

## AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION      **PRESENTED:** March 7, 2012

**TITLE:** 100 Block State Street – 117-119, 121-123, 125, 127-129 State Street; 120, 122 West Mifflin Street – Project that Involves the Demolition, Renovation and Refurbishing of Some Structures, as well as New Construction Including Private Open Space in the C4 General Commercial District. 4<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (24478)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Alan J. Martin, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** March 7, 2012

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Marsha Rummel, Dawn O’Kroley, Todd Barnett, Richard Slayton, John Harrington, R. Richard Wagner, Melissa Huggins, and Henry Lufler, Jr.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of March 7, 2012, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED A COMFORT MOTION** stating their support for the project located at the 100 Block of State Street – 117-119, 121-123, 125, 127-129 State Street; 120, 122 West Mifflin Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were George Austin, Doug Hursh and Eric Lawson, all representing the Block 100 Foundation; Bill Kunkler, representing the Fiore Companies; Deirdre Garton, representing the Overture Center Foundation; Susan Schmitz, representing DMI; Stephen Fleischman, Corkey Custer, Mary M. Kolar, Gary Peterson and Mike Slavish. Appearing in support but not wishing to speak were Sarah Frautschi, Scott Kolar, Grace Fleming, Richard Mackie, Katie Dowling-Marcus and Theodora Zehner. Appearing in support and available to answer questions were Betty Harris Custer and Grant Frautschi. Appearing and speaking in opposition were Elizabeth Cwik and Jason Tish, representing the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation; Ledell Zellers, Beth Kubly, Franny Ingebritson, Rosemary Lee and Dan Goldstein. Appearing in opposition but not wishing to speak were John Schlaefer and Eileen Kolbach. Appearing neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak was Stu Levitan, Landmarks Commission Chair. Appearing neither in support nor opposition but not wishing to speak were Maria C. Milsted and Daniel L. Milsted.

Eric Lawson presented architectural concepts addressing concerns and suggestions in response to previous comments by the Commission. He began with massing, which is similar to what is there now. Changes would include filling in the façade along Fairchild Street so it’s not a “left-over” space, and strengthens the curved portion of the building. Doug Hursh presented boards with design sketches of the addition with the idea of taking what was smooth and flat and start to break that up in the urban environment. More detail and depth have been added with a curved piece stepping back. Some of the stone would be removed to create more interest at the corner and make the massing less “heavy.” The new façade would reduce the solar heat gain, and adds to the rhythm along the curved element. A canopy has been added at the ground floor which invokes the image of a retail space in this location. The larger volume upper piece has been lightened and different stone textures and

sizes are being looked at for patterning throughout the larger parts of the building. From a garden perspective a series of stairs off of Fairchild Street will help with the 3 ½ foot grade change.

Bill Kunkler spoke on behalf of the Fiore Companies in support of the project. They believe this redevelopment will improve and enliven the outer loop. This block is relatively unattractive to pedestrian traffic. They respect the historic structures but see there is a trade-off to realize the greatest good within the community and allow the urban environment to evolve. The project design pays respect to the traditional scale and heritage along State Street while importantly creating a new façade along Fairchild Street that relates to the Overture Center.

Dan Goldstein spoke in opposition to the demolition of the historic buildings along Fairchild and Mifflin Streets. He also opposes the assault on State Street's physical integrity, in the name of renovation. The loss of historic buildings for short-term construction jobs and long-term gratification of the Frautschi team is unnecessary, and the architecture is an abomination. They would have us believe the block facing Overture is an eyesore; indeed the eyesore is the Overture itself and its financial hardships. The City should not allow the wealthy few to regard downtown as their own personal erector set and bulldoze any more buildings. Historic preservation must take precedence over corporate profits.

Deirdre Garden spoke in support as the Chair of the Board of the Overture Foundation. She shared a resolution they passed in support of the Block 100 redevelopment. She commented on the lack of public financing needed to this development which is going towards a project for the City. She sees this as a very creative development in competing with various design needs of the City. On the Fairchild side you see design echoes of the Overture Center as well as the new library. This is something that the Frautschi's have done reflecting their view of the City which is essentially to honor the past but to embrace the future. This is an investment in the vibrancy and the growth of the future of Madison.

