



Agenda Item #: 7

Project Title: 200 Wisconsin Avenue - New Hotel in the Downtown Core (DC). (District 4)

Legistar File ID #: 90072

Members Present: Shane Bernau, Chair; Rafeeq Asad, David McLean, Jessica Klehr, Davy Mayer

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of October 8, 2025, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a new hotel in the Downtown Core located at 200 Wisconsin Avenue. Registered and speaking in support were Doug Hursh, and Andy Laufenberg. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Michael Siniscalchi, and Matt Saunders.

Summary of Commission Discussion and Questions:

The Commission commented on the symmetrical form but asymmetrical application of materials. It should be more asymmetrical, with bigger moves or bigger swaths of materials. It's a very sophisticated massing and application of materials. Overall, a good use of materials, but if you are going to make a bold move like dropping a material or stopping one; go all out.

The Commission asked about two curb cuts on Wisconsin Avenue. The Secretary noted the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines are clear that porte cocheres are not to be parallel to the street nor within the public-right-of-way. Part of the discussion should be that an alternative design, that may not be consistent with the guidelines, does. The Commission asked the applicant to explain why they need a double curb cut on Wisconsin Avenue. They responded that most people arriving via vehicle would come to the front of the building, and would want to have an entry. The proposal minimizes the intrusion into public space and all improvements are on private property within the building. The site isn't very large, which eliminates cut through, this is the best way to accommodate that and keep both drives away from Dayton and Johnson Streets. This also allocates all back-of-house elements away from the street.

The Commission acknowledged this is a difficult site.

The Commission noted that this site is really primo real estate, but the corners should be accentuated more and that does not seem to be the focus is here. There is beautiful masonry detailing, which is appreciated, but this is extraordinary real estate, so there should be a special shape or massing that goes with how fantastic this site is. The Commission noted that the design seems kind of safe for the spectacular real estate, including the corners and inquired if that is the design intent or if this is trying to figure out if the massing is ok. I hope you are going toward something really special.

The applicant replied that they wanted to design a good citizen building that works for the city. The strong brick corners create a very strong element, but maybe there is something that could do more to highlight the entry element. There is also a double height first floor (20 feet), it will feel very tall and grand and very transparent.

The applicant clarified that the glazing on the first 2-3 floors will not be transparent because it is parking.

The Commission was curious about the base of the building along Johnson Street, and the human scale, noting it was worth another look. The applicant did note they will have to have a bus stop on this side of the building that is not currently shown.

The commission agreed that the building is too safe and needs to look like it was built in 2027. You have a dynamic opportunity to create an awesome piece of architecture right by the Capitol. Bring some of the panels down and lighten that up, make it as glazed as it can be, bring the glazing up the corners, and give it a modern take on how you're applying your materials. In most hotels there are floor to ceiling windows; you're missing an opportunity for those views to the Capitol. You have the massing, but now look at how you are placing the materials on your massing. There is an opportunity now to dress your massing in a special way. You are going to want to step it up a little to get an exception for the inconsistencies with the guidelines.

The Commission noted the timeless quality, detailing and design is appreciated. The big-ticket item is that drop-off, because it so deliberately opposes the Downtown Design Guidelines. The Commission also noted the importance of maintaining tree canopies on all the street frontages. What is especially problematic is that the second third floors have parking – it is not just a matter of building materiality, but it is opaque glass with cars behind it – is there a way to peel back some of the parking away from the corner?

The Commission talked about street level pedestrian activation. Provide some tie in materiality of planters/walls to the rest of the building. Question if there is enough space for those planters; they should not be cast in place concrete.

The Commission commented that the plans may not match the renderings, and to make sure there is sufficient space to do what is being shown in the rendering related to landscape and planters.

The Commission noted a nighttime rendering will be good to see, as well as a better understanding of lighting on and around the building. The Commission inquired about wallpacks and louvers not being strongly indicated on the elevations. The applicant responded the mechanical system will be more of an institutional system, not through the wall. There will be a mechanical screen on the roof, but we can expect louvers in the back alley for the parking area.

Action

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION**, no formal action was taken by the Commission.