

## AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** February 1, 2012

**TITLE:** 100 Block State Street: 117-119, 121-123, 125, 127-129 State Street; 120, 122 West Mifflin Street – Project that Involves the Demolition, Renovation and Refurbishing of Some Structures, as well as New Construction Including Private Open Space in the C4 Central Commercial District. 4<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (24478)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Alan J. Martin, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** February 1, 2012

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Richard Wagner, Marsha Rummel, Todd Barnett, Dawn O’Kroley, Richard Slayton, Melissa Huggins, John Harrington and Henry Lufler.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of February 1, 2012, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this project. Appearing on behalf of the project were George Austin, Doug Hursh, John Grove and Eric Lawson, all representing the Block 100 Foundation; Stephen Fleischman, Sandra Torkildson and Mary M. Kofar. Registered in support but not wishing to speak were Grant Frautschi, representing Block 100 Foundation; Scott Kolar, Greg Rice and John Brigham. Appearing and speaking in opposition to the project were Elizabeth Cwik and Jason Tish, both representing the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation; Edward Kuharski, Rosemary Lee and David Leucinger. Registered in opposition but not wishing to speak were John Schlaefel, Peter Wolff, Eileen Kolbach, Bruce Woods, Bela Sandor and Ruth Sandor. Registered in opposition and available to answer questions was Erica Fox Gehrig. Registered neither in support nor opposition were Maria Milsted, Mark M. Smith, Daniel L. Milsted, Scott Kolar, representing Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc.; and Michael Stluka, representing the 100 Block Steering Committee.

George Austin summarized the project as a civic improvement with three segments: reinvestment, transformation and support of civic institutions. The project will provide high quality urban development to increase the quality of downtown from a philanthropic platform. Doug Hursh then presented a PowerPoint of the development proposal showing the existing pedestrian experience along North Fairchild Street and the landmark buildings included in the plans. The Castle & Doyle building will remain in place during construction, as well as the Buell façade. They will renovate and rehabilitate those buildings and possibly pull out the storefronts to the street, as well as make the buildings accessible. They are looking at removing one of the floors in the Vallender building. The buildings have been assessed by engineers; the brick has been painted over such that moisture is trapped and bricks are falling off. They studied the suggestion of the Commission to construct buildings that are of this time and reflective of the past. These were presented to the property owners/developers

as well as a neighborhood group who both felt that something that is more in keeping with the flavor of State Street is appropriate. It is not intended to be a historical rebuilding, a clean design but a representation of what was there in the past. They are adding a fourth floor to the back of the Buell building, stepped back four feet from State Street. The impetus for the civic node came from the surrounding and future civic buildings. The studies are showing a building that wraps the corner up to the Hovde building with the potential to be as tall as that building. Massing images showed views from Fairchild Street with the existing buildings in place. The vision along Fairchild is to create a space that invites someone coming from Overture around the corner to walk that way. Geothermal wells will be used within the garden space for heating and cooling the buildings. Hursh walked through the floor plans and their plans for more contiguous open space. They are keeping the majority of the Castle & Doyle building with cut-through walls and a ramp that would get you down to the level that exists today, with the Vallender floor aligning with that, with the idea of creating a fairly simple mass that has a sweeping curve that starts to define this space. The activity of the restaurant would happen on the ground floor with floor-to-ceiling glass and cut stone. Materials were discussed and samples were made available.

John Grove then presented plans for the urban garden. The café area outside would be an extension of the restaurant level that would pull out into the garden space. The pattern was derived from taking care of and managing the grade differential. The space would be incorporated with the terrace and walkable surfaces within that grain. The pattern provides a visual interest from the buildings above and from the street as you pass by, with potential for a hidden water feature to add sound and reflection. Canopy trees are proposed to reach about mid-building. Materials are limited to raised or flushed granite and paving. The variety of plantings would change seasonally; they are still in the process of studying what those plants would be.

