained regularity in the unit and let that color be that pearl white, we got more contrast and more of an effect more clearly. When we changed those panels it was visually odd, whereas with the single facet, your eye follows that striation, that texture and it was more powerful. We really liked the idea of color shifting of the metal panel but that was an ordinance issue with that materials, but it's a texture shift now.
- Can you explain where the faux wood panels are being used – only on the one façade, is it used anywhere else?
  - Right now they're only on W Wilson, it's a product called long board. It really stands the test of time outside, but only on that façade. We did consider it on the south side, but it seemed applied; here we get this stronger notion of the center and going vertical. It seemed more like an applied stripe on the other façade.
- Can you address the use of wall packs? How you're going to clean this, because concrete gets dirty? What if there were inlays of the long board at each of the windows? The material palette, I feel like you wanted this to

be a precast building with a splash of the other one so you could meet the zoning requirements and it looks like that. It doesn't look like that second material is integrated into the design. It could be better integrated fully around the building. It gives it more life, something a little less institutional, especially if you have a flat façade and there's no pushing and pulling.

- As far as cleaning it goes it's a really tight concrete mix that is very fine and as smooth as we can get it. It is a custom wall panel. It's produced by Wells. They have no concerns, they've showed us examples of buildings that have been built using this material, and its ability to let rain do what it does well, with modulation in the panel, so there is change like this one. We feel good about that.
- The wall packs are the same on all facades. The window system has an integral frame for the louvers. It is one frame made by one manufacturer, it's a bronze anodized frame.
- We've been asked specifically to look at a few criteria: #9, which is the aesthetic desirability and its context, and the building's impact on the Capitol View. We do not control the view compliance, but we can make a recommendation as to what our opinion is on anything that intrudes into that view. I'm hearing there is a lot of concerns about the aesthetic desirability of the building, the design composition and its visual interest is really inhibited by these green elements. The corner here at the bottom, it's like a deconstruction of the building, the rest is tall, elegant and slender, simple composition. There doesn't seem to be any cohesion between the first floor and four-five stories and the rest of the tower and that goes for the green tattoo on the upper corner of the other side. It is better served without it. The repetition of the panel, it's pretty small with respect to its articulation; on a building like this, the panels are larger and made up of smaller pieces either a larger module or less articulation might help. Some variety in the panel design, not a lot, but say all the panels from four to the roof, could be something very subtle. Finally, if you're going to have some long board or metal panel, then integrate it holistically throughout so that it doesn't feel like a minimum to satisfy a requirement. The lack of cohesiveness detracts from the compatibility from its context.
  - We looked at double and two and ½ times that scale, but we never got that strong texturing. In fact the larger the units, the texturing was not as impactful. It didn't feel like a texture, more like a sheer cloth. I hear what you're saying about long board on the sides; we are happy to add that in on the other sides.
- Are the windows/voids/punches as big as they can get?
  - They could be bigger, yes.
- They should be, it will help your façade and the feeling of being in a small space. The more light you can get in there, less punches and bigger ones will help. It would allow you to keep the scale of that concrete panel the way it is.
  - They could be, but not a ton. We used the verticality to have 7-foot tall windows in quite a few locations, so we feel like we are daylighting that pretty well, but we could look at it again.
  - The material next to the windows is flat concrete versus the metal panel.
- For Initial Approval, you're open to revisiting some of these concepts, right?
  - Yes, we're looking for Plan Commission approval on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, but I don't want to shut the door on the design getting better, especially on some of the things that have been mentioned.
- I am all about height, light, and modern but I agree that the art piece on top is so random. I think it needs to be revisited. It seems applied like the long board.
- Conditional use standard #9, the question of human scale. You started your comments with the five-story cut-out, do you think that meets the human scale? Or is it too tall, could it be shorter, but is that a human scale? I like it, I think it's interesting. Is that a proportionate size for this kind of artwork?
  - The size of that reveal, at five stories, is a proportionate response to the top of the building. That receding and change in materials is in proportion to the building. This is a big walnut portal, from a pedestrian scale this notion starts to go away, this push back goes away, and what you are then relating to in terms of scale is the portal.
- I think the material is interesting, did you say if it comes in different sizes? Is it all that size?
  - This unit, 1' x 4' custom facet that is one of these. We can make that anything we want, we looked at different scales and forms, it could be bigger, it's completely custom.

- Standard #9, I think you could make a case that the E Wilson façade is interesting but the John Nolen side doesn't meet that at all. Looking at that façade from somewhere else, it looks like the back of the building.
  - I heard 'tattoo,' applied to this assembly on the back. As much as we wanted to have that be this banner, I get what you're saying. My question would be if this were to wrap only the top floor and wrap both sides back 12-16 feet, does that conceptually verbally sound better?
- Have you done an elevator study? You have two passenger elevators, I'm not seeing a freight elevator, and how many occupants do you anticipate having in the building?
  - We think occupancy will be around 328. We have not done an elevator study, but the elevator company has looked at this and they feel that we can make this work.
- Does the distribution of move-in/move-out dates spread itself naturally across the calendar year? Do you have past experience that you can apply to this one?
  - We're looking at four times a year currently, we may have to adjust that depending on lease-up and length of leases. We are looking at restrictions on van size and timeframes for them to move. Each resident would get a certain timeframe. It's probably more like four times a year.
- The large student complexes are nightmarish for them and anybody who traverses across the City on those days.