Rosemary Lee spoke in opposition as a 44 year downtown resident and supporter of all things downtown. She is in the minority of CNI members who oppose this project. This project will desecrate the unique character and design of Madison's beloved State Street and nearby area. She sees that only two benches would be made public which is at only one end of the development. Why doesn't the ramp have railings? The ramp would not be for just wheelchairs. The plaza could be in any suburban wasteland; stale and unfriendly and unremarkable. The demolition of the buildings is unconscionable. What public problem will be solved or what public benefit will be gained by the demolition of these buildings? It seems to be a "my way or the highway" with the Frautschi's; they aren't welcoming to citizen comment or input from individual professionals. She further referenced the February 8, 2012 letter to Dick Wagner, including the statement that they would abandon the project if the Urban Design Commission did not give them the approvals they want. Just because the Frautschi's gave us the Overture does not mean they should be granted the right to move forward with this development.

Susan Schmitz spoke as a representative of DMI. A healthy downtown is good for our City. This can improve the uses and increase the users to our central city. We have an opportunity to improve a block of State Street that has been needed for a long time, and the chance to improve the outer ring. The Fairchild portion of the project does just that and will bring activity to this dark and underutilized area. As we focus on more people coming to the downtown to eat, shop and play, it will be more important for us to have pocket parks. She encouraged the Urban Design Commission to work with the project team in making this a reality.

Franny Ingebritson spoke, thanking the Frautschi's for their all the work they've done and generosity they've shown. Many of the properties have been neglected, however, the properties that are registered landmarks or recognized as contributing factors to the State Street Historic District are ripe for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. Standing in the lobby of the Overture Center looking across Fairchild Street she would prefer to see a streetscape as shown in the drawings commissioned by the Madison Trust. The modern design of the Overture

Center with the historically and culturally significant buildings across the street brings Madison's past and present together. Proceeding with the current plan, historic buildings will be demolished and others stripped of their authenticity. We would be left with a view that lacks a sense of place, it would set a terrible precedent for the future of other historic buildings on State Street and in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Mike Slavish spoke in support on behalf of Hovde Properties. They own the property across Mifflin Street and see the project as the third leg of a four-legged table by establishing a cultural arts hub in this area. For people who work in this area, clearly the façade along Fairchild is in need of work. This would help establish a more pedestrian friendly corridor in this area. The viability of retail users drops off substantially when you move farther away from State Street. Thus the restaurant space would require a State Street address. This would establish a real identity for the façades along Fairchild Street, drive property values up and animate the space that will hopefully eventually become a cultural arts hub for the City of Madison.

Beth Kubly spoke in opposition. This project destroys our landmarks, and reduces public space. Downtown does not need any more dead space after 5:00 p.m. The scale is inappropriate, the materials are cold, and the garden is nothing but wasted space. Refurbishing would save our heritage and history. The idea that you need a view from Overture is silly; when you are there you are focused on what you are there to see. What we need is something human scale to enliven this area.

Gary Peterson spoke about "a place," with the garden being the best feature of this plan. The garden will help strengthen the cultural values for people using the Overture and new library. It will provide a greater density of people for downtown, art and cultural activities draw crowds. The corner of Mifflin and Fairchild has changed and as a place goes, it's much more appropriate as a garden than it is as buildings. This garden will be a place to view the other corners, it's a place to gather with other people, have music, art displays on a temporary basis, hold discussions, children's activities, etc. Madison Trust should work with the 100 Block Foundation to move the one landmark building. Barnett questioned Mr. Peterson as to whether he was told by the developer what sorts of activities could occur in this garden space. Barnett further stated that this is billed as a private garden and the developer has not spoken of any of these possible uses. He asked Mr. Peterson to clarify if those things would happen; he responded he could not clarify anything, he sees them as good ideas.

Jason Tish spoke in opposition as a representative of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation. He drew the Commission's attention to comments submitted by Mr. Jacob Arndt, which discuss the masonry structures and their excellent structural condition. The Landmarks Commission has already acted on this particular aspect of the proposal but this underscores the fact that this project would demolish a viable building (Vallender) that has clear cultural connections to Madison German immigrant heritage, solely for the convenience of having matching floor plates with the adjacent building. A theme that has emerged in some testimony is the idea of reinventing and reinvigorating the outer loop. We should work toward that being pedestrian and bicycle friendly, but the idea that a sculptural rarified open space featuring a private garden would do more to attract people to that intersection than a streetscape of fine grained shops and cafes strikes him as a bit absurd. The way you make a streetscape pedestrian friendly is by creating a variety of destinations, places to sit, meet friends; the streetscape now is very permeable where there are six opportunities for entry to this block and this proposal would reduce those points down to two.