Jason Tish from the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation presented their alternate vision for this block based on a rehabilitation approach. They agree there is potential for improvement in this block. There is deep disagreement on the best approach of taking advantage of this opportunity. Redesigning and reusing existing buildings is a more sustainable approach and would also create as many jobs as new construction. This approach would retain roughly 6,000 square feet of commercial/retail space lost with the Block 100 Foundation proposal. Part of the issue is that this proposal stems from and is an extension of the Overture aesthetic. Physically and architecturally it has been shoehorned into a small scale urban commercial district, making the contrast between the north and south side of the 200 Block of State Street is stark and dramatic. Taking a big picture view of State Street provides an experience of authenticity you can't get anywhere else, derived from historic small scale architecture, architectural history, urban development history, and this character is most clearly identifiable in the 100 Block. This proposal would begin the reinvention of the 100 Block. The proposal includes a façade-ectomy for the Buell building, which is generally considered destructive to historic buildings. Demolition of designated landmarks is problematic; the Castle & Doyle building, the Buell building and the Schubert building are all possible candidates for rehabilitation. The proposal would exchange a viable existing building with open space for the urban garden. They are skeptical that a private garden would be a significant draw to this location. Other public urban spaces downtown that do not draw people in include the courtyard outside the Geoff 3 building, Lisa Link Peace Park and the Union Terrace, which sits empty half the year. Architect Elizabeth Cwik echoed Dick Wagner's sentiment in being grateful to the Frautschi's to their generosity to the City of Madison. An adaptive reuse and preservation solution for the 100 Block was presented, which enlivens the corner with commercial activity and provides a roof garden. These blocks need to evolve and grow with time. The 100 Block Foundation has perceived a problem and is looking at one way to solve it; there is more than one way to solve this problem. The uniqueness of the flatiron block is that the buildings are all connected. This proposal creates a false dichotomy of the 100 Block of State Street and Fairchild Street. Both sides really belong together but the footprint of the main mass of the proposal sits in the middle of the block and completely ignores the edge of this flatiron block in a way that no urban planner would recognize as appropriate; it completely ignores the urban edge. This open space garden/plaza and the fact that it's a single

use plaza is troubling, its main use is an eating area for the restaurant. The Stark building has been doing a fine job of holding that corner since 1927.

Steve Fleischman spoke about the scale and retail aspects of State Street as being more important than the architecture. It's a street that has an energy and makes sense as a pathway between the State Capitol and the UW campus. The people enliven that street when they walk up and down. He applauds this proposal because he sees it as keeping State Street intact. It also keeps its retail presence intact, and has the opportunity to totally refurbish the Castle & Doyle building. It is sensitive to its neighbors in terms of the use of materials and form. It's completely privately funded with a strong attempt to keep the tax base and to enhance that tax base with money coming from the rent to help support the culture in Madison.

Scott Kolar spoke representing Capital Neighborhoods. The members spent a great deal of time reviewing this proposal and established a steering committee was formed to represent the views of the neighborhood to the developer. They have met 11 times over the last 3 months. Two things have emerged during that time as the neighborhood's goals: The character of State Street be maintained and that Fairchild Street be made more pedestrian friendly and attractive by eliminating the back door appearance of the façades. The steering committee generally favors the plans for the State Street side, which include rehabilitation of some landmark buildings, with the following caveats: historical accuracy should be maintained as much as possible, reconstructed façades should have a historically accurate look, and high quality materials should be used throughout and a great deal of attention paid to getting the details right. As for the Fairchild Street side, residents are divided. There are those who favor the civic node with open garden space and believe it will achieve the goal of improving Fairchild Street, with the potential benefits outweighing the loss of the Fairchild building and the Schubert building. Others feel that the Fairchild and Schubert buildings should be maintained because of their landmark and historic significance. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse would better achieve the goals in this area. They would like to note the professional manner in which the development team has engaged the neighborhood, and believe constructive participation by all parties can result in the positive evolution of a proposal.

Rosemary Lee spoke as a 44 year downtown resident and a member of Capital Neighborhoods in strong opposition to the plan as presented. She hopes this project does not become as divisive as Pleasant Frautschi's project in New York. Interesting architectural and historic characteristics will be lost forever. This plan is disrespectful of the site's uniqueness. Our past defines our present and our future and it is unconscionable to willingly destroy it. Landmark buildings should not be sacrificed for glass and steel. Everyone at this table knows that a structure can be rehabbed if the owner is willing to do so. She also mentioned concern for the small business people who are not part of this project and the financial losses they may suffer. This plan needs more vetting by commissions, City staff and citizens.

Sandra Torkildson spoke as one of the owners of A Room of One's Own. She has faced a lot of the challenges that business have had to face with the older buildings downtown. It's not easy to run a business in some of the conditions those buildings are in. She was excited to hear about this project as it will update a lot of the buildings with a bigger footprint. She is especially happy with the addition of office space because that brings more business to the retail components. She wants the downtown to remain an active retail node, not just a place for entertainment and bars. Diversity is part of a downtown, with a mix of architecture being appropriate and interesting.

