



Project Name/Address: 1801 E Washington (adjacent to Yahara River Parkway)
Application Type: Development adjacent to a designated landmark
Legistar File ID # [40631](#)
Prepared By: Amy L. Scanlon, Preservation Planner, Planning Division
Date Prepared: December 9, 2015

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: MMP CCG Madison, LLC
Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting a recommendation for the appropriateness of the development adjacent to a landmark site.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The subject site is adjacent to a designated landmark site (Yahara River Parkway).

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

28.144 DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO A LANDMARK OR LANDMARK SITE.
Any development on a zoning lot adjoining a landmark or landmark site for which Plan Commission or Urban Design Commission review is required shall be reviewed by the Landmark Commission to determine whether the proposed development is so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjoining landmark or landmark site. Landmark Commission review shall be advisory to the Plan Commission and the Urban Design Commission.

Analysis and Conclusion

The Yahara River Parkway landmark site is a historic landscape that stretches from Tenney Park and Lake Mendota to Lake Monona. The proposed development project sits adjacent to approximately 10% (or less) of the landmark site's length.

City staff has encouraged the design team to transition the new development to the landmark site through sensitive architecture and compatible landscape design. The proposed building composition consists of a tall 4 story element closer to East Washington and a shorter 4 story element closer to East Main Street. These two elements will be separated by approximately 60' where a courtyard opens to the parkway.

While the overall proposal is not too large or visually intrusive, there are several ways the proposed building design could be improved to better relate to the adjacent landmark site. The architectural expression of the proposed building is busy and borders on being visually intrusive to the landmark site. The architectural design should be simplified to become a backdrop for the historic landscape. At a minimum, the color selected for the balcony frame elements is distracting and should be revised to be less contrasting so that the elements are not considered visually intrusive. In combination with the proposed paving, the area directly adjacent to the proposed building visible from the parkway should provide planting areas to soften the way the building touches the ground and to transition the building to the landscape.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Landmarks Commission advise the Urban Design Commission and Plan Commission that the proposed development is not so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjacent landmark and to provide the following design comments for consideration by the Urban Design Commission and Plan Commission:

1. In combination with the proposed paving, the area directly adjacent to the proposed building visible from the parkway should provide planting areas to soften the way the building touches the ground and to transition the building to the landscape.
2. The architectural expression of the proposed building is busy and borders on being visually intrusive to the landmark site. The architectural design should be simplified to become a backdrop for the historic landscape.
3. At a minimum, the color selected for the balcony frame elements is distracting and should be revised to be less contrasting so that the elements are not considered visually intrusive.