Mary Kolar spoke on behalf of Metropolitan Place. Since last fall and into the new year, many residents support the proposal that includes preservation of the historic character of State Street, the new buildings on Fairchild and the greenspace on the corner of Mifflin and Fairchild. 92.2% of the Metropolitan Place residents who responded were in favor of the Block 100 Foundation project. The greenspace is one of the more appreciated facets of this project. As a downtown resident living among a variety of architecture she asked the Commission to support this project. It maintains the look of historic State Street, revitalizes downtown and makes Fairchild a

much more attractive place to walk. It will contribute to the financial success of the Overture. This project is vital to the continued improvement of downtown Madison that makes it such a desirable place to live. Rummel inquired about the residents who are in favor of the plan and if they also favored demolition of landmarked buildings. Ms. Kolar responded that the question survey question merely asked if they supported the project or not, without identifying specific buildings and their proposed demolitions.

Elizabeth Cwik spoke in opposition. As a design professional she feels it is very important that the Block 100 Foundation should honor and follow Madison's Landmarks ordinance and urban Design Principles and Guidelines just as any other developer would be expected to. There is a compromise in here because all the stated goals of the Block 100 Foundation could be achieved with a combination of adaptive reuse and sensitive infill. Increased business opportunities, the tax base, the enlivening of the Fairchild facades; it's important to note that the Caputo and Milsted families on the other side of the block have restored and cared for their buildings without any City money. It's important to save the Schubert building and the Stark building.

Corkey Custer spoke in support. He encouraged the Commission to make a decision that will have the best outcome for the City over the decades to come. It's unfortunate that people have decided to take out various issues on the Frautschi's. The alternatives presented are in apparent defiance of economic reality that the existing buildings can somehow be magically rehabilitated. We have here a thoughtful intelligent design that was clearly done with an eye towards scale and a concern for this community with every penny of profit goes to the people of Madison. If we reject this project what will go in its place? The considerable concern for this community that is reflected in this design and project as a whole is by far the best we're going to do.

Steve Fleishman spoke of this as keeping with the scale and texture of Madison, it's pedestrian friendly and retail friendly. It recognizes the Castle & Doyle building and preserves it. Fairchild as it is now is a lost place. This has been discussed with the board of trustees for the Museum of Contemporary Art and they are in favor of the development. This will support cultural institutions and he urged the Commission's support for this project.

Stu Levitan spoke as Chair of the Landmarks Commission. This will be one of the most important decisions anybody makes when serving on these City bodies. The reconstructed Vallender building retains the historically relevant design. The impact of the new building where the Buell building was, on the Castle & Doyle building has not yet been seen by the Landmarks Commission. The basic issue of the massing at the corner the Landmarks Commission has advised the Plan Commission that there is historic value in the Fairchild building due to its architectural significance and the architect involved. They have recommended that the Plan Commission not grant the demolition permit for the Fairchild building. The Vallender building is even more historic but they recognize the structural integrity issues were such that they did not oppose the demolition permit, although it is historically significant. They have not yet voted on the final piece (the Schubert building), which would require the Landmarks Commission to issue a certificate of appropriateness; he feels the Commission would not vote in favor for that certificate. This has the prospect of being a tremendous improvement to downtown Madison and applaud the Frautschi's for their generosity.

Chair Wagner then discussed Commission roles in this project. In terms of any demolitions, the Plan Commission has to approve those. The Urban Design Commission does not comment on demolitions. In terms of the design issues, the Urban Design Commission has comments about the massing, footprint, etc. and advise the Plan Commission and because it is in the C4 District they have some authority. Levitan agreed and noted historic preservation, design and land use as the three tiers to this project. This is both a design and a land use issue. Rummel asked Levitan about Arndt's email and wondered if the Commission would have made a different decision had they known about that information; Levitan responded that he would have looked to staff for their advice. The Secretary noted that packets were assembled of email comments received from those in favor and those in opposition.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Is there a way you would consider restoring the State Street façade by keeping the Vallender building. We are pretty much looking only at the back and there are 3 sides to look at. If it's true that the bricks on the State Street side are salvageable, would you be willing to reconfigure that building and keep that façade?
  - In January we submitted a letter of intent with analyses of the buildings in significant detail. Speaking without seeing the email from Jacob Arndt, we hired a structural engineer who looked at all the buildings. The structural report on the Vallender building contains significant issues. We hired a national and international expert who does reviews for exterior skins of buildings. We could have done this internally but we hired somebody nationally. We got a ladder on State Street and looked at the brick at multiple locations. His analysis is that that brick is bad. We've used that opinion to say "significant structural failure, issues with that building." It would be easier and more cost effective to take it down and rebuild it to what we've proposed to do. Whatever style of architecture we come to an agreement on, to try to fix that building and remove the majority of the brick and replace it with brick that won't look the same. If hypothetically we had a second opinion and there is doubt, would you be willing to consider... I don't think that building is worth saving from my review of that building. I can bring in an expert to say it's in great condition. I could bring somebody else to make it look worse too. We went to somebody we trusted from a national expertise to come and look at it. If we found out the majority of the brick is great and it's just a little bit of work sure I think somebody might want to say something and do something. But I don't think we're anywhere near saying that building can be saved.

