



Agenda Item #: 4

Project Title: 849 E Washington Avenue + 10 S Paterson Street - Alteration to a Previously Approved Mixed-Use Building in Urban Design District (UDD) 8. 6th Ald. Dist.

Legistar File ID #: 76215

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Christian Harper, Shane Bernau, Amanda Arnold, Russell Knudson, and Rafeeq Asad

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of March 15, 2023, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of an alteration to a previously approved mixed-use building in UDD 8 located at 849 E Washington Avenue. Registered and speaking in support were Nate Helbach, Jeff Davis and Brandon Adler. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Evan Dysart.

The team presented the proposed design progressions:

- Changing the flush metal panel to a flush ACM panel. This allows for a more durable, larger product with less joints and cleaner edges, and addresses potential oil canning issues.
- Changing to a matte black color in lieu of previous steel, changing the windows from dark bronze to black on the podium and towers on all elevations. This eliminates potential staining from cladding onto other materials and durability concerns, and is a better match to the brick tone of the existing Gardner Baking building for better connection.
- Changes in the size and location of the mechanical louvers on the south elevation are required for constructability as the design was finalized. As a direct result of the louver change, there will be adjustments to the art mural location and size.
- Proposed change to the planter wall height along the north and east elevations at the podium base to reduce the amount of exposed concrete and to bring planters closer to the street level for a better urban environment.

The Commission discussed the following:

- The biggest change is the color palette to the more black and white color scheme. Our motion last time specifically called for the pre-weathered steel.
- I can appreciate the durability issues but a similar color palette could be achieved with a different material. This being a mass timber building, the whole spirit and feeling seemed to be one of warmth and an organic nature; that cream and weathered steel coloration was more in line with that. The switch to a stark, modern cold black and white is a disappointment. When I shared this with friends they were confused thinking it was a colored building in a black and white photo; they overwhelmingly chose the original color palette. Please expound a little bit on the change in color.
 - I had similar sentiment when we made this change; it's a by-product of inflation with costs going through the roof. There's only one manufacturer that could supply the pre-weathered steel at an \$800,000 increase in cost. If we wanted to go with a local manufacturer, they couldn't do the pre-weathered. We had huge concerns as the owner about using corten weathered on site. As you know,

corten does not weather well on site, it stains everything in its path. So it was either go with the local manufactured corten weathered onsite and risk the staining, or switch to a painted metal panel. We actually got samples of at 15 different kind of faux cortens. The faux cortens looked really bad; almost like a camo finish, so we decided not to go that route either. We landed at this charcoal metal panel based on cost constraints. There were oil canning concerns and that is why the metal panel was changed above to ACM. On the lower portion the biggest constraint was cost.

- Still seems like there must have been some other options out there other than black and white. This is disappointing in general.
- If it is a solid color, there is definitely a wide range of colors available.
- Going to black and white is way down there on the list of options, but color is subjective.
 - We had gone through multiple options in a solid paint color to better match the original aesthetics of the pre-weathered steel to give that warm appearance of the facade. The main issue is getting that exact same color to match between the window frames, two cladding profiles, as well as the multiple conditions to match that color. Even within manufacturers they couldn't commit to match color. We'd end up with about 3-5 non-matching brown colors that we thought would look quite terrible. It would be the easiest and best looking final product if we went to a darker cladding that we could consistently match brown across all different finishes.
- Curious about the planter height change – it is going from what to what?
 - Planter height was initially 48 inches above grade, being dropped down to 24 inches.
- Will there be enough soil to support the plants going in those planters?
 - No, that should not be an issue there at all.
- It does appear that the planting species wouldn't be affected so much by that planter depth change.
- Do you have any renderings of what the change in the façade colors looks like? I believe the previous submittal had corten for the planter boxes as well, but I totally get not wanting to use something pre-weathered. Did you explore this façade color scheme with a corten planter box?
 - We could look at that, originally those planters were concrete, it's just a change in height between the different submissions. There is a possibility for doing a pre-weathered planter there. For durability concerns, it is right up against the sidewalk with snow and salt, we felt concrete would be more robust, which is also why we lowered them to have them closer to grade for a better pedestrian experience.
- I think the weathering steel will be more robust than concrete. If durability is actually an issue I wouldn't shy away from weathering steel there. It might be a nice pairing in terms of color palette with the new proposed charcoal cladding. I'd prefer that warmth and interest of the weathering steel as opposed to just another concrete planter wall.
- Was brick explored in alignment with the existing building?
 - Yes, brick was my preference, but unfortunately the structure had already been finalized and it could not support brick.
- It sounds like this was designed as a compromised solution. I appreciate the comments of looking at the finer details and looking at it holistically. If you were to use some amount of corten product, as an accent, what would be the proposed location?
 - We are still studying adding some corten inside at the front desk. There is an overhang along Main Street that frames the entrance of the garage, with potential corten for that piece of metal (that would be flat, not corrugated). We could also use it for all the planters, as Shane suggested.
- The planter boxes are more accessible to pedestrians than the surround of the garage door and would have a larger impact in terms of bringing some of that corten back into the project.

Action

On a motion by Knudson, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (5-1-1) with Knudson, Braun-Oddo, Bernau, Arnold and Harper voting yes; Asad voting no; and Goodhart non-voting.

The motion approved the design progressions with the condition that the planter boxes be pre-weathered corten steel.