



Agenda Item #: 6

Project Title: 134, 140, 148, 150 S Blair Street/506, 508, 510, 514, 516, 518, 522 E Wilson Street - New Residential Building and Hotel in UMX Zoning. (District 6)

Legistar File ID #: 79707

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Wendy von Below, Shane Bernau, Jessica Klehr, Christian Harper, Marsha Rummel, Rafeeq Asad, and Russell Knudson

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of May 29, 2024, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a new residential building and hotel in UMX zoning located at 134, 140, 148, 150 S Blair Street/506, 508, 510, 514, 516, 518, 522 E Wilson Street. Registered and speaking in support were Brian Munson, Trina Sandschafer, and Joel Koeppen. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Johnathan Lilley, Alex Padrnos, and Eliot Gore. Registered in support but not wishing to speak were Evelyn Freimann, Kyle O’Hearn, and Robert Klebba.

Summary of Commission Discussion and Questions:

The Commission inquired about the existing buildings that are to be rebuilt, noting this is not preservation, the buildings will be demolished and rebuilt. The applicant noted the intent is to match the brick colors without painting them, and to match the window patterns. The Commission noted that the intent should be to give a nod to the historic facades, without giving it back exactly as it is – we don’t need all of the bad elements that are currently on it. That aside, this is a great design.

Several Commissioners expressed a preference for allowing more freedom to reinterpret the historic blocks while still having the outlines and frames, and same sized punched openings, without distracting from the new development. When you zoom in on the details of the historic façades, you can see what has been changed over time and some of the patchwork that has been done.

The Commission discussed the internal street, the use of decorative concrete unit pavers, and the small swath of lawn, noting it does not contribute much to the landscape or street design. It was noted that the living street could have more in terms of design and programming. There are a lot of nice details and materials are nice, the precedent imagery is great, but the plans seem to reflect something else. The hackberry noted on the landscape plan (#6 and #7) is an overuse of one species; there are other upright taller trees that could be used.

It was noted that the southwest and Blair Street elevations could utilize more windows and fenestration. The southwest façade was suggested as a place for artistic expression.

The Commission discussed the verticality of the ribs in the metal panel, suggesting that it could go horizontal versus vertical for more articulation, as well as light and shadow play. If fire walls do not allow for fenestration, more ins and outs are needed; the detail paid to the street level/pedestrian experience should go all the way to the top, and carry over to the blank façades. The air gap between the Hotel Ruby Marie and the new hotel needs to remain, but some attention should be paid at the street level to make it less creepy.

Overall, the Commission felt this iteration is a better design now, and appreciated the integration of the two contributing buildings into the hotel. The Commission commended the team on working with so many competing interests, and their efforts to incorporate all that feedback.

Action

On a motion by Knudson, seconded by Rummel, the Urban Design Commission made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission to **GRANT INITIAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (7-0).

The motion was made with the following findings, conditions and comments:

- The application shall return to UDC for Final Approval.
- The UDC finds that the overall building design and composition, mass, scale and placement is appropriate, the treatment and design of HVAC louvers as proposed on the hotel building is adequate.
- Revise the landscape plan to reflect two different varieties of uprights trees on the living street.
- Additional detailing and articulation shall be incorporated into the metal panel areas on the blank building end walls of the hotel building, including but not limited to horizontal articulation, more articulated panels, or artwork.
- Provide additional details related to the recreation of the existing historic facades to allow for flexibility in the reinterpretation/reapplication of certain architectural details of those facades versus recreating exactly what is existing today (i.e., the diamond window pane pattern or six-over-six windows vs. the brick detailing).
- Consideration should be given to the angle of the masonry wall on the west elevation, including as it wraps the corner and relates to the blank wall expanse.
- Provide additional details related to the proposed architectural lighting.
- With regard to the S Blair Street elevation and landscape shown along the base elevation, the landscape plan shall be revised to more accurately reflect the renderings.