



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 121 E Wilson Street

Application Type: Alteration to a Previously Approved Mixed-Use Building in UMX Zoning
UDC is an Advisory Body

Legistar File ID #: [71621](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Dan Kennelly, Quad Capital Partners | 121 E. Wilson Investors, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is proposing exterior alterations to an approved 14-story mixed-use residential and commercial building comprised of 337 residential units, roughly 19,445 square feet of commercial space, and 345 parking stalls. The proposed exterior alterations, as noted in the Letter of Intent, include:

- The base of the building has shifted to better align with the build-to line along Wilson Street,
- Changes to windows (size and mullions) and railings (cable with glass on upper floors only),
- Changes to the arrangement and extents of the concealed fastener metal panels on the Wilson Street and John Nolen Drive elevations and the pleat/fold accent of the panel (from inward to outward),
- Alignment of punched openings within masonry portions of the building,
- Increase the masonry detailing between the window jambs,
- Eliminate architectural lighting of the building façade and other updates to photometric plan,
- Modify inset balconies to be projecting within the interior courtyard space and remove the vertical element framing the inside facing balconies on the Wilson Street elevation, and
- Removal of the curbed planters and bike parking in the right-of-way.

Project History:

- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on June 1, 2022.
- The UDC reviewed the proposal at their September 21, 2022 meeting. The Commission granted Final Approval with conditions.
- The Plan Commission reviewed the proposal at their October 3, 2022 meeting. As part of Plan Commission's approval, a condition of approval was included that noted that the applicant shall continue to identify ways to lower and minimize the overall area and height of the projections into the Capital View limit so they are the minimum necessary to screen rooftop mechanical equipment.

Approval Standards: The Urban Design Commission (UDC) is an **approving body** on this request. Section [28.074\(4\)\(c\)](#) states that: *"All new buildings and additions that are less than twenty-thousand (20,000) square feet and are not approved pursuant to (a) above, as well as all major exterior alterations to any building shall be approved by the Urban Design Commission based on the design standards in Sec. 28.071(3), if applicable, and the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines. The applicant or the Alderperson of the District in which the use is located may appeal the decision of the Urban Design Commission to the Plan Commission."*

Design-Related Plan Recommendations: The project site is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) planning area. As such development on the project site is subject to the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#). As noted in the Downtown Plan, the maximum recommended height is up to the Capital View Preservation Limit.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests that the UDC review the proposed alterations and make findings based on the aforementioned standards, consistency with the design intent of the original approval, and as it relates to the impact the proposed alterations may have on the overall building design and detailing, streetscape and pedestrian environment, especially with regard to the items as noted below:

- **Building Design and Materials.** As noted in the Letter of Intent, the building material palette is not being changed as part of this request; it is still comprised of a concealed fastener metal panel system and masonry. However the applicant is proposing changes to:
 - The application, organization and extents of the proposed metal panels,
 - The articulation (pleat/fold) of the panels,
 - Increase the masonry between window jambs,
 - Modify inset balconies to be projecting in the courtyard and provide a larger corner balcony at the northeast corner of the building,
 - Change railing materials to be a combination of cable and glass (on upper floors only) where versus the original approval reflected all glass railings, and
 - Changes to the alignment, size, and mullion pattern of the windows.

Staff requests the UDC review and make findings related to the proposed material changes as they relate to the overall building design and composition and articulation/modulation, especially as it relates to the lakeside elevation, E Wilson Street elevation, and the long views.

- **Landscape.** As noted in the landscape worksheet, there is an overall reduction of plantings/landscape points on site, including along the street, as well as at the southeast corner of the building. Staff requests the Commission review the updated landscape plan, giving consideration to the creating year-round texture and color, as well as softening hardscape areas and providing shade along the street, as well as screening.
- **Lighting.** As noted in the Letter of Intent, modifications to lighting are proposed, including the removal of architectural lighting. While the updated photometric plan reflects an overall reduction in light levels on site, staff remains to have concerns regarding light levels, especially the maximum footcandle ratings on rooftop open space areas, which in some cases are in excess of 10.0 footcandles and uniformity ratios in excess of 5:1. Staff requests the UDC review the updated photometric plan and provide findings related to the proposed light levels and fixtures. Consideration should be given to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, especially those guidelines that generally speak to minimizing light spill into the sky and on neighboring properties, not creating excessive glare, accentuating architectural features and landscaping, and limiting lighting at the top of buildings so as not to compete with the Capital dome.

The applicant is advised that an updated photometric plan, consistent with MGO 29.36, will be required to be submitted for review and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.

Summary of UDC Discussion and Final Approval Recommendation

As a reference, the Commission's comments from the September 21, 2022, meeting are provided below:

- I like the angled lake side integration it's a very appropriate concept. The landscaping is very sophisticated. I don't know that we cannot approve up-lighting of the building.