The Commission discussed the following:

- I kind of like the green punch out, it could be four stories instead of five. This idea of the green core, just the rigor of wrapping that under the ceiling so it truly feels like you're breaking into the green core of the building. There's some depth to the space just to the left of the lobby and that feels wrong, there's too much blank wall. You should have a view into that lobby from that left side. It feels like a lot of blank wall where it could be more open and glassy. Maybe there is some larger wholesale changes to the façade and materials, which may make this not relevant - you have this opportunity, a moment to celebrate that view out towards the lake and right now the site plan ignores it. There is something that should be celebrated there, it could be a special asset to anyone who catches a glimpse of the lake between the buildings.
- A little bit of homework for the Commission, we could take a look at Bethel Lutheran on Johnson, it has these faceted similar depth to the precast, you can see how light and shadow plays off of that one at only three stories.
- The green cube facing the lake, if you start exploring other alternatives to that, I still think the architecture should be able to rely on materiality, articulation in the daylight and not require this glowing beacon/banner that is really most evident at nighttime reflecting off of the lake across the city. Color shifting panels, something that could replace that element without needing nighttime light, or maybe it's something completely different altogether.
- Looking at the pedestrian scale, this is an art installation, whether its two-stories, a true pedestrian size, or a bigger void is irrelevant, but the activity behind that lower level should be treated differently and that the lobby should be glazed all the way around that corner because it shows the activity. To my point about more glazing, above that, on floors 2-5 where you have that punch at the shadow line, that's the living room for that unit and that could be a bigger void to break up some of this concrete. I'm struggling to match the plan with the elevations and punched openings and how they relate to the floor plans. There's major opportunities for more glazing to break up some of the heaviness. I love the texture, but not the color. So many punches makes it look like a prison, needs to be more residential versus horizontal. The building next door has floor to ceiling windows, modern means bigger, not traditional smaller openings. I agree, open up that alley, don't block it, that's a missed opportunity.
- I'm still very concerned about the erosion of the corner and how it isn't cohesive with the slenderness of the tower. If you are going to have a notch in there is needs to be centered. For such a tiny building there's a lot going on at the first two stories. I'd like to see a little subtle change in some of the panels, whether it's the module itself or how the spandrels are handled. The cohesiveness of the overall design and the scale and repetition of the facets are my major concerns. Overall having a simply expressed, nice tower as opposed to all the glassy towers is kind of a neat thing, but at the street level it kind of falls apart.

- I agree with the comments, and about pulling the entry out to make it more of an entrance. It doesn't feel like an entry right now, it's too tall. I object to that same approach being used on the side and back. If you're going to do an art gesture do it once and do it well; the other pieces become gimmicky. The architectural materials that we talked about Integrating and making a true full palette, long board, metal panel, whether scale is addressed with cement board or not.
- The view toward the lake, I'm a little bothered that there is an abrupt stop with the view to the lake. You've got a concrete pad with striping on, then there's a pathway. There should be a pathway that starts at the urban edge at the street and lead you back there. Look at how to integrate the bike parking with the landscaping instead of a row of bicycles. Some of the points in the memo from staff, we were asked to comment on the long views, we've addressed that with not needing the art gimmick on the lake side. There were significant concerns with regard to the lighting of that.
- The wall packs, I don't object to them being integral to the frame but I'd like to see more details to see how well they are integrated and if it's aesthetically appropriate for this district. I don't know that I fully understand the lighting, but would like to understand that better with footcandle ratings, temperature ratings, and all of that.
- There's context here that you can pull your datums from the surrounding context. The building to the left, they have a base, that's their podium, their base, it sets a precedent. Why not make yours meet that datum? It looks heavy, like a concrete slab just sticking out. If you wrapped it with the artistic expression, and it would three sides and pulled it down to play off the existing datum. Plus opening up the bottom. I do like it, but it needs work. You commented about having these two different types of buildings, you're talking about being true to form and materials...I'm trying to understand that better.
- The erosion of the corner and the horizontal punched opening. The slot could be the middle with strong corners, let it stand as a tall slender counterpoint to the other more glassy buildings. The entry expression is way too tall for a building like this, it doesn't relate to anything, it makes you think the building wants to lean over a bit. There's not protection there, it doesn't relate to anything.
- I like the corner, but those horizontal bands bother me. They are windows that look into living rooms.
- An asymmetrical deconstructed corner versus a very traditional elegant tower on top that is where the lack of cohesion is.
- If they pulled it down, do you think that would help a little?
- Yes, well right. The top of the tower and that base is not working well together.
- I'm not sure we addressed the Capitol height preservation limitation and minimizing the projections as much as possible.
- It's an elevator overrun and roof access, there isn't a room up there or anything for an activated space up there, so it looks like it is minimized. I also think that since it is way towards the front of the building, it is likely not visible from the lake side.
- I like the idea of a pathway from the street edge. I would advise them to focus on the canyon, but should you wrap that green thing around, should you look into that entryway from the side angle? That's part of the street experience and now it looks like a back-of-the house street. How do we make it more interesting.
- I am not averse to some of the suggestions on the art piece, having it become part of the ceiling too for a more full IMAX experience could be a plus. I would push back on any ideas to bring it down. I don't want to be standing in a topiary forest, it behooves the imagery to have some height to it. The whole notion of it being cut out and having that image in there is what makes the building dynamic. If it's built like this, people will be searching for building addresses, other visual clues, nobody will have trouble finding this building. Like it or hate it, it is part of the definition of something being iconic. That part is essentially working.
- The faux wood lends a certain warmth, something to push against the concrete that works well, but there is not enough of it.
- As far as the comments about having a view down to the lake in that narrow space, that space is pretty much the only outdoor amenity space for the residents and it's actually landscaped pretty nicely with a nice selection of plants that may have a chance of making it in a sunlight starved area. It is pretty well thought out and it should be as it is the only open space area for residents. My biggest problem from a design standpoint is the backside of the building, something more dynamic needs to happen. The repetition of the wall art element is a

