



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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TO: Urban Design Commission
FROM: Timothy M. Parks, Planner
DATE: November 6, 2017
SUBJECT: ID [46482](#) (UDC); [49166](#) (Plan Commission) – Demolition Permit and DC (Downtown Core District) to PD(GDP-SIP) (Planned Development District, General Development Plan-Specific Implementation Plan) to demolish a six-story commercial building and construct a nine-story, 120-room hotel with first floor restaurant-tavern and rooftop lounge at 118-122 State Street; 4th Ald. Dist.

The applicant, 122 State Street Group, LLC, is seeking approval to demolish the six-story retail/office building at 122 State Street, and most of the two-story building at 118 State Street and to allow construction of a nine-story, 117- to 120-room hotel with first floor restaurant-tavern and rooftop lounge. As part of the demolition of 122 State Street, the pedestrian bridge across W. Dayton Street with the City's State Street Capitol Garage will be removed. The subject site is located on the easterly half of the flatiron block bounded by State Street, N. Carroll Street, and W. Dayton Street, and includes frontage along all three of those streets. The applicant is seeking approval of a Planned Development zoning district to allow the height of the hotel to exceed the six-story maximum height allowed for most of the site and surrounding block on the Downtown Height Map in Section 28.071(2)(a) of the Zoning Code.

Approval Standards

As with any planned development, the Urban Design Commission is required to provide a recommendation to the Plan Commission with specific findings on the design objectives listed in Zoning Code sections 28.098(1), Statement of Purpose, and (2), Standards for Approval, including standard (2)(h), which pertains to applications for height in excess of that allowed in Section 28.071(2)(a), Downtown Height Map.

Project Description

Plans for the proposed hotel call for the building to be constructed to the property lines on all three street frontages. The floor plans are not fully detailed, but based on the project plans and data on page 25 of the September 6, 2017 bound application booklet (which contain project history, intent, massing and architectural studies, etc.), the first floor of the hotel will contain approximately 4,200 square feet of space to be used as the lobby, a bar, and office space on the Carroll and Dayton sides of the floor, a 3,870 square-foot restaurant opening onto State Street. Entrances to the hotel are proposed from both Carroll and Dayton streets; a separate loading dock/service area will be provided at the southernmost end of the N. Carroll Street façade. At this time, the applicant proposes to use Carroll Street for guest arrival and for its valet parking operation; no parking will be provided on-site. The basement of the proposed hotel will feature spaces for mechanicals, guest fitness, and two meeting rooms.

The second through fourth floors of the hotel will feature guest rooms, with those floors built mostly to the three property lines with the exception of a portion of the third and fourth floors, which will be slightly set back above the cornice of the two-story building at 118 State Street to emphasize the preservation of that façade with the project. At the fifth floor, the State Street façade of the hotel will be set back 30 feet in observance of the four-story height maximum at State Street on the Downtown Height Map. A terrace is proposed at the fifth floor for the four guest rooms adjoining the setback area. Guest rooms will continue on the sixth through eighth floors. The ninth floor will feature less enclosed space (4,573 square feet compared to 8,509 on the floor beneath), which will contain a bar and related spaces, with the rest of the floor to be an open outdoor terrace featuring a variety of seating arrangements (per the rendering on page 37 of the application booklet) and a raised viewing deck overlooking State Street. A recessed mechanical penthouse is proposed above the ninth floor enclosure (per Sheet A-110 and booklet page 36, with massing depicted on page 37).

The exterior of the proposed hotel will primarily be clad in a combination of gray cast stone, zinc panels, and glass curtain wall, with the exception of the existing brick façade of 118 State Street, which will be incorporated into the State Street façade of the new building in an effort to integrate the mass of the new building into the existing rhythm of building massing at street level. The height of the proposed hotel will vary based on setbacks and vantage points. The first floor will have a floor-to-ceiling height of 18 feet, with 12-foot floor heights on floors two through eight. The rooftop mechanical penthouse will be approximately 129 feet above the grade of State Street, with the ninth floor roof approximately 118 feet above State Street. The ninth floor itself will be 101.5 to 102 feet above State Street and roughly 99.5 feet above the corner of N. Carroll and W. Dayton streets (per Sheet A-201), which accounts for a modest grade change along Carroll from Dayton down to State.

Analysis of Standards for Approval

The project team has met on a number of occasions over the last 18 months with Planning staff and staff from other agencies, as well as with members of the community, to garner input on the design of the proposed hotel, which has been a nine-story structure from the start. The team has been extremely willing to incorporate much of the feedback received during those discussions into the design of the building, as reflected in the various design iterations shown on pages 26 and 27 of the application booklet.

However, despite those extensive outreach efforts and the willingness to consider the input received heretofore, the Planning Division cannot support the applicant's proposal due primarily to the nine-story height. In short, staff does not believe that the proposed building can meet all of the standards for PD approval required in order to allow the three additional stories of height above the maximum of six allowed on the Downtown Height Map in the Zoning Code.