- They will need to figure out the angle of the light or surface above the source to not project up into the sky.
- Based on the renderings they're not trying to make this a bright building. Wouldn't it just be easier to do downlighting?
 - It's not the same quality of light to us. We are looking at this very seriously. We have recessed that crease element to have the light hit that, we also have a soffit at the top of the building, so looking straight down you won't see the lights. The lighting designers have a light fixture that faces back towards the building vs. shooting the light straight up.
- Regardless of how you do it, buildings at night make a difference. I would not like to see the lighting go away, it doesn't make for a vibrant downtown. This being as prominent as it is, the amount of activity, the lighting is important and I would like to see it happen. Anything you can do to keep it involved in the project in some way.
- Overall I think it's a great project.
- Overall I think all of your big moves on the design are really fantastic, really nice. The Wilson Street active corridor leading you back to a terrace overlooking the lake is really cool urban design. I also love how the solid void helps activate Wilson Street. All the terraces and amenities, the bench elements, the plantings are all really nicely done and overall the site and architecture have a lot of unique really nice details that get me excited, including the lighting.
- The lake side façade, I think that's still where I'm not in love with it, especially as you look at it from a perspective from John Nolen, it still seems like one large building occupying a very wide lot at the same datum as the buildings next to it. Those three volumes are stepping back very subtly, and I still don't feel like it's there, it's a very monolithic façade on this side. I like how you've made some adjustments, what you've done with the balconies and rhythm is refined and better than last time. The gradation of these solid bars against the glass is nice. I still feel like it could go more solid towards the bottom, there's a ton of glass and probably solar gain issues facing a wide open lake too. Both aesthetically and from a solar gain efficiency perspective, having more solid at the bottom to make that gradation more obvious would be better.
- On the parking lot plinth where you have the vines growing up, that doesn't relate to anything above it. Could be stronger if the zone with the vine or cables matched a line that related to something somewhere else above.
- I'm wondering if this building feels welcoming to all percentages of our population. This is an opportunity for it to be a public space as you promoted it, but I wonder already, how do people know they are welcome to be here, to stay here, how long can they stay, do they need to buy coffee? Thinking about Hilldale, with all the seating and outdoor space that's supposed to be welcoming, but there's a sense that you need to buy something to have a reason to be sitting there. I would welcome more conversation on making that space accessible and welcoming to all citizens.
 - What is it about the design that is not welcoming to you?
- The umbrellas and the closeness of the tables, I would think I need to buy something to be there. It could maybe be more playful?
 - The promenade space and programing, we can't guarantee we'll get everything the developer wants. The plan is for a food hall and potentially a coffee shop and restaurant down by the lake. Down this middle space it is kind of a public space where you could buy something, come outside and eat, or benches where you could sit. That goes all the way down to the lake. Potentially on the terrace side would be public seating for the food hall, but potentially a restaurant with seating just to support that restaurant. We can continue to think about your ideas.
- Great to see this continue with more details. The crease, is that a bent metal or is there going to be a seam?

- It is a bent panel with no seam. Potentially as we get into the details there could be a seam in that location. It is a heavier gauge metal that will remain flat, there will be a series of joints on each of the panels.
 - The intent is that it is an actual folded panel to accentuate that and catch and play with the light, not necessarily have the reveal going across it. As we get into the details and how they manufacture that is still to be determined. Our intent is a series of folded panels that progress across the face of it.
- Very intriguing idea, wondering if over time there are potentials for corners to find their way enough out to be able to experience some separation or changes that are not desired. Unintended consequences.
- How are you achieving this depth, a curtain wall or a window wall system?
 - Third floor and above is a window wall system, within the framing we do are accommodating quite a bit of depth to allow the panels to fold back in there. To provide enough space at the folds to insert the lights to hopefully illuminate back towards the building without projecting outward.
- It would be nice to capture that fixture in the depth of the crease. I personally, being a fan of the intent behind the dark sky ordinance, I would support an exception here with the direction you're going as a nice design feature.
- You're stepping back as you go north?
 - The actual site has an angle. The State Office building is further out than Marina Towers. We've kept the building rectilinear with the street grid, as it goes towards the lake it has that stepping.
- One benefit is that you are recognizing the harsher times of solar exposure. The farther out mass is actually providing some protection to the back masses from the afternoon harsher sun times. It's not going to do much, but it's better than nothing. I would advocate for some more depth and more expression there, the angle of the sun could hone in on a functional intent of some stepping there.
- Imagine this project from a window to wall perspective compliance with the energy code going in the direction of performance based compliance. It would be great to understand the glass selection.
- I really like the improvement to the John Nolen side. There's not a lot you can do with a lot of stepping back and three dimensional movement on a tight site without giving up your program space. The bent panel will provide a lot of movement and interest as you move through John Nolen on bike or car. I don't mind that it still has a flatness, I think the reduction of the balconies was a big improvement. Do you have operable windows on all of these units? Can you point out where the exposed fastener panels are?
 - The units will have operable windows in a vertical orientation similar to the pattern occurring with the metal panels.
 - The exposed fasteners would be the tactile high performance concrete panels in a random pattern covering the three floors of the parking structure. That's the only place on the façade they exist.
- Tenants will appreciate the extra floor space vs. a balcony.
- Nice project, I appreciate all the improvements and changes you made in response to our comments last time.
- The renderings do not accurately indicate where the mullions are for those operable units.
 - They would be within the framework of the operable windows in the vertical orientation, not necessarily given the correct thickness that they have.
- The sash and mullion can be heavy, any idea where we're looking at these mullions? Another horizontal near the floor?
 - No not another horizontal, they would be integrated into the smaller vertical windows, and some of the larger openings would have a side portion of that having a vertical member to it as well.
- I'm curious about this mostly 1-bedrooms and studio unit count.

