



Agenda Item #: 5

Project Title: 700-740 Regent Street - Planned Development (PD), New Residential Building Containing Approximately 363 Apartments

Legistar File ID #: 68730

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

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of April 27, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a new residential building located at 700-740 Regent Street. Registered and speaking in support were Linda Irving, Robert Muller, Renato Gilberti and Brady Halverson, all representing Trinitas Ventures. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Joseph Alexander, representing the Alexander Company; Joseph Mayer and Nathan Wautier, both representing Trinitas Ventures. Registered in support but not wishing to speak was Adam Winkler, representing the Alexander Company.

The project has received Plan Commission and Common Council approval. The development team presented follow-up design items addressing the Commission's previous concerns on potential massing along the northwest façade, the landscape plan specific to species appropriateness and plant schedule, and courtyard visuals to explain the open space and relation to courtyard units. The full balconies have been replaced with Juliet balconies for the same rhythm and character without hanging over the property line. The landscaping that will be installed on City owned land between the back of the bike path curb and the building, cannot be counted towards landscape points, which accounts for the discrepancy in the planting table and plan. The plan has also been updated to be mostly natives and cultivars. This landscape plan achieves points that are far in excess of what is required, with the overall concept showing a series of cascading spaces that visually relate with increasing privacy as the spaces move up the building. Vignettes showed the courtyard experience, programmed by property management to provide an indoor/outdoor experience that is open to the sky while being protected from the winter with a large movie and sports viewing screen, fire pit, games, and semi-private gatherings. Windows at each floor allow daylighting into the first floor corridors, and the courtyard units will have operable windows.

For the screening graphic element, they are proposing a vertical perforated metal panel system with expressed joints. The graphic element would run along the entire north façade of the building with the flamingos strategically posed to create a whimsical feel. The development team has spoken with a local muralist to discuss the possibilities of developing this and how it would be painted on the metal. The recommendation is to use an enamel based automotive paint for its durability with an approximate 10-year life span on the actual material. The flamingo image would be stylized to some extent based on the artist's choices.

The Commission discussed the following:

- Remind us of the courtyard space width where the TV is located.

- 25-feet.
- That light well is really deep, less than a typical three parking spots. Have you considered making that bigger by removing the three apartments on one side or the other? At seven or even more stories deep, those poor people in the winter will have zero natural light coming in, it's disturbing to me that we would build buildings like this when we've had a lot of evidence showing the effects of the lack of natural light on behavior and health. This is going backwards. It's an engaging space for I don't know how many opportunities, but there's no view to the sky for most people in those courtyards.
 - That would dramatically change the economics of this and make it a project that would not be viable. This type of courtyard is not uncommon in a number of major cities. We are providing upgraded lighting in these units, and the silver material to add reflectivity. Additionally these units are discounted to our more premium view apartments. There are other outdoor amenities, including the 12th floor open space. Some of these renters might be coming out of a dorm.
- You're not going to consider removing these three units.
- I have always enjoyed your landscape intent with this project, and the great contribution along the bike path to the community. Some plant specific things that could be folded into a motion: the second floor terrace shows some sun loving plants right up against the building, those may not do well, in particular the Prairie Smoke, Little Blue Stem and Fox Hedge; consider different species for those few.
- Cultivars can be better than the straight species and better suited to an urban development. Consider cultivars of the Russian Sage, Dervilla and Echinacea.
- We previously noted the proximity to the bike path and repair facility that more bike parking stalls should be placed along this edge. Any changes made?
 - The bulk of the north façade is a bike storage room. The bike room access has been lengthened and we've adjusted the angle of the ramp for a two-way traffic condition.
- Do you have any bike stalls for visitors in this room, or are there at grade stalls right there off the bike path?
 - We will absolutely include some of those, we always put them by the doors for sure.
- I have the same concerns about the Little Blue Stem being on north side of building. They won't die but they won't thrive either. The two sedges have a bit more leeway as far as being happy in varying conditions.
- Happy to see more flowering plants along the bike path. Getting some named cultivars of some of those plants would be good.
- The amenity courtyard selection looks good as far as what will do OK in a low light condition. The Wild Ginger, Biokovo Geranium and Green Packet Pachysandra ground cover numbers don't make any sense; those should be at least tripled or multiplied by six, in number. Thank you for the changes, it's an improvement to what was in front of us previously.
- The extra information is very helpful. Would it be possible to enclose the light well with a transparent fenestration or glass skylight to enhance that amenity as a fully enclosed temperature controlled space?
 - That poses complications from a code standpoint. From a one-story condition, the interior amenities are all accounted for at the roof of the building, this is purely intended to be exterior.
- I like this project, I don't mind the light well, I've seen it in other major cities. My concern is the activity, there's too much going on, I don't know if that's a hospitable space. Within 24-feet as diagrammed with all this stuff, it's not very inviting.
- From a UDC standpoint it's an interior space. The general public can't see this light shaft from the street or bike path unless you're an occupant. We typically don't involve ourselves in interior design issues on projects like this. These are going to be priced competitively and people will have a choice to live in this space. I would caution the Commission about assigning too much importance of our consideration on an approval recommendation for an interior space.
- (Secretary) This item has already been approved by the Plan Commission and Common Council.
- The Juliet balconies are a good compromise without changing the entire façade. The landscape spaces are a huge positive.
- We could give staff latitude on approving the screening art at sign-off unless it changes dramatically.

- I welcome the freedom of expression of the artist. The repetitiveness we see on the elevation, was that planned? I would welcome some variability at the artist's discretion.
- Added information has been really helpful.

Action

On a motion by Knudson, seconded by Bernau, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (6-0).

The motion included the following:

- Ensure that bike racks are included at the bike path side of the building, particularly for those users that don't have access to the indoor bike storage.
- Consider different species for the second floor terrace plants right up against the building, in particular the Prairie Smoke, Little Blue Stem and Fox Hedge.
- Consider the cultivars referenced for Russian Sage, Dervilla and Echinacea.
- The motion approves the proposed mural, noting a preference for an artist approaching this mural from a holistic perspective and how it's experienced from the path. The screening art can be approved administratively by staff unless it changes dramatically from what is shown on the Final Approval drawings.