The Statement of Purpose for the Planned Development District states that the district is "established to provide a voluntary regulatory framework as a means to facilitate the unique development of land in an integrated and innovative fashion, to allow for flexibility in site design, and to encourage development that is sensitive to environmental, cultural, and economic considerations, and that features high-quality architecture and building materials." In addition, the Planned Development District is intended to promote green building technologies and encourage sustainable development; promote integrated land uses; preserve historic buildings, structures, or landscape features through adaptive reuse of public or private preservation of land; provision of more adequate, usable, and suitably located open space, and recreational amenities than would otherwise be provided under conventional land development techniques; and to facilitate high-quality development that is consistent with the goals, objectives,

policies, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.

Applicable standards for approval in the PD District to be considered include whether the PD facilitates the development or redevelopment goals of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans, coordinates architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses and create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area, and includes open space suitable to the type and character of development proposed.

Specific consideration shall be given to standard (2)(h) in Section 28.098, which requires that when applying the above standards to an application for height in excess of that allowed by the Downtown Height Map, the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans and no application for excess height shall be granted by the Plan Commission unless it finds that four specific standards are met. These four standards are enumerated below, each followed by a brief staff analysis:

1. *The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned (if the recommendations in the Downtown Plan call for changes) character of the surrounding area, including but not limited to the scale, mass, rhythm, and setbacks of buildings and relationships to street frontages and public spaces.*

Staff acknowledges that the excess height proposed may be compatible with some of the existing and planned building heights in this part of the Downtown, particularly the Concourse Hotel across Carroll Street to the north, and the recommended eight- to ten-story building height for portions of the Madison College property to the northwest. However, staff does not believe that the excess height proposed is compatible with the existing or planned character of the properties immediately surrounding the subject property. While the largest building to be demolished as part of the project is a six-story building, which dates to 1917 according to City records, staff does not feel that the existing bulk alone is reason to grant approval of a new building at the same, or in this case, greater height. The applicant correctly asserts that the proposed hotel will adhere to the four-story maximum building height at State Street as recommended by the 2012 Downtown Plan, unlike the existing building at 122 State. However, staff does not feel that the stepping back proposed in accordance with the Plan and Zoning Code justify the three additional stories proposed.

2. *The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories.*

Planning staff also does not believe that the applicant has demonstrated that the proposed building results in a higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories. While this standard can be difficult to quantify, it is perhaps the most consequential for determining whether any height above the allowed maximum on the height map should be approved, and if so, how much. Any height beyond that recommended in the Downtown Plan and regulated by the Zoning Code could create a precedent for future buildings proposed along State Street and elsewhere in the Downtown area. The Urban Design Commission, Plan Commission, and Common Council should carefully consider the rationale for additional height approved, if any. To date, the applicant has not shown a comparison of the proposed nine-story building with a six-story building, and it is difficult to conclude that the nine-story building would be of higher quality than a building of lesser height. Financial considerations alone should not factor in this finding, as any subsequent proposal to exceed the allowed height here or elsewhere is unlikely to be less valuable to construct than the current proposal.

3. *The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the project and create a pleasing visual relationship with them.*

In order to approve a taller building than allowed by the Downtown Height Map, the scale, massing and design of the new building shall complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the project and create a pleasing visual relationship with them. In this case, the proposed hotel is adjacent to a landmark three-story Lamb Building at 114 State Street, another “through-lot” building, which, like the buildings at 118 and 122 State, has frontage on both State and N. Carroll streets. On October 2, 2017, the Landmarks Commission voted unanimously to the Urban Design Commission and Plan Commission that the State Street façade of the proposed hotel is not so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjacent landmark. Subsequently, the Landmarks Commission voted that the N. Carroll Street side of the proposed hotel is so large and visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjacent landmark. As such, staff cannot recommend that the project complements and positively contributes to the setting of the landmark, giving further cause to recommend against the proposal.

4. *For projects proposed in priority viewsheds and other views and vistas identified on the Views and Vistas Map in the City of Madison Downtown Plan, there are no negative impacts on the viewshed as demonstrated by viewshed studies prepared by the applicant*

The applicant has also not demonstrated that the proposed nine-story building will have no negative impacts on the viewshed as demonstrated by viewshed studies prepared by the applicant as required by condition #4 of standard (h). While sufficient information is provided to depict the proposed hotel in its immediate setting, staff does not feel that sufficient information has been provided to demonstrate how the building will appear from a distance, particularly along State Street, which the Downtown Plan notes is “Madison’s premier street.” While the proposed building should not impact views looking west down State Street from the State Capitol, staff is concerned that any impacts from the reverse perspective looking back to the Capitol from Bascom Hill, etc. have not been provided despite having been requested by staff on October 4, 2017, and suggested in comments made by members of the Urban Design Commission during the March 22, 2017 informational presentation on this project. Both long and up close views of any new building or addition up and down State Street are critically important to staff in determining how that new building will fit with the character of that iconic street.

Conclusion

In closing, as the Urban Design Commission considers its recommendation to the Plan Commission on the proposed Planned Development zoning for the hotel at 118-122 State Street, the Planning Division asks that it make specific findings on the standards for approval in Section 28.098(2) of the Zoning Code in due consideration of the statement of purpose for that district, with specific consideration of the stipulations for addition building height in standard (2)(h).