Let's look at the architecture of the building because I think it's really stunning. Stunning interest. When I saw your design it just seemed like you could do better and I think we should talk about that design. If they're going to dispute that then let's look at the design they're proposing.

- We could get into a debate about the condition of the building. I certainly have my issues with the project. I know the firm and it's a top notch firm; I highly doubt, I have a lot of faith in their report and I cannot see they would doctor their report, it's more than dependable.
- The report may refer to the building as a whole when preservation also has to be relevant to current use. If we look at this in pieces and look at the State Street façade, I feel that has a social and cultural value of original immigrants' construction on State Street that has value above what an assessment of a condition report has.
- I also came away with (from Landmarks) we recommended to the Plan Commission that the fourth floor addition over the Buell building was not really acceptable.
- In looking at that fourth floor addition and how it relates to its neighbors, part of the relationship of that fourth floor relates to how we're treating the neighboring building as well. My personal opinion would be that fourth floor could be more closely integrated with the neighboring building if that neighboring building took a more modern approach.
  - From our purview of the project, some of the things we saw with this façade from a more historic character could wrap around and transition to something that becomes new. Creating something that's more in keeping with the older fabric as it transitions around and then the new sits on top. That's conceptually how we were doing it and thinking of it.
- But I hear Dawn asking should the State Street façade not be a reconstruction of the old building but should it be something more modern?

Also the reference of the old fabric wrapping the corner, that will not be the case with a new emulated Vallender building; that's not historic fabric.

- We've had discussions where we've presented alternative concepts, being more architecture of this time.

The Landmarks Commission said they want something that is this character on State Street now, they also say they don't like the new building it relates to. If we want to ignore that and talk about the State Street stuff we can do that, but I feel some sympathy for the applicant who is getting different city boards and commissions giving totally different directions. At what point do we try to work together?

- We're here tonight for approval on the massing, the garden concept, not the specifics. But we're willing to talk.
- I don't think the mass is going to change on State Street. I really want to like this project and I have mixed feelings. I've got to be convinced of what we're going to get and I'm not convinced that Fairchild Street is doing that. Before we had Overture Center there we had a hamburger restaurant that always had groups of people outside waiting to be seated, we had a market, it was a dynamic street. When Overture went in there and is closed during the daytime it shuts down that part of the street. I'm looking at what do you do on the other side that's going to open that up and I see only one entrance; I want to see multiple entrances along Fairchild. Going into one restaurant and putting in one garden is not going to activate Fairchild, particularly a private garden. I'm not convinced this is going to be the open garden you're talking about. We need to get ingress and egress for those buildings to create that dynamic on Fairchild. I also am concerned about what happens to Mifflin Street. That's a dynamic street coming into Madison and we're creating a hole in its corner. We need to start planning those things together so it works as a unit. It doesn't make a lot of sense to me from a planning standpoint.
  - In order to get retail to be activated along State Street with the buildings that are there, you have to essentially maintain the floor plates place that are there right now, which puts those floor plates in terms of the Buell building and Fairchild building, the platform now is waist height. You have significant issues to try and activate this portion and it only gets worse as you go down, unless you keep a building at the corner and that's not part of the vision of what's being proposed. Our thought relative to that was to create the idea that you can start to transition and move across that arc. The idea that this becomes the retail front from this point across the garden and forms, in a larger context, a larger place that we're trying to create.
- I think about Chicago where they have stairs going up to retail fronts. I just think to give up those two buildings you have to have something special and right now what I'm seeing is really something to look at from the Overture Center but for the public I'm not sure what that does. It's mostly garden with a walkway. I don't see having music or art festivals there. Some of the ideas brought up are viable for this space.
  - What we're saying here tonight is there are multiple zones here and we'll work with the Commission and the community to define something that is unique and special within the City of Madison. The fabric of a city is more than buildings. This could be a very dynamic space, something we don't have in the City of Madison.
- I know this is a private project but have you had any discussions with the City about how this could interact with Mifflin Street and the possibility of closing that block?
  - The idea that this becomes part of one space is a great idea. To the extent that we can come and plan this I don't think we're up for that.