- We do have two bedrooms and some three bedrooms as well. The majority of one bedrooms is what is marketable.
- We took a pretty detailed look at the market as we flushed out the design details and went for a variety of different unit sizes and types. We did want to include quite a few studios to create a great attainable housing option, while also providing some larger units that could appeal to families and others.
- The second floor amenity space terrace is great when it's not winter. Have you considered putting in any amenity space that could be used year-round?
 - The 14th floor has fairly substantial interior amenity spaces for tenants with a mix of lounges, dining and other features.
- We're not in a pool shortage in Madison and this is right out on the lake, you could consider adding more greenspace or something else we are short of. This looks good and appropriate for the area.

ACTION:

On a motion by Asad, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **RECOMMENDED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (6-1-0) with Asad, Braun-Oddo, Harper, Bernau, Klehr and Bennett voting yes; Knudson voting no; and Goodhart non-voting.

The motion noted the following:

- The Commission noted that the proposed projections into the Capital View Height Preservation Limit were acceptable, provided they are the minimum necessary to provide access.

ATTACHMENT:
28.071 (3) DESIGN STANDARDS FROM ZONING CODE

(3) Design Standards.

The following standards are applicable to all new buildings and additions, within any ten- (10) year period, exceeding fifty percent (50%) of existing building's floor area for non-residential buildings, mixed-use buildings, lodging houses, and residential buildings with 8 or more dwelling units.

(a) Parking.

1. Parking shall be located in parking structures, underground, or in surface parking lots behind principal buildings. Parking structures shall be designed with liner buildings or with ground floor office or retail uses along all street-facing facades.
2. For corner lots or through lots, rear yard surface parking areas abutting any street frontage are limited to fifty percent (50%) of that frontage, and shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the street property line.
3. Parking garage openings visible from the sidewalk shall have a clear maximum height of sixteen (16) feet and a maximum width of twenty-two (22) feet. Garage doors or gates shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the front property line. Doors to freight loading bays are exempt from this requirement.
4. No doors or building openings providing motor vehicle access to structured parking or loading facilities shall face State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

(b) Entrance Orientation.

1. Primary building entrances on all new buildings shall be oriented to the primary abutting public street and have a functional door.
2. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area.
3. Entries shall be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with elements such as roof overhangs, recessed entries, landscaping, or similar design features.
4. Within ten (10) feet of a block corner, the facade may be set back to form a corner entry.

(c) Facade Articulation.

1. The facades of new buildings more than forty (40) feet in width shall be divided into smaller vertical intervals through techniques including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Facade modulation, step backs, or extending forward of a portion of the facade.
 - b. Vertical divisions using different textures, materials, or colors of materials.
 - c. Division into multiple storefronts, with separate display windows and entrances.
 - d. Variation in roof lines to reinforce the modulation or vertical intervals.
 - e. Arcades, awnings, window bays, arched windows, and balconies to reinforce the vertical intervals.

(d) Story Heights and Treatment.

1. For all buildings, the maximum ground story height is eighteen (18) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor. An atrium that exceeds eighteen (18) feet will be considered more than one (1) story.
2. Upper stories shall not exceed fourteen (14) feet floor to floor.
3. For all buildings, the minimum ground story height is twelve (12) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor.

4. For non-residential uses, the average ground story floor elevation shall not be lower than the front sidewalk elevation nor higher than eighteen (18) inches above the sidewalk elevation.
5. For ground-story residential uses, landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls or similar treatments shall be located between the sidewalk and the front door to create a private yard area.

(e) Door and Window Openings.

1. For street-facing facades with ground story non-residential uses, the ground story door and window openings shall comprise a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the facade area.
2. For street-facing facades with ground story residential uses, ground story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area.
3. For all buildings, upper story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area per story.
4. Garage doors and opaque service doors shall not count toward the above requirements.
5. Glass on all windows and doors shall be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior. Spandrel glass may be used on service areas on the building.

(f) Building Materials.

1. Buildings shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials. Table 28 E-1 below lists allowable building materials.
2. All building facades visible from a public street or public walkway shall use materials and design features similar to or complementary to those of the front facade.