

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: August 2, 2017

TITLE: 1501 Monroe Street – Alteration to an Existing Development for Expansion of “Hotel Red.” 13th Ald. Dist. (48105)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

*Advisory Recommendation to the Plan Commission

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Chris Wells, Acting Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: August 2, 2017

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Cliff Goodhart, Lois Braun-Oddo, Rafeeq Asad and Michael Rosenblum.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of August 2, 2017, the Urban Design Commission **GAVE AN ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION** to the Plan Commission for an alteration to an existing development located at 1501 Monroe Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Jason Ilstrup, Elizabeth Repaske, Alan Fish and Tim Lacy.

The team previously presented to the Plan Commission in March asking for 8 stories for 105 total rooms, with an event and food and beverage space on the top floor. Those plans were not approved; they are back with an additional 40 guest rooms on two new floors for a total of 87 with the top floor being heavily recessed with an approximately 2,000 square foot event space, 1,000 square foot lounge and two outdoor decks. This new request has taken off 19.5 feet of the original expansion on the backside, with the roof sloping 13 feet off the front side on Monroe Street. A 24-hour valet surface will be used in combination with additional striping to allow for 78 parking spaces (they have access to an additional 12 close by). They are seeing hotel guests using fewer cars. They wanted to soften the building and create a new look to the front and backsides of the building. The rooms face generally north (towards Camp Randall) and south (towards the neighborhood). The new floor levels are generally the same with the exception of the rooms facing southwest (down Monroe Street) which would be glazed and facing west to help break up the façade somewhat. The building will continue to step back along the north with no rooms on the 5th or 6th floors having balconies, and no balconies will ever be on the back (alley) side of the building. The setback that starts at the 3rd floor will continue and stepback at the 5th and 7th to reduce the scale of the project from the southwest view. The prow is setback 50 feet from the current corner point at the upper most level. They will be repeating materials that are there today, extending in a few key locations the existing smooth concrete, but then transitioning to a glazed cap to lighten up the top, and continuing to add color throughout the building with red glazed components, while addressing the “flat” wall facing those coming down Monroe Street. A new elevator shaft will be all red glass. They will do plantings or a higher wall along the corner patio to prevent sound from going into the neighborhood. Monroe Street is 50 feet across, as is

Regent Street. If you go from the corner of Hotel Red across to the corner at the Field House, that's 150 feet. This unique location with 150 feet across the street through 3 intersections really sets up for a larger scale.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I don't think this fits in with Monroe and Regent Streets at all. It is an iconic building, but when I look at this it's a little intense. Because it's so big and you have the red, I don't think you need the setbacks and so many materials. It's a little chaotic. Setbacks work for a certain purpose and I'm not sure that this meets that. It has to be simplified.
- I was reading Tim Parks' memo, we're supposed to judge it on the overall composition and the success of an addition that provides a top, then determine whether it provides us with sustained aesthetic desirability. I agree with you 100%. It's not an easy problem to solve but I think this new design is actually less cohesive. Instead of more rational it seems more idiosyncratic, more amorphous rather than trying to quiet it down. I think it makes it even more disjointed. I certainly don't perceive any axial relationship with Camp Randall or the Field House. The whole idea of this being a plaza with all the streets intersecting, I don't think that's perceived either. I don't see a building that's a base and a top, I see a building with two tops on it. My recommendation would be to make it a little smoother and quieter with less projections. The south and east elevations are the most successful.
- I love the red elevator but it is a simpler view. If there's some way to bring that around the front more because it is a busy building.
- It does look more chaotic. Is there a way to use or change the red railings that are existing and when you do the addition to make that a bit more uniform because now it looks too random? That vertical red elevator is a focal point but here your eyes are just moving all over to try and make sense of the building. The other part is the gray of the concrete, it does look a little too unfinished. Maybe the whole top rather than concrete you go with white or something smoother. It feels real disjointed.
- Pick one thing to do red; red is an accent color.
- Maybe define the massing a little bit.
- I think part of the problem is the point, in that the building folds the way the street folds, and the prow tries to change that from the lower stories. But then up here the prow sticks out and it loses continuity.

ACTION:

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **GAVE AN ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION**. The motion was passed on a vote of (4-0).

The advisory recommendation was as follows:

- Develop a more cohesive exterior façade design, which might have predominantly vertical or horizontal design.
- Make it smoother with fewer projections.
- The prow is up for debate.
- The design needs to respect the way the building folds around the corner due to the streets intersecting.
- South and east elevations are generally more successful.
- The building reads as having a base and two tops. Maybe continue the four-story building for two floors and then have a true top.
- Have a more deliberate use of the red color.
- Do materials changes where the massing changes.