I'm not asking you to do that, but designed to that if they do happen you can create a synergy there.

- I think the garden does a lot to get you to the point where you can say this is the ideal site for a new museum complex. That decision hasn't been made within the community. Mifflin Street as it is now it adds to the backdoor feel. I think this creates something for the resident of the City, that while walking down State Street or Overture I can see something that's a destination, it's more than a building on the corner.

I just don't understand what the destination is.

- When you get the museum and the new library, the dynamic of this corner is changed forever. Removing a building at the corner is a great vision because it adds to the ability for somebody to say “Wow, with the vacated Mifflin Street that’s a great place to put a museum.”

Looking at Overture in the daytime it’s a dead street. If you’re going to take those buildings out you really need to do something across the street along that façade. You have to create a way to activate those fronts instead of having back doors.

- You have two retail spaces that conceivably could have some presence on Fairchild. Whether it’s display windows or stairs going up there is an opportunity to activate those retail spaces on Fairchild as well as on State Street.
  - Whether there’s an entrance there, but there will be something, maybe floor to ceiling windows to activate interest. What we’ve shown as the restaurant is frankly a concept.
- The lack of canopy trees on Fairchild is probably one of its main failures and why it’s so automobile driven. We’ve eroded away the street trees to create parking for five stalls on that Fairchild face. Incredibly small number of vehicle parking spaces for what should be recreated as a proper street with proper canopy scale trees. That should become a given with whatever happens on that block, so we can envision Fairchild with landscaping as well.
- You really haven’t changed the project much that I can tell. When I look at the plan overlaid on the existing footprint you can see how the Schubert building is pretty much the same footprint as the proposed new addition. Is there a way to get you to look at keeping the Schubert building using this space, maybe cutting off part of the Haswell building to have greenspace. I just don’t see a way of getting to “yes” without figuring out a way to incorporate the Schubert building. Can you help us out here?
  - I think the applicant has done a tremendous amount since October through now in doing a variety of things. They’ve looked at the Castle & Doyle, the State Street architecture. The Schubert building does not fit into the vision of what we’re proposing. The idea of having a unique space within the City can only be formed by removal of the Schubert building and creating and defining a space. What we’ve presented tonight is some different massing ideas because what we’ve heard is there’s not enough articulation and fenestration, it’s too monolithic, too heavy, not light enough, that’s what we heard last time at this Commission. We’re responding that we’re willing to break this façade up, to put canopies in, these glass pieces on the arc that would add energy efficiency, a vitality and depth to the façade, we’re willing to go there but we’re not willing to save the Schubert building in its current location. They’ve said they would move the building but as of yet there is not a viable location.
- If the Landmarks Commission were to approve moving the Schubert building, then the question for us becomes is this design one that we could approve? We’re not trying to solve the preservation issue, there may be ways to solve that but that’s a decision for Landmarks and Plan. Our charges are whether the open space can work, if this design direction that we’ve seen as an alternative can work, and they the Plan Commission ought to start engaging the question of land use for the corner of the design, whether there’s a solution for the Schubert building. If we can’t make progress on these we’re never going to get to that.
- I appreciate the position that you’re in trying, and the Frautschi’s should be commended, but as one of the speakers said this is their vision for the City. I find it unfortunate for all parties that the massing and site plan you’ve presented hasn’t evolved. This is one of the few projects that hasn’t evolved. We’ve presented ideas, suggested eliminating parking stalls, suggested working with the City for ideas about West Mifflin and those things haven’t changed. The idea of how that greenspace could be developed hasn’t evolved. It’s all pretty much the same and we’re here spinning our wheels. The issue for me is that corner space. Once those three pieces go in that corner changes dramatically but I think the question is, it changes but what really fits it well. We all know there are 100 solutions we could come up with, you could save the walls of the Stark building, remove part of it, could that be a covered space. There

