

AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: November 2, 2015

TITLE: 702-706 Williamson Street – Third
Lake Ridge Historic District –
Revisions to the construction of a
previously-approved six-story, mixed-
use building. 6th Ald. Dist.
Contact: Thomas Miller, Kahler Slater

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Amy Scanlon, Secretary

ADOPTED: November 2, 2015 **POF:**

DATED: November 2, 2015

ID NUMBER: 39062

Members present were: Stuart Levitan, Chair; Anna V. Andrzejewski, Vice Chair; Erica Fox Gehrig, Lon Hill, David WJ McLean, and Marsha A. Rummel

SUMMARY:

Levitan opened the public hearing.

Thomas Miller, registering in support and wishing to speak. Miller explained the improvements that have been made to the project to address the conditions of approval and the modifications that are required to make the improvements. The modifications include increasing the number of bedrooms that have windows, increasing the number of 3 bedroom units, increasing the amount of protected bike parking, adding an additional level of car parking below grade, adding a rooftop terrace, adding balconies, screening for rooftop mechanicals, improving construction type from wood frame to post tension concrete, adding street level entrances to enliven the street, and reducing the unit count by 5.

Linda Lehnertz, registering in opposition and wishing to speak. Lehnertz explained that the roof top terrace was mentioned in the Plan Commission comments as something the applicant could consider to meet the open space requirements and that there are other ways this requirement could be met that might involve reducing the size of the building. She explained that the terrace will have a tall metal screen along the front and back and that the structure added to the roof for access is an additional story (increasing the height) with a length of 55'. The structure and the screen will be visible from the ground. She explained that the amount of metal material has increased with this proposal and that other conditions of approval from the previous approval have not been addressed. Lehnertz explained that this building is a large building that will sit next to what has been the largest building on Williamson Street and make that historic building seem small and not as important as it has to date. She also explained that the underground parking de-watering process can damage adjacent historic resources.

Gary Tipler, registering neither in support nor opposition and wishing to speak. Tipler explained that Marquette Neighborhood Association (MNA) attempts to negotiate all possibilities and in this case, not all issues have been addressed so the item should be referred so that the MNA can review and negotiate possibilities. He explained that the original design could be improved and that Tom Miller has the ability to design a better project for this site. He explained the different MNA attempts to review the project and explained that one presentation was for information only without MNA comment.

Staff explained that the Certificates of Appropriateness for the previously approved project are still valid and the applicants have some Plan Commission conditions to address, but the project could be constructed. In addressing the Plan Commission conditions, the new owner proposed design modifications that improve the construction materials and interior quality. Because the new owner wanted to make improvements to the previously approved project and because the Historic Preservation ordinance was revised to include a different approval process, the proposed project needed to return to the Commission for all approvals.

Andrzejewski and Hill noted that they did not receive full packet information and wanted the record to indicate that this is an odd situation for new Commissioners that could have been handled differently.

There were general questions about the previous discussion of the Commission when the project was originally approved.

Gehrig asked Tom Miller about the current height of the building. Miller explained that the sixth story height is 3' shorter than originally proposed (72'-4" is now 69'-4"). The screening for the mechanical equipment is approximately 4 feet tall. The roof top terrace requires access by elevator and stairs and this requires an addition of height. The massing of this rooftop access is held toward the middle of the building so it is less visible from adjacent properties. Miller explained that the use of masonry has increased and the use of metal panel has decreased as originally requested by the Commission.

Rummel asked Tom Miller for the difference in gross volume between the two proposals. Miller explained that the footprint is being increased by approximately 1500 square feet on five levels and each level is approximately 10 feet tall which totals 75000 cubic feet.

Miller explained that the additional square footage was being added at the rear and explained that the addition of square footage seemed to have more positive effects on the building than negative.

Miller described the design changes that have been proposed including use of metal panel and larger windows, more balconies, and the use of color.

Rummel asked Miller about possible design options to soften the corner element or step back the height to maintain the view of the Capitol. Miller explained that the corner element is an integral part of the building design and that the height of that feature was not reconsidered in the revised proposal.

Levitan asked staff to describe those items that could be done to meet the standards. Staff explained that it is the opinion of the Preservation Planner that the standards are met, but that there is always room to improve a proposal. In this case, the wood cladding seems out of place in the discussion around visual compatibility.

Lehnertz explained the height of the rooftop addition as it is interpreted by the definition of height in the ordinance. Staff confirmed that the height of the structure should be measured to the top of the structure. McLean explained that elevator overruns would have been included in the measurement of the height of the original proposal and the elevator and stair access masses are necessary for the amenity of the rooftop terrace.

Eric Fleming, registering in support and available to answer questions. Fleming explained that the rear addition of space is designed and has been improved. He explained that the original design would not have needed to return to the Commission if the conditions of approval were met with minor revisions to the building design, but instead, he chose to improve numerous aspects of the project and return to the Commission for the review of the entire project.

Fleming explained that the MNA President suggested that the project be reviewed by MNA and the P & D committee. They presented to the P & D committee and there was discussion, but no vote and they went to the Board meeting, but there was an error with the notice or the agenda so it was not reviewed.

Fleming described the project schedule.

There was general discussion about the construction standards. Levitan explained that the added volume of the building is located on the rear corner which would not be visible and even if it were visible, the feeling of the size of the building was not changing because the corner was being filled in. Gehrig explained that the immediate context is of large industrial buildings. There was discussion about stepping the massing down on Blount Street or redesigning the tower to be more horizontal and less vertical in its expression so the feeling of height/volume is reduced.

Levitan asked that staff clarify the use of the word “shall” in condition 3 of the staff report recommendation. Staff explained that “shall” was an incorrect word and should have been “may”.

The general discussion about construction standards continued and included taking design cues from adjacent buildings, the difference in architectural treatment and original use (residential buildings have different purposes than industrial buildings), and the use of the “wood” material.

There was general discussion about the new definition of height and the need to keep this a review a matter of compatibility.

Miller explained that the original project did not show the required elevator overrun or mechanical screening.

There was general discussion about how parts of the building will be seen and from which locations.

Miller explained the de-watering issues related to wood piles adjacent to land with a very high water table.

Marty Rifkin, registering in support.

Joan Hart, registering in opposition.

Joy Newman registering in opposition and available to answer questions.

Levitan closed the public hearing.

ACTION:

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Rummel, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the existing building. Motion passed 4:1. Gehrig voted no. Levitan does not vote.

McLean asked if the conditions of the staff report have been satisfied. Miller confirmed that the masonry is standard not utility size. Staff explained that any design considerations should be included in the motion and based on the intent of the discussion, staff can work with the applicant to provide final approval. Andrzejewski asked that the applicant could study the stepping down of the massing on the Blount Street elevation. Hill and Rummel explained that the integration of the corner element could be explored. McLean requested the regularization of the corner element divisions.

Andrzejewski understands the spirit of the request and of the evidence of all parties presented during the discussion.

Rummel explained that this is a new project under a revised ordinance.

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Hill, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction with the conditions of approval in the staff report and modifying #3 to read that the applicant shall consider modifying the design with the following design suggestions: soften the corner tower element in its visual expression to increase horizontal compatibility, stepping of the mass down toward adjacent buildings, the height of the mechanical screening and rooftop elements, and the wood/material treatment. Motion passed 4:1. Rummel voted no. Levitan does not vote.