non-starter. I don't see any way of approving something so bright and glaring, as that on the top of the building. It doesn't make any sense to me at all. I continue to have concerns about access and parking, this is by far the biggest project that has almost no parking whatsoever and I think it's really naïve to think people won't have cars. It will become everyone else in the neighborhood's problem and that troubles me.

A motion was made by Von Below for Initial Approval, with consideration for the comments that we talked about, including:

- Studying the entry,
- Studying all façade elevations so they are in conformance with the design guidelines for this district and the comments given,
- Studying the access out to the lake and the connection between the loading and parking area and access,
- Providing details for the wall packs, and
- Providing additional information on the site lighting.

The motion was seconded by Harper.

Discussion on the motion:

- Also if the motion conveyed to the Plan Commission includes the fact that we didn't have strong concerns about the Capitol View Preservation Height Limitation.
- (Secretary) If we think some of these are things we want changed, or changes or modifications to them, we need to use stronger wording than 'study' or 'revisit.' There's no directive there, so we need to revise as action items.
- I'm willing to have that wording updated.
- We want to see details on how the wall packs are integrated, not just a closer view. A better look at the integration of materials, not just these slivers of long board. Look at the façades and elevations as it relates to the size and location of the windows and voids.
- So the expectation will evolve and improve.
- I think code requires egress to come through a path, not just out to a parking spot. You have to have a pedestrian sidewalk, you can't egress into a vehicular space or a pedestrian sidewalk.
- We're giving you a ton of stuff to think about, is it maybe too much for an Initial Approval. Typically that's massing and site plan, this is such a small narrow lot is kind of locked in but it feels like there's a lot out there in terms of design.
- Are you suggesting referral instead?
- Yes, there's a lot, Initial says "go."
- Even removing the lakeside tree void changes the massing, potentially. I think there's a lot that could still change. Just a question.
- Typically, if this was a building on a larger site, we are not asking to change the building location, it is basically this form on this site, but we want to see work done on the entry and materials. Even though that is a lot, that is still a lot. I think this could get Initial Approval, I think.
- (Secretary) Given the number of comments I've heard tonight alone on suggestions for redesign, I also wonder if a referral is more appropriate in this case than an Initial Approval. Theoretically if they start adjusting setback/stepback, you are really looking at different mass and scale and form to the building in general.
- The conditions on the motion are not meant to be prescriptive its more respond to the concerns and make the appropriate changes and come back.

The motion failed on a vote of (2-3-1) with Rummel and Von Below voting yes; Bernau, Asad, and Harper voting no; and Chair Goodhart non-voting.

A motion was made by Bernau, seconded by Asad, for referral with the same conditions as noted under the previous motion.

Discussion on the motion:

- It can be captured in Initial, but I think Initial signs off on a lot of things. These are not requirements, but once you start doing some of these things and the design starts to evolve, it could be a completely different building. As you start to play with some of these suggestions, it makes more sense to take a fresh look at how this comes together.

## Action

On a motion by Bernau, seconded by Asad, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item with the following comments:

- Study and make revisions to the main building entry as noted in the UDC comments,
- Study and make revisions to all façade elevations so they are in conformance with the design guidelines for this district and the comments given, including integrating all materials including the Long Board metal panels on all elevations, and as it relates to the size and location of the windows and voids,
- Study the access out to the lake and the connection between the loading and parking area and access, especially as it relates to loading and the pedestrian pathway,
- Provide details that show how the wall packs are integrated into the architecture, and
- Provide additional information on the site lighting, including footcandle and temperature ratings.
- The Commission’s motion included the noting that the UDC does not have strong concerns about the projections into the Capitol View Preservation Height Limitation given the location of the projection near the street side of the building.

The motion was passed on a vote of (4-1-1) with Bernau, Asad, Rummel and Harper voting yes; Von Below voting no; and Goodhart non-voting.