are so many opportunities for that space and that building. The word civic has been applied to this space and it struck me that this will be a dynamic corner, it is a dynamic corner, but it seems to me if this were a studio project, if that was a civic building proposed, and I know it's not, but a restaurant isn't a civic space. It's a bit of a stretch but I look at that space and see maybe enough space for 30 people, who can enjoy the Overture Center when the trees aren't in, it's analogous to Monona Terrace, which has its best views from the lake but I don't have a boat. I don't see that space as civic; if that was to be the cultural history of Madison where everybody comes and gets to enjoy a museum based on our City and county, that's a cultural building that everybody's going to go into and then that space becomes activated with lots of people that cross lots of demographics. That space right now just doesn't do it. There's got to be a solution out there that we can achieve all the objectives of the Frautschi's and the community, but it hasn't changed. The style of the buildings on State Street, replacing or not replacing, those are details but I don't think the site plan has changed.

- I think you're missing the point. The point we're here to make tonight, the biggest issue before us is, is there an open space at the intersection of Fairchild and Mifflin Streets? That's what we're asking tonight. We're open to discussing this, this was an idea, we've heard lots of feedback. I love the idea of eliminating some of these spaces. The extent that this could become very pedestrian friendly and turn the corner into a new Mifflin Street I think would be wholeheartedly supported by the Frautschi's. For us to come with any grand concept, we'd be doing that six months from now. We're willing to do that process after we get approval that there can be an open space at that location, and the massing from a volumetric aspect is approved. I want you to look at this differently than when you typically look at initial approval. Can I have this greenspace at the intersection? If people don't want that we need to know that because we want to move forward. We've got the Landmarks Commission saying we want this building to stay. We need to understand from the Urban Design Commission can we have a greenspace at this location?

My response is that this is the packet we were given to base our decision on and this design of that greenspace is very different than an open palette. If we're being asked to approve initial design, this is the design as opposed to that notion. If it's that notion than we're really at that informational level and this is time for a dialogue about what that space should be.

- I think you've heard from the applicants in this case, you're asking them to spend more money on design and they don't want to do that unless there's some willingness, not saying it's approved.

I completely understand and agree, but the premise of this presentation that was presented to us was initial approval that that's...

We cannot act differently than what the request is. I think you're hearing the core request is, do we as a Commission think that an open space there can work as part of an urban design for a project or not, do we think relatively the volume of the building they're doing is generally in the ballpark of what we can accept.

- That's a fair question we should talk about but I was approaching this as here's the design...
  - But I want you to look at it not from a traditional perspective. The letter that was written February 8<sup>th</sup> was trying to be specific in saying all we're doing is trying to take a baby step here so we can move to the next step in the process. What we're saying is we're willing to work with this and other Commissions.
- Giving initial approval means we're saying you can have an open space there.
  - That's what we're asking for.

For me, it depends. It depends on what you do with the rest of the site. I'm not willing to say yes until I see other things happening such as more activation on Fairchild Street.

I think that's very valid. I think that's fine.

- Could you be specific as to the possibilities you've been allowed to explore for what that space could be? Are the suggestions made here tonight ones your client would be willing to listen to?



- From the knowledge of what they've given to children and the arts in this community, I can't imagine they would say no. We have to work through the process and those ideas were wonderful and to the extent they can be worked into this; how it gets developed after that, we're open to ideas.
- That space is relatively small. Has an idea been floated previously for a more public civic use for that space?
  - In the last 3 years, sure.

