



Agenda Item #: 7

Project Title: 229 West Towne Mall - Exterior Renovation of a Planned Multi-Use Site. 9th Alder Dist.

Legistar File ID #: 79616

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Wendy Von Below, Christian Harper, Marsha Rummel, and Rafeeq Asad

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of September 20, 2023, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of exterior renovation of a Planned Multi-Use Site located at 229 West Towne Mall. Registered and speaking in support was Killian McKenzie. Registered in support but not wishing to speak was Ethan Nelson.

The applicant is seeking approval of a bigger storefront for a bigger more elegant location than the current Mineral Point Road location, which is run down. The north elevation façade would build the façade up, with the entry relocated to the west side as the parking stalls are located on this side of the building as well. Lettering is proposed on the north and west elevations. The building materials include Nichiha fiber cement board with a wood aesthetic, as well as matching the existing stucco and brick. With the addition of front doors on the west side, some plantings would be moved and a crushed granite path added, any existing vegetation that is removed would be replaced, and bike parking added.

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

- I understand why there is no glazing at the top where you have the hydro massages on the floor plan, but the other elevation with the vestibule entry, check-in and lobby, why doesn't that have more glazing and daylighting coming in there?
 - In a lot of our clubs we do have windows at the entry desk.
- This is a facelift to make it look like you are modern and nice, competitive gym, but your entry doesn't say that. There's no canopy or anything, it's just flat. It's really flat and doesn't read like an entry. Some type of projection, like Dick's with the massive entry feature, it gives it some dimension. It needs a little bit more design to do what you're trying to do. An entry canopy, something that brings you in, as opposed to just a flat wall, a little gesture.
 - I agree, more windows is something that we can look at. Good comments.
- Are you raising the roof on that portion where you are putting in the new wall?
 - No. Just the parapet, the roof behind that is staying the same.
- It appears there's a lot of EIFS on a little bit of brick, it really compresses that. I can imagine the motivation to do that is to provide a big signable area, but maybe I'm just being cynical about that. I see the signable area on the drawings and that would be way above the roof level, I don't think that's going to fly anyway, unless you raise the roof. Architecturally, in addition to the entry not being emphasized, those enormous EIFS panels are out of proportion with the base of the building. Adding masonry will never match, it may be a matter of adding the Nichiha as a band in the EIFS area, more like a frame; then it is in proportion with the base of the building. To frame that EIFS panel. We're not here just to provide a canvas for a bigger sign at West Towne Mall.
- Continue the pilasters, more consistent and more elegant.
- Would both of those be signable areas?

- (Secretary) Correct. Signage is not being considered this evening, but we would be looking at signage in excess of size allowed, as well as more than four-feet above the roofline. But of those requests would be required to come back to the UDC for review and approval. It may be good for the Commission to weigh in on the signage as it is shown on the plans currently.
- It would look pretty awful to have this big huge parapet with a small sign on the bottom of it.
- Why is the parapet so high?
 - That's what we do in our clubs. We have over 120 stores and some of our more aesthetically pleasing gyms have pretty big parapets. I don't know about the sign approval and how big that can be, but the signs usually take up the majority of that space.
- Working with staff to put the cart before the horse. Realizing how big your sign could be so your mass is in proportion. Put the canvas around that. Adding something to your entry, some type of canopy, will make all that feel a little bit better.
 - We do have a couple different options to our signage, whether it's stacked or linear, as well as the gear logo.
- Regardless, even with no signage, that EIFS cap is way out of proportion with the brick base of the building. We're letting you know the actual sign can't go more than four-feet above the roof that's behind it. Nobody would be happy with a big roof portion and tiny little signage at the bottom of it.

The Commission discussed the following:

- There are a few problems on the landscape plan. There is stuff on the plant schedule that isn't on the plan, and the labels aren't all corresponding correctly, for example there is a juniper listed in the plant schedule, but it doesn't show up on the plan. The plan schedule should be cleaned up. You decided to keep Callery Pear on there that is not a tree we would approve anymore. That plant is being banned in a lot of Midwest states and we discourage the planting of that. If you're taking out all the existing plantings and leaving that with the idea of planting around those, don't, get rid of those Callery Pear trees and plant some other small tree in its spot. You have the crushed gravel path that is specked as crushed gravel; trying to remove snow from a gravel path is a fool's errand. Either make it concrete or just use a one sided bike rack on that side and let people access it from the sidewalk.

Action

On a motion by Harper, seconded by Von Below, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** with the following conditions:

- Address the comments related to mass/proportions of EIFS area, including minimizing the EIFS expanse to be more in portion of the base of the building, including bringing down the parapet height or incorporating the Nichiha panel to create a frame,
- Finessing the signable areas to be proportional to EIFS area,
- Enhancing the entrance into something more dynamic and less plain than is currently pictured,
- Making adjustments to the landscape plan as noted in comments, including utilizing a different path surface than crushed gravel, removing the remaining callery pear and replacing it with another tree species, and updating the landscape plant schedule to reflect only the plantings on the plan.

The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (4-0).