Mark Smith felt compelled to attend the meeting rather than writing a letter to the Commission. What motivated him was the idea that a corner would be demolished which makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. Cities are made of blocks, and blocks are made of streets with buildings that hold the edge. Vacating a corner is extremely destructive to the urban fabric. He urged the Commission to reject any proposal for this block that suggests the

removal of a large portion of that block, particularly on a corner. This block may very well benefit from some appropriately scaled public space, however, the most successful way to do that may well be to use the rooftop. He also noted that Cesar Pelli stated: "The lobby of the Overture Center is to be used as an urban living room to for anyone, whenever the doors to the lobby are open." The Overture lobby space is actually larger than the outdoor space being proposed here tonight. It would be used much more heavily if the surrounding corners and blocks were built back up the way they should be. He sees great value in navigating through the City streets, reaching a building and navigating through that building to reach a rooftop or other hidden urban pocket space to get a new perspective. Rummel asked if he had any ideas or visions related to Mifflin Street. Smith responded that there are opportunities and seems somewhat forgotten in this conversation. If all the new or rehabilitated projects go through, Mifflin will become even more important than it is right now, and possibly more traveled than State Street. The façades on Mifflin as well as holding that street edge is very important.

Edward Kuharski spoke as an architect inspired by the older architecture in the City. The City's Downtown Plan has a whole section on historic preservation and talks about these corners being key aspects to preserve. More aggressive inspection, enforcement and maintenance are what is needed for this historic buildings. There should be an incentive to remain in these buildings. The City should have mechanisms in place to encourage tenants to fill these areas. The City's original Civic Center held the corner and engaged pedestrians. The new Overture is a glass and steel box that just sits on the corner but does not engage anyone with limited entries. The doors are hardly ever open except for emergency egress. It's a travesty that the only entrance to Overture along the entire State Street length is a tiny entrance to the museum shop. He does not want to see another block treated in the same thoughtless manner.

Mary Kolar stated that this project is needed, it is a taking care of buildings on State Street that are badly in need of being restored, the developer is going to keep the Castle & Doyle building and maintain the historic looks of the other buildings. In terms of how the project blends State/Fairchild and Mifflin, if you walk around the Capitol Square you will see a blend of historic and newer buildings. It's why people like myself choose to live in downtown Madison.

Eileen Kolbach spoke about the demolition of the Stark and Schubert buildings. All of the things wrong with the building can be taken care of. The floors can be removed and put back and have a nice building. She is not enthused about the color of the building as it echoes the Overture Center. If it was a different color it might look more modern.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- The configuration of the restaurant, has that been tested with any willing restaurateurs?
  - We've been meeting with a restaurateur in the City as a consultant and he is interested in the space.
- The total square footage of office space is 20,000 square feet? If you were to go the rehab and renovation route, is there any stream of income that could be generated off of those spaces?
  - The project is smaller than the existing space by about 11,000 square feet (6,000 of which is basement space). The proposal has taken care to create spaces on the upper floors that are very efficient. By keeping them as apartments as has been proposed would not generate that income.
- One of the things I struggle with in this design is that I really like the curve of the plaza, and I really want the curve to somehow be reflected in the architecture. My instant reaction was you're trying to capture the mass and bulk of what was there but I want something that's really different and soaring. This design feels very heavy to me and I want it to float a little bit more. The natural space in the plaza should somehow be reflected in the building. I think this new building needs to be different, and it's OK if it's different, and it should be.

- Are Potter Lawson working on the State museum effort?
  - As a programming effort we have been working with them.

What is the timeline?

There is no timeline on this project. They've looked at multiple sites downtown, this is one they've looked at. They haven't told us when and if they might build it. We've done some massing diagrams that show how much site they need for the program they've identified, more volumetric studies.

- The entryway of this new addition – how on the street edge do you get inside the building?
  - The entry is on the plaza side. The nature of a restaurant is such that they want only one entrance. The restaurateur said they need a front door on State Street to make this successful.
- Who is this garden for? The public or the restaurant?
  - Both.

I could walk in off the street and sit in the garden?

Yes. We have to look at City requirements in terms of delineating restaurant space but I don't think we have to have it cordoned off. The garden will be open 24/7.

I like the project. My concern is the plaza on the corner, it doesn't work. I think it's a nice plaza it doesn't grasp that street corner.

