



**Agenda Item #:** 2

**Project Title:** 222-232 E. Olin Avenue - New Mixed-Use Building Located in Urban Design District (UDD) No. 1. 14th Ald. Dist.

**Legistar File ID #:** [70106](#)

**Members Present:** Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Rafeeq Asad\*, Shane Bernau, Jessica Klehr, Tom DeChant, Russell Knudson and Christian Harper.

**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Summary

### SUMMARY:

\*Asad was recused on this item.

At its meeting of June 1, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a new mixed-use building located at 222-232 E. Olin Avenue. Registered and speaking in support were Lance McGrath and Tom Lee. Registered in support but not wishing to speak was Michael Metzger.

The building will be twelve-stories with first floor lobby, commercial and parking. Levels 2-3 include parking with 9 stories of residential capped with a mechanical penthouse, for a total of 192 apartments, 225 parking stalls, and 13,500 square feet of commercial space. Common amenities will include a coffee bar, secure mail & package rooms, trash and recycling chutes, secured bike and maintenance room, fitness center, meeting space, fourth floor community room with common terrace, and an at-grade dog run. Two main driveway points come in on the east as a one-way for drop-offs, and the western driveway serves as the main in and out access point for residential and commercial parking. A future multi-use trail is shown as land around this site is developed, which will eventually lead to the bike room. Some of the roof areas will contain green roofs.

Updates to the proposal include a more dynamic façade to appear less institutional, more vertical articulation and better connections between the indoor and outdoor spaces. The updated renderings show greater clarity to the volumes with varying materials, and better proportions on the balconies. Increased offsets between the layers and cantilevered corners help to create a dynamic shadow condition over the commercial space below. The brick volume is in contrast to the metal panel beyond, they have introduced vertical windows to help break down the façade to add more residential character, and increased the amount of glazed area to the commercial space. The main entrance is now marked by a copper anodized panel in dialogue with the Wonder Bar. The volumes slide to the west and peel away from adjacent volumes. Building materials include vertical rib metal panel in a weathered zinc color, light colored linear brick, aluminum panels and copper anodized metal panel at the front entry.

The Commission discussed the following:

- We need to make findings on the project's site connectivity, building orientation and ground level activation, landscaping, as well as the use of metal panel in UDD 1. They have addressed those in the presentation to some degree.

- This is really nice looking. With the Wonder Bar element your site got more challenging, and the entrance drives seem really uncomfortable and tight, there's a lot of tension there with the shape and scale. Thoughts to pushing that southwest corner up for more width there?
  - We did struggle with that. The only delivery driver that stays any length of time is the postal service. There should be room to skirt by as long as the first car pulls up far enough, and we can do marking to guide people there. It's a really challenging site, with saving the bar we're limited with what we can do. It's not ideal but we're comfortable with it.
- Is there room to park a car along the far south side? Is there no parking up in front of the building?
  - There is room for a car to pass by if the first car pulls in all the way. If they stop at the pinch point then it's going to cause issues.
- The building is much improved with the articulations and some of the slipping of your layers. The guardrails on the balconies could use more attention. The vertical feels like something should relate to the building detail a bit more rather than something "off the shelf."
- Is that represented accurately in terms of the vertical aluminum?
  - It's some sort of metal railing, not aluminum off the shelf, but it works well with the metal on the building. We previously had glass railings but those are required to be all bird glass.
- The horizontals add a design element and aren't just functional. The guardrails are an opportunity to continue with the theme, I would suggest giving that some thought, they don't have to be 100% glass. Maybe some kind of pattern that replicates another pattern somewhere on the building that could help articulate the horizontal, but also translate back to another form of the building.
  - We can certainly study that as we get more into the details. We're trying to see the balconies as singular elements so the vertical pickets would become more opaque or simple looking. We don't want to draw too much attention to them as an architectural element.
- I like that the pickets seem to overlap the balcony fascia and disguise the structure, the repetition of verticals not interrupted by a heavier object, a clean array of verticals is very pleasing and nice. Encourage you to consider the materials but maybe continue with that theme, how it relates to the vertical ribs on some of the other façade materials on the base and plinth levels.
- The landscape was nicely done, a nice palette of materials. Most of that plant material is low and arranged nicely with the building concept. Recommend something like an ornamental tree that does anchor the building more in the landscape, right now the landscaping is nice, but it's mostly appreciated up close or looking down from above.
- The entry sequence feels crowded, it may be appropriate to reduce the amount of landscaping there where there's not a lot of site space to allow for more breathing room with this intersection of parking, pick-ups and activity. Maybe expand the hardscape of the bike space and retain some landscape at the main entry doors, just not quite as much.
- The massing, articulation and materials are really nicely done.
- Is the connection to the multi-use path planned to be built as part of the project or a future thought?
  - We're going to build our sidewalk, but the rectangle in the northwest corner will be the easement area for the City to build the path it will connect to. That will happen as the land to the west of us is developed. We have a meeting scheduled to talk about this yet this week.
- I was hoping for the glass solution to the balconies, that option would be the most elegant. They are a very important element that needs attention.
- The wall along John Nolen Drive that conceals most of the parking, you show it with a lot of greenery. Do you have a visual of that not concealed by greenery?
  - There is glazing to the left with the commercial space, and screening on the right where the parking is located. The metal panel wraps around to help conceal the ventilation louvers, and a field of projected brick slips and folds around that form there.
- That's a fairly solid mass and a highly visible façade; plantings will conceal a fair amount when they're mature.