Then it seems like the four-legged site you're talking about.  
But we have to determine what civic means as it means different things to different people.
- Can this Commission move forward with initial approval that also calls for a particular process to be put in place, layout a process to get to everyone's concerns. We've heard clearly, we want the space activated, we want the garden to be something that is a place and is active, streetscaping. I feel like we're not going to get resolution tonight. We can get resolution on our comfort level with some sort of a process where we can work with the applicant on what is going to happen with this greenspace. I'm asking, are we allowed to do that?
- The Commission could adopt a motion which would speak to a number of issues. It wouldn't be initial approval in our traditional term, but if the Commission has collectively felt that a design for this project that included open space at the corner and a volume likened to this that might also include taking away those parking spaces, we can adopt a motion like that as to how we would see his project proceeding. I would suggest you also would like to encourage the Plan Commission to discuss the land issue at the corner. If we as a collective body don't see the open space working or see the volume of the building as wrong, then I think the project's not going forward. We can adopt a motion that says we think this development can move forward and these are our concerns and these things can be accepted. Those acceptances are still conditioned on a whole bunch of other stuff.
- A motion for initial approval, does it give us the bite we need with all the caveats we have with it?
- I don't think a traditional motion for initial would. I think a motion that the Commission finds the project has many merits that they think it is conceivable or possible that the open corner and mass of the building can be approved depending on the design issues and the resolution of additional questions.
  - It seems to me the description of initial approval is very vague. I think we need some strong action by this Commission to make the next step in this process, whether that is a strong recommendation, a strong initial approval, I think it has to be one of those two. If I'm the applicant saying nobody wants this, what am I going to do? I'm going to question things. Why move on.
- Is there any way this piece can move away from State Street, the square footage taken up here without removing square footage. Then you won't see it on State Street and it keeps it from looking like it's on top of the Buell building. Another key is finding a location to relocate the historic building. You haven't destroyed it, you've relocated it. This piece down here needs to have the public be able to come and have a picnic. I really like the walls of the Stark building; if they can't be saved to create this corner, I'd like to think they can be factored in somehow as a tribute. Those four points I'd like to include in the motion, if there is a motion.
- I don't oppose the volume overall it's just where you're putting it. Maybe instead of relocating the landmark, consider reusing it. If you're going to get my support I want to see some diligence there. The easiest way to move forward is by incorporating that building. I really urge you to consider that.
- The deterioration of the urban fabric and holding that street edge with the walls of the Stark building (or urban form) is the piece that I struggle with. If the curved form were lifted two stories and occurring over the retention of the urban fabric and block, I feel it could maybe do both. Retaining the urban edge and the block edge is a criteria for me.
- What happened if you put a building on that corner with moveable walls, you could have an open space that's activated all year long. This could be something really we would all be thrilled with.

- That's why we're here tonight, but having a building at the corner is not the vision. It sets a place at the street level that sets the key to this project.
- So to clarify, "no" to reusing the walls of the Stark building, "no" to holding the street edge, "no" to an overhang over something, and "no" to moveable walls. I just want to make sure you've said no to everything we've thrown out.
  - I haven't said no. We can certainly look at the volume of the fourth floor to the extent that this could be pulled back. The extent that there is something here at the corner that is civic, whatever that is, or if it's grander than that, I think it can be grander than that. The Schubert building staying is a tough one, we've had that discussion internally with the applicant. The applicant feels the best project is without the Schubert building. They are willing to move the building. I don't disagree that the footprint is similar to what we're trying to do from a massing perspective. To have a building edge here, a wall or essentially leave the two walls of the Stark building is probably a non-starter in my opinion, with the applicant. So I'll say likely no to 2 out of 4.
- What about working with the City on getting rid of the parking?
  - Happily. I think working on a concept, with the City on discussing Mifflin Street we could do that too.
- You're asking the Commission to approve a design without a design. What everybody's saying, in order for us to take that leap of faith without a design you need to create a space with a public/private interface, it's pretty simple. Right now it's strictly private and you can't say "we can do that."
  - That can be in the motion.

But we don't have a design.
- Also more retail and doors on Fairchild. Doors to the street. Retail presence. Right, and I heard Eric talk about that. It doesn't make a difference to me. The context of whether or not I can support the open space depends on what else is done.
- It's not initial approval in a traditional sense, it's a comfort motion.
- It's more than work with the City on parking, it's to expand that greenspace with the removal of parking. It means widening the terrace and have that relate to the greenspace.
- The corner depends on the resolution of these issues.
- I think it would be appropriate to request the Plan Commission to look at the question of the corner. They also have a land use issue. Normally they would wait until they had a formal initial approval. I'm not asking them to take definitive action. Just to have them say how they see these issues that they also have jurisdiction over.

Staff compiled comments by the Commission for a prospective motion that generally noted the following:

- The Urban Design Commission supports the concepts of the project, that the volume of the building with some adjustments to the fourth story relationship to the Buell building per Landmarks Commission needs resolution, the open space at the corner with issues discussed, including work with the City on elimination of parking and expansion of terraces, the issues of the public/private interaction and the uses of that open space, retail presence on Fairchild Street and the Landmarks issue of the Schubert building to be reused or moved. The garden part is that the open space on the corner can be approved if the issues are resolved as discussed including space with a private/public interface.
- That's one of the things you lose me on. Right now there is a private/public interface with the sidewalk.
- We're asking as one of the resolutions. Those were suggestions as to whether the applicants are open to that, you can have more resolution of that if that's what you want to make this acceptable. Friendly amendment.
- The open space be programmed so that it invites the community in and activates Fairchild from that corner.