- During the day the Overture is dead. I'm concerned that from November through March, even April, that side will be a dead corner without some kind of indoor use there. I don't want to see two dead corners in that area.
- The entrances to the Overture, do you see a mid-block crossing at some point? How do you see that circulation?
  - We saw it this way for safety crossing at intersections. The mid-block piece, that's one reason we diagramed the block this way. The entrance at this point is so it's visible from State Street and the ability to walk through.
- Was there thought to having more hardspace and people occupying that space?
  - We're open to comments. We've looked at this multiple different ways. We had a lot of discussion about public versus private space.
- Can you comment on restoration, renovation and a third floor rooftop deck on the corner building.
  - The roof is wood framing, less structure than you have at your home for floors. It's undersized and would need extensive work. The mechanical equipment is all on the roof right now. The footprint is 2,800 square feet, with that amount of space, two exits up there, an elevator, there are a lot of different challenges to make that a very usable green roof space. Fire resistant rated construction factors in and is totally different with a wood frame building.
- Your response to the question was about the roof frame loading and it's a bigger question about the capacity of the foundations and the bearing wall structure, less about the existing roof deck if we could walk upon it. If it's not designed to that capacity, a steel framed structure could be inserted within it while still retaining this building. I strongly feel that corner building, the Fairchild building (Stark), needs to remain in that location and I've referenced before the MG&E building that was demolished for the construction of Overture just opposite Fairchild Street; it was a two-story building that looked remarkably like the Fairchild building that was designed with the capacity to have two additional floors added, which were constructed and the four-story building was demolished for the construction of the Overture Center. I encourage the design team's further research of that building. That's a deal breaker for me. I strongly feel that building deserves to remain on that corner.
- I almost envision your first floor level being elevated. Go up, build a roof deck, a structure we can see and we can see the depth and make it soar and make it sing. There's a lot of opportunity here, this being the hub. If it's ground plane outdoor space that we need, please discuss vacating West Mifflin Street with the City, even if it's on a temporary basis. I think we have spaces we can better use.

- I thank the Frautschi's for recognizing there is an opportunity and problem there. The proposed uses, converting the apartments to office, that seems to make good sense.
- The term civic was used for that space. When I think of civic I think of a space where I'm welcomed. Oasis was also used. I'm not sure if I understood exactly what the dynamic of that space is. It's 24/7, there's no one policing it, but it's the "Edgewater" realm of who can walk there, when is it closed off, etc. When I hear the word "public" I can sit there as long as I want and the restaurant can't tell me to leave. But there are tables intended for the restaurant but there aren't places to sit here. I see this as a very defensible space with the layers, it's discouraging people from being a part of that because you're not going to sit in the planter beds. I don't see this as a refuge or oasis.
- There are so many other places that are in a reasonable zone. There's the Capitol Square, Peace Park, the terraces. State Street is a great place but it's not huge and I don't think of it as going down Madison Avenue where you walk for miles and miles and don't find an open space. A both ends you've got an open space. I don't see that there's a need for a refuge right in there. And I would agree that it's a temporary space, it's going to be used by a select few for however many months out of the year.
- I'm glad to see there was investigation in terms of the precedent setting spaces in Boston. But those are really public open spaces, there are benches, they're open to the street, they're not what I would consider on the side of private or public/private like here.
- I'm not seeing the need. I look at this and I wonder is the purpose of this space equally for people to sit in that space and look at the Overture Center, or is it for people to be in the Overture Center and look at the space, or for people in the Overture to look out and get a better panorama of it. Is that space intended more for viewing to the Overture or from the Overture, or equal.
  - I think we're trying to create a space that recognizes the importance of what we're creating, what could be on this corner. You come around the ring road and you see a special space that is unique. It's a place making opportunity. It's not to clear views from the Overture. From the new library the public spaces have all been pulled to the corner and there's great opportunity to partake.
- There's parking along here right now and the sidewalk is narrow. When you're in Overture you look out the ground plane and see cars and parking meters. What if you just said how about this 9-feet here, get rid of the parking, get benches out on the street, put in plantings that fit the street and create a nice backdrop to the Overture Center. Then you could rehabilitate those buildings, insert modern pieces into their façades.
- I do feel there should be some honest dialogue about which buildings come down and which ones stay. Certainly the Landmarks, I think should stay. This street is a collection of different periods of architecture, some of which are quite nice and some are unfortunate. Any new work should reflect today's date. The vitality of State Street is because of people but the people are there because of the things that are going on there. I don't think inserting a piece of modern architecture into that fabric would be a detriment. To me the big item is the corner park.
  - The landscape architect would agree with you. They'd like to bring the edge of the park out into the right-of-way. We suggested staying within the property line but that would be a discussion we'd love to have. There's trade-off as people will drive to find parking, so having parking on the street is important. Maybe it could be pulled back so the corners could be treated differently. And when we talk about "civic nodes," it's not the garden, it's this whole part right here. When you take Overture Center, the new library and hopefully a new State museum and put them all together on 3 sides you create a very special zone. These buildings come right up to the right-of-way with no breathing room. There's no greenspace, there's nothing about it that's very appealing. The garden became an element to help reinforce this civic node. There is a nod to Nolen in terms of utilizing this corner in a way that was recommended 100 years ago in his plan.
- I also think if the street were narrowed the traffic would slow down which would be really good.