- It's a challenging façade, having to go up vertically with the parking as opposed to down. This elevation is obscured by trees that are along the railroad corridor, inbound you don't really see this until you get up past the intersection. Those trees are not on our property.
- Any chance you could spring for a more mature tree than 2.5" caliper?
  - Yes I'm fine with that.
- (Secretary) It's important to note that the path is likely going to change the landscaping on this side of the building, we don't know to what extent. The idea was to connect from John Nolen Drive all the way to the Wingra Creek path to provide connectivity and safety. The City is looking at other potential mid-block crossing points rather than John Nolen Drive. As part of the Commission's motion, it should recognize potential changes to that part of the site and provide provisions for further review, if warranted.
- This has come a long way and is a much more dynamic façade. It was a huge amount of work on your part, appreciate you took so many comments into your considerations. I would encourage to break out of the safe colors, but that's subjective.
- Your horizontal balconies are fighting with the vertical elements. There is nice shifting on the vertical elements, but any longer horizontal balcony doesn't shift the verticals so it's a different feel. The shade and shadow of the underside of those balconies will be important. Maybe the slab doesn't stop right where the vertical metal panel starts. It seems almost too balanced when you get to the balconies.
- Where it goes from clear to spandrel glass, the vertical mullions are to the exterior, is the intent to make it look two-story when it's one story?
  - The vertical mullions will be continuous and likely be a curtain wall. The spandrels are hiding the parking behind it.
- The landing space in front of the building doesn't leave much room for being 'messy.' Realize it's a tight site but that front entrance in particular, I support the comment of more hardscape.
- It would be more dynamic if it extended out further and didn't line up with the exterior material changes.
- The use of the Sugar Maple trees along that north façade is absolutely the right approach to landscaping. Bigger might be better, but research shows starting with a larger tree may take longer time to establish. Smaller caliper might establish and take off quicker, I'd recommend maybe a 3" tree.
- Regarding the extensive green roof on the south side of the building, it calls out a 4-inch system with sedum trays; I'd highly recommend a 6-inch system inter-planted with some perennials to provide biodiversity and flowering for pollinators. It will retain water better and require less irrigation to support that whole system.
  - We can look at that, but this area is not visible.
- It is a pretty significant area and should get you more water retention and more to look at from the upper floors.
- Much improved building in a really dramatic way. Kudos to that. Like the slight shifts from floor to floor, this works very well in a visually interesting way.
- Happy to see the variety of stuff you planted, the fact you are willing to plant large drifts. The entry at the front door, I agree with needing more space there. The attention you paid to light exposure and putting appropriate plants on the north side of the building, appreciate the fact you have plants that have winter interest. Agree with the comments about the sedum.
- The fourth floor roof deck is really nicely done, but I noticed some of the planters are listed as 18 inches high, most of the plants don't get much taller than that. Privacy for those balconies won't be reached with an 18-inch planter, having taller planters might be a prudent decision.

## Action

A motion was made by DeChant, seconded by Klehr, to grant initial approval. The motion failed on a vote of (2-4-1-1) with DeChant and Klehr voting yes; Braun-Oddo, Bernau, Knudson and Harper voting no; Goodhart non-voting and Asad recused.

On a motion by Braun-Oddo, seconded by Bernau, the Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion passed on a vote of (5-1-1-1) with Braun-Oddo, Bernau, Klehr, Knudson and Harper voting yes; DeChant voting no; Goodhart non-voting and Asad recused.

The motion provided for the following conditions, to be approved at an administrative level by the Urban Design Commission Secretary:

- Revisit the railing options based on Commission comments.
- Consider a 6-inch green roof tray system with more biodiversity in plant selection, including, but not limited to perennials (i.e. allium and dianthus).
- Consider larger planters on the fourth floor balcony.
- Look at improving the traffic flow sequence of the drive aisle.
- Reexamine the amount hardscape and landscape at the front entrance to allow for more breathing room.
- The Commission accepts the use of metal panel as part of an overall material palette in UDD 1.
- The Commission recognizes that landscape changes could happen on the north side of the site with construction of the multi-use path.