

AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 7/9/18

TITLE: 118-126 State St - Development Adjacent
to a Designated Madison
Landmark; 4th Ald. Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Amy Scanlon, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 7/11/18

ID NUMBER: 51562

Members present were: David WJ McLean, Richard Arnesen, Marsha A. Rummel, and Lon Hill.
Members excused were: Stuart Levitan, Anna V. Andrzejewski, and Katie Kaliszewski.

SUMMARY:

Jeff Vercauteren, registering in support and wishing to speak.

Ken Gowland, registering in support and wishing to speak.

Eric Nordeen, registering in support and available to answer questions.

Matt Prescott, registering in support and available to answer questions.

Fred Mohs, registering in opposition and wishing to speak.

Sam Chehade, registering in support and wishing to speak.

Franny Ingebritson, registering in opposition and wishing to speak.

Staff provided a summary of the staff report and recommendations for the State Street and North Carroll Street elevations. Vercauteren summarized the feedback they received from the Commission at the May 14 meeting and how that is reflected in the updated designs.

Gowland thanked the Commission for the in-depth critique provided during their last review of the project, specifically related to the materials, massing, and bulk at the top of the structure. He noted that in the previous iteration, limestone extended all the way up the building, and the Commission felt it was very heavy and didn't reinforce the datum at the fourth floor. In response to those comments, they revised the proposed materials for the top floors to include glass with steel detailing and cornice work at the top, which Gowland noted is reminiscent of other historic structures downtown. He explained that they reserved the limestone for the base, which allowed them to break up the building design to create a more confined scale and remove the monolithic feeling. He stated that the proposed design changes better respect the rhythm along State Street and are simplified and streamlined, which provides more autonomy to the two flanking historic buildings on either side.

Arnesen noted that the new design is a drastic change from the previous iteration, and asked the applicant to explain how the addition of windows on the side elevations will work for the hotel. Gowland pointed out that there is metal paneling as well, so they are not all windows and some are reliefs. Arnesen clarified that the Carroll and State Street façades are glass above where it is stepped back, and Gowland confirmed. He stated that they felt this design provided a more meaningful separation between the lower and upper floors, but still allowed it to read as singular building.

Arnesen asked if the building was stepped back further after the fourth floor than in previous iterations. Gowland stated that it is not stepped back any further, as they decided to address the scale by changing the materials.

Arnesen asked if they removed a story from the building. Gowland stated they did not. Arnesen asked if he was missing where the stepped back top floor was, and Gowland explained that they did push the top floor in further toward the middle, away from the parapet, to try and bring the scale down.

Rummel asked if the new design is still exceeding the height of the Downtown Plan. Vercauteren stated that 88' is currently allowable under the Downtown Plan, and their design reaches 95' at the top of the parapet. He explained that from the pedestrian view, one cannot see the top of the roof, but it is currently at 107'. Nordeen pointed out that the new design is 11' shorter than what they had originally submitted last fall.

Mohs expressed his concern about the height mass. He noted that the Downtown Plan was adopted recently and should be followed. He stated that if we are going to allow new buildings that are taller than what is permitted, what does this mean to the rest of State Street? He pointed out that if this is approved, then it means the height requirement is no longer enforceable. He detailed the extensive time and effort the Downtown Plan took to create, and stated that now it will all be gone. He noted that if they say yes to this project, it will be difficult to say no to anyone else in the future. He pointed out that State Street is supposed to be a historic street, and asked if we still care about maintaining that. Rummel read the Commission's charge in terms of their advisory recommendation to PC and UDC, and asked Mohs if he felt it was still too large and visually intrusive based upon that. Mohs responded that it is.

Cehade, the owner of neighboring Michelangelo's Coffeehouse, stated that he supports the project and does not think the new design is intrusive. He stated that as it is now, this portion of State Street is not very appealing, and he believes the new design respects the architectural and historical integrity of the adjacent buildings, and will also be good for the community. He pointed out that that the new design complements and enhances the beauty of the landmark building.

Ingebritson stated that this development should focus on State Street all the way to Library Mall, but the developers are focusing on the square. She handed out images of State Street to show how tall the other buildings are. She noted that the staff recommendation was a surprise to her, and stated that it seems the Commission will not consider how this project does not complement or positively contribute to the setting of the Lamb Building. She expressed that it does not create a pleasing visual relationship with the landmark building.

Arnesen stated that the new design is a vast improvement to the existing buildings, and he does not find it to be too large or visually intrusive. Rummel pointed out that she thinks large and visually intrusive are two different questions, but in terms of being visually intrusive, she finds the new design to be dramatically improved and it is an attractive building that no longer overpowers the historic storefronts. Arnesen agreed that it is a big improvement on the State Street elevation. Hill stated that he likes the new materials, which give an appearance of being more compact compared to the previous designs. He noted that the goal was to get the landmark buildings to stand out, and he thinks they accomplished that.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Arnesen, seconded by Hill, to advise PC and UDC that the State Street and Carroll Street elevations are not so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the façades of the adjoining landmark. The motion passed by voice vote.