The Commission took a brief break to draft language for a possible motion. Chair Wagner read the following: “The Commission supports the concepts of the project, the volume of the building as proposed is acceptable with adjustments to the fourth story State Street façade pulled back from the Buell building, the open space at the corner can be supported if the issues are resolved with the public/private interface of that space including civic programming to invite the community in and which activates Fairchild and Mifflin Streets, that retail presence on Fairchild be increased, on-street parking on Fairchild shall be eliminated and the terraces be expanded to relate design wise to the corner’s open space, and that the issues of the Schubert building preservation by moving or inclusion be worked on, and the Plan Commission should undertake the appropriate land use discussions as part of their initial steps.

- So the motion doesn’t say anything about holding the street edge?
  - No. It assumes the street edge is being defined by these conditions. But it doesn’t say what the design is.
- George Austin asked two questions relative to parking. It’s obviously a multi-year issue, we clearly are interested in making sure these spaces are the best they can be. If we initiate a discussion with the City does it have to be included in the capital budget?
  - The Chair responded no, in thinking your designs, we want to see hopefully how it would relate to that. The West Mifflin part is a longer issue. Take those few parking spaces away and think about how those widened terraces can speak to the design.
- To invite the public in, I understand what that means. I think to the extent how this space is designed versus a management decision and how it will be managed are two different things. I’m asking you if it’s on the design side.
  - That’s what I meant by programming. Program the space so it’s inviting. We haven’t leased out the space yet. It’s modeled as retail, it affects the economic model. My suggestion is simply for the greenspace.
- Can we do a round robin? The greenspace seems to be a very important issue and it might be helpful to hear each other’s comments (Commissioners):
  - I don’t have a problem with the greenspace. My first civic project in the community was the historic garden park on Gordon Street which preserved greenspace. It’s a wonderful little urban pocket park and they contribute to the urban story.
  - I agree, I take the long view. This creates a real opportunity to create some greenspace in which to enjoy everything that’s going to be going on around it.
  - I guess in my years on the City Council we began to explore street and parks in much smaller places than where they would normally think of them. I’m perfectly comfortable with how this might turn out. If it’s managed and brought on board with the right set of reasons and purposes I think that would be just terrific.
  - I’m not there yet for reasons I’ve stated earlier. I think there are many opportunities for different designs and feel in agreement with the comments that were made as part of this motion but I also feel we’ve made them previously and we’re sort of in the same position and this hasn’t moved along. I’m not sure what this will do differently.
  - I think in talking about ways of using a historic building and holding the street edge, that’s exciting but I just heard no. I wonder what it is we’re going to come back with at some future point. But I’m willing to see where it goes.
  - I don’t support this particular greenspace but I am not against a greenspace there. We’re giving up something and need to get something back. I’m concerned that that greenspace by itself isn’t going to give us what we need. More design has to be done. My support is going to vary until something else is done.

- The success of the space is that private parties going to the restaurant have their space where they feel comfortable eating, citizens can go have their bag lunch and feel comfortable within the greenspace, to me that's the success of that open space.
- I feel the lack of greenspace in the area is a result of the streetscape, not the block form. At this point I feel the loss of social and cultural historic value is too great of a compromise.

### **ACTION:**

On a motion by Slayton, seconded by Huggins, the Urban Design Commission **EXPRESSED INTEREST** in supporting the project. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-3) with Barnett, Rummel and O'Kroley voting no.

The Urban Design Commission supports the continued exploration of the general concepts of the project. The volume of the buildings as proposed is acceptable with adjustments to State Street fourth-story façade pulled back from the Buell Building (which implies that the space is placed elsewhere). The open space at the corner can be supported if issues are resolved with the public/private interface, including civic programming to invite the community in and which activates Fairchild and Mifflin Streets. The retail presence on Fairchild shall be increased, and on-street parking on Fairchild shall be eliminated and the terraces be expanded to relate design-wise to the corner's open space.

Issues of the Schubert building preservation by moving or inclusion shall be worked on. The Plan Commission should undertake the appropriate land use discussions as part of their initial steps.

### **SECRETARY'S NOTE:**

The motion does not constitute initial approval of the project, but an expression of interest in support with the specification of issues that need to be addressed with future consideration for initial approval of the project by the Urban Design Commission.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project is 5.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 100 Block State Street**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	5	6	4	-	-	-	5	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5

General Comments:

- The applicant seems unwilling to respond to concerns about the proposal’s treatment of the corner of Mifflin and Fairchild.