

September 12, 2022

Urban Design Commission
c/o Mr. Colin Punt
City of Madison
Madison, WI

Members of the Urban Design Commission:

I am writing regarding the project being proposed by the developer, Mr. Terrence Wall, at 131 West Wilson Street. On August 31, under the auspices of Capitol Neighborhood Inc., members of a neighborhood steering committee met with representatives of the developer. We raised several issues of concern to the developer representative and the project architect.

Superior design – Regarding the architectural design, we are not yet certain the design rises to level of distinction and notoriety on a highly visible site in this important downtown corridor. Also, the building ought to be visible, stand out and be attractive to those entering the downtown from John Nolen Drive. Please encourage the developer and architect to improve the design.

The need for affordable housing downtown – Capitol Neighbors Inc. has been on record encouraging the addition of affordable housing units in downtown Madison. We believe new developments must commit to some small portion of affordable units for those who may wish to live and work in the service sector downtown. Just as the developer wishes to maximize revenues from higher value units, we in the Capitol Neighborhoods Inc. footprint want a small allocation of affordable units. This should be done because it is the right thing to do and not because of any government program.

Vehicular traffic and congestion are fast becoming an issue in this high traffic corridor. While it is important to increase density in our downtown, a new building at 131 West Wilson must be designed to have adequate onsite parking for vehicles such as moving vans, garbage pickup, deliveries, ride services, building services, etc. In addition to the approximately 250 resident vehicles, we need to be assured vehicles can enter and exit the premises safely and cross the two-way bicycle corridor without creating a hazard. Current design plans are inadequate. And we wish for the pedestrian experience and interaction to be positive and uplifting. Bicyclists need to feel safe when navigating the corridor.

While it may not be necessary for the developer to secure official “LEED Certification,” with climate change only becoming a greater concern, we would like the project design to enhance the utmost sustainable design principles. It is our understanding the building is designed to be solar powered at some later date. We strongly believe the build ought to be solar powered from the beginning and at project completion.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Ronald S. Luskin

Ronald S. Luskin, Chair
131 West Wilson Street Neighborhood Steering Committee