



Agenda Item #: 8

Project Title: 131 W. Wilson Street - New Mixed-Use Building in UMX Zoning. 4th Ald. Dist.

Legistar File ID #: 73562

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Shane Bernau, Rafeeq Asad, Russell Knudson, Jessica Klehr, Ald. Juliana Bennett and Christian Harper

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of September 21, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a new mixed-use building located at 131 W. Wilson Street. Registered and speaking in support was Kirk Keller, representing Plunkett Raysich Architects. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Jake Bunz, representing T. Wall Enterprises.

The proposal replaces the current building slated for demolition with a fifteen-story, 263-unit, high-quality building and design that enhances the Madison area in this prominent location, with the hope of changing the 1970s and 1980s feel along this corridor and trying to create a skyline piece without walling off John Nolen Drive or W. Wilson Street. The driveway is set back to stack cars for the loading area, and a two-story entry space will identify the building. They are in discussions for a possible coffee shop to open up to the street, with professional office space located directly above on the second floor. Building materials include metals and glass for a building that can stand the test of time. A mix of unit sizes are proposed, with outdoor patio space for all units. A small intrusion into the Capital View Preservation Limit is located in the center of the building with a ship's ladder and hatch.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Overall the project is decent, but it's just like every other project we see. We talk about adding to the skyline, why do we continue to take the safe approach with the same materials and forms? I would love to see something more dynamic in terms of design. It's not unique or as special as it could be. Do something outside the box to really enhance the skyline.
- The wood tones and beiges are very safe and familiar. That's something the UDC could be convinced to move away from.
- The downtown area is redeveloping, but all of them look the same with nothing new. It's a mistake to not want to distinguish yourself from all the other new development in this area. There is a group of people in the Capitol Neighborhood that think the opposite, that we should maintain some of that 1970s architecture before it is all lost. There are some historic buildings in this neighborhood that use the brick and mortar tones. I would look at breaking up the façade so it's not one tall box, layering it a bit more.
- I appreciate the amount of detail at this Informational level, it gives us a lot to talk about. It's a unique position to see the other proposed designs and many of them are approved and going up. I do think that given the passion in your intent, this does seem to be a block with some projecting balcony fins. The overall mass is still quite dominant, I agree that the top story is a nice touch but this doesn't look a whole lot different than some other projects we reviewed tonight. I'd encourage you to keep going and go further.
- Is that Kalwall proposed as thinner bands with darker orange?

- Yes, bringing wood tone material underneath the roof and balcony forms to integrate it onto this to get some motion along this side of John Nolen Drive. The lighter pieces you see would be the Kalwall material, with a hammered textured and colored concrete along the base in a mixture of materials.
- There's a little more character in that base expression, can some of that energy start to find its way to other parts of the project?
- I commend the L-shape you have so that the portion facing the lake is seventy-feet, then steps back. That's an interesting idea, I also appreciate the moving trucks going inside the building, Wilson Street is already congested. The replacement building next door will be ten or twelve stories and no longer purple. That's affordable housing, as we watch these buildings its good for us to consider what the streetscape feels like, that it's inclusive. We see beautiful façades rendered, not everyone is living in a penthouse.
 - We are very aware of the 139 project and have kept a good separation from this property to be able to step back more than fifty-feet in areas.
- I do like the cap you have, and I appreciate pursuing timelessness, but you may be erring on the side of being safe. On the opposite side is consideration of that streetscape and space for street trees. I'm not sure how this is impacted by some of the City's latest zoning efforts to create space for a tree canopy but this appears tight between the sidewalk and terrace. I'd encourage you to think about those street trees and how important they are. The previous building had this deep setback, a plinth, and an outdoor patio instead of just building right up to the public realm. The activity you're showing here is much nicer, but I want to make sure there is that appropriate void space for the public realm and space for the street trees. Incorporate layers between public and semi-public realms.
- On the terrace it would be nice to layer in some planting there, incorporate substantial real greenery. If you could see that from John Nolen Drive, that would be wonderful, but also for someone using the space.
 - We have a cistern and green roof, and are reusing gray water before dispersing it, as well as solar panels and green absorption.
- Every side of this building has the same treatment. The lot next to it will eventually be developed with a very tall building, with people looking at each other just a few feet away, but you've pretty much designed a glass box. Aside from having shades everywhere, I wonder if there could be more deliberation of how each of these façades are treated. The elevations show explicitly that each side is more or less a glass box with some interruptions. I struggle with that, I'm not sure if the result of your design intent is really going to be effective.
- The base of the building from the John Nolen side is a little busy. I'm not opposed to color or articulation in the Kalwall, but now it's seen as potentially four different segments. Bring one of those design intents around the corner, you could simplify that quite a bit and still have interest and color without fracturing what is essentially a solid base.
- The terrace needs a lot more green, I would encourage something more permanent there.
- The front of the building has a lot going on, you can see the exposed concrete columns through the glass inside the building, you have traditional paneled columns at the front. Simplifying your language of elements would go really far into making this truly timeless.
- With the affordable housing proposal next door, I'd like to highlight how important it is to work with that developer who will be your neighbor. People who are middle to low income, when they drive down these streets, to know there is affordable housing next to this. I've heard way too many times the idea that 'I want to live here but I don't want those people living next to me.' We don't want to create spaces where there is tension between neighbors. Work together rather than developments growing against each other.
- It's a dynamic skyline along here and resonates with me, but we're seeing a sameness with everybody wanting to max out the height, and it's starting to grate on me, having everyone asking for this exception. The long views of these projects, lay a ruler along the top because they're all building to the same height, it's getting ridiculous.
- There are a lot of things to like, the shape, it steps back, some of the treatments, the wood look underneath introduces a texture and color I find appealing, But you are missing opportunities to do more. The tannish sections in the middle between the balconies with champagne mica, why can there not be articulation in there, or substantial color changes? A dozen stories of beige is a missed opportunity to do something there. It's a

luxury high rise, if you're calling it the Moment and marketing it as such, you should design it so. I agree with the neighborhood that this design doesn't reach that level.

- I agree about getting substantial greenery on the terrace, and I'm glad to hear about potential solar.
- I'm glad there's some thought going into making the base of the parking garage an attractive part too, but I'm not sure why the orange just stops and becomes a concrete wall. The surfaces here are crying out for some other type of expression to the people driving by every day.
- Rethink the layer-cake top. The top could be something special, maybe a different color and more attitude given to the rest of the conservative composition.

Action

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