

From the desk of Steve Holzauer, AIA

May 7, 2018

Janine Glaeser, AIA, LEED AP
Planner, Urban Design Secretary
Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development
Planning Division
126 S. Hamilton Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2985

RE: Drury Hotel Application
UDC Informational Review

Dear Ms. Glaeser,

I recently reviewed the application material and drawing exhibits provided by applicant Drury Hotel for UDC review and information at an upcoming public meeting on May 9th. I will be out of town the day of the meeting and wish to submit some input.

First, I am encouraged by the applicant's interest in Madison. It reflects a strong market here and an optimistic outlook for a sustained business, higher education and tourism industry in our downtown core. The site of the proposed new hotel tower is adjacent to an important and historical urban planning axis between the Capitol and Lake Mendota. At perhaps the narrowest segment of the isthmus, the site on Wisconsin Avenue is an even more critical component of great urban planning and place-making.

The design submitted for the proposed new hotel tower significantly undervalues our expectations for great design here. The design is simply too suburban, and it does not emphasize the high value of the Wisconsin Avenue site. If a plain building is to be erected, I am not sure where it belongs here. There are programmatic issues with the design that must be reconsidered. The primary lobby is deep in the middle of the block. Multiple levels of vertical parking are lurking behind the modest façade, taking all occupied space up to at least 50' above the sidewalk. My biggest objection is the modest, almost economical proportion of windows. Urban architecture should have floor to ceiling glass and curtain wall facades with occupied uses that bring energy, activity and life to the surrounding neighborhood.

This building will be here for a long time. When people talk about Madison and its downtown core, let them talk with envy and excitement that they are amazed by the architecture here and that they are inspired by the quality of our urban experience. The proposed design is simply not effective at achieving that impression.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Holzauer', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Steve Holzauer, AIA