- You have created an opportunity to look at this block in ways we never have before. Can we find a way for you all to see another outcome that will get at some of the things you want. I think we need to work on really vacating Mifflin Street. That's the public civic node we could create. We could have this great space between all these new buildings connected to the Capitol in a way that will create an edge that is just fabulous.
- I struggle with the question of façade-ism. I urge you to think how you could save a landmark rather than just walk away. If the Vallender building can't be saved, maybe that's where the modern might come in.
- We really do need to see this as a triangle and include the Mifflin side as well. This plan creates a lot of dead space on Mifflin. You're only building a one purpose building but we want these to last generation. You're building a restaurant, what if that restaurant fails? We need something more functional.
- I really appreciate people like Sandy coming in and talking about retail spaces.
- The fourth story addition on the new construction really didn't fit the Buell building; it's not the right top. I hope you look at what else you could do there.
- That block when it was triangular was developed for small private interests. The City has changed the dynamics of that area by approving the Overture Center and investing in a new library. So this is not the same kind of area. How does the City address public buildings and their functionality and presentation? What's that context, not just what the block's context is. I don't think this proposal does anything to harm State Street. If this is a public space where we've now created more significant public buildings, how do we think of the areas around them in terms of context. There's something that needs to be different. We're changing this and we haven't sorted out how that change affects the public space. Hopefully the design team and our comments can help solve that.
- Trying to predict how that space will be used. I'm trying to discern what kind of footprint you need programmatically. I believe that that node as a concept can still be met. It's what type of public space is needed.
- I'm not convinced that this garden is indeed a public garden. I don't see the amenities or why anyone would come down to that area. The way it bleeds off it weakens West Mifflin Street; you've got this swiss cheese effect with holes for openings. Nothing takes you right to the park. I'm not against having some type of open space there but it really needs to be defined. The way you have the horizontal lines, you don't really invite people into it, there's no place to sit, there's no context for it.
  - One of the reasons for elongating it is from State Street, to open up that view corridor. To provide something at the corner that's more of a destination than just a building.
- Do you see that our comments and concerns can be discussed, or is this a case of "this has to happen this way?"
  - That's a very good question and I don't have a specific answer. The Block 100 Foundation's design solution is very superior in their mind. Whether there is an alternative they feel comfortable proceeding with, I don't know the answer to that yet.
  - Almost every committee we've met with has been split. We've received a lot of support and we've heard a lot about revisions.
- Is the architecture fixed?
  - No, not at all. We're open to comments.
- Maybe you need a modern flatiron building there at the corner. I think cities are organic creatures and they grow and change.
- I think if you can get the architecture of this building to wow people, you can get there.
- I agree, it needs to sing. Right now it seems too much like a background building. The buildings have different faces on different sides, and they should because they face different things. But there's no connection there, other than through the penthouse.

- What if we also thought of the envelope? What if we got from the City 12 more inches for the envelope, with the sidewalk and then instead of inserting in you can insert over? And give yourselves more opportunity with preserving special pieces.
- Instead of doing something new on State Street, the front of this building doesn't even have a front. It doesn't have a street conversation, it doesn't say "come on in!" The fenestration is a problem and we really need to look at how it treats that fourth floor addition where it faces State Street. You're putting a top on this building that is just the wrong style. That's aside from the whole question of removing buildings.
  - We've got a building that's trying to be supportive of its surroundings, other than the ground plane being very open and energetic.

New on State Street can work. Replacing the Potter Lawson (Leath/Haswell Furniture Building) façade on State Street doesn't do anything for me. It's OK but it doesn't help sell this building as really helping make that whole civic arrangement be outstanding, which is really part of the problem we are trying to get to. In that sense maybe a more great presence design might sell it.

- I think the costs are too high in terms of the loss of landmarks and another historic building. The design needs to pay for it, so to speak, it needs to be something really exciting.
- Maybe this building is too homogenous. Maybe a little sterile.

### **ACTION:**

On a motion by Barnett, seconded by Harrington, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (7-0).

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall rating for this project is 8.



**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 100 Block State Street**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	8	5	7	7	-	8	10	8

General Comments:

- Top issue is erosion of the corner. Much else admirable. Sincere thank you for the effort.
- Architecture should be more exciting. Bottom heavy, need to soar.